



# Manifesto 2026

**ahpf** cymru·wales

The Allied Health Professions Federation Cymru (AHPF Cymru) represents a collective of 13 distinct professions dedicated to supporting individuals across their lifespan. Our members operate in diverse settings, including the NHS, social care, local authorities, private practice, education, and the judicial system. The federation includes the following bodies:

**The British and Irish Orthoptic Society**  
**The British Association of Dramatherapists**  
**The British Association for Music Therapy**  
**The British Association of Prosthetists and Orthotists**  
**The British Dietetic Association**  
**The British Psychological Society**  
**The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy**  
**The College of Paramedics**  
**The Royal College of Occupational Therapists**  
**The Royal College of Podiatry**  
**The Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists**  
**The Society of Radiographers**  
**The British Association of Art Therapists.**

Ahead of the 2026 Senedd elections, AHPF Cymru has identified five key areas of focus that we believe political parties must prioritise to ensure the future sustainability and effectiveness of Allied Health Professions (AHPs) across Wales.



### 1. A National Workforce Strategy for AHPs

AHPs are the **third** largest clinical workforce in NHS Wales. However, AHPF Cymru is deeply concerned that, as one of the smaller professional groups, the vital contributions of AHPs to population health and wellbeing are too often overlooked. AHPs account for **25%** of the NHS workforce in Wales and as demand for healthcare services continues to grow, the need for AHPs in key areas—such as rehabilitation, mental health support, and preventative care—has never been more urgent. Without a coordinated national workforce strategy, these professions risk becoming unsustainable, leading to unsafe staffing levels and preventable harm to patients. It is imperative that the next Welsh Government commits to the development and implementation of a comprehensive workforce strategy for AHPs. Making NHS Wales more efficient will only happen with more investment in primary care and the wider workforce, as stated in Welsh Government’s

scientific advice on the NHS in 10+ years.<sup>1</sup> In England, Scotland and Northern Ireland, NHS policy is moving towards safe staffing guidelines for AHPs—Welsh policy must follow suit. Without such a framework, staffing gaps often go unnoticed, contributing to increased burnout and compromising care quality. Clear and enforceable staffing standards will ensure a more resilient workforce, better patient care, and a healthier society.

AHPF Cymru also calls on the next Welsh Government to work with the UK Government to extend the ability for relevant AHPs in Wales to train and practice as independent prescribers.

<sup>1</sup> Welsh Government (2023). Science Evidence Advice (SEA): NHS in 10+ years An examination of the projected impact of Long-Term Conditions and Risk Factors in Wales. <https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2023-09/science-evidence-advice.pdf>



AHPF Cymru calls on the next Welsh Government to introduce a comprehensive **national workforce strategy** and **safe staffing guidelines** for Wales.

### 2. A Healthy and Fit Workforce

The health and wellbeing of the workforce are paramount to maintaining high standards of care. Organisations must prioritize the physical and mental health of their staff, ensuring timely access to AHP services when needed to keep staff in work or to assist in returning to work. By fostering a supportive environment and promoting wellbeing, employers can prevent burnout, boost productivity, and improve job satisfaction.

Furthermore, achieving a healthy work-life balance is essential for staff retention and engagement. Employers must offer flexible options for breaks, exercise, and wellbeing activities to support staff in maintaining good health. Additionally, it is crucial that workplaces provide adequate resources and support for women experiencing menopause, with clear information on available services to help mitigate its impact on their work lives.



AHPF Cymru calls on the next Welsh Government to ensure **timely access to AHP services** for those working in **health and social care**.

### 3. Widening Access to the Profession

AHPF Cymru strongly believes that expanding access to the AHP professions through degree apprenticeships is essential for addressing workforce shortages and improving the diversity of the sector. Apprenticeships offer an accessible alternative to traditional university education, allowing individuals to gain hands-on experience while earning a living. This pathway is particularly important for those who may face financial or logistical barriers to higher education.

The next Welsh Government must take decisive action to introduce and expand degree apprenticeship schemes within AHP fields. This initiative will not only create more inclusive routes into health and social care professions but will also support local communities by nurturing a skilled workforce that is attuned to the unique needs of the Welsh population. By increasing training opportunities in this manner, the Welsh Government can enhance healthcare provision, reduce inequalities, and provide more individuals with life-changing career opportunities.



AHPF Cymru calls on the next Welsh Government to **expand access** to the AHP professions through exploring routes, in consultation with the professions, such as **degree apprenticeships**.

## 4. Investing in Local Health and Social Care Infrastructure

AHPF Cymru fully supports the shift towards community-based care, recognising that it can lead to better health outcomes and reduce pressure on an overstretched hospital system. However, to make this vision a reality, the next Welsh Government must prioritise investment in local health and social care facilities. These centres would enable a broader range of services—such as diagnostics, treatment, and rehabilitation—to be delivered closer to patients’

homes, improving both access and convenience.

Such facilities would not only reduce travel times and enhance patient satisfaction but also foster collaboration among providers, improving the integration of primary, community, and social care services. Investing in these local hubs is essential to reducing health inequalities, meeting growing demand, and ensuring equitable access to high-quality care for every citizen.



AHPF Cymru calls on the next Welsh Government to ensure that **services within the community are delivered within suitable buildings.**

## 5. Universal Access to AHP Services in Treatment Pathways

AHPs play a critical role in the prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation of patients, yet access to these services is often inconsistent, particularly in rural and deprived areas. Every citizen in Wales should have the right to equitable access to AHP services as part of their treatment journey. Whether through rehabilitation, managing long-term conditions, or supporting recovery, AHPs provide essential, evidence-based interventions that enhance patient outcomes and quality of life.

The next Welsh Government must address the geographic and socio-economic disparities in access to AHP services. This requires a concerted investment in both workforce expansion and community-based care models, ensuring that no one, regardless of their location or circumstances, is excluded from the benefits AHPs can provide. By prioritising this, the government can reduce health inequalities, enhance care quality, and improve overall population health.



AHPF Cymru calls on the next Welsh Government to allow patients the **right to access to AHP services** as part of their **treatment pathway.**