Sent via email: *please respond to peter.just@rcslt.org and elissa.cregan@rcslt.org*

The Rt Hon Steve Barclay MP
The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care
39 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0EU

17 February 2023

Dear Secretary of State,

Extending prescribing responsibilities so patients get the right care, in the right place, at the right time

We are writing, as a coalition of allied health professionals, to urge you to use the powers you have under the Medicines and Medical Devices Act (2021) to extend independent prescribing responsibilities to dietitians, occupational therapists, orthoptists, diagnostic radiographers, and speech and language therapists. Our call is supported by the British Association of Prosthetists and Orthotists as prosthetists and orthotists will be seeking independent prescribing responsibilities in the future.

Extending prescribing responsibilities to our members would help deliver the vision you set out in your speech to the NHS Providers Conference in November of patients getting the right care, in the right place, at the right time. It is a practical measure you can take to support patients, and bolster other health professionals, such as GPs. It will help deliver the goal you set out in your Mail on Sunday article in November of removing barriers that get in the way of what matters to patients, including reducing the amount of time that clinicians spend on time-sapping admin, as well as devolving decision-making to the allied healthcare professionals who know their area best and giving greater freedom to do their job.

As you may know, during the Act's passage the Government made various commitments to MPs and peers when they argued for prescribing responsibilities to be extended to allied health professionals. Sadly, since then there has been no meaningful action to take this forward.

We urge you to act now, in the interests of the people we support and in the interests of the health and care system:

- Extending prescribing responsibilities to us is an easy win. It will reduce bureaucracy for doctors and other health professionals, allowing them to get on with the job of treating and caring for other patients.

- Extending prescribing responsibilities can be done safely using the already proven regulatory, education and governance frameworks that are in place for other prescribing professions.
- It's common sense to give us, the clinical experts working directly with certain patients, the prescribing responsibilities needed to deliver a quick and efficient service. Simple reforms like this can provide a quicker, safer, and more efficient NHS.
- Extending prescribing responsibilities will help patients to get the medicines they need more quickly, improving outcomes, as onward referral to a prescriber is not needed.
- As we have shown through the use of our current legal responsibilities for medicines such as supply and administration and supplementary prescribing mechanisms, we can be trusted with supporting decisions around medication. The ability to prescribe is a logical extension of this.
- Prescribing responsibilities will support allied health professionals' career development, and help to ensure that we recruit and importantly retain a highly trained skilled and motivated allied health workforce.

We are united in our call for the process of assigning prescribing responsibilities to be reviewed and reformed, allowing common-sense policies to deliver rapid change in health and social care reform. Please help us to help you, our NHS and care workforce colleagues and most of all our patients by enabling us to independently prescribe.

We would welcome an early opportunity to discuss this issue with you and look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Liz Stockley
Chief Executive, British Dietetic Association

Veronica Greenwood
Chair, British and Irish Orthoptic Society

Steve Ford
Chief Executive, Royal College of Occupational Therapists

Kamini Gadhok MBE
Chief Executive, Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists

Richard Evans OBE
Chief Executive, Society of Radiographers

Dr Nicky Eddison
Vice Chair, British Association of Prosthetists and Orthotists

cc: Will Quince MP, Minister of State for Health and Secondary Care