

Rt Hon Wes Streeting MP
Secretary of State for Health and Social Care
Department of Health and Social Care
39 Victoria Street
London SW1H 0EU
06/02/2026

Dear Secretary of State,

Re: Allied Health Professional (AHP) recognition for chiropractors

I am writing as the Chief Executive of the British Chiropractic Association (BCA) regarding the continued exclusion of chiropractic from the list of recognised Allied Health Professions (AHPs) in England. There is now a significant and timely opportunity to strengthen musculoskeletal (MSK) care delivery, expand community capacity, and support the NHS in meeting pressing access and productivity challenges.

There are almost 4,000 practising chiropractors that are statutorily regulated by the General Chiropractic Council (GCC), of these, the BCA represents over half, with 2,000 members. The GCC was established by Parliament under the Chiropractors Act 1994, with its primary duty being the protection of the public. It sets and enforces standards of education, training, conduct and performance; maintains the statutory register of chiropractors; and takes fitness-to-practise action where necessary. All practising chiropractors in the UK must be registered with the GCC and comply with its regulatory requirements.

Alongside this statutory framework, the profession is supported by the Royal College of Chiropractors (RCC), established in 2009 as an academic and professional body to promote high standards of clinical practice, research and postgraduate education. The RCC supports evidence-based practice and quality improvement across the profession, reinforcing consistency and clinical assurance in patient care.

In regulatory, educational and clinical terms, chiropractic is closely comparable to physiotherapy and osteopathy, both of which are recognised Allied Health Professions; yet chiropractic remains excluded from AHP status despite sharing similar statutory regulation, scope of MSK practice and workforce contribution.

Despite this well-established infrastructure, the absence of AHP recognition continues to limit the extent to which chiropractors can be systematically integrated into NHS pathways. Indeed, it remains unclear to our sector what the pathway to achieving AHP status is, and whether decisions on awarding AHP are grounded in a competency framework. This is increasingly difficult to justify given the scale of unmet demand for MSK services and the government's stated priorities around reducing waiting times, shifting care into the community, and improving workforce productivity.

The recent York Health Economics Consortium (YHEC), a subsidiary body of the University of York, recently published a health economics report, commissioned by the BCA, demonstrates the scale of the opportunity and is backed by an extensive literature review including the most

recent studies that examine the chiropractic profession. The analysis shows that recognising chiropractors as AHPs and enabling fuller NHS integration could:

- significantly expand MSK capacity in community settings;
 - free up over 100,000 NHS appointments each year; and
 - deliver productivity gains estimated at approximately £400 million annually, with cumulative benefits of up to £1.5 billion over the course of this Parliament through faster return-to-work outcomes.

This evidence indicates that AHP recognition for chiropractors is not simply a professional classification issue, but a practical policy lever that could materially support NHS performance and wider economic objectives.

Against this backdrop, we are concerned by the lack of engagement to date on this issue. Senior ministers, including Baroness Merron, previously indicated, on the floor of the House of Lords, a willingness to meet with the BCA and representatives of the chiropractic sector to discuss AHP recognition. Subsequent refusals to meet, without explanation or clarity as to process or timetable, have left the profession unclear as to how this issue is being considered. Given the strength of the evidence and its clear alignment with current health priorities, this absence of dialogue is difficult to reconcile.

We are therefore seeking clarity and engagement. Specifically, we would welcome:

- Confirmation of the current policy position on AHP recognition for chiropractors;
- An explanation of the criteria being applied and how chiropractic is assessed against them; and
- A meeting with you, one of your Ministers, or senior officials, to discuss how chiropractic could be better utilised in support of NHS and government objectives.

The BCA stands ready to work constructively with the Department of Health and Social Care to realise this opportunity in a way that benefits patients, the health system and the wider economy.

Yours sincerely,

Cait Allen

Chief Executive Officer

British Chiropractic Association

