

AGM 2026: member proposals

Member proposal

Proposer: Dr Chris Wood

Seconder: Jayne McConkey

That BAAT council leads BAAT members in campaigning on three important economic issues for arts therapists: the Student Tariff; inclusion in the psychological interventions document (2024); and eligibility for the mandatory registration as Mental Health Practitioners and Wellbeing Practitioners (effective from June 2026). Art therapists are currently excluded.

- The Student Tariff would encourage more organisations to offer student placements and reward placement supervisors (all other Allied Health Professionals have the Student Tariff).
- Inclusion in the psychological interventions document would give proper recognition to the breadth of work undertaken by arts therapists.
- Eligibility to apply for Mental Health Practitioner and Wellbeing Practitioner roles would provide a much-needed employment opportunity in this difficult economic period.

Supporting Statement

In Yorkshire and Humber, we have been working alongside senior NHS colleagues to draw attention to these issues across all the nations in the UK. These issues have been raised on professional forums and directly with BAAT Council in the past year. We would like BAAT to respond to our concerns and engage in active, consistent campaigning to address them. Ideally this would be best done in partnership with the Arts Therapies Professional Bodies (BAMT, BADTh, ADMP), as these issues affect all modalities, and a joint approach would strengthen the campaign.

We consider it important for arts therapists to be seen as both allied health and psychological professionals, because this reflects the range of work they undertake. The three issues in the proposal: gaining the Student Tariff; our work being acknowledged as a psychological intervention; and eligibility to apply for mental health practitioner roles are issues of natural justice for our professions (given the range of other

professions that are included), and they would benefit prospects for art therapy employment.

References:

- <https://www.bps.org.uk/news/deadline-mental-health-and-wellbeing-practitioners-be-registered-approaching>
- <https://www.england.nhs.uk/long-read/implementation-guidance-2024-psychological-therapies-for-severe-mental-health-problems/>

Council's response

Thank you for your proposal regarding campaigning for student tariffs, the inclusion of art therapy as a psychological intervention, and eligibility for the upcoming registration of Mental Health Practitioners and Wellbeing Practitioners.

Tariff is so important for our professions and BAAT, BAMT and BADth are all keen to see this put in place. In response to course leaders' and student feedback over the previous years, BAAT has been collaborating with colleagues at NHS England to develop a comprehensive tariff offer as part of the 2024–2025 Art, Drama and Music Therapies NHSE Commission. <https://baat.org/publications/developing-the-arts-therapies-professions/about-the-project/> . The final student and university datasets were submitted in December 2025, and we are awaiting a decision from NHS England in due course. Should the tariffs outcome be positive for art therapy in the UK, BAAT will ensure that universities, placement partners, and students are supported effectively, in line with agreed timescales and technical guidance.

As a small profession, campaigns to raise awareness of our work and show how art therapists can support services and the wider community are vital. Art therapy is recognised as a member of both the AHP and psychological professions NHS networks, so BAAT does liaise regularly and work with professional bodies from across these sectors. Most recently, we worked with UKCP and over 48 counselling and psychotherapy organisations on a campaign to request a review of the NICE guideline on Generalised Anxiety Disorder and Panic Disorder in Adults. That said, Council does hear of instances where art therapy has not been included in new guidance, policies, or roles where the skills and knowledge of art therapists could effectively be used. We will ask our CEO to reach out to NHSE about the psychological intervention document and see if there is learning that can be taken from other parts of the UK to support this. We will also ask

her to explore what opportunities there may be for art therapists in relation to the registration Mental Health Practitioners and Wellbeing Practitioners, mindful of the need to maintain appreciation for the unique skills and level of knowledge that art therapists hold on entry to the register and across their careers.

Recommendation for member vote:

That BAAT continue to work closely with the drama and music therapy professions to explore and incorporate the inclusion of tariffs as relevant to the specific universities and placement providers. Also, to explore the possibility for inclusion in the psychological interventions document and suitability/ eligibility to apply for Mental Health Practitioner and Wellbeing Practitioner roles and registration, so that members are supported in being able to access jobs and recognition for the skills and knowledge that art therapists can offer our workforce across the UK.

Member proposal

Proposer: Tim Wright

Secunder: Sinead Braiden

We propose that BAAT Council clearly explain at the AGM and via an email sent to all BAAT members, the due diligence processes that they followed to award a paid consultancy role to the BAAT Chair regarding the NHS England arts therapies project. This decision raises serious concerns about governance, transparency and ethics that require a detailed explanation.

Supporting statement

In late 2023 NHS England granted £430,000 (including VAT) to BAAT to lead a project to develop the arts therapies. Council minutes of 3.2.24 show that Council agreed to pay an undisclosed sum to the BAAT chair Claire Louise Vaculik to act as consultant to the project for 12 months.

This raises several governance concerns:

- The Chair is an elected director, so there is potential conflict of interest.
- Reputational risk to BAAT.
- The chair is already paid an honorarium to cover their work.
- The chair has no NHS experience, so the decision may have prevented a more suitable BAAT member taking the role.
- Lack of transparency in use of members' money

Council's decision appears to risk breaching the following sections of the Directors Code of Conduct:

- 4.8 Directors must not use their position to promote their personal, professional or business interests
- 4.12 Directors must avoid any conduct that impairs the ability of the Board to perform its functions or to enjoy the confidence of the public, the membership or government
- 4.15 Directors must ensure that resources within their control are used effectively and sparingly...
- 4.18 Directors must comply with any relevant Equal Opportunities Policy and any other relevant policy affecting their role as Directors

Tim raised these concerns in a letter to council, but the reply did not allay them and raised further concerns, notably that the consultancy had no job description or person specification.

We urge members to vote for transparency, to vote for this proposal.

Council's response

This is Council's response to the member's proposal submitted by Tim Wright. It reiterates Council's previous response to Tim's letter to Council on the same topic, which covers three interrelated substantive issues. We will address these in turn. (Please note hyperlinks to further information have also been included).

NHSE commission

It was announced at end of 2023 that all Allied Health Professional bodies would be commissioned to support the development of education and career progression. Art Drama and Music had been grouped together by NHS England and BAAT was asked to lead on behalf of the three associations, due to capacity and NHSE contracting requirements. Given the short timeline between the announcement and submission of applications Claire Louise Vaculik, our BAAT Chair, wrote the project bid, which was refined with input from all three professional bodies.

Council reviewed the bid and approved to support this well designed and comprehensive proposal comprised of three projects addressing the drivers contained within the NHS Long Term Workforce Plan, the NHS People Plan, AHP Delivers Strategy and Framework 15. The bid was successful and although funded by NHSE, the scope of the commission



included all four nations and broader international perspectives and drew together art, drama and music therapists from all sectors of practice. The projects drew upon knowledge from a range of expert reference groups, including NHS employers, higher education professionals, trainees, and service users.

Governance

The British Association of Art Therapists (BAAT), the British Association of Dramatherapists (BADth), and the British Association of Music Therapy (BAMT) had been asked by NHSE to work in partnership for the commission. BAAT, BADth and BAMT were seen as the appropriate suppliers for this work, given their knowledge in this field and their representation of their respective professions as the professional bodies for Art Therapy, Drama Therapy and Music Therapy. As mentioned, the contract was signed with BAAT on behalf of all three organisations – with BAAT therefore identified as being the lead organisation. The commission was time-limited, starting in February 2024 and to be completed by end of March 2025. There were clear outcomes set that had to be delivered by each of the reporting deadlines, in order for the next tranche of funding to be approved by NHSE. The successful commission, the biggest that BAAT had ever been awarded, was announced to members and a new section was created on the BAAT website so members could all stay abreast of the work as it developed and get involved. When it was agreed by Council in February 2024 that to mitigate risk, the BAAT Chair and BAAT CEO would hold the oversight position for the contract, they started implementing the steps needed to deliver the work. Neither of these two roles had a job description, as it was their roles and insights from their work as CEO and Chair that provided the assurances to NHSE that were needed for the contract to be awarded. To undertake this extra work on behalf of BAAT, both the then-CEO and Chair were paid additional fees. This enabled them both to continue delivering their usual duties for BAAT members and the profession.

The work undertaken for the NHS England commission was monitored in accordance with NHSE's contract management processes. This consisted of monthly meetings between the overall project coordinator, project leads for all three organisations, and the AHP Programme Education Reform management team. A highlight report was completed by the project coordinator each month, which was signed off by organisational project leads prior to the meetings. The report provided updates on progress against milestones, output and outcomes, risks and issues and a financial breakdown of project costs and spend.

The successful delivery of all three projects confirms governance structures were in place

that mitigated any reputational or financial risk to BAAT. Details of personnel employed to deliver this project were shared with members through postings on the BAAT website and regular updates in e-Bulletin mailouts and our InSight magazine .

Council decisions and Directors Code of Conduct

The decision by Council to support the bid written by the Chair was carefully considered: It provided opportunities leading to measurable outcomes for all members of BAAT (trainees, practitioners and educators) and built stronger links with music and dramatherapy colleagues. Directors correctly saw the commission as an opportunity to increase public awareness and confidence in the arts therapies and strengthen pathways from trainings to employment for members.

By receiving the NHSE funding, BAAT delivered an extensive range of resources to future-proof the profession, including:

- Project A: workshops, creative and campaign resources, and series of films to raise public awareness of art therapy;
- Project B: a new core curriculum for our trainings, information about becoming an educator, and shared work by art, drama and music therapy educators to prepare the foundations that could support a request for placement tariff;
- Project C: a career framework, a series of films to inspire people to train and to help art, drama, and music therapists to navigate different stages across their career, and resources to raise awareness of the work of professional bodies.

This decision aligns with Directors prudent use of members' money and supported the achievement of our company's objects.

Reports of the progress and outcomes of the project were shared at Council meetings and reported in its minutes. The commission ended in March 2025, and it was reported in last year's annual report and presented at the AGM, with Beverley Harden, National AHP Lead and Deputy Chief AHP (England) commending the work in her video welcome. On the day, members were also shown the service user voice animation, one of the films which was developed as part of Project A.

Vote for transparency

The proposal invites members to affirm their commitment to transparency—one of the Association's core values. We hope our response shows the thorough due diligence undertaken by Council on your behalf to safeguard and strengthen the role of arts therapies within our nation's healthcare workforce.



We know how important it is to keep members informed and involved in how Council works. That's why we're committed to building on this over the coming year—looking at clearer, more accessible ways to share updates and report relevant details of Council's activities.

If you agree please vote on the following proposal:

Members request Council to identify more accessible ways to share updates and make sure everyone can contribute to and stay informed of Council's work.