

Chair's Report – December 2020

1. Purpose of Report

To update Council about the Chair's activity and developments on HCPC issues and to give colleagues an opportunity to update Council on projects and initiatives referenced herein.

2. COVID-19

Developments in national guidance and workforce requirements continue to pose challenges, not least with potential regulatory and operational changes as the UK transition period on exiting the EU comes to a close. Another factor at play is the variability in restrictions and expectations across our four countries. With regard to the HCPC, in my judgment, the greatest difficulties lie in maintaining organisational wellbeing and consistent levels of performance.

3. A Culture of Learning

I now have regular meetings with the SMT to review in advance what will be brought to Council and to optimise the opportunity for meaningful two-way contributions.

The most pressing matter that I have raised is the imperative to have a very significant improvement in Fitness to Practise (FtP) performance, well within the year. I fully support the proposal to run gateway assessments and to have regular 'face to face' meetings with the Professional Standards Authority (PSA), much in the same way we did when running the project to transfer Social Workers to their new regulator. Action points and advice will be documented, so there is a clear trail of responsibility for delivery and accountability. I trust the PSA will support us in attending these meetings, until the PSA Standards are being sustainably achieved.

The lessons learned will need to be culturally embedded across the whole of HCPC, not just the FtP part of the operation. The reason is, that from the moment a future registrant chooses an HCPC approved educational course as meeting our Standards, or a healthcare professional engages in HCPC approved training, or Continuing Professional Development or advanced study is undertaken, the HCPC is influencing regulatory outcomes. How we interact with students, existing and future registrants, employers, service users and other stakeholders, affects individual and system behaviours. HCPC must be an exemplar of best practise and so, getting FtP right and Standards met, is the responsibility of everyone at the regulator.

As the HCPC's research done via Surrey University demonstrates, registrant testimony is powerful in our understanding the impacts of FtP and how, whilst discharging our statutory duties, we can improve the process.

It was for that reason I decided, with the Chief Executive's support, to respond directly to correspondence from a former registrant who had been removed from the Register as the result of a FtP process. I took great care to ensure that good governance was followed and legal boundaries, respected at each stage of an interview and communication exchange.

It would not be appropriate to make public details of the case, but I have been able, with the former registrant's agreement, to distil a 'Lessons Learned' document to be utilised in learning and development sessions and as a stimulus for cultural change.

4. Communications

Since the last Council, I have been focusing on playing my part in external, issues-led communications. My briefings, social media, and face to face meetings have reached out to the whole of the UK and in parliamentary terms, both Houses. Topics have included regulatory reform, our future Council Apprenticeship, wellbeing, and the coronavirus vaccine rollout.

5. Annual Report

The Chief Executive and I have finalised the first publication of HCPC 'Highlights', giving punchy information and infographics that showcase key facts and messages.

6. System Support

As Council knows, I have invested, on its behalf, considerable time in supporting another regulator to appoint a new Chair. At the time of writing, the appointment process, which began in September 2019, has not yet been concluded.

7. Strategy and Policy

7.1. Strategy Development

The corporate strategy is covered by our agenda, but I wanted to recognise the connectivity that engagement around its content has given us with key stakeholders, including user groups. Regulators do not regulate in a vacuum, nor can they develop an effective regulatory culture that protects the public, without the virtuous circle that involves applying what is learned from engaging with registrants and service users.

I will be resuming a round of stakeholder meetings in the new year, to build on what we have achieved in improving our connectivity.

7.2. Change Plan

I have arranged to meet with Pelham Allen to discuss his year-end review, and this will be available to Council. The Executive continues to deliver against the current agreed operational priorities. 2021 will see a shift into a

corporate plan designed to realise the strategies agreed by Council. This is a 'first'.

7.3. Proposed Fee Increase

We believe that the best feasible political alignment and workforce has been achieved and are moving to formalise the fee increase. Its impact on HCPC funding has been long delayed and is essential in order for us to continue to deliver statutory functions.

7.4. Risk Appetite

The risk appetite workshop I supported has taken place, and there is a potential second workshop under discussion.

8. Succession Planning

8.1. Council Apprentice

The Council Apprentice role is attracting great interest on social media and I have promoted it in a LinkedIn post et al. If Council is supportive, and we get the strong field we hope for, it may be possible to explore widening the opportunity.

8.2. Committees Review

The Senior Council Member and my thinking on how best to populate the new Committees has been circulated to members. There has been a thorough refresh of the Committee Standing Orders and Terms of Reference.

8.3. Reappointments

Three Members of Council have been reappointed with terms of two years.

9. Sector news

The Chair of the NMC has fallen ill and whilst he is recovering, a Deputy Chair is standing in. I have an update meeting in early December.

PSA Board Member Antony Townsend continues as Acting Chair.

10. Chair's meetings

Regular internal meetings, such as weekly catch up with CEO, are not listed.

Date	Meeting
September 22	Director, DHSC
September 23	Chair, HCPC Audit Committee
October 1	Chief AHP Officer for England
October 5	Data Ethics Workshop
October 8	Regulator recruitment Director, Policy Connect (think tank)
October 19	Induction, Andrew Smith, Executive Director of Regulation
October 20	Lessons Learned interview
October 21	Professionalism, Prevention and Risk Appetite Workshops
October 26	Chair, Independent Family Returns Panel
October 29	Regulator Chair interviews
October 30	Regulator Chair interviews
November 5	Board Effectiveness Webinar
November 6	Regulator Chair Panel
November 11	Senior Council Member
November 19	UK-USA public affairs webinar
November 24	Regulator Chair Panel