
Chair's Report – March 2023

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. Succession Planning

We have conducted, via a recruitment consultancy, an extensive search for our next Chief Executive, making sure that HCPC values were at the heart of our process and approach. There has been a high level of interest and of quality applicants. The appointment panel has identified a preferred candidate and I am pleased to seek the Council's approval at our March meeting to take the next steps in confirming employment. Should Council agree to the appointment it is expected the candidate would be in post in early July.

I would like to thank a number of people who have been instrumental in securing this result. First, Fatma Ali, HCPC's Head of HR, who led the selection of the consultancy, the design of the selection process, communications and briefings of all of the interested parties and who provided wise and impartial counsel to the appointment panel. Fatma's colleague Rebecca Bryan, HR Business Partner, was invaluable during the panel interviews. The staff of HCPC provided excellent guidance on what they wanted to see in their next Chief Executive, directly to the recruitment consultancy; and this information informed our search and selection. Specific thanks go to the members of staff across a number of departments and levels of seniority, who took part in a staff panel with each candidate as part of the interview process. The feedback from this staff panel played an important part in shaping the appointment panel's decision.

Naturally, I would like to thank the appointment panel members who worked cheerfully with Fatma, consultants Saxton Bamfylde and myself through reams of paperwork and meetings, to arrive at our preferred candidate: Maureen Drake, our Senior Council Member, with Alistair Gray, who has been an outstanding independent panel member. Last, though definitely not least, Claire Amor, Executive Director of Governance, Assurance and Planning, who sourced our independent members and made sure that our process was compliant with our Code of Corporate Governance and followed good governance principles, and Zoë Allan, Governance Officer, whose energy, diplomacy and organisation helped us keep everything as smooth and unproblematic as possible.

Meanwhile, I would like to thank, on my and Council's behalf, Andrew Smith who has stepped in. While Andrew decided early in the process not to apply for the role of Chief Executive, he is doing an excellent job 'holding the fort' as Interim Deputy Chief Executive.

3. Council Members

Our new Council members [Lianne Patterson](#) and [John McEvoy](#) attended their first Council in February and have joined, respectively, the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee and the People and Resources Committee. I am delighted to welcome them and feel confident they will make a great contribution to HCPC's work and its development. It is also a real pleasure to have this year's Council Apprentices on board – [Damien Baker](#) and [Oli Davies](#) . They follow in an important tradition to put diversity, equity and belonging at the heart of all we do. Damien and Oli have joined HCPC's growing alumni network.

Many people have been involved in delivering the induction programme to support our new joiners on Council. As feedback shows, this makes a huge positive difference to members' experience and contribution, enabling them to get up to speed and feel involved as fast as possible. Thank you to all colleagues and external stakeholders who have given their time to this important step in making our new team members feel supported and welcomed.

4. Reform – and regulatory flexibility

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) has announced that HCPC, together with the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC), will be in the next phase of regulatory reform, following the General Medical Council (GMC). The start date for drafting and preparing these reforms has not yet been stated.

Andrew Smith and I met the Chair and Chief Executive of the NMC in March and among the topics we covered was how best to co-ordinate, communicate and be efficient as our organisations take on the opportunities (and challenges) of regulatory reform.

5. Strategy and Finance – sustainability

I am anticipating with excitement the presentation that England's Chief Allied Health Professions Officer, Suzanne Rastrick, will be making to our March Council on the topic of environmental sustainability. Suzanne has been a superb critical friend to the HCPC and to have her championing this existential and strategic theme is very good news.

6. Fitness to Practise (FtP)

Laura Coffey, Interim Executive Director of Regulation, and I have met to ensure that, while being in the latter stages of the Professional Standards Authority's (PSA's) report on HCPC's performance against their standards, a keen focus on Fitness to Practise is maintained and reported on. FtP will remain a Council top priority until all PSA FtP standards are met. Achieving PSA standards across the board - and maintaining them - is an absolute 'must'. I was given assurance that the HCPC's improvement journey continues apace, and there is no complacency.

7. Proposed fee increase for registrants

At its last meeting, Council had an extensive discussion about the proposed increase, in particular the data yielded by the thorough consultation, with key inputs

from registrants and members of the public who may be, or have been, patients or service users. Council members came at the debate through different lenses and informed by diverse backgrounds (including registrant members). They coalesced in the unanimous conclusion that the fee increase remains essential in order to fulfil HCPC's statutory duty to protect the public.

The Executive, in particular Andrew Smith and Alastair Bridges, supported by colleagues and our advisers from Luther, and myself, continue to make ourselves available to discuss the matter and to answer any questions stakeholders may have. We set out and explain the background to our decision, the public consultation process we went through before making our decision, the range of mitigating measures we are committed to implementing as a result of the consultation and which will support our registrants.

8. Stakeholder relationships

I was pleased to meet Sally Cheshire CBE, the new Chair of NHS Resolution, for the first time. NHS Resolution is an arm's length body of the Department of Health and Social Care, it provides expertise to the NHS on resolving concerns and disputes fairly, sharing learning for improvement and preserving resources for patient care. We agreed it would be valuable to be in touch from time to time, especially in the interests of finding consensual solutions to difficult issues.

9. Concluding comments

In addition to being involved in succession recruitment for HCPC (posts at Chief Executive and Director level), I have gladly assisted the GMC in its selection of two new Council members, contributing as a lay member of the panel at their Chair's request.

These key decisions and preparing for them, have been my main focus in the period, along with regular and new stakeholder meetings, Council and Committee work, the proposed fee increase, HCPC performance, introducing new Council members and debriefing with former ones. I also engage with new agendas and people to open my thoughts up to future-proofing the HCPC.