

People and Resources Committee

Minutes of the People and Resources Committee meeting held in public on:

Date: Thursday 12 March 2026

Time: 1.30pm

Venue: Videoconference via Teams

Present: John McEvoy (Chair)
Neville Hounsome
Pameleta Ricketts
David Stirling (for items 7-8 and from item 12)
Dabbi Taylor*

Apologies:

In attendance:

James Afolabi, Financial Planning and Analysis Manager
Fatma Ali, Head of HR and OD
Francesca Bramley, Governance Manager
Alastair Bridges, Executive Director of Resources
Laura Coffey, Executive Director of Fitness to Practise and Tribunal Services
Paul Cooper, Head of Business Change
Eve Johnson, Employee Forum Representative
Alan Keshtmand, Head of Finance
Geoff Kirk, Head of IT and Digital
Iain McGregor, Independent Adviser for Technology-Led Innovation
Pauline Monu, Executive Support Officer
Patricia Morrissey, Head of Governance
Bernie O'Reilly, Chief Executive (from item 7)
Aditya Palai, HR Business Partner
Matthew Peck, Head of Communications, Engagement and Public Affairs
Katarzyna Szklarska, IT Team and Contracts Officer

* Council Apprentice

Public meeting

1 Welcome and introduction

- 1.1 The Committee Chair welcomed those present to the meeting of the People and Resources Committee and invited new attendees to introduce themselves in turn.

2 Apologies for absence

- 2.1 There were no apologies. It was noted that David Stirling would join the meeting slightly late due to prior commitments. The Partner Project Lead was on annual leave and therefore their agenda items would be presented by the Head of Governance.

3 Approval of agenda

- 3.1 The Committee approved the agenda. The Chair confirmed that papers would be taken as read but that questions and clarifications were welcomed.

4 Declaration of members' interest in relation to agenda items

- 4.1 There were no interests declared.

5 Minutes of the People and Resources Committee meeting held in public on 13 November 2025

- 5.1 The Committee approved the minutes as an accurate record of its meeting held in public on 13 November 2025.

6 Matters arising

- 6.1 The Committee noted the updates on the matters arising from previous meetings held in public. The actions proposed for closure would be closed.

Performance Reports

7 Resources Directorate Performance Report

- 7.1 The Committee received a paper from the Executive Director of Resources, providing an update on performance in the corporate enabler functions for the period to January 2026.
- 7.2 The report showed continued good performance against most key performance indicators (KPIs). IT performance against the service-level agreement for incident

resolution remained high, with performance improving in January after a slight decline earlier in the year, reflecting increased levels of demand.

- 7.3 Cyber security measures continued to progress, with an increase in the Defender Secure Score and the end-user device security score remaining within benchmark. It was noted that this area remained dynamic as industry standards continued to evolve.
- 7.4 The Committee noted an improvement in the proportion of invoices paid on time, following previous issues earlier in the year. Training and process improvements within the Finance team had contributed to this, although further improvements were still being made.
- 7.5 The Committee noted progress across the investment portfolio, including commencement of works on the heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) project and activity in relation to partners, data, customer contact, and web portals. It was noted that a substantial proportion of the investment budget was forecast to be carried forward, and the Committee discussed the balance between ambition and deliverability.
- 7.6 Members welcomed the maturity of the performance dashboard and external benchmarking and discussed the need for more explicit 'stretch' targets for the next corporate strategy period. It was noted that a wider review of KPIs would be undertaken as part of the development of the 2026–31 corporate strategy and associated corporate plan, and that departmental KPIs would be cascaded from this work.
- 7.7 In response to a question on an interim firewall, the Head of IT and Digital confirmed that the current firewall and associated hardware at Park House were approaching end-of-life. Procurement timelines for the new network meant that full implementation ahead of the end-of-life date was not achievable without undue risk. An interim firewall solution had therefore been procured to ensure continued resilience and security while enabling a well-managed implementation of the wider network transformation project, including future migration to a 'zero trust' model. The Committee was assured that the interim firewall was fully robust and secure and that the approach was a pragmatic way to de-risk the network transformation.
- 7.8 The Committee discussed prioritisation, noting that the technology roadmap set out a prioritised set of improvements. For example, a case could be made for focusing on a world-class CRM and case management system as foundations for organisational performance. The balance between ambition and capacity would be explored further in the context of the budget and investment discussions.

8 HR Performance Report

- 8.1 The Committee received the HR performance report from the Head of HR, who provided an assessment of the organisation's performance for the third quarter of the 2025-26 financial year against key Human Resources (HR) performance indicators (KPIs).

8.2 The Committee noted the following points:

- Overall workforce performance remained stable, with continued recruitment demand and strong engagement levels, within the approved workforce establishment.
- Pulse survey results showed high employee engagement, with an overall satisfaction score of 82% and a completion rate of 74%, the highest since the survey's introduction.
- Despite seasonal pressures and an increase in sickness absence during autumn and winter, the HCPC had maintained positive employee experience and engagement.
- Preparatory work was underway in relation to changes arising from the Employment Rights Bill, including updates to family-friendly and related policies, with plans to follow appropriate governance routes and to consult the Employee Forum.

8.3 The Committee sought clarification on the recruitment timeline metric. It was confirmed that, due to the variability in vacancy approval processes (including role redesign), the metric measured from the date an advertised role went live to the date an offer was accepted, rather than from resignation.

8.4 The Committee noted that the average length of service for leavers was 2.7 years and that turnover was concentrated in more junior roles, reflecting employees' desire for progression within a relatively flat organisational structure. The role of remuneration in relation to recruitment and retention would be addressed through proposals that had been considered by the Remuneration Committee at its meeting in February 2026.

8.5 Assurance was sought as to how stress and wellbeing within the Fitness to Practise (FTP) directorate was monitored. The Committee was assured that FTP used a daily anonymous 'mood board' which was monitored at team and directorate level, with follow-up and targeted support where needed. The Committee noted that feedback on potential issues such as bullying and harassment could be raised through multiple channels including Speak Up Guardians, wellbeing advisers and the Employee Forum.

8.6 The Committee queried the reported long-term sickness absence figure (14 cases, representing around 4% of the workforce) in comparison with the percentage of working days lost (1.4%). It was noted that the long-term cases were predominantly related to underlying medical conditions, including serious illness, rather than work-related stress, and that the figures would be reconciled outside the meeting.

Action: The Head of HR and OD would reconcile and clarify the long-term sickness absence figures (number of cases vs. percentage of days lost) and provide confirmation to the Committee.

9 Finance Report

9.1 The Committee received a paper from the Head of Finance and Commercial, presenting the financial position as at the end of January 2026 and the latest year-end forecast, together with an analysis of trends in international applications.

9.2 The Committee noted the following points:

- The forecast position had moved from a slight deficit to a surplus when compared with the previous forecast, due to timing of costs, especially in relation to complex legal cases, delays in filling some vacant posts, and bankable savings, including lower-than-expected Microsoft licence renewal costs and reduced recruitment agency fees owing to increased direct recruitment.
- Actual and committed investment expenditure was broadly aligned with the latest forecast of around £1.3 million, compared to an original budget of around £2.5 million and a previous forecast of around £1.9 million.
- The cautious approach to financial planning and risk provision had supported an improved reserves position.

9.3 A Committee member suggested that income and expenditure per registrant could be tracked and benchmarked against other health regulators. It was noted that the average cost per registrant in 2025-26 was £123, which matched the renewal fee, indicating that previous modelling for the recent fee review had been appropriate. It was confirmed that this analysis formed part of the fee consultation and strategy work and that comparative data with other regulators would continue to be used in that context.

9.4 The Committee considered the trend analysis of international applications and noted the following points:

- Between 2022-23 and 2024-25, international application volumes had averaged just under 13,000 applications per year, generating significant income.
- During 2025-26, volumes had fallen sharply to fewer than 3,000 applications (approximately an 80% reduction), largely due to external factors including changes to UK immigration policy, tighter visa thresholds, increased salary requirements and restrictions on dependants.
- International application volumes were not expected to return to historic highs and the medium-term financial plan reflected reduced reliance on this income stream, with a prudent assumption of further decline. In relation to resourcing levels, fixed-term contracts had been used effectively to manage peaks in demand, with reductions implemented as volumes decreased.

9.5 The Committee discussed the concentration of international applications in particular professions and source countries. Work was being undertaken through education quality assurance and engagement with the Higher Education Statistics

Agency (HESA) to understand the pipeline from approved programmes, including dropout rates and subsequent registration, and the distinction between predictable trends in UK-trained graduates and less predictable patterns in applicants trained overseas. The unpredictability of international application volumes had been identified as a financial risk and had been captured on the operational risk register as appropriate.

10 Partner Report

10.1 In the absence of the Partner Project Lead, the Head of Governance introduced the partner report for the third quarter of the 2025-26 financial year, which provided an overview of a number of performance metrics.

10.2 The Committee noted the following points:

- Partner recruitment performance remained strong, with two key campaigns for panel chairs and legal assessors attracting approximately 220 applications; all vacancies were on track to be filled in quarter 4 and recruitment KPIs had been met.
- Turnover had improved, with voluntary resignations reducing from 14 to 10 in the quarter, remaining within KPI thresholds.
- Reasons for leaving were consistent with previous quarters, including other work commitments, pay levels and feedback that the record of assessment (ROA) for assessors was complex. The ROA had been deliberately strengthened to improve the quality and robustness of recording and decision-making.
- The partner establishment remained broadly stable, with around 654 partners carrying out over 800 roles, and approximately one in five partners holding more than one role.
- Training activity remained strong, including induction training for panel chairs and new e-learning modules for registration assessors.

10.3 The Committee also noted that the team was monitoring the potential implications of a forthcoming Court of Appeal case on the employment status of legal assessors.

10.4 Data quality issues arising from the implementation of the new partner payroll system would be considered further in the private session.

10.5 In response to a question, it was confirmed that contingencies for potential partner-related cost pressures (including those associated with the Court of Appeal case) were included within the organisation's general and legal contingency planning.

People

11 Employee Forum update

- 11.1 The Committee received a verbal update from the Employee Forum Representative.
- 11.2 The Employee Forum was undertaking a team refresh, with nominations and elections planned for the lead representative role and other vacancies, alongside a review of its terms of service.
- 11.3 The Forum was seeking to increase its visibility and engagement across the organisation, including proactive contact with new starters, enhanced use of the intranet and exploring options such as a short introductory video for inclusion in induction materials.
- 11.4 The Committee's insights were sought as to how the Forum could further increase its visibility and engagement. The Committee suggested that the Employee Forum should continue to collaborate with other colleagues such as Speak Up Guardians, wellbeing champions and safeguarding champions. In addition, the Committee suggested maximising the use of existing communication channels and exploring new, accessible communication formats.
- 11.5 In response to a question, the Employee Forum Representative clarified that the Forum was one of several staff voice channels, alongside wellbeing advisers and Speak Up Guardians, and was routinely consulted on policy proposals. Many issues were resolved or signposted at an early stage without escalation to the Executive Leadership Team.
- 11.6 The Committee noted the update and reiterated its support for the Employee Forum's work.

12 Gender, ethnicity and disability pay gaps 2025

- 12.1 The Committee received the 2025 gender, ethnicity and disability pay gap reports from the Head of HR and OD.
- 12.2 The Committee noted the following points:
 - Reporting on the gender pay gap is a statutory requirement for organisations with over 250 employees and the HCPC has reported since April 2017.
 - Ethnicity and disability pay gaps are not yet statutory requirements, but the HCPC had chosen to report on ethnicity for the last five years and on disability for the last two years.
 - The mean gender pay gap had reduced to 15.7% (from 16.5% in 2024), reflecting the distribution of men and women across pay bands rather than unequal pay for equal work.

- The mean ethnicity pay gap stood at 27.8% (from 28% in 2024), largely driven by the concentration of ethnic minority colleagues in lower pay bands and lower representation in senior roles.
- The mean disability pay gap had reduced significantly to 1.7% (from 12.8% in 2024), substantially below the UK benchmark.

12.3 The Committee discussed:

- the relatively low number of declared disabled staff, advising caution in drawing conclusions from percentage changes;
- the structural constraints posed by a relatively small and non-hierarchical organisation, noting the limited senior posts and low turnover at senior levels and the limitations this placed on the pace of change;
- the continued focus on representation of ethnic minority colleagues in senior roles, noting that while around half of the workforce identified as from an ethnic minority background, a substantially lower proportion were in senior bands and strategies were being developed to address this;
- the importance of equity (as distinct from equality), including providing additional targeted support and development for under-represented groups, while continuing to appoint on merit;
- the organisation's proactive approach to development initiatives, including aspiring managers and leadership programmes, reverse mentoring, and Council Apprentice schemes.

12.4 In response to a question, it was clarified that some comparative figures for other regulators were shown in red in the draft report pending publication of their 2025 data, and that these would be updated when available. It was noted that differences in size and structure significantly affected pay gap profiles.

12.5 The Head of HR and OD outlined work to encourage disability disclosure, including capturing information at recruitment through pre-employment questionnaires, updating records where reasonable adjustments or occupational health referrals were made and supporting staff forums (including for neurodivergent colleagues). The Committee suggested that internal communications could play a greater role in encouraging colleagues to disclose disabilities, emphasising the supportive culture and benefits of hybrid working for colleagues with longer-term health conditions.

12.6 The Committee commended the progress made to address the HCPC's pay gaps, particularly in relation to the disability pay gap, but expressed concern about the continuing scale of the gender and ethnicity pay gaps.

Action: The planned strategies for reducing the HCPC's pay gaps, particularly the ethnicity pay gap, would be referenced within the people strategy.

- 12.7 The Committee discussed the reference in the foreword to the organisation's ambition to maintain a 'minimal' gender pay gap and requested that this phrasing and the associated timescale for reducing gaps was reviewed.

Action: The Head of HR and OD would redraft the HCPC's ambition set out in the foreword for a 'minimal' gender pay gap prior to publication.

- 12.8 The Committee approved the 2025 gender, ethnicity and disability pay gap reports subject to reconsidering the statement within the foreword.

13 Partner policies

- 13.1 In the absence of the Partner Project Lead, the Head of Governance introduced a paper setting out proposed minor updates to the partner conflict of interest policy, the partner reference policy and the partner recruitment policy, which had been reviewed as part of their scheduled review cycle.

- 13.2 It was noted that the updates were minor in nature, did not change the purpose or scope of the policies, and were intended to ensure that the policies remained current, legally compliant and operationally clear. The updates had been considered and endorsed by the Executive Leadership Team, and no financial implications arose from the changes.

- 13.3 The Committee approved the proposed minor amendments to the partner conflict of interest policy, the partner reference policy and the partner recruitment policy

Communications

14 Communication update

- 14.1 The Head of Communications, Engagement and Public Affairs updated the Committee on the progress of changes to the communications function within the HCPC.

- 14.2 The Committee received an update from the Head of Communications and Engagement on the delivery of the communications strategy and the development of the communications function.

- 14.3 The Committee noted the following points:

- Significant progress had been made in rebuilding the in-house communications team and reducing reliance on external suppliers and contractors.
- Work had focused on putting in place the foundations for a high-performing communications function, including strengthening internal capability and supporting colleagues to communicate confidently and consistently.

- The communications strategy approved by Council in July 2024 was broadly on track, with the majority of actions delivered or in train and a small number adjusted to reflect wider organisational priorities and resourcing.
- Priorities for the coming year included enhancing consistency of brand and tone of voice, developing internal communications channels and content to support organisational culture and to celebrate staff and achievements and supporting the delivery of the technology roadmap through a major web upgrade and upcoming user research on digital channels.

14.4 The Committee noted that communications effectiveness was monitored through a dashboard of output metrics (including website, social media and intranet engagement) and welcomed the development of a trust metric from corporate strategy consultation work as a higher-level indicator of impact.

14.5 The Committee encouraged the team to continue to frame the HCPC's role in terms of the public benefit delivered by the professions it regulates, with examples such as recent profession-focused campaigns.

14.6 The Committee noted the ongoing partnership with the Patients Association and the plans to increase patient and service user voice within communications activities.

Governance

15 Review of Committee effectiveness

15.1 The Committee received a paper from the Governance Manager summarising the responses to the annual Committee effectiveness survey. Five responses had been received, representing 50% of those surveyed, which was consistent with the previous year.

15.2 Overall feedback was positive. The Committee noted, however, that the response rate was relatively low and that there were some 'disagree' responses on topics such as opportunities for members to contribute, the extent of challenge and clarity of conclusions.

15.3 Themes arising from free-text survey responses included:

- encouraging all members to contribute and challenge, recognising that contributions may be influenced by members' confidence and length of service;
- providing opportunities for members to have greater input into the agenda and forward plan and considering the ordering of items (for example positioning some investment and organisational performance items earlier in the agenda);
- considering deeper discussion of some topics in private session, where appropriate;
- strengthening Committee engagement with the wider HCPC workforce and exploring the value of observing other regulators' committees; and
- ensuring that the Committee has access to sufficient IT and digital expertise.

- 15.4 The Committee agreed that the findings warranted further reflection and that a more in-depth discussion would be beneficial, potentially at a Committee workshop or as part of a strategy session.
- 15.5 The Committee noted the outcomes of the effectiveness review and agreed that the Chair and the Governance team would consider how best to respond to the feedback, including options for further discussion at a strategy or workshop session.

Action: The Committee effectiveness feedback would be scheduled for discussion at a future Committee workshop or strategy session.

16 Review of Committee standing orders

- 16.1 The Committee reviewed its standing orders as part of the scheduled annual review. It was noted that no changes were proposed at this time and that any future changes arising from the ongoing effectiveness work could be brought back for consideration.
- 16.2 The Committee agreed that no changes were required to the Committee standing orders.

17 Committee forward plan

- 17.1 The Committee noted the forward plan for 2026.

18 Resolution to move the meeting to private session

- 18.1 The Committee Chair invited Dabbi Taylor, Council Apprentice, to share his reflections on the public session of the meeting. The Committee had worked through the agenda with ease and papers had been well-structured to support an effective discussion. In particular, the finance report had been clearly structured to make it accessible to those without a financial background. There had been a good level of constructive challenge demonstrated throughout the meeting. There had been open and respectful discussion on sensitive subjects, including equality, diversity and inclusion.
- 18.2 The Committee resolved that the remainder of the meeting would be held in private, because the matters being discussed related to matters which, in the opinion of the Chair, were confidential or the public disclosure of which would prejudice the effective discharge of the Council's functions.
- 18.3 The meeting was briefly adjourned.