

Chair's Report – September 2021

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

Of particular importance is the consultation underway on our Rules relating to holding hearings online. We are mindful of trying to incorporate a range of voices and opinions, rather than simply those who are most dominant. The flexibility, and the reduced carbon impact of virtual hearings, have been a useful feature of the changes we made during peak pandemic times. Though we are having face-to-face hearings and understand there are skills to be learned in transferring to online, the ability to continue to run virtually too, would be at best an asset and at worst, essential.

3. A Culture of Learning

Reflective Reviews

Annual reviews with each Council Member and myself have taken place. I have found these immensely valuable in building understanding and relationships, and agreeing the key ways in which we can further enhance Council skills and work together most effectively to support the organisation's strategy.

4. Communications

The bulk of communications have focused on matters related to regulatory reform, as well as dealing with messages that a presence on social media invariably attracts.

5. Strategy and Policy

5.1. Strategy

We are coming up to the time when Council's view on priorities for the annual plan will be needed. In order to inform discussions, we are arranging some 'deep dive' sessions and discussions with the Executive that will help Council understand the organisational pinch points and opportunities.

5.2. Fitness to Practise Improvement Board

The most recent Board (which I chair) was held on September 16. Membership encompasses the Professional Standards Authority, the DHSC, and Senior Executive Members. Council has a full update on the extensive work being undertaken and the impact this is having on performance. I would like to add that the Board is an excellent mechanism for promoting transparency and accountability, surfacing issues and ways of improving reporting, and gaining helpful feedback from external stakeholders. We intend to continue with it for the foreseeable future. Especially appreciated is the presence and input of the PSA and DHSC, as well as the fact our Chief Executive makes a point of attending to support our Executive Director of Regulation and Head of Fitness to Practise.

5.3. Fee Cycle

I am encouraged by the team working that has been in evidence when the occasional 'system blip' has disrupted the payments flow. Active consideration is being given to preparing for future rises, the aims of which will be small, incremental changes reflective of the wider economic picture.

5.4. Finance

The Finance Department is returning to fuller strength and capability, with the future arrival of a Head of Finance now confirmed. Although this will not be till after the turn of the year, I would like to thank Gordon Dixon, who has returned to fulfil specific tasks, and his colleagues, for their commitment and what they have achieved in getting the end of year work back on track.

6. Chair's meetings - overview

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

During the period since last Council, I attended two EDI Forums to hear at first hand the reflections, reactions, and advice being shared. Reviews for Council Members were completed, and I had the pleasure of catching up with our two Council apprentices and hearing about their hopes and plans for the next stage of their careers.

It was with immense sadness that I learned it had been necessary for Dame Clare Marx to step down from being Chair of the GMC with immediate effect, but I have had a most helpful and positive meeting with the Acting Chair, Professor Dame Carrie MacEwen. In addition, conversations with the GMC Chief Executive have proved invaluable, as ever. We have also continued to work closely with the NMC, and I was delighted to have an early, wide-ranging meeting with the new Chair, Sir David Warren.

Meetings with a spectrum of MP's continued, usually with an element of regulatory reform discussed, which was a topic in other stakeholder discussions, including those with civil servants. I joined our Chief Executive to brief KPMG on our response to their regulatory reform consultation.

Other meetings include a Bank of England stakeholder briefing on the economy (which I attend regularly) and with an Integrated Care System (ICS) Chair.

7. Council and Committee appointments

We received an overwhelming response to our appointment campaign for three new Council members with c.390 applications received. Interviews will take place in late September, I look forward to sharing the results with Council later this year. My thanks to member Sonya Lam for taking part in what has been a time intensive assessment process.

Following the Education and Training Committee's consideration of its future composition needs, I was pleased to confirm the reappointments of Independent Committee members Penny Joyce and Luke Jenkinson for a term of one year to the end of 2022. Given the full roll out of our new education quality assurance model early in 2022, their continued engagement while the model embeds will be of great benefit to the Committee's governance.