
Chair's Report – July 2024

1. Purpose of Report

To flag developments at the HCPC from the Chair's perspective and to update on activities of note.

2. Highlights

Conversation with Patient Safety Commissioner

I had a though provoking and timely conversation with that brilliant champion of patient voice, Dr. Henrietta Hughes, the Patient Safety Commissioner. Who could have known in advance that it would fall on the morning after the general election? It was a memorable day and a perfect moment at which to reflect together on how we can work better as a system to secure the safety of service users and patients. The HCPC's new partnership with the Patients Association (whose Chief Executive has been central to our co-production project on 'consent') is another facet of our commitment to better outcomes for patients.

Particular thanks to Zoë Allan (Business Manager of the Chair and Chief Executive Office) and Jennifer Evans and cameraperson Adrian Dias from Luther Pendragon, our independent communications consultants.

Employee coffee sessions

As a non-executive member of the HCPC Council, I regularly meet the more senior people in our organisation, as you would expect. However, I wanted a way to get a better understanding of and connect with the whole organisation, without becoming operational. Supported by our Chief Executive, my reverse mentor Aditya Palai and I have been piloting a series of small group meetings to enable me to hear the personal journeys of diverse HCPC employees who are earlier in their careers with us.

This is a great privilege for me and helps inform my decision-making as I go about my role. It has been enriching to learn about different lived experiences and to gain further insight into what makes the HCPC a happy place to work, as well as how we can continue to develop.

Employees need to feel that the Council is accessible and that everyone is empowered to participate, contribute and show leadership at every level.

I am pleased to relate that at two recent such sessions, colleagues were keen to discuss AI (artificial intelligence) and some of the technology tools we are either using or trialling to improve how we operate as a regulator. It is an open secret that I am an advocate for the transformative potential of AI to reduce mundane tasks,

increase job satisfaction, increase consistency, improve forecasting, drive information intelligence and streamline regulation!

Communications strategy

While we have had some first-rate communications planning and advice, the new communications strategy that will be considered by Council imminently is a 'first' for the HCPC and one of the positive changes that have come with the advent of new Head of Communications Matt(hew) Peck. Informed, open, focused communications are fundamental to the smooth running of most, if not all, organisations and the HCPC is no exception.

HCPC Whole Team Day

The day after the July Council meeting, we are gathering for our annual all-employee development day. It will be an immersive event, highlighting registrants, colleagues and external associates of the HCPC. The dynamics of the day are a wonderful source of renewable energy!

3. Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC)

It is with great sadness and concern that I note the report of the latest independent review of the culture at the NMC and wish them every success in their journey to recovery.

While I know that our own senior team is not at all complacent, we all at the HCPC have an important function in role modelling the values and behaviours that are expected of our registrants as they care for patients and service users.

We want a supportive, productive and happy work environment. There is no place in it for disrespect and poor behaviour. Bullying can take many forms but where it exists, it must be called out and rooted out. Recognising, of course, that challenge and meeting expectations are part of striving for improvement, personal and organisational growth.

Let us all continue to work together in a spirit of shared responsibility, collective enterprise, public service, learning and understanding. I know from my own interactions that everyone has a story, there are very diverse lived experiences - and all are valuable to a healthy, thriving culture.

4. Fitness to Practise Improvement Board

I convened an emergency meeting of the Fitness to Practise Improvement Board to discuss process issues that had arisen after the Professional Standards Authority (PSA) had completed its latest assessment of the HCPC's performance against PSA standards. There was a frank, respectful exchange of views and data and follow up action was agreed.

5. Council workshop – Integrity in Professional Regulation

Council member Professor Steven Vaughn led us through a hugely informative, insightful and challenging presentation and discussion about the meaning and place of ‘integrity’ (as opposed to other concepts) in regulatory language and practice.

Steven has kindly agreed to present an HCPC lecture and conversation, which we will host at our offices and open up to other regulators and a wider audience.

6. Chief Disruptor LIVE

I spoke at an event where the attendees comprised senior professionals from the commercial, public, charitable and academic sectors who are leaders in constructive disruption, transformation and change. My themes included ‘minimum process, maximum effect’, daring to fail, understanding organisational heartbeat, AI – productivity and job satisfaction, and challenging the status quo.

It was a pleasure to meet Katie Knapton, a physiotherapist registrant who runs an innovative ‘virtual physio’ business. PhysioFast Online was started during the pandemic and has been emulated by others.

7. Digital Forensics Summit

Almost all of us have a digital footprint that has over the years, expanded exponentially. This Cityforum Digital Forensics Summit provided a fascinating, well-informed update on the use of digital forensic techniques in investigations – undoubtedly on the road map of information gathering.

8. Unwritten Ground Rules (UGRs)

A webinar by invitation on the UGRs that govern organisational culture. An opportunity to refresh my skills.

9. Stakeholders and colleagues

During the period, I met colleagues and stakeholders including:

- Professor Suzanne Rastrick – Chief Allied Health Professions (AHP) Officer for England
- Sir David Warren, Chair, NMC

10. Fee increases for registrants

As previously stated, the general election paused the political features of the HCPC’s proposed smaller incremental fee rise. These will resume as MPs return to parliamentary duties.