
Chair's Report – May 2024

1. Purpose of Report

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

2. HCPC People

Chief Executive and Executive Leadership Team (ELT)

It is almost a year since Bernie O'Reilly joined HCPC and I have observed how his leadership has created the focus and the opportunity for real progress in ELT cohesion, clarity and delivery. The role descriptions for each ELT member have been refined and the work and resources balanced across the portfolios. One of ELT's next challenges will be re-integrating the Executive Director of Corporate Affairs on her return from maternity leave.

From the outset, Bernie has prioritised People - employees inside the organisation and outside, stakeholders. He made a point of being accessible and available to any colleague who wanted to meet him and meets all new joiners. The impact of this translates to the positive working culture evidenced in recent Pulse surveys.

At management level, the ELT has worked together on its own development. This approach of empowerment and accountability is being rolled out across the organisation - it was a privilege to join the 'Heads of' to hear Sir Robert Francis speak at an event curated by Bernie and designed to include emerging leaders in a development programme aimed at them.

Council Apprentices

It was an immense pleasure to spend time with our Council Apprentices, Geraldine Kinkead-Richards and Jordan McKenna. It is hard to believe that they comprise our fourth cohort. Every apprentice has been different but their characteristics in common are a passion for health and care services and having no prior boardroom experience. Over the years, I think we have got better at preparing Council Apprentices for the steep learning curve they encounter in navigating Council papers, planning, asking questions in this new context, working on committees – but there are always new insights. Not one Council Apprentice so far has realised, initially, the impact they have by bringing their personal perspectives, fresh thinking, and inspiring professionalism to the table.

Governance

Our Head of Governance and I met Yasir Samir, who is now collaborating with us on a governance and non-executive leadership effectiveness review for the latter part of the year.

The next set of objectives for the Chief Executive have been circulated to Remuneration Committee colleagues and will be shared with Council as a whole for information.

Employee coffee sessions

At its face-to-face meeting in March, Council spent time getting to know reverse mentors and participants in other mentoring schemes organised by the redoubtable HR team. Tehmina Ansari gave us a superb exposition of the department's work on these programmes. As a result of a conversation I had while we 'mingled' I followed up with Ann Faulkner and enjoyed a virtual coffee. Ann's prompt has led me to experiment with opportunities to chat informally with colleagues. We will try these and see if there are any takers!

3. Forum for the Future

With a deal of Council business to process, the longer-term future can sometimes slide down the priorities. In order to think about future proofing, I have initiated a 'conclave for the future' whose first members are David Stirling, Sue Gallone and John McEvoy. We supported the ELT in its thinking to refine the proposed 'technology map' following discussion at last Council.

4. Education

I spent some time with Jamie Hunt learning about the Education Department's (which Jamie heads) current plans. He is rightly proud of the Department's Annual Report detailing the sea change that has been brought about by introducing a new operating model. I am keen that Education enjoy a higher profile at Council, given its crucial role in driving professionalism and patient safety.

5. Sexual safety

I organised introductory discussions about software that can assist with reporting and tracking concerns raised about sexual safety and other problematic behavioural issues; first with England's Chief Allied Health Professions Officer and subsequently, Andrew Smith, HCPC's Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Director of Education, Registration & Regulatory Standards. Potential trials are being looked into.

6. Patient safety

The Group of health and care Chairs that HCPC convenes met to consider a set of principles to govern 'consent', including its definition. Since its inception, the group has included the Patient Safety Commissioner and the CEO of The Patients Association, co-production being a cornerstone of how we wish to operate. A fuller explanation of the work and its aims will be shared with a future meeting of Council.

7. Environmental sustainability

James McMahon, Head of Estates and Facilities Management, has workshops in the diary to engage colleagues on a range of sustainability topics. The Council looks forward to hearing more.

8. Visit to St. George's Hospital, Tooting

The Chief Executive and I will be visiting St George's University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust on 31 May to learn more about a recent virtual reality trial under way within the physiotherapy unit.

9. Stakeholders and colleagues

During the period, I met colleagues and stakeholders including:

- Chair of the General Medical Council – a regular update meeting, at which the trend for an increase in complaints and the reasons that might underlie this, was a topic
- Chair of the Nursing and Midwifery Council – Fitness to Practise was the key area discussed
- HCPC Committee Chairs – a fixture in the calendar and also used to highlight emerging areas of interest
- Dr. Rebekah Eglinton – the variable regulatory landscape of psychologists and counsellors was discussed, with helpful research materials provided by this Council member (who is a Consultant Clinical Psychologist)
- Aditya Palai – an energising meeting with my reverse mentor

10. Fee increases for registrants

Consultation on the proposed incremental fee rise is under way.