

Statement in support of UKCP trustee nomination

Bill Adlard

My involvement with UKCP governance began in 2022 when the Board, under the chairmanship of Syed Azmatullah, released proposals for revision of all the constitutional documents of UKCP. Before getting into psychotherapy, I had practised as a barrister in London for 20 years. I was well used to ploughing through legal documents. But I found these proposed documents particularly opaque.

In March 2022 I attended an online consultation with the Board at which it was clear that many people were deeply anxious about what was happening. At the meeting I tried to reassure the Chair that I was fully behind the Board, but what needed to be made very clear was that clinical matters relating to the modalities of psychotherapy should remain the province of the Colleges while other aspects of UKCP, such as regulation and statutory compliance, would be the realm of the Board. There seemed to be general agreement about this at the meeting. But this was not reflected at all in the proposed constitutional documents. This led to my submitting a petition to the Board, supported by well over 500 UKCP members, for an Extraordinary General Meeting of UKCP to approve changes to the Byelaws which would protect the role of the Colleges in relation to modalities, and require the approval of a General Meeting for any changes. The petition also included a proposed change to the Standing Orders allowing a College to be governed by a committee rather than an individual Chair if it voted to do so. These changes were passed by 70% in favour, 30% against. The Board included some proposals of their own for the meeting to consider, derived from their proposed constitutional changes. These were all heavily defeated.

My intention in petitioning for this EGM was simply to safeguard one of the most basic founding principles of UKCP: the role of Colleges. In so doing, I thought I was simply underlining and embedding something quite non-contentious, that might attract widespread support and help unify and support members during the process of change. But the outcome was regarded by some as a vote of no confidence. There were resignations. That had not been my intention at all.

Over the ensuing 2 years, I worked as a member of the renamed executive committee of HIPC. The changes to the Byelaws that were mandated by the EGM were made. The new Board approved the holding of a vote of members of HIPC on the question whether there should be an individual chair or a committee to hold managerial responsibility for the College. I produced a written proposal for the structure of the management committee which was approved after a couple of minor changes to be placed before the members of HIPC for a vote.

I also served on the UKCP's Strategic Working Group which led to the release of the three-year strategic plan at the recent UKCP conference. Over this period, I was appointed interim Vice-Chair of HIPC. By October, the major issues on which I had originally campaigned for change had been resolved. A new collaborative spirit had emerged between the Board and HIPC in the process. I felt that the issues which had led to me being co-opted onto the HIPC executive had been resolved. So I stood down from the executive committee so that due process could take place for the selection of a replacement.

But what has emerged over the last year is that UKCP still needs to undertake substantial changes to its constitutional documents. This arises partly from the management review of

UKCP that was conducted by Beamans HR consultancy. This means that the issues that were originally of concern to me will still arise going forward. There is now a UKCP constitutional working group that is directing this work. There is also the possibility that the new government will impose statutory regulation on the field of psychotherapy. I want to make sure that any changes to the constitutional documents from here onwards, whatever the cause, still maintain the role of Colleges in relation to clinical matters even though the specific contractual status of office-holders and assessors may need to be reformulated. I want to make sure that any new proposals are clearly and accurately worded. I want to make sure that any communications about this explain clearly and simply what the changes are and how they will affect members. I want to help UKCP develop into an organisation with a clear purpose and a structure that efficiently delivers value to its members and to the public.

During the Rugby Conference, from which UKCP emerged, the guiding ethos of the conference was very much that every voice was important and should be heard and taken into account. Later, the founders of UKCP did their best to bring this ethos into the new corporate structure of UKCP by creating the category of individual membership, and giving all individual members the right to petition directly for a change in the constitutional documents of UKCP. Unfortunately, this is actually never used, because although it is set out in the Standing Orders, it badly needs simplification, and perhaps because of this it is has never been publicised, and so no-one knows about it. One of my other main concerns, therefore, is to try and bring that original ethos into effect in the present day as far as possible, thereby encouraging more member participation. Another way of achieving this will be for UKCP to hold a regular Annual General Meeting (which I believe is the present Board's intention) at which the Board itself can be subjected to scrutiny by members.