

# Statement in support of UKCP chair nomination

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I am standing for election as UKCP chair after serving as interim chair for the past five months and as a co-opted trustee since September 2022. Although I am now a practising psychotherapist, I have a background as an organisational consultant, working with commercial and not-for-profit organisations on turnarounds and leading organisational change. I strongly believe in psychotherapy's ability to heal and its potential to support growth and change in individuals and society. If elected, I want to fulfil the commitments made in our new strategy, 'Psychotherapy in a Changing World'. This was developed after a four-month consultation with members, and while some aims are not new, we need to action them now. As a trustee I led the strategy working group, alongside the CEO Jon Levett, where we identified four key areas for building the organisation and the profession. I wish to continue this leadership by being your choice for chair.

## **Voice – Social and Political**

I want us to be the "go-to organisation" for public, government and media comment on psychotherapy. This means we need to reaffirm ourselves as the trusted body that develops and amplifies the professional voice of psychotherapy. Whilst we need to join with sector partners to combine our voices on some topics, we also need to ensure we have a distinct and distinguished position that embraces a plurality of approaches yet upholds high standards of training, CPD and ethical practice. We need to confidently lead multi-partner projects and campaigns and, crucially, be on the front foot with the media, ensuring they and the public have clear information on what UKCP psychotherapists and psychotherapeutic counsellors contribute and say about psychological well-being in the UK today. To achieve this, we will create spaces and platforms for members to share their knowledge and experience as experts in their work and develop direct and unique conversations with the public that show our work and its impact on community well-being. And we need to be creative with it; we need to use the channels of communication that reach different audiences and ensure our brand is recognised, trusted and supported by all parts of society.

## **Membership – Growth and Diversity**

We all enter the profession at different points in our career/life. I want us to show a diverse range of potential trainees the value of being a UKCP registered practitioner today. This means supporting achievable and affordable learning and developmental pathways, whatever our background. There will be a line of sight to organisational members to help them in this work because they are, quite simply, the organisation's foundational base. Also, as individual members, you need to feel confident that we support you at the different stages of your professional journey, whatever your modality or wherever you are in the UK. We need to review the membership categories to ensure we provide value at each point and develop an engaging programme of events and CPD, aligned with your interests. We have already reinstated an in-person annual conference after 5 years, and it was a joy to see and feel the embodied experience of members conversing, learning and "being" together.

## **Quality – Professional Practice and Research**

High-quality, impactful psychotherapy and psychotherapeutic counselling, underpinned by appropriate regulation, is the bedrock of our offer to the public and service providers. This needs to be strengthened over the next few years to increase trust in the profession and mitigate the areas of significant risk of harm to the public. We need to develop our approach to complaints, widening the opportunities for early resolution whilst ensuring the most serious breaches of the Code of Ethics and Professional Practice result in formal procedures.

We currently have system-wide gaps in policies, guidance, and processes, which need to be addressed via joint working groups drawn from across the organisation and its members. We have already reintroduced the ethics committee and developed a scheme of work that will support members in guiding and developing their practice. We intend to do this using interactive methods such as seminars and podcasts. We aim to launch special interest groups/partnerships that support UKCP as a learning organisation and to ensure practitioners are aware of the latest research and best practices. Our research conference is set to continue.

## **Organisation – Structure, Culture and Values**

UKCP has undoubtedly had 2 years of uncertainty and challenge, and throughout this time, I remained co-opted in as a trustee to support the organisation, which has demanded time, energy and resilience. Most importantly, though, throughout this time, we have developed a clear vision, via the new strategy, of where we are going and what we want to be. We need to review and revise some key areas, such as our governance and administrative structures, and ensure we meet all the recent company and employment legislation applicable to our organisation. Developing a working culture that people want to be a part of will be important. Income remains a focus; we need to maintain our primary source of revenue (memberships) whilst diversifying and developing new sources of revenue via training, CPD and events. I want to lead a more diverse organisation and foster a more inclusive culture by driving the recently relaunched EDI-BIIDE\* plan and supporting the well-being of our members and staff. I also want to develop our sustainability plans to maximise our social value and embed our values into every aspect of UKCP's activities. We need to be agile and focused moving forward, so pace and priority are essential, as I want members to see tangible progress.

If elected, I will deliver on the objectives detailed in the strategic plan and ensure that UKCP moves forward as a confident, purposeful, and inclusive organisation, demonstrating the value of psychotherapy in today's society.