
The UKCP Board of Trustees is conducting a formal consultation with all our members about making some updates to our governing documents – our Articles, Byelaws and Standing Orders.

This document covers some of the questions that we have received.

What right does UKCP’s Board have to make changes to how we are governed?

UKCP is both a registered charity and a limited company and, by law, the Board acts as both Trustees of the charity and company directors. The Board is strictly following the change management process set out in our current Standing Orders, which permit it to consult with members and garner their views about proposed changes. This includes hearing from and listening to Colleges, organisational members, individuals members and committees. The consultation period also includes a meeting of the Members’ Forum.

The Board of Trustees is elected by the entire membership through an open election that is run by an independent election service. The election of trustees ensures that UKCP is governed in a way that protects the democratic rights of the members and adheres to company law and the Charity Commission.

But Trustees aren’t even psychotherapists, are they?

Our Chair and majority of our Trustees are UKCP psychotherapists who have been directly elected to the Board by members via open, transparent and inclusive processes. The majority of these are practicing psychotherapists who also bring experience from previous careers.

Two members of our current Board are lay people – our Treasurer along with a lawyer – who bring vital professional expertise.

How did we get to this point to bring the documents to consultation?

Discussions for changes in our governing documents started over two years ago. It was initiated from discussions with Professional and Regulatory Committee of Colleges and Faculties (PRCCF) about the burden of administration tasks on UKCP Colleges.

A Regulatory Taskforce was set up in 2019 with UKCP staff and members of the PRCCF. The taskforce worked together on how to move regulatory administration from the College officers to the relevant UKCP staff members.

In 2021, the Board of Trustees proposed changes to the governing documents and notice of a consultation was given to the membership.

In January 2022, we opened the consultation to gather thoughts, feedback and suggestions from UKCP members. This is a time to discuss, and work together on, these proposed changes. We are still in this consultation period.

All responses to the consultation will be reviewed by the Board of Trustees. The review will ensure that the proposed changes are individually considered in light of any feedback. Once the review has taken place, next steps will be announced, and a General Meeting may be called with details of any proposed changes to be voted on.

Is this a move towards centralisation away from the current ‘federal’ structure?

UKCP is already a unified professional and regulatory body, and is not a federation of

separate, independent Colleges. Colleges are an integral part of UKCP, answerable to the Board of Trustees who, in turn, are answerable to the Charity Commission. Having a democratically elected Board of Trustees ensures that UKCP is acting in the public interest but also ensures that the needs of the whole membership is considered.

The governance changes will ensure that UKCP is fully compliant with the Charity Commission's Governance Code. The Code represents a standard of good governance practice to which all charities should adhere and is not optional. The Board of Trustees is responsible for ensuring that UKCP is operating primarily in the public interest.

Why are you consulting with all members and not just the 'Principal Stakeholders' such as Colleges?

One of the key drivers of the proposed changes are to ensure that UKCP's governance – the way it elects officers and makes decisions – is fully open, transparent, inclusive and accessible. Therefore, in keeping with that intention, the Board is very keen to hear the views of all stakeholders, to ensure that every member of UKCP at varying stages in their psychotherapy career lifecycle, can make their views and suggestions heard.

What is wrong with the current governing documents?

As a limited company and a registered charity, we are only required to have Articles of Association and Standing Orders. The proposed changes create one set of Standing Orders that bring in the relevant byelaws. We have also 'firmed up' our governance by putting some of the byelaws into our Articles. This simplifies our documents and sets out the foundation for UKCP.

Our current governing documents go into lots of detail that aren't necessary. They especially put a lot of work onto the

Colleges to have several College committees and officers to support with administrative work. This is unsustainable for smaller Colleges.

How do the proposed changes encourage diversity?

First, they will ensure that Colleges are following the same transparent, open and inclusive methods for recruiting and electing representatives as the Board of Trustees.

Second, the changes will offer more sustainable opportunities to volunteer for UKCP that do not all require huge time commitment towards regulatory administration. So that we attract a variety of perspectives and voices to decision-making and governance at UKCP, we must ensure there are no socio-economic or other barriers to applying.

Opportunities to volunteer with UKCP will be focussed and would include College representatives.

Colleges would need, as a minimum, the following:

- Chair
- Vice Chair
- Members' Forum representative
- Ethics representative
- Diversity and Equalities representative
- Education, Training and Practice representative
- Research representative
- Engagement representative

Focused representative roles mean that there are specific areas of interest and expertise for members to get involved. New College roles would offer rich and varied opportunities to volunteer and contribute to making UKCP's vision a reality.

The Remuneration and Performance Management Committee will recommend to the Board of Trustees the method of appointment or election for College

representatives. The process should be transparent and inclusive.

Volunteers will be supported and developed throughout their periods of office and there is an induction process being created to support new volunteers.

Are the Executive going to be taking over trainings?

There is no proposed change to the standards of our training nor to the process of how these are created. The Education, Training and Practice Committee, which comprises members from each UKCP College, is responsible for defining and reviewing the Standards of Education and Training (SETs) that UKCP accredited trainings follow.

ETPC is made up of representatives from across the Colleges.

The governance changes propose no new powers for the Executive – there remain very strong ‘firewalls’ between operations and governance. In fact, the voice of modalities and members will increase and have much more influence if these changes go forward.

Is the Professional Regulatory Committee of Colleges and Faculties (PRCCF) being abolished?

No. The committee will be expanded with remits across two committees: the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) and Colleges Committee.

The QAC would comprise the current PRCCF plus the chairs of ETPC, the Professional Conduct Committee (PCC) and Membership Committee to ensure joined up working on the overview and scrutiny of regulatory standards. The new Colleges Committee would comprise the current PRCCF and would focus on bringing modality thinking towards informing Board strategy.

Representatives from the Colleges will continue to stand on the ETPC and we are required to reinstate the Ethics Committee and Diversity and Inclusion Committee.

Aren't these changes just about more centralisation and managerialism?

It's actually the opposite. The changes would only migrate some of the regulatory administration and organisation from Colleges to the staff team and none of the regulatory standard-setting or assessments. The intention is to enable the Colleges to have more time to bring their psychotherapeutic expertise to the fore, whether in a regulatory capacity or in a strategic sense.

The Board have no wish or any intention for the Executive and staff to undertake any duties that require psychotherapeutic judgement and expertise. The Executive and staff would ensure that the regulatory processes are managed in a timely fashion in partnership with College experts, ensuring the integrity of the register and adherence to the legal context in which we work. The plurality of UKCP in terms of the Colleges and the modalities they reflect is what we wish to build and promote, not weaken. That is why we want Colleges to have representatives who work with the staff team in key areas such as research.

How will the modality voice be preserved?

The proposals will not only preserve the modality voice but grow it. By ensuring that the administrative regulatory work is conducted by staff, the Colleges will be able to focus on setting standards, assessments as well as promoting the different modalities and ensuring modality representation across the organisation.

Working together, we will continue to grow by respecting the modality voice and its relationship with the needs of clients and service users.

The ten Colleges of UKCP will continue to represent the modality voice. This will be expanded through the QAC and the Colleges Committee and through representatives that work closely with the Content and Engagement team to promote psychotherapy to policymakers, the public and media outlets.

Is the Chief Executive still going to have a performance review?

Yes. The RAPMC acts on behalf of the Board and will be responsible for reviewing the performance and remuneration of the Chief Executive, with direct input from the Chair of the Board of Trustees. There will be a formal annual appraisal as well as interim reviews throughout the year.

The RAPMC will also be responsible for reviewing the performance of any Trustee, officer and volunteer who receives remuneration for services to UKCP.

The RAPMC will not have the right to veto but will advise on what is required for Trustee, officer and volunteer roles and report to the Board of Trustees.

Are the proposed changes to help UKCP to provide short-term work in the NHS?

We know from our 2019 member survey that 45% of members would consider NHS work and that rises to 81% for students and trainees.

The proposed changes do not in any way change the work that ETPC and the Colleges do on setting the standards of training and continuing professional development. For example, the new NHS Psychotherapeutic Counsellor Postgraduate Diploma will be a three-year immersive training. Instead of undertaking 450 hrs of client work they will have done at least 1,500 under full supervision. They will receive training in mental health, safeguarding and medical procedure.

We have made progress with the NHS. Our focus is to make it clear that high-quality UKCP psychotherapies should be part of their provision and to expand the NHS workforce with our members to support the growing need for mental health support.

We have also been able to input into the NICE depression guideline for adults. More work is needed, but we have been campaigning for change and that work has paid off. The proposed changes will only help further with this work by having College representatives that focus on research and engagement.

Why is there a legal commentary?

Our reason for sharing this is for openness and transparency. Lawyers are required to be non-partisan and abide by strict ethical guidelines. We engaged with our lawyers to make sure that any changes that we propose adhere to company law and to the Charity Commission's requirements. It was also an opportunity to get guidance on our current governance documents.

What will the committees do?

The Board of Trustees has always had responsibility for determining how UKCP should be structured and organised, including deciding on the Colleges, Committees and Officers that there should be. Its powers to delegate to individuals or committees on such terms as it thinks fit remains unchanged.

The terms of reference for each UKCP committee, and for Officers, will be determined by or in close consultation with the Board of Trustees.

A brief outline of the responsibilities for each of the committees can be found in Appendix A of the proposed Standing Orders.