Board meeting
Public minutes of the meeting
19 July 2023

Approved Minutes of the Board meeting, 19 July 2023

Present	**In Attendance**
Caroline Corby (Chair)	Jane Carey
Alan Clamp (Chief Executive)	Graham Mockler
Juliet Oliver (JO)	Christine Braithwaite
Moi Ali (MA)	Douglas Bilton
Marcus Longley (ML)	Melanie Venables
Tom Frawley (TF)	Louise Appleby
Nick Simkins (NS)	Meenakshi Arora
Amrat Khorana (AK)	Melanie Spencer
	Simon Wiklund
	Akua Dwomoh-Bonsu
	Melanie Venables
	Oyinkan Onile-Ere
	Daisy Blench
	Karen Smith
	Dinah Godfree
	Dan Scott
	Melanie Hueser (Secretariat)

Observers
See below

1. **Welcome and Introductions & Declarations of Interest**

1.1 The Chair opened the meeting, which was the first Board meeting the PSA had held in its new office.

1.2 The Chair welcomed everyone to the Board meeting which included members of staff and external observers: Anisah Chowdhury (GMC), Aveen Croash (HCPC), Nasia Nicou Panayiotou (HCPC) and Terry Koranteng (NMC).

1.3 AK declared he had started a new job with the South London and Maudsley NHS Trust.

2. **Apologies**

2.1 FD sent apologies.

3. **Minutes of meeting held on 17 May 2023**

3.1 The minutes of the last Board meeting held on 17 May 2023 were accepted as a true and correct record and approved.

4.   Actions and Matters Arising from the meeting on 17 May 2023

4.1   All actions were complete or on track.

5.   Update on Fitness to practise (FtP) timeliness

5.1   The Chair moved the FtP item to the beginning of the meeting to allow sufficient time for discussion. The Director of Regulation and Accreditation introduced the item. The overall performance of the regulators for the current year was similar to the previous year with little progress on FtP timeliness for those regulators who are not meeting the standard.

5.2   In addition to the regulators that have reduced the number of old cases from pre-pandemic levels, the GMC and SWE have shown a reduction in old cases year on year for the past three years. The NMC had a reduction in old cases of about 10% over the last year.

5.3   Much work continued to be done by the team to address the issue, but it was highlighted that care needed to be taken not to focus on this one issue to the detriment of other areas of regulatory performance.

5.4   The team were organising a workshop in August where the GOC will share their learning with the performance review team on what had worked well in reducing their backlog and improving timeliness.

5.5   The Board noted that the ongoing issue of the regulators failing the timeliness standard was worrying. The issue had existed before the Covid pandemic. The Board also remarked on the fact that some of the regulators, even big ones, manage to meet the standard regularly.

5.6   The Board queried whether the reason for failing the standards was systemic or something specific to the regulators. It was confirmed that it was a combination of both for most. Once there is a backlog it can be difficult to resolve and take time to do so.

5.7   A common issue that was reported to the PSA was that it has been difficult to recruit and retain FtP staff.

5.8   It was confirmed that overall, the willingness is there to address the backlogs, and it is a high organisational priority for a number of regulators, but regulators were not always able to make the planned progress as quickly as they wished.

5.9   It was highlighted that two areas at the regulators were not considered in the Performance Review process – governance and finances and it was noted that these areas could be potentially crucial in their influence on the FtP difficulties. The NMC had once before received a £20 million grant from the Department of Health and Social Care to tackle backlogs.

5.10   The Board agreed that the PSA should not wait for the impact of the regulatory reform on the issue but continue to support the regulators now in developing solutions.

5.11   The Board discussed whether the backlog issue could actually be fixed. It was suggested that solutions could be considered that so far had not been discussed – like raising registration fees. There was agreement that the PSA's role in suggesting solutions should remain confined to facilitating learning, knowledge sharing and solution development.

5.12   The Board highlighted the impact the NHS workforce plan might have on the issue, and priorities at the regulators and workplaces therefore shifting. The Board emphasised that it was aware of the complexity of the issue and that a balance needed to be struck between understanding the pressures on the system and continuing to fulfil the PSA's role in protecting the public.

5.13   The Chair suggested that a follow-up letter to the Secretary of State should be considered in December 2023 – a year since the last letter was sent.

5.14   The Board agreed that a Board workshop on FtP backlogs will be organised and that the Scrutiny Committee will discuss the format of this workshop at its meeting on 3 August 2023.

Action: GM and Scrutiny Committee to develop and schedule FtP backlog workshop.

6.   Board meeting in Scotland September 2023

6.1   The Chief Executive introduced the item. The plan was for the September Board meeting to take place in Scotland. The accompanying stakeholder meeting will focus on patient groups and representatives, and Board members will then meet with other stakeholders on site.

6.2   The Board **approved** the plan.

7.   Evaluation of the accommodation and pensions projects

7.1   The Director of Corporate Services introduced the item. Both projects had been concluded but it had been highlighted that no final pension scheme had as of yet been chosen as not enough new staff had yet joined.

7.2   The ICT project was not yet complete, but an evaluation will be brought to the September meeting.

7.3   The Board agreed that the new office space was very pleasant and highlighted that they had been told by staff that the location was suitable, and that staff enjoyed coming to the new office.

7.4   The Board highlighted that for now the emphasis of the evaluation could only include lessons learned and that benefits realisation would have to be reviewed later on.

Action: JC to bring a benefits realisation item for the accommodation and pensions projects to the Board in September 2024.

7.5   The Board and Executive drew attention to the fact that it had been disappointing that the accommodation advisers and project managers had not highlighted the need for the wayleave agreement which had held up the installation of the permanent internet line.

7.6   The Board **noted** the report.

8.   Board development: social work and social care

8.1   The Chief Executive introduced the item. The Board had requested that a workshop be organised for Board members on the topic of social work and social care.

8.2   It was proposed that a workshop will be organised as one of the Board development sessions for October 2023, with the date to be confirmed soon.

8.3   External speakers from social care backgrounds in the devolved administrations and possibly from Social Work England will be identified and will be asked to speak about the sectors more broadly.

8.4   The Board **approved** the proposal.

9.   Chair's report

9.1   The Chair gave an update in addition to the report and confirmed that appraisals from the next cycle will all be covered in the May update.

9.2   The Chairs, roundtable took place on 10 July. 2023 The Chairs had agreed to meet every six months and the next meeting will be organised for January 2024. The Chairs had in the majority mentioned education and training as one of the regulators' major areas of focus. The PSA did not at present do as much work in this space as in other areas of regulation and it was suggested that this could be explored.

9.3   Other areas covered in the meeting had been FtP backlogs and reform. On the latter, it was expected that the NMC would be next but there was still uncertainty on what will happen after that.

9.4   A number of Board members had met for a business plan review meeting, with a second one planned for early September 2023.

9.5   Board recruitment will be a major focus in 2024 and the Chair will be grateful for Board member involvement.

9.6   Improvements had been seen at the HCPC over the last year, which was very encouraging.

9.7   The Board **noted** the report.

10.   Executive report and project dashboard

10.1   The Chief Executive introduced the report. The new EDI action plan was currently being finalised and will be shared with the Board in early August 2023. The plan was now linked to the PSA's strategic plan.

10.2   A standing agenda item on stakeholder engagement had been added to the private Board meeting agenda.

10.3   Within the regulatory reform schedule another round of feedback will be sought on the Anaesthesia Associate and Physician Associate Order in a few weeks. A bigger update on reform will be provided at the November Board meeting.

10.4   The installation of the lease line will be completed by the end of the week. The Lead Lawyer had been recruited and will start in October. A Finance Administrator role had been advertised.

10.5   The Board queried whether the number of registrants in the Accredited Register Programme increased the workload for the AR team. It was confirmed that there was a small increase in the amount of work but that the number of registers was more crucial than the number of practitioners registered with them. The resourcing structure for the programme will be reviewed again soon.

10.6 The Board queried whether there was a significant reason for the increase in website visits. It was explained that at the moment there was still insufficient data to make meaningful comparisons and that a number of factors, including high profile FtP cases could increase the traffic to the website.

10.7 The Board commended the first influencer campaign and was interested in learning more about the campaign messages and safeguards in place in due course.

Action: CB and Comms team to brief the Board on influencers and social media.

10.8 The Board **noted** the report.

11. Finance report

11.1 The Director of Corporate Services introduced the item. The report was to the end of May 2023, with a forecast of £152,000 deficit, much of which had been planned.

11.2 NS had given feedback on the structure of the report, and it will be updated going forward.

11.3 A couple of small errors were identified and will be amended.

11.4 It was confirmed that the website project had not yet been tendered for. £100,000 had been included for this project in the budget. It was confirmed that, as the cost for the project had been agreed in the budget the Board would not have to individually approve this cost again; if the actual quotes for the work turn out to be higher the Board will discuss this at an upcoming meeting.

Action: JC to recirculate schedule of delegation to the Board and share the website project brief with NS.

11.5 The Board **noted** the report.

12. Committee reports

12.1 **Audit and Risk Committee report annual report:** NS introduced the report in the Committee Chair's absence. The audit report had found no issues in compliance or override of controls. The risk management process will be further reviewed in the autumn. In the auditors' ranking the PSA had received the second highest position. Lessons learned had been recommended to the ICT team and were being implemented.

12.2 The Board **noted** the Audit and Risk Committee report and annual report.

12.3 **Nominations Committee report:** The Board **noted** the report.

12.4 **Scrutiny Committee report:** The Board **noted** the report.

13. Any other business

13.1 There was no other business discussed.

14. Questions from Members of the Public

14.1 There were no questions.

14.2 The Chair thanked the observers for their interest in the Authority.

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Signed by Chair   **Date 20/09/23**

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professional
standards
authority

Action Log

On track (including not started) Delayed (or medium risk of delay for projects) Overdue (or high risk of delay for projects) Complete

Mtg. Date	Item No.	Action point	Owner	Date required	Action progress	Status
18 January 2023	5.3	Bring a proposal for a Section 29 review to the July Board meeting.	GM	19 July	Moved to the September 2023 meeting	
15 March 2023	6.14	JC to report on project evaluations and benefits realisation for the IT, accommodation and pensions projects at the July Board meeting.	JC	19 July	IT project not yet complete. Report on other projects on the agenda	
19 July 2023	5.14	Develop and schedule FtP backlog workshop.	GM/Scrutiny Committee			
19 July 2023	7.4	Bring a benefits realisation item for the accommodation and pensions projects to the Board in September 2024	JC	September 2024		
19 July 2023	10.7	Organise a Board briefing on influencers and social media.	CB/Comms team	September 2023	Complete	
19 July 2023	11.4	Recirculate schedule of delegation to the Board and share the website project brief with NS.	JC		Complete	