
Executive report

1. Summary

- 1.1 In addition to our statutory duties, the key priorities for the organisation at this point in time are: (1) the website development project; (2) developing our guidance on implementing regulatory reform; (3) post-election parliamentary engagement on our manifesto for change (making care safer for all); (4) publishing the PSA Annual Report and Accounts 2023/24; and (5) actions to address the Professional Standards Authority commitments in *Safer care for all*.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 The Board is asked to note the Executive report and to ask any questions of the Chief Executive and Directors.

3. CEO stakeholder engagement

- 3.1 Between the May 2024 and July 2024 Board meetings, the Chief Executive attended a number of stakeholder engagement events, including the following.
- A meeting of the Chief Executives of the statutory regulators.
 - The council meeting at the GOC.
 - Meetings (together with the Chair) with the CEOs and Chairs of the GOsC, GMC and PSNI.
 - A meeting (together with the Chair) with Baroness Hayter to discuss issues relating to sex/gender on statutory registers.
 - Attending the Health and Social Care Regulators Forum.
 - Meeting the Interim Ombudsman at the PHSO.
 - Attending meetings organised by NHS England on the new Leadership and Management Framework.
 - The quarterly information-sharing meeting with the DHSC and officials from the devolved administrations.
 - Individual meetings with the Chief Executives of the GDC, GMC and HCPC.
 - The HCPC Fitness to Practise Improvement Board.
 - Curating a presentation and round table discussion on public body leadership at the Centre for Science and Policy in Cambridge.
 - A meeting with the Chair and Chief Executive of the New Zealand Dental Council.
- 3.2 Looking forward, the Chief Executive will attend further stakeholder engagement events before the next Board meeting, including the following.
- Meetings with stakeholders as part of the Board meetings in Wales/Cymru.
 - Attending a board meeting at SWE.
 - Meeting the Patient Safety Commissioner for England.

- Making a presentation at the CLEAR Regulation Conference in Baltimore in September (and attending the September Board meetings remotely).

4. Summary of risks

- 4.1 We have assessed the top three known risks facing the Authority as: (1) the backlogs of fitness to practise cases in some regulators; (2) the lack of clarity about the use of Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and other criminal record checks by regulators and Registers; and (3) the challenges of implementing significant regulatory reform and the associated risks to regulatory effectiveness and public protection.

5. Regulation and Accreditation

Performance review

Reporting

- 5.1 In March, we published reports for the GOC, PSNI and SWE. We found that the GOC has met all of the Standards. We found that PSNI met 15 out of 18 of the Standards. It did not meet Standard 4 because the PSNI had not provided timely and accurate information to us. The PSNI did not meet Standard 10 because there have been a number of errors on the PSNI's register during the review period. They did not meet Standard 15 because it is taking too long to deal with fitness to practise cases and the number of open older cases has increased. We found that SWE met 17 out of 18 of the Standards. It did not meet Standard 15 as it is taking too long to progress fitness to practise matters.

Performance Review Cycle 2024-2027- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- 5.2 We are now using our new approach to assess regulators against Standard 3 which considers whether the regulator understands the diversity of its stakeholders and ensures that its processes do not discriminate unfairly. The HCPC and GOsC are the first regulators to be assessed in this way and we expect to publish our 2023/24 performance review reports on these two regulators before the end of June.

Section 29

- 5.3 The table below sets out the key statistics so far for this financial year, compared to the same period in the previous financial year. The number of decisions received from regulators has remained the same. We have lodged seven appeals so far in the 2024/25 financial year.

	1 April 2024 – 31 May 2024	Same period 2023
Decisions received by the PSA	397	394

Detailed Case Reviews (DCRs) completed	15	22
Statutory deadline decisions	10	7
Case meetings held:		
• Sufficient	0	3
• Insufficient but no appeal	1	0
• Insufficient and appeal	1	2
Appeals lodged	7	7
Learning points sent	20	30

- 5.4 Four appeals have been lodged since the previous Board meeting (NMC/Oluwaleye, NMC/Cradock, GPhC/Jamali and HCPC/Sharaf). Two appeals have been settled by agreement (NMC/Akinkugbe and GPhC/Farooq), and settlements are being explored in several other cases. All other Section 29 litigation is progressing. One decision has been handed down by the courts since the last Board meeting and the appeal was upheld (NMC/Haward).
- 5.5 The appeal and detailed case review workload continues to be high for the Section 29 team, which continues to impact the team's ability to progress work outside of business as usual.

Appointments

- 5.6 Since the last update to the Board, we have provided the Privy Council with advice concerning two appointments processes. These concerned the GDC's recommendation of a single lay candidate to join its Council and the NMC's recommendation of two candidates for reappointment to its Council. We were able to advise the Privy Council that it could have confidence in both of these processes.
- 5.7 There are currently four ongoing processes that the PSA has previously considered advance notices for, including the GMC's process to find two candidates to recommend for appointment. We reviewed the GMC's plans in May and expect its process to conclude in September.

Accredited Registers

Operational delivery

- 5.8 As at the end of May, we had missed our target of '90% of decisions about the annual check within one year of the previous assessment', where we achieved

89%. We missed the deadline for the British Acupuncture Council's annual review in May 2024 due to the need to gather additional information. At the time of writing, the assessment is ongoing but is expected to complete in June 2024. We also missed the target in the previous twelve months for the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy, and for the Association of Child Psychotherapy due to resourcing pressures at the time which are now resolved. The target is expected to be met again from August.

- 5.9 We had also missed our target of '95% of Conditions are reviewed within two months of when they were due', achieving 90%. This represents 9 out of 86 Conditions. Performance continues to increase each month, and we now expect it to be back on track by July 2024. As reported previously, and the target has been missed since October 2023 due to a combination of evidence submitted late by some Registers, and challenges in dealing with the increased number of Conditions issued over the past year.
- 5.10 We have received a new Standard One application from the National Association of Care and Support Workers (NACAS) for its Voluntary Care Professional Register (VCPR). The VCPR is joint initiative by NACAS and the Institute of Health & Social Care Management (IHSCM).

Accreditation decisions

- 5.11 Since the last meeting, we have completed Standard One assessments for the Register of Clinical Technologists and Society of Clinical Perfusion Scientists. We will be publishing the reports in due course.

6. Standards and Policy

Policy and research

Consultation responses

- 6.1 Since the last Board meeting, we have responded to:
- the GMC Anaesthesia Associates and Physician Associates Rules consultation (more detail below)
 - the DHSC Duty of Candour review consultation

Legislative reform

Consultation on our guidance to support regulatory reform

- 6.2 We recently consulted on two new draft guidance documents to support reform: 'Guidance on the use of Accepted Outcomes in Fitness to Practise' and 'Guidance on Rulemaking'. These aim to support the effective implementation of the new legislation for regulators that is being introduced as part of regulatory reform, beginning with the Anaesthesia Associates and Physician Associates Order (AAPAO) 2024.
- 6.3 We received 83 responses to the consultation from a wide range of stakeholders including patient groups, Royal Colleges, employers, NHS bodies,

regulators, Accredited Registers, defence organisations and professional associations. Most responses were supportive of the guidance documents and agreed that these would help regulators to use their new powers in a way that protects the public.

- 6.4 We are using the feedback to further refine the guidance documents and make sure that we consider where stakeholders suggested specific areas might be enhanced. We plan to publish the final guidance alongside a report on the outcome of the consultation in September 2024.

The GMC's Anaesthesia Associates and Physician Associates Rules consultation

- 6.5 We have submitted our response to the GMC's Anaesthesia Associates and Physician Associates Rules consultation¹, which closed on 20 May. We highlighted our concerns about some areas of the proposals for fitness to practise. These include the plans to only use single case examiners, without the option of pairs, and an imbalance between registrant appeal rights and public protection mechanisms. We have also written to the Government to highlight our concerns and express our willingness to work with officials to improve the legislation itself before it is rolled out further. This is of particular importance given the legislation forms the blueprint for the reform to the GMC's regulation of doctors, and for the other regulators.

Refocusing Fitness to Practise project

- 6.6 We have begun scoping work to look at how regulators could help reduce unnecessary fear and promote a better understanding among registrants of the fitness to practise process and its purpose. This project flows from the Accountability, Fear and Public Safety chapter of *Safer Care for All*², and the conversations that we had with stakeholders on these themes in the past year.

Stakeholder engagement

- 6.7 Following the announcement of the General Election, we have been preparing our first parliamentary bulletin, ministerial letters and early briefings ready for when the next government is in place. We have analysed the manifestos to identify areas which relate to our work and used these to shape the items we have prepared. Once key appointments have been made, we will assess the best timing to issue these and seek targeted meetings to offer our regulatory expertise and support.

Communications

Due to the pre-election period of heightened sensitivity for communications, our external channels have been quieter than usual.

Website

- 6.8 Our part-time Website Project Manager has started and is helping to drive momentum on the redevelopment project. Staff across the organisation have been involved in a series of workshops looking at our business objectives, user

¹ [PSA consultation response | GMC consultation on the AA and PA Order Rules \(professionalstandards.org.uk\)](https://www.professionalstandards.org.uk)

² [Safer care for all | Professional Standards Authority](#)

needs and functional requirements. As part of the current scoping phase, we are undertaking user research to get feedback from regulators and registers as well as individual service-users on ways to improve our website.

Brand

- 6.9 Within the stakeholder engagement and communications strategy approved by the Board last year, we committed to review our brand. A brand workshop was held in June with the Senior Management Team and Chair. This explored our priority audiences, strategic direction, values and proposition so that options and recommendations can be made about whether any refresh is needed to our brand.

Accredited Registers Quality Mark campaign

- 6.10 We continue with the planning for our accreditation Quality Mark campaign and are nearing launch for Phase 1, which targets practitioners on Accredited Registers. The campaign will be delivered through a mix of channels including our social media. An important outcome from this initial phase of the campaign is that more practitioners display the Quality Mark since Phase 2 aims to encourage more people to look out for this when they select an accredited practitioner. Phase 2 will be informed by insights from our survey of service-users, which is due to close by the time of the Board meeting.

7. Intelligence and Insight

Research

- 7.1 The 2024 research conference will be held on 17 October at a Central London venue to be confirmed. It will be a partnership with the team who led the NIHR-funded Witness to Harm project. The content will include dissemination of findings from that project, and other fitness to practise related research. The call for content proposals will particularly encourage submissions relating to EDI and sexual misconduct. We are delighted that Professor Louise Stone from Australian National University, who is leading an international project on sexual harm between doctors, will attend and present at the event.
- 7.2 The Assistant Director (AD I&I) has participated as an interviewee in SRA-commissioned research about on the overrepresentation of Black, Asian and minority ethnic solicitors in enforcement processes.

Commissions and projects

Commissioned review: GTC(S)

- 7.3 Phase 1 of this work is underway. At the request of the GTC(S) we have agreed an extension to the overall timescale such that completion will be end February 25 (was end December 24).

Sexual misconduct project

- 7.4 The AD I&I has had discussions with NHS England about its work with trusts under its Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence programme, and with the HCPC about its work on sexual misconduct with the Association of Ambulance Chief Executives. It is hoped that these will be the focus of the first two discussion

sessions of the project, in July and September and discussions are ongoing to arrange this. As noted above sexual misconduct will also be a subtheme of the research conference.

8. Corporate Services

IT

- 8.1 Change of third-party IT support partner as well as Azure hosting and Office 365 backups partner. This is the first change of support partner since the cloud transformation project as we now require more proactive support.

Finance

- 8.2 The Finance Report is on the main agenda.

People

- 8.3 Ruth Ajayi joined us as the new Associate Board member on 3 May 2024.
- 8.4 Helen O'Neill joined us as the Parliamentary Engagement Officer on 13 May 2024.
- 8.5 Kate Lawson joined us as the Policy Manager (maternity cover) on 24 May 2024.
- 8.6 Lulu Feutry joined us as the Website Project Manager in May 2024.
- 8.7 Christine Braithwaite will be retiring on 5 July 2024 as the Director of Standards and Policy.
- 8.8 Simon Wiklund will be leaving us on 17 July as the Head of Legal in the S29 team.
- 8.9 Osama Ammar has joined us on 1 July 2024 as the Head of Accreditation.
- 8.10 Melanie Venables started her new role as Director of Policy and Communications on 1 July 2024.
- 8.11 The Non-Executive Director role has been shortlisted. Interviews have taken place on 5 July 2024.
- 8.12 Rhys McCarthy has joined us on 26 June 2024 as a Scrutiny Officer.

Governance

- 8.13 The annual internal audit programme is now underway.

EDI

- 8.14 The internal cycle for completing remaining actions from the 2023/24 EDI action plan has ended. The actions for the 2024/25 EDI action plan are being developed and work on these will start in July 2024.

KPIs up to 31 May 2024

Our performance against our KPIs is set out below:

Area of work	Key performance indicators	Performance to date in 2024/25
Section 29 decisions	Number of cases received [compared with same period last year]	397 [394]
	Number of Cases considered at a case meeting or statutory deadline meeting [compared with same period last year]	12 [12]
	Appeals lodged [compared with same period last year]	7 [7]
	100% of relevant decisions considered within statutory deadline [compared with last year]	100% [100]
Performance Reviews	100% of 2024 performance reviews published within 3 months of end of review period	100%
Public concerns about Regulatory bodies	100% of concerns acknowledged within five working days since 1 April 2024	99% (81/82) ³
Accredited Registers – current processes	90% of Registers have a full assessment within three years of the previous assessment.	97% (27/28)
	90% of decisions about the annual check within one year of the previous assessment.	89% ⁴ (25/28)
	95% of Conditions are reviewed within two months of when they were due.	90% ⁵ (77/86)
	100% of targeted reviews are completed within four months of the date initiated.	N/A

³ One missed when transferred between inboxes at the start of April.

⁴ We missed the deadline for the British Acupuncture Council's annual review in May 2024 due to the need to gather additional information. At the time of writing, the assessment is ongoing but is expected to complete in June 2024.

⁵ Due to increase in number of Conditions and issued and late submission by some Registers, more detail provided in main report.

	90% of decisions about new Standard 1 applications are made within four months of receipt.	N/A
	90% of decisions about full accreditation (Standards 2-9) are made within eight months of receipt.	N/A
Finance	Budgeted income / expenditure variance less than 5%	0% [859K/860K]
ICT	85% of helpdesk calls to be closed within 1 day System unavailability below 10 hours	100% [56/56] 0 hours
Information security	No incidents reported to the Information Commissioner's Office	0
Information requests (FOI / SAR / EIR)	All (100%) Subject Access Requests dealt with within statutory deadlines All (100%) Freedom of Information Act requests dealt with within statutory deadlines	100% [1/1] 100% [2/2]
Complaints	100% of complaints acknowledged in five days Response to all complaints to be completed within 28 days	100% [1/1] 100% [1/1]
Social media	Total number of followers across our social media channels (compared with same period last year in brackets) Number of new followers across our social media channels (compared with same period last year in brackets) Number of engagements with our social media posts (compared with same period last year in brackets). <i>Engagements include likes,</i>	7,085 (4,159) 352 (26) 890 (354)

	<i>reactions, comments, replies and shares.</i>	
Website usage	<p>Year-to-date data on website usage from April 2024 to date with same period last year in brackets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total page views across the website • Check a Practitioner landing page and practitioner specific pages • Accredited Registers home page and related Accredited Registers pages 	<p>115,486 (94,465)</p> <p>33,371 (31,766)</p> <p>21,159 (15,837)</p>