Election statement – **Jo Lucas**

I am proud to describe myself as a psychotherapist and would be delighted to be able to contribute to our professional organisation again. I would hope to support the growth and development of UKCP, ensuring it represents the concerns of the membership – both individual practitioners and training organisations. I would like to contribute to developing the profile and understanding of therapy, to increase the number of paid roles available to people. As a member of adjudication panels, I began to get a much better understanding of the importance of the role of UKCP in promoting and protecting the credibility and accountability of the profession. I would like to contribute to UKCP's activities in widening the choice of therapies available to people, for example, working with the range of stakeholders to ensure that research is carried out into other forms of therapy so they too can be accepted as evidence-based treatments by NICE. My experience of being a non-executive director in the NHS might be useful in contributing to a campaign to create more roles for therapists and counsellors in the NHS workforce. This is particularly important in the light of the increased demands on the mental health system and on therapists and counsellors. In particular, I believe it is important to ensure that people have better access to longer-term therapies. I believe that my experience of working within and across organisations, with policymakers as well as providers, would be useful both to the organisation and its beneficiaries.

I bring a profound commitment to the importance of widening access to psychotherapy to disadvantaged and socially excluded communities, both as a personal resource and as a professional training. I was lucky enough to be able to afford the training in terms of both time and money, but this is not true for all. I think UKCP, the members and member organisations can begin to think more creatively about ways to address this imbalance in the profession. This is particularly important as so many psychotherapy practices and training courses do not reflect the diversity of the cultures they work in. It is not just about making people feel welcome but more importantly about recognising and addressing the inequalities that prevail and impact on people's lives and the opportunities available to them. This could be about training bursaries, about outreach to community groups, ensuring information about therapy is widely available, finding ways of supporting people to access therapy according to need rather than income and ensuring that therapists are paid. The reliance on volunteers for many low-cost and free services is, in my view, an indictment of the system and an injustice to practitioners.

I am also interested in working with training organisations to think about how they might become more diverse and continue to provide high-quality education in these challenging times. This is both about increasing access to training and ensuring and assuring the quality of what is provided. I currently teach on a psychotherapeutic counselling degree programme in a member organisation.

I have wide experience of sitting on boards – previously with UKCP, as a Non-Executive Director of a mental health and community NHS Foundation Trust, as Chair and trustee of a local Mind, a special needs housing association and a couple of international development NGOs. Through this I have learnt what the role of a Trustee involves, how to contribute to meetings, to understand the organisational issues presented and to challenge constructively. I can express my views clearly in a way that others tell me they can hear and understand. I recognise the importance of gathering information from within the organisation to ensure that decisions taken by the board reflect the experience and views of all the members and the beneficiaries. I have developed a good understanding of governance and the importance of transparent and accountable decision-making.

Through my experience as a board member and as Chief Executive of a small organisation, and now running a small business, I have developed a good understanding of accounts and strategic financial management. I can read budgets and understand the system well enough to be able to ask probing questions when I am not clear about the information before me.

I have a strong sense of social justice and a clear ethical stance. I have experience of working with people from a range of communities and cultures through my various roles, having worked both in the UK and internationally.

I have been in private practice since 2014. My background is in mental health in a wide variety of roles, including running an ‘off-the-street' counselling service in the 80s, as a residential social worker and later a Monitoring and Development (Mental Health) Officer in a local authority, working for Mind locally, regionally and nationally, and supporting the development of mental health user groups and promoting advocacy and self-help as Director of a charity based in the UK and working internationally.

While I enjoy the very private and personal role of therapist, I also have a lot of experience of organisations. I would like to use this for the benefit of UKCP and its membership.