Strategy 2024–27: psychotherapy in a changing world

engagement feedback report

UKCP

UK Council for Psychotherapy

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Executive summary

Purpose of the report

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the findings from the member engagement activities we carried out during our strategy consultation period, running from January to July 2024. This report aims to summarise the feedback received from our members and detail how this feedback has influenced the development of the new UKCP three-year strategic plan.

While it has been impossible to incorporate all the ideas given through the feedback, we have endeavoured to integrate the most common and impactful suggestions. Our goal is to ensure that the new strategy reflects the collective voice of our members to the greatest extent possible within our available resources.

As we move forward with the implementation of the new strategy, we call upon all members to remain actively engaged, as your participation is key to its success.

Summary of findings

During the engagement we received over 350 pieces of feedback through a variety of channels, including forums and committees, webinars, our New Psychotherapist magazine, emails and surveys. Common themes that emerged highlighted the importance of UKCP's role in regulation, member support and public voice.

Some of the things members said they would like to see UKCP doing included:

- better regulatory processes

- more events, courses and CPD opportunities

- enhanced member support

- a stronger public and policy voice.

Specific areas of focus members would like to see included pursuing statutory regulation and chartership, improving member services and increasing UKCP's visibility and advocacy efforts.

Overview of the strategy

The strategy is set out under four strategic pillars: quality, membership, voice and organisation. The programmes of work to be carried out over the next three years each sit under one of these pillars and have been informed by the feedback received from members. These programmes of work are subject to individual project planning.

Key things the new strategy focuses on include:

- enhancing regulatory processes

- reviewing governance structures

- expanding opportunities for early complaint handling

- improving inclusivity

- developing UKCP as a learning organisation

- enhancing member services

- increasing UKCP's brand and public presence

- improving organisational sustainability.

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Introduction

Background

The development of this new strategy is crucial for UKCP to maintain high standards, adapt to emerging challenges and effectively represent the interests of our membership. It will help to define what the common objectives are and make sure that the activities we do all align with these.

The strategy has been over a year in the making. In 2023, the UKCP trustees and CEO reviewed and mapped out the breadth of organisational activities, revealing a structure where all activities fit into one of four strategic areas – or pillars: quality, membership, voice and organisation. The strategy has been developed with all activities categorised under these key areas.

At the start of the process it was recognised that members' views would be crucial in shaping the activities within the strategy, therefore a six-month engagement period was conducted to help inform the content of the strategy.

Engagement process

To gather member input, we carried out a series of engagement activities including:

- four webinars focused on different strategic topics

- three think pieces to provoke thought and discussion among members

- two surveys sent to all members

- sixteen email newsletters to members which included information about the strategy engagement

- consultation and engagement with the members forum and Professional Regulatory Committee of the Colleges and Faculties (PRCCF).

Forty members also contacted us outside of the above engagement activities to share their thoughts on the direction UKCP should be taking over the next three years.

The engagement process was signed off by the Board of Trustees. It was overseen by a strategy working group comprising UKCP members and staff, and was carried out by a strategy delivery group consisting of UKCP staff.

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Situational analysis

Current state of the organisation

A situational analysis was conducted at the start of the strategy development process to assess the current state of UKCP, evaluating internal and external factors impacting the organisation. This analysis identified strengths such as the quality of training and weaknesses such as guidance on ethics and financial constraints. Opportunities identified included advances in artificial intelligence and neuroscience as well as increasing NHS recognition, while threats included the increasing numbers of complaints against members and legal challenges. This comprehensive assessment, which informed the member engagement process, provided a foundation for developing a strategy that leverages strengths, addresses weaknesses, capitalises on opportunities and mitigates threats. More findings from the situational analysis are available in the appendix.

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Member feedback summary

Overview of engagement activities

The engagement activities and the feedback received have been organised below under each of the four pillars – quality, membership, voice and organisation.

Quality

Membership

Voice

Organisation

Pillar 1:

Quality

The engagement activities held under the strategic area of quality were:

Webinar

Exploring the interrelation between ethics, regulation and training – held on 4 June

95 joined live
24 video views

Think piece: artificial intelligence and psychotherapy

1,713 views

Think piece: neuroscience

881 views

Open-ended survey to all members

81 respondents

Below is a summary of some of the key things we heard:

Recognition and status

Calls for UKCP-registered psychotherapists to be recognised and valued at the highest level and for protected professional status.

Regulatory standardisation and clarity

Desire for UKCP to streamline and unify regulations across colleges and modalities ensuring consistency in standards and practices.

Transparency and collaboration

Calls for transparency in UKCP's decision-making processes, clearer communication regarding policies and regulations and increased collaboration with members.

Professional development and support

Calls for more practical guidelines, CPD and support for members through the complaints process.

Some of the key activity outlined in the strategy following this feedback includes:

- reviewing all regulatory processes*

- developing a suite of ethical guidance and other resources*

- developing our approaches to complaints*

- taking equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) and belonging, intersectionality, inclusivity, diversity and equity (BIIDE) into consideration in all aspects of our work

- addressing system-wide gaps

- developing UKCP as a learning organisation

- facilitating a comprehensive programme of research activity.*

*also identified as an area in the situational analysis to focus on.
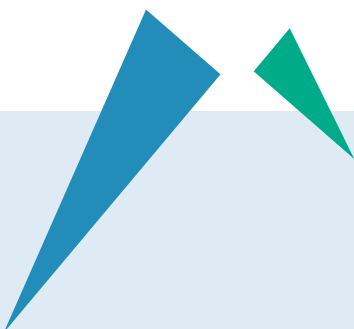
Pillar 2:

Membership

The engagement activities held under the strategic area of membership were:

Webinar

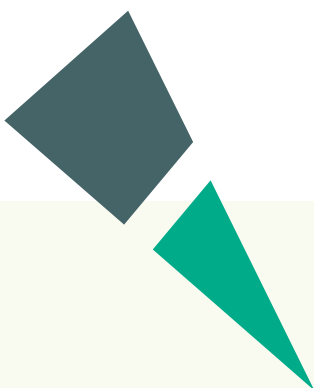UKCP membership: reflect, review, recommend – held on 26 March

44 joined live
32 video views

Open-ended survey to all members

81 respondents

Members forum engagement

Attended 2 meetings

Below is a summary of some of the key things we heard:

CPD opportunities

Increase availability of high-quality CPD, webinars, workshops and training events and create a CPD hub.

Professional recognition and protection

Advocate for psychotherapists and psychotherapeutic counsellors to be protected terms and explore chartered status.

Communication and transparency

Improve communication around professional standards, policy changes and organisational structure.

Member engagement and feedback

Involve members in changes through consultations and foster a greater sense of community through conferences and networking.

Financial barriers

Address financial barriers for trainees and offer multiple routes to qualification.

Some of the key activity outlined in the strategy following this feedback includes:

- developing a programme of events and CPD*

- reviewing membership categories and services*

- supporting the members forum

- aiming to build a representative membership of the UK population* and promoting an inclusive environment

- reviewing services and products*

- building strategic alliances that promote growth*

- exploring chartered status to allow members to use titles 'chartered psychotherapist' and 'chartered psychotherapeutic counsellor'.

* also identified as an area in the situational analysis to focus on.

Pillar 3:

Voice

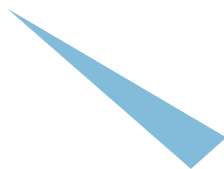The engagement activities held under the strategic area of voice were:

Webinar

Policy, research, reputation: how and where should UKCP focus its resources? – held on 11 July

27 joined live
7 video views

Open-ended survey to all members

81 respondents

Below is a summary of some of the key things we heard:

Focused advocacy efforts

Promote UKCP accreditation as the gold standard in training, lobbying for recognition within NHS healthcare settings and by GPs, and enhancing public awareness of the benefits of choosing a UKCP-accredited therapist.

Visibility and presence

Increase visibility of UKCP's work both externally with the media and public, and internally with members.

Expand psychotherapy services

Lobby to get psychotherapy services expanded within the NHS.

Support psychotherapists and address financial barriers

Provide more active support for psychotherapists working in the NHS and address VAT exemption issues.

Research and policy changes

Capture/promote research and changes to policy.

Guidance on working with autistic clients

Provide ethics and supervision guidance for working with autistic clients.

Access for autistic clients

Improve access for autistic clients to find suitably qualified therapists with autism training.

Engage marginalised and minority groups

Develop strategies to engage marginalised and minority groups in policy and campaigning.

Ongoing learning support

Support ongoing learning in the workplace for newly-qualified practising therapists.

Audience diversification

Branch out beyond communicating with the 'average Guardian reader'.

Public education

Enhance public education to help clients make informed choices.

Some of the key activity outlined in the strategy following this feedback includes:

- providing information on what UKCP members have to say about psychological wellbeing

- ensuring we are the go-to organisation for comment on psychotherapy today*

- building the UKCP brand to be recognised and trusted*

- representing the diversity of UKCP members in our external environment

- promoting and supporting work done by UKCP's organisational members and colleges

- giving UKCP members the opportunity to vote at an annual general meeting

- establishing an all-party parliamentary group (APPG) on talking therapies at Westminster and cross-party groups in devolved administrations*

- advocating across the political spectrum for policy and investment in psychological wellbeing

- seeking to influence local and national priorities, policy and practice.

* also identified as an area in the situational analysis to focus on.
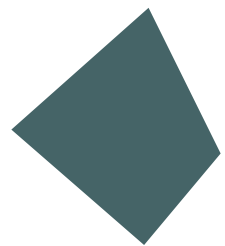
Pillar 4:

Organisation

The engagement activities held under the strategic area of organisation were:

Webinar

What is the primary purpose of UKCP? – held 19 February

120 joined live
182 video views

Think piece: What is UKCP really here for?

By CEO Jon Levett (sent as an email to 9,674 members)

Opened 10,887 times
by 5,930 recipients
49 audio listens

Open-ended survey to all members
81 respondents

Below is a summary of some of the key things we heard:

Clarity on role

Provide clear information about UKCP's role and what it offers to members. 64% of those who attended the webinar identified regulation as the primary task of UKCP and 65% of those who answered our survey were in favour of UKCP's primary task being regulation. However, 65% of respondents to a poll on the think piece see UKCP as a membership organisation.

Operational improvements

Improve Find a Therapist on the website, provide more online resources and ensure quicker response times to communications.

Inclusivity and diversity

Support therapists working with clients in minority groups and marginalised communities, ensure the organisation is welcoming to therapists from all backgrounds and that underrepresentation in committees and leadership roles is addressed.

Organisational structure and processes

Simplify and streamline the organisation's structure and make UKCP more accessible.

Sustainability initiatives

Reform processes and technology to improve efficiency and implement recommendations from past consultations.

Future direction and vision

Ensure UKCP's sustainability and focus on developing a strategy that both supports the profession and members.

Some of the key activity outlined in the strategy following this feedback includes:

- approving new governance structures and documentation*

- developing new sources of income*

- advancing technological capabilities to improve working practices and communications*

- reviewing UKCP's organisational structure to ensure it reflects strategy priorities*

- refining and embedding the EDI-BIIDE (equity, diversity and inclusion – belonging, intersectionality, inclusivity, diversity and equity) action plan and carrying out work to diversify the membership*

- driving towards sustainability in our office and management as part of our commitment to environment.

* also identified as an area in the situational analysis to focus on.

5 Creating UKCP's vision, mission and values

Members were also invited to tell us three words they think represent UKCP's values. These words were then used to inform our new vision, mission and values. 51 members responded to this survey.

The most common words cited by members were:

- integrity
- professional
- respect
- inclusive
- ethical
- compassion.

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Conclusion

In conclusion, the member engagement activities conducted have provided valuable insights that have significantly shaped our new three-year strategy.

The feedback from this engagement has not only informed operational activity but also helped to refine UKCP's vision, mission and values, ensuring that they resonate with our membership's aspirations and the organisation's future direction.

While it was not possible to incorporate every suggestion, the strategy reflects the most common and impactful ideas that align with our mission and resources.

Stay involved

As we move forward with the implementation of the new strategy, we call upon all members to remain actively engaged. Member participation is crucial to the success and growth of UKCP – by being involved in UKCP activities you can help shape the future of the organisation.

We encourage you to:

- stay informed through our email newsletters, website and events
- provide feedback by participating in surveys, attending meetings and sharing your thoughts on how we can improve – constructive feedback will help us refine our approach and address concerns
- participate actively through joining committees and working groups
- network with fellow members.

Contact information

For further questions or feedback, members can email UKCP at: strategy@ukcp.org.uk
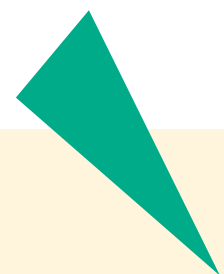
Appendix

Situational analysis

A situational analysis was carried out at the start of the strategy development process to thoroughly assess the current state of UKCP. This analysis is critical for understanding both the internal and external factors that impact the organisation.

By identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, we can ensure the new strategy is grounded in a realistic understanding of our operational environment. This assessment enables us to leverage strengths, address weaknesses, capitalise on opportunities and mitigate potential threats.

The situational analysis was also vital for the engagement process. It provided a clear picture of where UKCP currently stands and highlights the areas that require attention and improvement. This, in turn, informed the conversations with members, ensuring that the feedback gathered was relevant and focused on the most significant issues.

By incorporating member insights into the situational analysis, we have been able to develop a more responsive and effective strategy that reflects the needs and expectations of members.

Situational analysis summary

Strengths:

- quality of training
- member advocacy and support
- policy influence
- dedicated staff and volunteer workforce.

Weaknesses:

- guidance on ethics
- membership value perception
- membership demographics
- regional imbalance
- research funding
- mission clarity
- financial constraints
- outdated systems
- brand perception.

Opportunities:

- advances in areas such as neuroscience and psychedelics
- SCoPEd collaboration
- NHS recognition
- research collaboration with partners
- funded NHS training pilot for psychotherapeutic counsellors.

Threats:

- increasing number of complaints
- legal challenges increasing insurance premiums
- AI ethical issues
- public confidence in regulators' complaints processes
- competition from other bodies
- limited political connections
- governance complexity.

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