

## **Approved Public Board meeting minutes**

14 January 2026

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### **Present**

Caroline Corby (CC - Chair)  
Alan Clamp (AC - Chief Executive)  
Candace Imison (CI)  
Juliet Oliver (JO)  
Nick Simkins (NS)  
Ali Jarvis (AJ)  
Geraldine Campbell (GC)  
Ruth Ajayi (RA)

### **In Attendance**

Jane Carey (JC)  
Amanda Partington-Todd (APT)  
Melanie Venables (MV)  
Douglas Bilton (DB)  
Dan Fletcher – MKS  
Sally Knight – MKS  
Daisy Blench  
Osama Ammar  
Marija Hume  
Oyinkan Onile-Ere  
Dan Scott  
Rachael Culverhouse-Wilson  
Akua Dwomoh-Bonsu  
Suzanne Dodds  
Ryan Davidson  
Dan Fletcher (MKS)  
Sally Knight (MKS)

Melanie Hueser (Secretariat)

### **Observers**

See below

## **1. Welcome and Declarations of Interest**

- 1.1. The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed everyone to the Board meeting. Observers included members of staff and external observers: Anisah Chowdhury (GMC), Silvia Dominici (NMC) and Carol Haynes (NMC).
- 1.2. The Chair welcomed Dan Fletcher and Sally Knight from MKS who will observe the meeting for the Board Effectiveness Review.

## **2. Apologies**

- 2.1. Eleanor Marks gave apologies.

## **3. Minutes of meeting held on 19 November 2025**

- 3.1. The minutes of the last Board meeting held on 18 September 2025 were accepted as a true and correct record and approved, with the following corrections:

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- 6.3: Replace ambiguous “Reform” (capital R) with clear reference to regulatory reform, to avoid confusion with the Reform political party
  - 10.2: Clarify that the Board approved the budget for scoping, not the project itself

#### **4. Actions and matters arising from the meeting on 19 November 2025**

4.1. All actions were complete, on the agenda or on track.

#### **5. Chair’s report**

- 5.1. The Chair introduced the item, explaining the report was shorter than usual because it covered a period that straddled the holiday season.
- 5.2. The Chair reported she had recently received a response letter from Mike Nesbitt, Minister for Health, regarding cosmetic non-surgical interventions, an issue the PSA raised during its visit to Northern Ireland the previous summer. The Northern Ireland Department of Health acknowledged the issues raised by the PSA. However, the Department highlighted capacity constraints preventing them from addressing the matter fully at the present time.
- 5.3. The Chair and Chief Executive were due to meet Jenny Minto, the Scottish Minister for Public Health and Women’s Health.
- 5.4. The Board noted the increase in staff over the last few years. PSA’s headcount has increased by 5–6 people over 5–6 years (roughly 15–20% growth in a small organisation). Each increase was based on individual business cases approved through the business planning process. The increase is noticeable in percentage terms because the PSA is small.
- 5.5. Workforce planning is currently under review with an upcoming workforce planning internal audit report destined for the Audit & Risk Committee and a forthcoming business planning meeting in late April to review resourcing.

#### **6. Executive report and project dashboard**

- 6.1. The Chief Executive (CE) introduced the item, noting that the report was extensive and covered progress updates, risks, regulatory interactions, project status, and major sector issues.
- 6.2. The CE highlighted the organisation’s strategic priorities and provided updates on key workstreams.
- 6.3. The PSA is now in the postconsultation analysis phase for the Standards Review Project. Feedback was gathered from both the survey and roundtable events held before Christmas. The team is currently editing and adjusting the proposed Standards. Updated Standards will go to the Board in midFebruary, with a meeting scheduled for Monday 23 February for approval to publish.
- 6.4. The UK Government wants the Lord Mann Review on antisemitism and racism within the NHS and regulatory systems to conclude before making decisions that could affect regulatory reforms.
- 6.5. Consultation has taken place on the Strategic plan in parallel with the Standards review. Feedback suggests no fundamental changes needed, though several improvements will be made for clarity.
- 6.6. Business planning documents approved by the Board before Christmas have now been submitted to the Privy Council. Approval is expected by late January or early February. Registered practitioner numbers have increased by 3.5%, now over 2 million.
- 6.7. The CE provided an update on the NMC Independent Oversight Group, monitoring NMC improvement plans. Three major improvement programmes are underway at the NMC.
- 6.8. Screening performance has improved, but this has pushed the backlog downstream: investigation-stage cases increased by 25% over the last year. Timeliness therefore has not improved. The Group will meet every other month going forward.

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- 6.9. There were a number of meetings in the diary for January, with the new Scottish Public Services Ombudsman, with the National AI Commission, a meeting with the Northern Ireland Department of Health and a meeting with Minister of State for Health.
- 6.10. **Regulation and Accreditation:** Performance Review Reports
- 6.11. GMC: 18/18 standards met. (Noting that a statement had been published to explain the reasons for this assessment, in light of the political/cultural scrutiny the GMC had faced during the year on antisemitism related issues and overseas registrants.)
- 6.12. GDC: 16/18 standards met. PSA has issued an escalation letter on Standard 15 (not met since 2017/18). The Board discussed how to understand the GDC's prolonged difficulties with Standard 15, and how to promote improvement, including political pressure, the role of reform, and opportunities for renewed intervention.
- 6.13. NMC Performance Review Timelines - The next NMC review publication will likely be end of May, outside usual KPI expectations. Reasons were explained in the paper, including impact of delays to 2023/24 performance review report publication and complexities with the approach to the audit for 2024/25. PSA is exploring mitigation for future review cycles to minimise impact on 2025/26 performance review publication.
- 6.14. Section 29 (Appeals) - Increase in initial reviews due to fewer regulator decisions meeting the "administrative closure" threshold. More cases are proceeding to DCR and case meeting panels, though this remains proportionate to the overall volume of decisions being reviewed. Section 29 team has recently completed a significant improvement programme which was presented to the Scrutiny Committee in December.
- 6.15. Accredited Registers - Significant staffing changes to the team between October and December. Despite this, performance remained stable, widely praised as a testament to team and their leadership.
- 6.16. Standards Review Project - Engagement was successful and valued by sector stakeholders. Feedback now being analysed for final Board approval stage (February).  
**Action:** JO/APT to schedule deeper review of the Fitness to Practice system for the Scrutiny Committee and report back to the Board.
- 6.17. **Policy and Communications:** Response to House of Lords Inquiry - PSA is submitting evidence regarding how growth-related duties affect health and care regulators. The response draws heavily on principles of Right-Touch Regulation. PSA emphasises the value of the Accredited Registers Programme as a cost-effective alternative to statutory regulation.
- 6.18. Coordinating Regulation of AI: A workshop is scheduled for late February, led by researchers from Bristol University. The aim is to identify common principles for regulating AI use by healthcare professionals. Engage with the National AI Commission so PSA can influence the future AI regulatory framework. Include diverse patient/public voices. Output will feed into both PSA's future Standards work and collaboration with MHRA.
- 6.19. Safeguarding and DBS Checks: New legislation will allow self-employed practitioners in England and Wales to request their own DBS checks. Regulators and Accredited Registers may become the expected route for such checks. PSA is working with the Home Office and Ministry of Justice to clarify implementation. Current Standards appear flexible enough to incorporate the change without redrafting. More detail will return to the Board in February (within Standards) and a full risk-review update in March.
- 6.20. Board members raised concerns about the limitations of DBS for internationally recruited staff, differences between UK nations, whether the overall public protection risk could actually increase if DBS is over-relied upon and the need for PSA to maintain a risk-based approach.  
**Action:** MV to schedule safeguarding issue for the March Board meeting as part of the risk register review.

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- 6.21. **Intelligence and Insight:** Sections 29 learning outputs now include statistical summaries of organisations attending PSA learning events. Webinars attracted between 81 and 252 registrants.
  - 6.22. Work is progressing toward a joint research conference with two academic partners.
  - 6.23. Horizon scanning note of discussion to be circulated soon.
  - 6.24. **Corporate Services:** There was nothing to add that was not covered in the paper.
  - 6.25. The Board asked whether two major pieces of work should now appear formally on the Project Dashboard, the Accredited Registers' "single platform" project and the Regulatory Reform Programme (multi-strand work across the sector). It was explained that the Regulatory Reform Programme is not a single project but a collection of many projects, so it does not map neatly onto the dashboard format. Regular updates to the Board will continue.
  - 6.26. The Accredited Registers platform project may be appropriate to add when it moves from approval to implementation in 2026/27.

## 7. Finance report

- 7.1. The Director of Corporate Services introduced the item. The financial position was reported up to the end of November. At that point, PSA was forecasting an overall year-end deficit of £71,000, compared with the originally planned break-even position.
- 7.2. Two lines in the report required Board approval, as they concerned expenditure that would shift into the next financial year.
- 7.3. Research Project – £63,000 underspend. The work will be carried out in 2027/28. Since it will not be spent this year, the £63k will move into reserves at year-end. The Board will need to approve drawing down this amount next year when the work resumes.
- 7.4. Accredited Registers – Influencer Campaign – £10,000. The campaign aimed at raising public awareness had begun too late in the year for the full budget to be spent. Some of the costs would therefore fall into the next financial year. Again, the Board was asked for in-principle approval to carry the unspent portion forward so the campaign could complete.
- 7.5. The Board asked would the deficit shrink if the £63k research budget were simply not carried forward?. JC confirmed that the £63k underspend was already included in the current forecast, the deficit figure already reflects that underspend. Therefore, delaying or cancelling the project does not impact on the forecast.
- 7.6. £10,000 originally showing as unused in the conferences budget line had now been allocated to support the AI-related event. This would increase the forecast deficit (from £71k to approximately £81k), and the Board would see that reflected in the March Finance Report.
- 7.7. Section 29 Costs were identified as the largest pressure. These costs had gone up due to an increase in Section 29 activity. At least one lost case that resulted in an adverse costs order — the first such case in several years.
- 7.8. If Section 29 expenditure continues at the current trajectory, the PSA may need to increase the Section 29 budget for next year by as much as £156,000.
- 7.9. This will place pressure on the PSA's ability to fund discretionary work (such as research projects).
- 7.10. Therefore, although the Board could give approval in principle to re-drawing the £63k research funding next year, that will depend on the overall budget position at year end.
- 7.11. The Chair agreed, saying the Board should not commit to future spending unless the broader budget environment supports it.
- 7.12. The Section 29 costs will be reviewed by Scrutiny Committee in June, and the business plan will come to the Board meeting in July.
- 7.13. The Board was being asked to approve, in principle, the carry-forward of the £63k research project budget, and £10k AR influencer campaign budget, subject to confirmation next year, once the fuller budget picture is known. **The Board agreed to this conditional approval.**

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**Action:** JC to schedule budget carry forward approval for the Board after the end of year position has been confirmed.

## 8. Committee updates

- 8.1. **Scrutiny Committee:** The Scrutiny Committee Chair gave a verbal update on the Section 29 improvement programme, its outcomes, and future expectations.
- 8.2. The Scrutiny Committee held a bespoke session in December focused on the Section 29 improvement project, which had been running since September 2023. A slide pack had been circulated to the Board with a summary of the work.
- 8.3. The programme introduced several changes to strengthen the efficiency, quality and transparency of the Section 29 process. Panels now included more focused and appropriately skilled decision-makers. A rota system now replaced informal volunteering, ensuring resilience and diversity of thought.
- 8.4. Decision templates and case summaries were streamlined to support clarity and consistency. Quality checks were improved, ensuring a more robust and consistent decision-making process. Learning points and decision rationales were collected and analysed more systematically. These improvements had already demonstrated meaningful impact.
- 8.5. Regulators had already begun responding to learning. Several had updated guidance and internal practices based on PSA feedback.
- 8.6. Publication of the first annual Section 29 report helped raise awareness of systemic themes and issues across regulators.
- 8.7. The Committee recognised the importance of cost control, particularly given the rising number of Section 29 cases, and the financial pressure of complex cases. A full cost and value-for-money paper will come to the June Scrutiny Committee meeting.
- 8.8. The Committee discussed new success measures and the need to monitor these, using data to understand which issues are difficult to shift, and the numbers of appeals brought and the reasons for trends and increases in cases reported.
- 8.9. It was noted that PSA also needs to learn from successful cases, not just losses, because many cases hinge on close legal judgement, judicial outcomes can vary and PSA must apply learning from the full range of outcomes.
- 8.10. It was clarified that individual learning points already feed directly into the Performance Review evidence base. The Section 29 team regularly sends learning point bulletins to regulators. In terms of next steps, the PSA are developing qualitative and quantitative metrics to track progress and are considering a shared KPI between the performance review and s29 teams to look at regulator performance improvement.
- 8.11. The Committee felt confident the work should now move into business-as-usual.
- 8.12. The Board **noted** the report.

## 9. Board workplan 2025/26

- 9.1. The Director of Corporate Services introduced the item. The Board agreed that the Workplan should be updated to include major upcoming Board items, such as the Standards sign-off on 23 February and the Strategy session scheduled for 24 April.  
**Action:** JC to add the Standards sign-off and Strategy session to the Board workplan.
- 9.2. The Board **noted** the workplan.

## 10. Any other business

- 10.1. There was no other business discussed.

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## 11. Questions from Members of the Public

11.1. There were no questions.

11.2. The Chair thanked the observers for their interest in the PSA.



**Signed by Chair**

**Date 18 March 2026**

**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   |
|------------------|----------|---|--------|---------------|---|----------|
| 19 November 2025 | 6.7      | Develop a publication on how the PSA uses Right Touch Regulation.   | DB     | March 2026    | On the agenda for March 2026  | On track |
| 19 November 2025 | 6.14     | Bring a post-implementation website report to the Board meeting in March 2026.                                    | OOE/MV | March 2026    | Delayed due to the need to address accessibility issues as set out in the Executive Report. | Delayed  |
| 14 January 2026  | 6.17     | Schedule deeper review of the Fitness to Practice system for the Scrutiny Committee and report back to the Board. | JO/APT | June 2026     |   | On track |
| 14 January 2026  | 6.21     | Schedule safeguarding issue for the Board meeting as part of the risk register review.                            | MV     | March 2026    | Update included as part of the Executive Report.  | On track |
| 14 January 2026  | 7.13     | Schedule budget carry forward approval for the Board after the end of year position has been confirmed.           | JC     | July 2026     |   | On track |
| 14 January 2026  | 9.1      | Add the Standards sign-off and Strategy session to the Board workplan.  | JC     | January 2026  | Complete  | Complete |