

## Accredited Registers

### Targeted Review: UK Board of Healthcare Chaplaincy (UKBHC)

May 2025

#### 1. Outcome

- 1.1 At the UK Board of Healthcare Chaplaincy (UKBHC)'s annual check in November 2024, the Professional Standards Authority ('we') recommended a Targeted Review on Standard Six (Governance), to be conducted after a new Chair was appointed in December 2024 and after consideration of the Conditions that were re-issued in September 2024 (see section under Standard Six of the annual check outcome letter).
- 1.2 This report sets out our assessment of the actions taken by the UKBHC since the appointment of a new Chair and the plans that are being put in place to assure the resilience of the new governance structure.
- 1.3 We found that the UKBHC had taken full and appropriate action to respond to the two Conditions we reissued in September 2024 and that the new team assembled around the work of managing and leading the register are well equipped to ensure effective operations.
- 1.4 We have made two recommendations that will support the Register in the consolidation of their work in 2025 and beyond.

#### 2. Background

- 2.1 We assess registers against our Standards for Accredited Registers ('the Standards')<sup>1</sup>. In some cases, we might need to undertake a targeted review of the Register. This could be triggered by concerns at an annual check, or those raised in-year through our 'Share Your Experience' (SYE) process.
- 2.2 At the UKBHC's annual check, completed in November 2024, changes identified in the governance structure signified that one or more of our minimum requirements for Standard Six (Governance) may not have been met.
- 2.3 We, therefore, undertook to:
  - conduct a detailed investigation of the impact of the changes and vacancies at the highest level of UKBHC governance to assure the Register's effectiveness and resilience in meeting the ongoing demands of our accreditation programme
  - inquire into the robustness of its succession planning in business continuity
- 2.4 This amounted to a Targeted Review of UKBHC's governance structure and its resilience. The review activity was scheduled to take place following the appointment of a new Chair in December 2024, while simultaneously considering the remaining conditions that were re-issued in September 2024.
- 2.5 The review process was, therefore, intended to be forward-looking and supportive of the ongoing work to stabilise the organisation from the onset.

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<sup>1</sup> The UKBHC were originally assessed against our [Standards for Accredited Registers](#)

- 2.6 This report discusses the actions UKBHC has taken and are planning to take to address our concerns, as well as our decision about whether we are sufficiently assured of the register's effectiveness in its governance operations.
- 2.7 We carried out the following actions:
- a) reviewed relevant documentary evidence of UKBHC's reported actions about what it has done and planning to do to ensure governance stability and continuity in business planning
  - b) observed the Board meeting of 24<sup>th</sup> February 2025
  - c) held discussions with the Chair and three other Board members of UKBHC on 4<sup>th</sup> April 2025

### **3. Concerns leading to the Targeted Review**

- 3.1 At our annual check in November 2024, we were informed of changes within the Board which affected UKBHC's ability to deliver on its accreditation obligations. UKBHC missed some deadlines for submission of evidence and in the end was unable to meet three of the 12 Conditions issued at our full renewal assessment in November 2023. This was attributed to reliance on a sole individual who was unable to continue in their duties which impacted on UKBHC's governance capacity. Action to rectify this weakness led to changes, which included:

- Interim Chair appointed in July 2024-Dec 2024
- Interim Registrar appointed in July 2024-Mar 2025
- Expansion of the Governance sub-group
- Partnership working, with most Lead Officers now supported by one lay Director

UKBHC also informed us that there were three vacancies in key leadership and governance roles that were in the process of being filled:

- One lay Director position
- New Chair of the Board - by the end of 2024
- Substantive Registrar - by early 2025

Our knowledge of the impact of these changes, as well as the pending vacancies in key leadership and governance positions, at the time, was limited. As the operational and strategic effectiveness of the Register resides largely on the resilience and effectiveness of its Board, the state of UKBHC gave some cause for concern. An in-depth, detailed investigation of UKBHC's governance structure and effectiveness was, therefore, required. The situation also raised the issue of succession planning in business continuity and how UKBHC was addressing this important element for the sustainability of the Register. In all this, one assurance we had from UKBHC, however, was that there was no material change to the Register's financial position that could put its sustainability at risk.

## 4. Assessment of Actions

### 4.1 We assessed the following actions taken by UKBHC:

- **Invitation to Board Meeting:** We observed the UKBHC Board meeting of 24<sup>th</sup> February 2025. Our observation of the conduct of the meeting focused on three key areas – business practice, technical competence, and personal behaviour. On all three counts, we concluded that the UKBHC Board demonstrated good practice, great technical competence, ability for strategic thinking and planning, and excellent leadership.
- **Provision of Documentary Evidence:** We analysed a sample of documentary evidence provided by UKBHC of Board papers, including presentations by Lead Officers and chairs of sub-groups. These included an Agenda; Minutes of the previous Board meeting; report of the PSA Lead; draft budget for the next financial year; governance and risk report; risk matrix for chaplaincy practice; communications and engagement report; Interim Registrar's report; paper on professional registration; financial management report by the Treasury; and a revised expenses claims form for approval. We concluded that Board members understood their primary role in providing oversight, setting a strategic direction and delegating day-to-day management of the organisation to an executive team. Moreover, we confirmed that the Board is actively engaged in the management of the register and members are clear about their roles and responsibilities.
- **Discussions with Board:** At the meeting of 4<sup>th</sup> April 2025, a cross-section of UKBHC Board members provided transparent and satisfactory responses to a wide range of questions on various aspects of governance put to them by the Accreditation Team. These included an exploration of actions UKBHC has taken or plans to take to prevent the current voluntary resourcing structure from facing issues such as those seen in 2024; a long-term resourcing strategy for UKBHC; new website development and management; capacity for policy development; plans for continuing collaboration and engagement with the PSA and other accredited registers; support arrangements, including training in place or planned for Board members, recognising that UKBHC had to reform at a pace and start delivering work quickly; Board approach to prioritisation to protect resources from being over-stretched; consideration of risks related to a high proportion of the Board reaching term limits at a similar time; implementation of recommendations on our new Standard 9 EDI (Equality, Diversity and Inclusion); and work of the Complaints committee and appointment to roles. We concluded that the Board was engaged in the serious business of strategic planning and consolidation after a period of significant change.

### 4.2 We make the following recommendations to be reviewed at UKBHC's next assessment in November 2025:

- UKBHC should appoint members to its as-yet un-constituted sub-committee on Complaints and ensure that training is given to members prior to their first sitting
- UKBHC should commence implementation of its EDI policy and ensure that all its committees are constituted with EDI in mind

## **5. Conclusion**

- 5.1 We conclude that a huge amount of work has taken place in the last six months, moving UKBHC from instability in 2024 to stability and consolidation in 2025. Going forward, the Board's focus hovers around growing the register and the need for effective management of that growth; succession planning to ensure uninterrupted business continuity; a workable approach to CPD (continuous professional development) management; and effective management of the relationship between the Board and the various professional chaplaincy bodies. We recognise that there are already preliminary thoughts on the future structure of the UKBHC Board and the need to develop new resilience for that structure. Accordingly, we conclude that UKBHC has been stabilised and is moving in the right trajectory. There is, therefore, no further cause for concern about its governance effectiveness.