

Public minutes of the meeting of the UKPHR Board held on Wednesday 23 April 2025 via Teams at 14.00 hours

Present: Andrew Jones (AJ) (Chair)
 Jessica Lichtenstein (JL, Chief Executive)
 Gill Jones (GJ) (Registrar)
 James Sandy (JS)
 Marianne Coward (MC)
 Linda Smith (LS)
 David Evans (DE)
 Ranjit Khutan (RK)
 Ben Humphreys (BH)
 Joanna Dowd (JD)
 Pavenpreet Johal (PJ) (Secretariat)

Apologies: Jenny Douglas (JD)
 Helen Featherstone (HF)
 Duncan Vernon (DV)
 Rachel Flowers (RF)

1. Welcome, apologies for absence and new declarations of interest

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were noted as above. There were no new declarations of interest.

2. Minutes of Board meeting held on 19 February 2025

The public and private minutes of the meeting held on 19 February 2025 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

ACTION	WHO	WHAT	BY WHEN
	JL	Publish the 19 February 2025 public Board minutes on website	ASAP

3. Actions and matters arising

JL reported that all actions were done or on the agenda for an update.

4. Governance forward planner – 2025

JL reported that the team have prepared the operational plan for 2025-26 which has informed the governance planner.

5. For decision

2025/26 Budget

The Chair introduced the budget report, highlighting both the narrative and a detailed spreadsheet provided to the Board, with a recommendation to follow. JL was invited to present the budget report and highlighted the following key points.

- The draft budget was reviewed in detail by the Audit and Risk Committee in March, with significant discussion and input from committee members.
- Additional financial modelling was conducted to better estimate registrant numbers (new, remaining, and leaving).
- The updated financial outlook shows an increase in income, providing more flexibility compared to previous projections.

- The budget is prepared on an accrual's basis, ensuring expenditure and income are matched to the correct financial year.
- Numerous assumptions underpin the budget, with reasoning documented in the spreadsheet notes. Board members were encouraged to seek clarification as needed.
- Income is expected to rise to approximately £550,000, primarily due to fee increases and a growing number of registrants.
- Surpassing the £500,000 income threshold triggers additional financial audit responsibilities, resulting in higher audit and accountancy fees. A full financial audit may be required instead of a standard independent review.
- Registrant attrition rates are expected to be similar to last year, with a slight decrease in new specialists joining the register. These figures are monitored closely and adjusted for factors such as time out of programme.
- Efforts continue to improve forecasting for SRbPA route applications and pre-applications, with adjustments made for anticipated numbers.
- Restoration fees remain in place, with waivers applied occasionally.
- The renewal season is expected to bring income peaks, and an increasing number of registrants are moving to direct debit payments, which should help smooth cash flow throughout the year.
- The impact of direct debit on cash flow will continue to be monitored.
- Other income streams, such as portfolio development programmes, are still under review, with details to be confirmed.

The Board were pleased to see a small surplus in the budget following a year where a deficit was approved. The Board approved the 2025/26 budget.

PJ left the meeting

6. 2025/26 Staff Pay

JL presented the report and then left the meeting for the Board discussion. JL outlined the context for the annual pay review, noting inflation was approximately 3% as of January, though it has since decreased. Historically, salary increases have aimed to align with or approach inflation rates. There was no confirmed NHS staff pay agreement; predictions suggest a 3% rise across sectors and 2.5% in the public sector. JL highlighted that NHS pay awards have become less predictable in recent years, and that UKPHR may need to consider broader public sector salary trends rather than strictly aligning with NHS pay. The Board was recommended by the Audit, Risk and Remuneration Committee to offer a 3% salary increase, which is a reduction from last year's 4% increase but considered reasonable given current inflation trends. The Board discussed the importance of remaining competitive in the job market while managing reputational risks associated with pay rises that exceed those of registrants. It was acknowledged that the budget discussed and confirmed earlier includes the proposed 3% staff pay rise. It was noted that there is some uncertainty regarding the impact of National Insurance changes on staff costs, but any effect is expected to be minimal due to the small number of staff. The Board agreed to recommend a 3% pay rises for all UKPHR staff from 1 April 2025.

PJ and JL returned to the meeting

7. UKPHR's approach to social media

PJ presented a paper on the proposed move from X (formerly Twitter) to Blue Sky as the organisation's primary social media platform. This decision was recommended following recent decisions by key stakeholders such as the Professional Standards Authority (PSA) and the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC), who have shifted their primary social media engagement to Blue Sky while maintaining a presence on X. The rationale for the move includes concerns about changes at X, particularly around content moderation and organisational culture, which are seen as misaligned with the organisation's values. UKPHR has created a BlueSky account and proposes to use it for primary engagement, while continuing to post key announcements on X without active engagement, to maintain contact with users who remain on that platform. A draft

communication has been prepared to explain this change, which will be included in the upcoming staff newsletter.

JL noted that this is the first time the organisation would be making an explicit statement on a politically sensitive issue and highlighted UKPHR's limited current social media engagement, mostly focused on announcements and congratulatory messages.

Board members expressed strong support for the proposed move and the rationale outlined in the paper, but were concerned about making a strong statement without proper comms resources so suggested a short and factual statement. The Board also emphasised the importance of developing a clear communication strategy.

The Board agreed to the transition and a revised communication to be sent to registrants via the staff newsletter and posted on X.

ACTION	WHO	WHAT	BY WHEN
	JL & PJ	Issue comms on transition away from to X	ASAP

8. The Future of the UKPHR Office

The Chair introduced a paper regarding the organisation's current office lease and future accommodation needs. JL clarified that the discussion is at an early stage, with the paper raising more questions than answers. The aim is to consider the overall approach and establish a working group to explore options, rather than make final decisions today.

PJ presented an overview of the current office situation. The current lease expires in March 2026, after a 6-year term. Current rent and service charges total approximately £10,500 per quarter (including VAT), with additional minor costs for maintenance and insurance. The lease requires redecorating every three years, which has not yet been done. Uncertainty remains regarding the rent level after the lease ends, and clarification is needed on notice periods and termination conditions. The office location is in a developing area, potentially affecting future costs. There may be requirements to replace carpets and address other dilapidations before vacating. The organisation's need for office space has decreased as storage needs have reduced as physical portfolios are being phased out in favour of digital records. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, staff have successfully worked from home, with only occasional office use for meetings and minimal operational requirements. External stakeholder use of the office has been minimal, both before and after the pandemic.

Three options were outlined in the report. (1) retain the current office at existing size and location; (2) move to a fully virtual office with no permanent physical space or (3) downsize to a smaller office, either in the same building or elsewhere. Current office costs are approximately £54,000 per year. Initial research suggests IT providers can support a virtual office model, with manageable additional costs (e.g., for secure mail handling). Further analysis is required to fully assess business needs, financial implications, and operational impacts of each option.

The Board agreed for a detailed options paper to be brought to their next meeting in June including a sub option for being housed with another organisation. It was agreed to begin to engage with the landlord about the lease details and staff to ensure that they are consulted. Stakeholders could be contacted after the Board have settled on a definitive option. The Board agreed to only consider Birmingham or London for other smaller office options. Board members were asked to volunteer to support the project as a sounding board.

ACTION	WHO	WHAT	BY WHEN
	PJ	Draft a detailed options papers for Board discussion	26 June 2025

ACTION	WHO	WHAT	BY WHEN
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	JL & PJ	Liaise with landlord on lease options	26 June 2025
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ACTION	WHO	WHAT	BY WHEN
	JL & PJ	Conduct staff survey on future of office	26 June 2025

ACTION	WHO	WHAT	BY WHEN
	All	Board directors to volunteer to support future of office project	ASAP

To Note

9. 2024/25 Mid-Year report

JL and PJ presented the mid-year report, noting and subsequently thanking Zaira Ejaz for drafting the paper and Anna Lubasinska who contributed to the draft before her maternity leave. The mid-year report replaces the previous registration statistics updates at regular board meetings and covers the period from April 2024 to September 2024. There was a slight delay in producing the report due to reporting issues with EDI (Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion) monitoring data, in particular, the ethnicity data, which have now been resolved. No new concerning trends were identified in the report compared to previous years, and the data remains in line with organisational strategy. The report's format, combining text and graphics, was well received by the Board. The Board noted the report for information and observation, with the expectation that future mid-year reports will be delivered earlier in the year, ahead of the annual report at the September AGM.

10. Registration reports

The Board received and noted the minutes of the Registration Approvals Committee and Registration Policy Group.

11. Audit, Risk and Remuneration Committee report – including Risk Register discussion

The main items discussed at the last meeting of the Audit, Risk and Remuneration Committee have already been discussed earlier; 2025/26 budget and 2025/26 staff pay.

12. Education and Standards Committee report

The Board acknowledged that there was no Education and Standards Committee meetings since the last Board meeting. RK reported that the Committee was seeking a deputy Chair and that Board Directors were contacted should anyone be interested in the role.

13. Board skills audit – update

Discussed in private meeting.

14. Chief Executive Report

Discussed in private meeting.

15. Any other business

Discussed in private meeting

16. Date, time and venue of next meeting

Thursday 26th June 2025 at 14.00 via Teams. The Board Strategy day to be held on Tuesday 29 April 2025 10.30-15.30 in UKPHR Office in Birmingham.

Action points from this meeting

ACTI	WHO	WHAT	BY WHEN
	JL	Publish the 19 February 2025 public Board minutes on website	ASAP

	JL & PJ	Issue comms on transition to X	ASAP
	PJ	Draft a detailed options papers for Board discussion	26 June 2025
	JL & PJ	Liaise with landlord on lease options	26 June 2025
	JL & PJ	Conduct staff survey on future of office	26 June 2025
	All	Board directors to volunteer to support future of office project	ASAP

The Chair closed the meeting at 15.50 hours.

DRAFT