

***RESPONSE FROM ANDREW SAMUELS TO
'THE FUTURE IS IN YOUR HANDS' BY HEWARD
WILKINSON, TRICIA SCOTT, KEN EVANS, ANGELA
COTTER AND JOCELYNE QUENNELL (written
September 30th 2009)***

I am writing this response to the document circulated to all HIPS registrants by Heward, Tricia, Ken, Angela and Jo. I gather this statement was not authorised by the HIPS Executive and I am rather relieved to hear it.

I am not completely happy with the way the election is being run but, for the moment, rather than complain about bias within the process, I will focus on the document.

My main aim herein is to reassure everyone that a vote for me will not lead to the destructive and anarchic results wildly claimed in the document. We are certainly at a decisive moment but that doesn't mean that a vote for Andrew is a vote for Armageddon. To the contrary, a vote for me would mark your commitment to the traditions and core values of psychotherapy, including our ethical and even our spiritual values, such as standing up to undue and illegitimate authority and refusing to be silenced when resistance is appropriate. In addition, as my position statement for the election shows, I am not running on a single issue. I have carefully compared the three position statements and all range over a variety of issues and policies.

People may not realise that over 800 UKCP registrants have signed the petition against HPC. This needs to be taken seriously because it is highly likely that other registrants will share those concerns. This is why I am calling for a secret ballot on the HPC issue. We don't really know who actually supports HPC. Amazing.

It cannot be out of order for a candidate in this election to propose that UKCP suspends its support for HPC regulation and takes a lead - that hopefully others will follow - in calling for a Convention on the Future of Psychotherapy and Counselling. Support for regulation via the means of HPC is not enshrined in the UKCP constitution as a 'founding principle' (to use the term in the document). Indeed, UKCP support for HPC is relatively new. Only a few years ago, we were enthusiastically backing the idea of a Psychological Professions Council. And on July 1st this year, James Antrican wrote of HPC on the *Guardian* website that '[I]t is only in psychological therapies that the relationship is actually the means of treatment. This requires a different approach to regulation'.

The proposed Convention would help to determine what that approach to regulation might be.

Even the BACP is now realising what a disaster HPC is going to be for them ([http://ipnosis.postle.net/PDFS/BACP letter 28 July 09.pdf](http://ipnosis.postle.net/PDFS/BACP%20letter%2028%20July%2009.pdf)), and politicians from all parties as well as elements within the HPC itself are beginning to have serious doubts. This is probably why the HPC has taken a road show to the party conferences – they are more or less saying 'We will regulate you whether you like it or not and we are not interested in what you say, the alternatives you propose, and the evidence you bring'.

Isn't it OK for a candidate to criticise the leadership of an organisation if he is, as I am, coming to the election as a relative outsider who has not been part of that leadership? The signatories of the statement are long-time leaders of the UKCP for which they deserve gratitude and respect but not uncritical obedience. Perhaps the problem is indeed that the future is in our hands.

It is interesting to note the inadvertent undermining of UKCP in the document when such importance is laid on the arrival of this new body, the Mental Health Providers Forum. The heaping of praise on this organisation (which may well be justified) and the roster of members cited (many of whom are not UKCP) suggests that there could be a growing acceptance that UKCP may have lost its way.

There is much in this document with which I agree. For example, the strong statements about IAPT and the Savoy Partnership reflect, years after I first issued public statements, my profound concerns about these projects. <>

I have been puzzled to hear that a vote for me would mean that people might lose their jobs because they would not be able to register with HPC and this might have become mandatory in the public sector. Is this in fact a reasonable argument? Or is it electoral scaremongering? I will try to answer like this:

If HPC proceeds (which I hope it does not), then all will be well from the point of view of these employment worries. If elected, I would work with HPC, of course. But if HPC does not proceed, then, not only will everyone be in the same boat and nobody's job threatened more than anybody else's job, but there will have to be something else, and I would also work with that.

I am not against some kind of regulation and accountability. It is not that I 'stop short' of opposing all regulation in a tricky manner that disguises a much more extreme view ('sabotage'!!). I want us to have this Convention on the Future of Psychotherapy and Counselling to see what model of regulation would really be best for us, one that we can ALL support enthusiastically. Other models exist and are in use in other countries which is a good thing because it is pretty clear that, outside of a very, very small group indeed,

no-one is gung-ho for the HPC. Not even the HPC is gung-ho for the HPC!

(BTW, the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats are interested in the idea of a Convention and so is Lord Alderdice, from what he told me the other day. There is nothing to lose by having it, you see.)

The authors of the document have accepted that much of what they wrote about me is defamatory and inaccurate and they have retracted it in writing. As the libel lawyer I consulted put it, it is a 'non-retraction retraction'. But this stuff is circulating and so I must address the questions raised about my candidacy itself.

What has not been noticed is that, if we find another way to regulate psychotherapy and counselling than HPC, none of what I say and write on my website will be relevant. The reason I said what I said is that I had been getting threatening letters from the HPC Chief Exec demanding to know what I would call myself if 'psychotherapist' became a protected title. Hence the need for the Disclaimer that you can click and read on www.andrewsamuels.com I hope this little bit of context, which the four signatories knew perfectly well, is helpful.

Here is a public letter from one of the Board of Trustees of UKCP, Paul Atkinson, that is really extremely worrying. Without moralising or getting into a shame game, I do think all who have received the document of the HIPS Political group should take careful note of what Paul says:

Dear Members of the Board of Trustees,

I am very concerned as an ordinary member of the Board, as well as vice-chair of CPJA and Andrew Samuels' nominator for Chair of UKCP, at the direction campaigning within UKCP is taking.

The statement on the election from the HIPS political group is offensive to an open and honest process. Not only does it defame and grossly misrepresent Andrew and his platform - I understand that Andrew has asked for and received a retraction on certain statements – it blatantly distorts and misrepresents the history of the UKCP and its political process, the significance of considerable opposition to HPC regulation among UKCP registrants and the opportunity for a real vote among registrants on the direction of UKCP on regulation that Andrew’s candidature for Chair represents.

As far as I understand it it is not true that “the Board of Trustees of UKCP at its meeting this weekend (26-09-09) voted unanimously in favour of supporting Regulation through the HPC.”

It is not true that that “the UKCP...’s..... aim [of state regulation] has been continually reiterated by all the member organisations through the democratic vote throughout [its twenty years of existence]”. It has been consistently critiqued and resisted by many – some of whom have left the organisation over the years for that very reason.

It is not true that Andrew is anti-regulation. He is opposed to HPC regulation, which like many registrants he has come to see to be inappropriate and potentially damaging to the profession.

It is not true that “the UKCP was ready with generic guide-lines and training standards. These are enshrined with the values, principles, theories, philosophy, codes of conduct, ethics and professional practice that have evolved collaboratively, systematically and strategically over twenty years.” Many of these enshrined principles, codes etc have been imposed in recent years from the centre of the UKCP and have been resisted and rejected by the CPJA – they are still in dispute.

Andrew’s statement for the election represents the views of a significant proportion of UKCP registrants. Over 850 UKCP members have signed the Alliance petition calling for a halt to the HPC regulation process and for space to have a rethink about the appropriateness of this form of regulation for our profession. This is part of Andrew’s election statement. Only 26% of CPJA registrants responding to our section’s survey supported regulation via HPC.

Many of us have called for a poll of membership opinion over the years on HPC regulation, calls which have been opposed at the centre. Andrew has said he will organise a poll or polls, and be guided by the outcome.

For Heward and his colleagues to paint Andrew's programme for the UKCP as in opposition to UKCP policy [a Trojan horse for the Alliance] is an insult to registrants who agree with him and speaks of the undemocratic, bureaucratic abrogation of power within the UKCP that many members of my own section have been pointing out for several years now. This document, which reads as full of panic that HIPS members might not have minds of their own, completely justifies our reading of the organisation's undemocratic dynamics. Opposition to HPC regulation is a significant opinion among UKCP members.

This document cannot be allowed to stand without being made available to public comment by all members of the organisation.

Howard has suggested that it will go on the UKCP website. Can someone please tell me who is in control of this election process? Who is making up these changes in policy as it goes along? Can someone get hold of this process in a transparent way before it becomes utterly devoid of any integrity. Surely we now need as open and interactive a forum as possible. I hear the exec is thinking of using the web for postings and responses for all individual registrants. That would be good. HIPS document must be up there and open for everyone to comment on.

So far the CPJA has wanted to NOT endorse any candidate –nor enter into criticism yet alone defamation of any candidate. We were hoping we could leave it to our members to make up there minds. Clearly not possible.

Paul Atkinson

If you study what Paul is laying out in his letter, you can see that, by now, whoever is elected is not going to have been supported by everyone. We don't have a 'natural' candidate for Chair. And there will have been a degree of bad feeling. If elected, I promise to institute a process of healing and reconciliation, using, if necessary, an outside consultant.

I will conclude very simply with my unedited position statement for election as Chair. I ask everyone to reflect deeply as to whether or not what I wrote makes me so much of a pariah that I don't even deserve to be in the election at all.

I find myself in the surprising situation of standing for Chair of UKCP. This has come about in response to many requests I have received from across the organisation to do so. It is a serious candidacy; I am not mucking around. As an experienced psychotherapy administrator and politician, I have the necessary practical skills and creative abilities for the role. I also believe that I have the potential to unite the disparate factional groupings in the field and, even at this relatively late stage, lead a mission to redraft the map of our relationships with Government.

A vote for me would be the strongest possible action you could take to indicate your general support for the perspectives and proposals I am now going to advocate in this position statement.

Many of you will know that I am very concerned about the policies adopted by UKCP in relation to state regulation via the Health Professions Council. We are simply not a health profession and hence the HPC is quite wrong for us. The entry standards are ludicrously low. The ethics arrangements are inappropriately bureaucratic and adversarial for our kind of work. The Standards of Proficiency are also not fit for purpose. Everyone is now realising that the old mantra that HPC will make no difference to the way we work and the way we train couldn't be further from the truth. It is now clear that there will be a massive impact that others have been very reluctant to acknowledge. HPC will change a helluva lot.

If elected, I will be asking UKCP to take a position of leadership in going to the Government and the Opposition and insisting that an alternative approach to accountability and regulation be developed. I want us to call in the first instance for a Convention on the Future of Psychotherapy and Counselling.

UKCP's unsatisfactory response to the consultation on the Professional Liaison Group and Standards of Proficiency documents reflected the fact that there has not been sufficient serious internal debate about what line to take, let alone holding some sort of democratic ballot of individual registrants. If elected, *I would institute a ballot or a series of ballots on the questions that face us so that all registrants can have a voice in shaping UKCP policy on state regulation.*

I don't accept that HPC is a done deal. Politicians I have spoken to from all the main parties are certainly prepared to listen to the profession if cogent arguments are mounted. Isn't it interesting that virtually no-one is particularly enthusiastic about HPC? Several far more attractive proposals for providing therapist accountability and regulation exist. These include the idea of a Practitioner Full Disclosure List, which has worked very well in other countries, and the plan for a 'talking heads council'. At one time, UKCP supported a version of such a council. Above all, we must make it plain that the HPC and its PLG have lost the confidence of the UKCP. The means of selection of the PLG and the way it conducted its meetings were, at times, little short of disgraceful.

You can read a dissection of the Standards of Proficiency and the other HPC proposals at <http://allianceforcandp.org>

But HPC is not the only challenge we face. Our involvement in the Savoy Partnership and the inability to distance ourselves from the Improving Access to Psychological Therapies scheme are going to be damaging to the profession. IAPT's economic goals are unethical from a therapy point of view and the coup by which this scheme has garnered all the money for (watered down) CBT is just not justifiable.

The scandal of the Skills for Health initiative should have been tackled head on and in a much more public manner by UKCP. It was a situation crying out for strong and non-deferential leadership from our organisation.

The battle over the National Institute for Clinical Excellence guidelines has not been fought sufficiently energetically. If elected, *I would seek to address all of these problems in a way that is faithful to the values and traditions of the field whilst realising that this might not make us terribly popular in the circles of the powerful.*

In sum, UKCP has got itself muddled up in an unreflective manner with all the fascinating, power-ridden and resource-driven activities going on in our world at the present time. Objectivity and the sense that the interests and values of this profession must come first have progressively been lost sight of.

Moreover, UKCP is not investing sufficiently in its unique feature as the only national multi-modality organisation in the field. If elected, *in addition to further resourcing research, I would set up an educational and clinically-based programme for integrative and comparative approaches in psychotherapy. I would work hard to dissolve any destructive hierarchies and campaign to end the prejudices held by some members of some modalities about other modalities.*

The whole diversity/equality/inclusivity agenda is very dear to me and, if elected, I would highlight this aspect of UKCP's work. As a professional organisation, UKCP cannot deal in partisan politics. But it can and must have a social responsibility agenda, adding the psychotherapy voice and therapy thinking to debates on (for example) climate change and sustainable economics, immigration

and asylum policy, electoral and constitutional reform, economic and foreign policy, and in connection with reducing levels of violence nationally and internationally. It goes without saying that we have much to contribute in terms of mental health provision, programmes for the benefit of families and children, and in relation to educational reform. I believe my track record shows I can walk this tightrope effectively and, if elected, *I promise to make the social responsibility agenda a priority.*

Thank you for taking the time to read this and please visit my website at www.andrewsamuels.com

Andrew