

To the Registrants and MOs of UKCP

From Carmen Joanne Ablack, candidate for Chair UKCP



Several years ago I led CABP, a professional association for body psychotherapists, with the aim of getting the organisation into a position to apply for UKCP membership and to develop closer links with the international field. CABP is now an accrediting organisation within UKCP and has become a national body in the European Association for Body Psychotherapy (EABP).

I loved being able to work with so many generous and committed people, who I knew shared my beliefs about holding the best interests of our clients and our work as body psychotherapists at heart.

My UKCP history thus far

- Delegate to HIP Section
- Accreditation Board of HIPS
- Registration Board of UKCP

I discovered a similar passion and commitment amongst the delegates of all sections and also with those members on the various boards and committees.

- Executive Committee of UKCP
- Chair of the Standards Board
- Chair Education and Training Committee

It has been a privilege to work with all the people on these boards and committees and to meet so many registrants and UKCP delegates dedicated to their profession.

A UKCP Vision

In my professional association CABP, every fee-paying full member could vote and participate actively in the association. Such opportunities were missing for most registrants of UKCP who did not have a voice in the organisation unless they became delegates.

I passionately supported the campaign to transform UKCP and took an active role in the team working towards creating the new UKCP - a professional organisation that encompasses the plurality within the professions and represents our work in the wider world. The first milestone has now been achieved with registrants becoming voting members of UKCP.

We still have more work to do to fully realize UKCP's potential as a professional membership organization. This includes:

- ✓ Further empower individual members and create opportunities to participate actively;
- ✓ Developing regional resources and links with our communities
- ✓ Creating dialogues with training and accrediting organizational members;
- ✓ Fostering other professional bodies as allies;
- ✓ Enrichment of our field through affiliate members from allied professions;
- ✓ Creating opportunities for children and young people in distress, and looking for opportunities to make lives better by being creative with our work;
- ✓ Linking with other major mental health and well being organizations for support, guidance and friendship;
- ✓ Effecting meaningful change through smart alliances;
- ✓ Linking with trade unions Linking with employee associations delivering services to workforces and their families;
- ✓ Improving referral opportunities through UKCP
- ✓ Getting better recognition for UKCP members with insurers and healthcare providers;

In the new UKCP, registrant members will have more opportunities to be part of, and shape these initiatives and projects.

UKCP Volunteers

Together with the current Chair, Officers and Trustees of UKCP I have worked to improve opportunities for registrants' participation in UKCP. As a result, the number of registrants volunteering and contributing to all aspects of the organisation has increased dramatically during the last few years. Some 250 to 300 volunteers now participate in meetings, boards and committees of UKCP and its modality sections.

Their work enables UKCP to meet the challenges facing the profession in the 21st century. With their expertise and passion, they contributed to and supported UKCP's work in:

- Raising the profile of Psychotherapy with Children and Young People nationally and internationally;
- Negotiating the difficulties and challenges of the work on NOS at Skills for Health;
- Challenging NICE guidelines;
- Consulting, negotiating and influencing the work with the HPC;
- Creating the UKCP Karnac Book Series;
- Creating professional events and conferences
- Developing regional focus and representation with the aid Regional Meetings and the new Psychotherapy Council;
- Developing UKCP's voice in society, media and politics;

I have been privileged to contribute my skills and passion to these UKCP activities

and to lead and support some of UKCP's endeavours on political, bureaucratic and administrative levels.

On behalf of UKCP, I have guided and led teams of volunteers in these political, bureaucratic and administrative arenas. I firmly believe that addressing all three levels is essential to achieve a meaningful impact of psychotherapy in the wider world.

Working with Diversity

I have had the pleasure of teaching across Jungian, Humanistic, Existential, Integrative and Systemic disciplines inside and outside of universities over the past twenty or so years, here and abroad - often linking up and learning from indigenous and displaced communities working with their own peoples.

The dialogues and negotiations with all psychotherapy modalities in UKCP as Chair of the Standards Board have been a collegiate learning experience for me and helped me to develop my abilities to hold and utilize the richness of psychotherapeutic and socio-cultural diversities further.

I am keen to continue and develop these dialogues for the best interest of the whole profession. I don't always get it right. I argue passionately but I have also shown my willingness to discuss, negotiate and change my position in the light of better case positions. Meeting the challenges in working with some of the philosophical and passionate diversity within groups in UKCP is both humbling and rewarding. These encounters help me to re-ground myself and the work I do. They are not always comfortable but they are essential and have helped me to fight better battles for registrants and sections in political, bureaucratic and administrative arenas outside. I believe depth and self-honesty are essential qualities for leadership of this organisation.

Representing the Plurality of the Profession

Some of my most challenging moments arose when I had to defend psychotherapists and cross-modality psychotherapy against attacks from external bodies, government committees in the DoH and their the attempts to down grade the complexity of our work by signifying it as merely a list of occupational standards.

I feel inspired by the diversity in our profession and the depth of integrity, passion, competency and sheer quality of our multi-modality practitioners. This gives me the strength and perseverance to meet the frequent challenges of bigoted and self-reverent thinking.

Why I engage with external initiatives

I chose to stay in many meetings and discussions that went on for hours on end with people who ignored, marginalised or downgraded psychotherapy and psychotherapists. I persevere because I get results from being that tenacious.

I have just agreed major inclusions into the Humanistic NOS at Skills for Health that give recognition to the unconscious and transference aspects of our work in the HIP Section - this took an ability to keep coming to the table and presenting the case until it was not

only heard, but also created useful and powerful allies for us and has garnered a respect for the depth and quality of UKCP in public arenas.

With the support of section representatives, from the team of fellow officers and with a Board of Trustees that encouraged and supported me to do what I do best, which is speak up for others and especially those being marginalised, I was able to broker what we needed.

Working with the Chair and the Vice Chair of CPJA Section, we were able to reflect a genuine and principled position for them in relation to their Sections' experience of the Skills for Health project. This honest reflection garnered open acknowledgement of UKCP's integrity in being able to hold a diversity of experiences, contribute effectively and lay a marker down for what would be required to establish legitimacy from any future review.

Those modalities ignored by the recent NOS process have also been identified for consideration in any review. Sometimes planting the seed is the best we can do for the moment. I am personally and passionately committed to ensuring that psychotherapists and psychotherapeutic counsellors working in private practice, the NHS and elsewhere are not marginalized nor consigned to roles and situations that undermine the heart of our work and thus reduce or destroy what we can offer to clients and society.

I accepted responsibility for co-ordinating UKCP (Modality) Professional Occupational Standards and preparing the guidance for their use. It is my belief that we must continue to put our own case into the world in ways that are accessible to others, especially those who can influence the training and employment of our practitioners.

Psychotherapy has come of age

As we move into a new phase with a stronger voice and better public recognition, UKCP must also hold a place for our reflective soul. I genuinely believe that the new structure we are creating together can and will allow both our diversity and our synthesis to emerge to the benefit of us all.

We are a serious, thoughtful and essential profession. We make a marked difference to the people we see and to the people beyond with whom our clients live and work, to their children's happiness and to the quality of the communities in which we live and work. We need to celebrate our achievements and stop being in any way apologetic for what we are doing.

We must find new ways to engage wider and more diverse communities:

- ✓ In our client work and environments;
- ✓ By creating specific opportunities for members of these groups to become practitioners alongside us;
- ✓ By having the humility to let such groups help us to enrich our professions of

psychotherapy and psychotherapeutic counselling by creating opportunity for critical feedback and inspired innovation in meeting their needs.

The HPC elements

1. Statutory regulation forms part of the enhanced recognition and growing public awareness of our work. It is increasingly the norm for professions dealing with the physical, psychological, mental and emotional aspects of individuals to be regulated.
2. My preference has been for a Psychological Professions Council, something UKCP has put forward to the DH in the past. We continue to discuss this with other professions and in the political arena as an alternative.
3. HPC is the regulator identified by government and I would consider it a dereliction of my responsibilities as a member of the Executive of UKCP to have done anything other than engage and try to change those parts of the process that are inimical to psychotherapeutic practitioners.
4. UKCP must participate constructively in all the negotiations and dialogues that give us the opportunity to ensure we end up answerable to the appropriate questions and standards for our work. We must continue to pursue this in an intelligent and critically reflective manner. This critical reflective ability has helped me to communicate the quality and integrity of our registrants and member organisations and it carries with it the chance to change things.
5. We are already seeing some progress in the fact that the HPC is undertaking a serious review of their generic standards in recognition that they had previously been too reflective of the language and concepts of a limited understanding of health. They recognize that they will need to reflect the purview of the psychological professions that have either recently or in the near future are due to enter the list of professions they regulate.
6. While this is not to be underestimated, I do not see it as an end in itself, but rather as a reflection of the opportunities we have in helping educate and inform the regulator and in changing what others have characterized as unchangeable. But only if we are in the room, at the table, and in the relevant conversations.
7. I have been involved in trying to establish a meaningful relationship with the regulator chosen by government, the HPC since I came into my current role. There are dangers and we need to be constantly reassessing in order to ensure HPC becomes and remains fit for the purpose of regulating psychotherapy and psychotherapeutic counselling.
8. This vigilance has been part of the work of several of us on the executive and in the wider organisation over many, many months. Do not be fooled into thinking UKCP have taken regulation through HPC for granted nor that we are complacent in our dialogues with HPC. We must continue to engage and watch our engagement at the same time, we are psychotherapists, we know how to do that task.

We must be bigger than the limits of statutory regulation if we are to really make a difference.

I appreciate the concerns, anxieties and distrust of many registrants about the imposition of HPC statutory regulation. I do not agree however with those who are against UKCP being in a constructive dialogue with HPC with a view to being regulated by them.

At the same time I respect those who hold a genuine principled position about this and UKCP has committed and continues to commit to finding a way for those practitioners to remain within the organization. I agree wholeheartedly with this commitment.

This equally is not a wholly popular position. I do believe however that we would lose something very important if the creative, sometimes oppositional discourse is not held well by us collectively.

If not us, with all our history, training and experience then where else will you find a national and international body for psychotherapy that can allow the diversity of thoughts, approaches and opinions to be the forge of the profession honing the work it really needs to do?

I want to be able to guide this process on behalf of the whole membership with support and critically reflective advice from all the constituent parts of UKCP. This includes creating a strong working partnership with staff and the Chief Executive. I want to ensure we continue to foster and develop important political and professional relationships with other significant bodies and individuals of influence in the wider world.

Self Respect as a Profession

Holding our diversity of traditions and respecting each other seems to me crucial now and for the future.

Behaving sometimes in disrespectful ways towards each other seems to me how we continue to self-harm and foster unsound psychic environments for ourselves, and ultimately our clients. Of course we will sometimes hurt each other with our actions or words or how we say our words, but intentional harm I believe demeans us all and we must guard against this even though we will transgress it sometimes.

Can we win battles without getting scarred?

As a body psychotherapist I know this work cannot be done without some wounding. It is this very wounding which together with our capacity as psychotherapists to reflect on its meaning that empowers me to keep fighting but also to keep talking, to

keep engaging and to keep cognisant of what truly matters in our work and how we represent it to the world.

It is not the getting on with people I like or respect that counts per se; although this is a precious thing... it is the ability to make headway with the "stinkers" that is often the more important skill. Therefore I believe retaining my humanity in the face of others indifference, discrimination, dismissal and ignorance in the long term is what will really matter.

For me, it is about ensuring our work is protected as an art as well as a science and seeing this recognised as valid and desirable for the best interest of society. And by knowing that by returning over and over again to compassionate engagement that headway can be made, sometimes small, sometimes bigger.

It is important that I remain resolute in the face of the challenges and not allowing myself to be distracted by petty trivia. I will not betray my training, my work or the learning from my clients that no matter how hard it is, ultimately I must stay truthful to my integrity and honest about what is possible moment by moment. I have soul searched and engaged in challenging dialogues with colleagues inside and outside UKCP and will continue to do so with the best possible interests of our profession and our clients at heart.

Ultimately this is not about you and me; it is about the generations of practitioners and clients who will come after us. I am determined to give it my best to help make the world held and engaged in by UKCP a place that will foster the growth and development of the heart of our profession.

I am a psychotherapist who is black, female, getting older and probably eats a little too much chocolate. But all these things form part of who I am and how I meet the challenges ahead, including the chocolate.

Meaningful Contributions and Working with Children

I know that the UKCP can be a place that contributes and continues to develop in a way that makes that contribution more meaningful over time. I am determined that we maintain and extend diversity, learn from reflecting on our creative tensions and focus on what really matters. I am determined to work with others to find a place for all the registrants we have now and those who wish to join UKCP in the future.

I want to say a particular word about working with children and young people and child psychotherapy. UKCP has an opportunity to become one of the most important influences on the work being done in these areas. I am passionate about supporting the continued development of this work. I would also like to see us collectively utilise the experience we are gaining from it to help us understand how to meet the challenges of engaging with marginalized and forgotten groups across our society.

We will not do this from some position of academic discourse or political polemic alone. UKCP naturally supports this essential discourse and the people who do it well on behalf of all the profession. But I think we also need to understand that this work cannot be limited to our therapy and training rooms but needs to be taken out into the wider world. Individually and collectively, we must engage with changing times and question some of our habitual positions for the better of our work and contributions to society.

Psychotherapy in the 21st Century needs to be more passionate and compassionate than ever before if we are to play a meaningful role in our communities, societies and our world beyond the immediate concerns posed by statutory regulation or occupational standards. I accept this is also the challenge for UKCP itself, which is why I genuinely welcome my nomination for Chair and why I am willing to do the job.

I hope you will feel able to support me to take up the role of Chair of UKCP so I can contribute my skills and humanity to the team that will help guide our professional body towards a bright future.

Carmen