



Principal Executive Committee

1 May 2019

Report to country councils and standing committees

Summary

The Principal Executive Committee (PEC) met on 1 May 2019. This report contains a summary of the issues discussed.

Company law training

Members of the PEC are the statutory Directors of the Association, and we must be mindful of our responsibilities under legislation. Members of the PEC undertake regular training to explore all aspects of the law, or in some cases to properly understand our legal and governance responsibilities regarding a particular decision. We dedicated two hours of training at this meeting, facilitated by an external trainer.

Launch of BDA indemnity

Peter Ward provided an update on preparations for the launch of the BDA's new indemnity product in June, including various administrative, policy, regulatory and organisational matters.

The announcement of BDA Indemnity was made in the BDJ and BDJ- in Practice over the weekend of 12 April and at the same point the indemnity pages on the BDA website went live. In the first week of presence on the website, the indemnity pages attracted brisk traffic.

Peter Ward has been attending a range of BDA branches and sections to gauge reaction and to respond to early questions and enquiries. There has been a great deal of positive interest.

The PEC congratulated Peter Ward and the team for the extensive work and time that has been invested in this significant new offer from the BDA. Members told us they wanted the BDA to review the indemnity market and consider ways in which we could improve opportunities for members. BDA Indemnity is the result, driven very much by the values of the Association. We hope members will take the time to consider the new product and compare the offer with their existing arrangements and other competitors in the market.

Political neutrality guidelines

The BDA asserts that it is free of any party political allegiance and sets its policies in the best interests of the profession and the patients it serves. Staff are expected to implement those policies to the best of their ability, regardless of private conviction; and similarly, elected committee members should contribute to debate on policy issues in the best interests of the profession, and their patients and constituents. Again, elected members should not exhibit any party political bias in the democratic and policy making processes of the Association, and they must accept cabinet responsibility.

Staff and elected committee members and officers can join, and actively support a political party in a private capacity under the guidelines. This includes the freedom to stand as a candidate for a political party in an election, providing the individual concerned alerts the Chief Executive as soon as possible and cooperates with the Association in managing the situation. In most cases a candidate selection can be handled with good sense on both sides, but clearly a member of staff or elected member or officer with a high profile might encounter more difficulties and sensitive circumstances. As a result it's possible sometimes that being a candidate is incompatible with continued employment or elected office with the Association.

The discussion about the guidelines was prompted by an individual case, but it was agreed that it was timely to ask the Audit Committee to review the guidelines in general to ensure they remain fit for purpose.

Reports

We received a report from the Acting Chief Executive; and reports from the BDA in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Hannah Woolnough, the Chair of English Country Council and rotational Chair of the United Kingdom Council, delivered the report of the most recent meeting of the UK Council in March.

Susie Sanderson and Len D'Cruz

This was the last meeting attended by Susie Sanderson in her capacity as President, and thanks were expressed to Susie on behalf of the BDA for a very successful year, and for being such a superb ambassador for the BDA at home and abroad.

Thanks were also expressed to Len D'Cruz for his service on the PEC, following his recent resignation. Len's intelligent and measured contribution to the work of the PEC during eventful times will be sorely missed. A UK wide by election is underway to fill the vacancy.

Mick Armstrong
Chair, Principal Executive Committee

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