

## Chair's Report

Active membership numbers continue to grow with an increase of 25% in the last 5 years (2018 to 2023) with actual members being close to four thousand at financial year end 2023.

The Board will be looking to work with schools to continue to drive membership numbers up, increasing benefits to members via such channels as our monthly CPD taster chats; and working with schools to look for further opportunities to grow the community while maintaining and driving standards at all times.

The NCH membership play a vital role in maintaining our influence in the profession. We are pleased to confirm that alongside strengthening our Board and maintaining our ability to respond to such matters as the recent consultation with the CNHC, we continue to manage our costs within a similar envelope to the previous two years – with a turnover increase of 7.6% income helping to balance an increase in overall costs of 8.3% year '22 to '23. With continued careful prudence in place we will continue to support the membership, via Directors and Officers in the year ahead.

The NCH has provided an annual conference for many years and over the last few due to COVID, have moved the conference to online. Emerging into the post Covid years, venue spaces and hire has become too costly for the NCH to justify hosting an in person event- more often than not the numbers of attendees being around 150 members - less than 5% of our membership, to (usually) making a loss of between 5K - 10K, sometimes more. This is not a tenable option moving forward.

The online conferences, the paying of speakers and the demands on Board time & resources has been more cost effective, but again, whilst the cost has been less demanding we have seen a similar proportion of attendees to the in person conference. What we have discovered by hosting our free CPDs; the same number of speakers / same amount of time peppered throughout the year is that our attendee rate has tripled, and we conclude that this offering is far more palatable to a greater proportion of our membership.

The Mentorship programme has launched thanks to all the hard work of the team with Lisa Wade at the helm, the NCH is on standby to offer support fo those newly trained or members returning to practice. The peer groups continue to thrive both online and in person.

It's been a wonderful year of watching Sophie Fletcher as Membership Director team up with Abbey Robb on Comms and John Cassidy-Rice in Ops resulting in the embracing of social media with a presence on Facebook and an NCH members page, LinkedIn, with some great, lengthy articles for sharing, and instagram. Our aim to create unity within the membership and promote the NCH and client safety in as many arenas as possible.

The Board continues to go from strength to strength, we saw the introduction and departure of Alan Henderson as our PR - you may have remembered him hosting the online conference, the call of paid work too strong to continue to serve as an NCH Director. The Board are aware that increasingly the Board strengthens with more paid work; when we advertise the responses to paid work outweigh the responses to serve as a Director, and over the next few years are moving towards recruiting people who we can pay for services.

It was a huge loss to say goodbye to Karen Eels, our admin manager and training executive, Karen brought so many skills to the NCH and we miss her practical, no-nonsense wisdom. It is rare for someone to bring all the insights Karen brought to the team and to work as hard and diligently as she did, always one step ahead of the curve. The NCH wishes her all the best for her future and thanks her for all her hard work.

Every year there have been challenges for the NCH and every year the team has worked together to champion those challenges, this year has been no exception. Team NCH has been incredible; from Directors giving their time willingly to support the cause to our Exec working tirelessly on queries and complaints.

There are so many services the NCH provides to its members and we would not be able to do any of those things without an amazing team.

A big thank you to those from the past and the present Board.