

Briefing note re results of feedback from members of Central Council on key questions relating to an emerging constitution

This note reports limited progress with implementing the decision of the 2020 AGM to alter the legal status of the SHA to that of a company limited by guarantee. Central Council members in post at that or immediately after the AGM may recall that this topic was explained in a detailed paper prepared for the last meeting of Central Council but the item was not reached. Subsequent to that meeting, and to make some progress, the views of members of the then Central Council (now disbanded) were sought on four aspects which officers judged needed to be clarified before further detailed work on a revised constitution could be done.

The four issues were:

- a) Should the SHA operate across the whole of the United Kingdom or, as now, only Great Britain?
- b) Should it relate primarily to the NHS or the wider care system including both social care (adult and children)?
- c) Should it aim over time to offer each of its members an active body operating in their locality and if so using how many operating branches? Currently large parts of England have no operating branch.
- d) Looking ahead to becoming a company, what should be the size of the managing Board (Central Council) to balance manageability and member engagement and democratic oversight?

The level of response from members of Central Council was limited, seven replies only were received.

All seven responses supported remit of the SHA being to cover the U.K. and to encompass both the NHS and Social Care.

Views about the number of active branches that SHA ought to plan to have in England were mixed (as were views on how such branches should align with other structures e.g. Health Boards, local authorities). Two suggested a range of 16-20; one over 20, and one up to 15.

Likewise, in respect of the optimal size of Central Council views differed from around 25, 26-35, up to 40 and over 50. One response also suggested that, whatever the number, there should continue to be the same proportion of directly elected members as now.

Since the survey was conducted, membership of Central Council has been altered by two of the three officers, an action which in itself should cause

members to ponder the adequacy of the current constitution as both an enabling and constraining device.