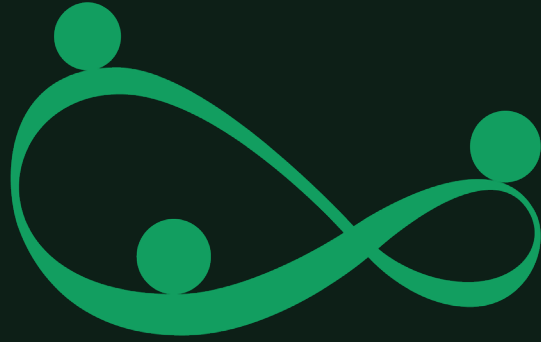




Association for Family &
Systemic Psychotherapy

51st AFSP AGM

Chair's Report: July 2025 - June 2026

A year of celebration, transition and renewal

Association for Family and Systemic Psychotherapy



Association for Family &
Systemic Psychotherapy

Welcome to our 51st AGM

At its best, AFSP is more than a professional body. It is a relational home for systemic practitioners, psychotherapists, trainers, supervisors, researchers, students, services and communities who believe that relationships matter — in therapy, in organisations, and in society.



Association for Family &
Systemic Psychotherapy

A year at a glance

From our 50th anniversary year into a renewed AFSP identity

This year has been marked by pride in our history, care for our volunteers and members, and the practical work of strengthening the organisation for the next phase.



Celebrating our roots while building the conditions for AFSP to thrive



Association for Family &
Systemic Psychotherapy

Celebrating 50 years of systemic practice

A milestone for the profession and for our membership community

50th

Annual conference and
birthday celebrations

Context

Special edition marking
the anniversary

Online

Celebration to
widen participation

AFSP

Name and identity
carried forward

What this made visible

The reach, creativity and resilience of systemic practice across training, services, independent practice, research, leadership and community life.

What we carry forward

A stronger story about why relational and systemic ways of working matter in public services, communities, independent practice, training, research, and leadership

Our 50th year was not only a celebration of the past – it was an invitation to imagine the next chapter



A heartfelt thank you to the people who hold and sustain our Association

The work of AFSP continues to depend on extraordinary volunteer and staff contribution

Volunteers and committees

Thank you to all committee chairs, committee members, working groups, branches, editors, reviewers, trainers and members who give time, wisdom and care to the Association.

Trustees and board members

I would like to extend deep gratitude to our current Board members for their ongoing commitment, care and generosity as volunteers. This has been a year of significant organisational transition, requiring careful stewardship of governance, culture, confidentiality, boundaries, and competing narratives, while continuing to act in the best interests of AFSP and its members.

Staff and operational colleagues

With heartfelt thanks to our dedicated staff team and colleagues, whose work has supported members, committees, events, finance, communications, governance and professional standards, while also carrying forward key projects including the new website and membership portal, the Blue Book Training Standards Review, and the strengthening of AFSP's organisational infrastructure

Departures and transitions

With gratitude to executive and staff colleagues who have moved on this past year, recognising the care, commitment and contribution they have offered to AFSP, our members and our wider systemic community. Kathi, Hannah, Kate, Antonia.

AFSP is not held by structures alone; it is sustained by the care, labour and commitment of a relational community.



Navigating staffing and capacity change

A year that required steadiness, prioritisation and relational leadership

Executive capacity shifted

Autumn 2025 brought significant changes in executive leadership and organisational capacity. The Board and remaining staff team worked carefully to sustain core functions, prioritise essential work, and support continuity for members, committees and key projects

Stabilise

Interim CEO appointed

We welcomed Rob as Interim CEO during a period of organisational transition. His appointment reflects AFSP's current need for CEO leadership focused on organisational stability, charity governance, operational grip, change management and the capacity to work systemically with complexity. The role is grounded in respect for the profession and AFSP's relational values, while holding a non-partisan position across the organisation.

Prioritise

Project leadership added

We warmly welcome Davina as Interim Organisational Projects Lead, strengthening AFSP's capacity to progress priority projects, support transition planning and build the organisational infrastructure needed for the next phase.

Rebuild

This year, trustees have carried significant responsibility: holding organisational transition, complex histories and difficult decisions, while working to build stability, trust and a sustainable future for AFSP



Strengthening governance and accountability

Building clearer conditions for trust, decision-making and future leadership

From AFT to AFSP

Embedding the Association for Family and Systemic Psychotherapy name and identity, while honouring the history and recognisability of AFT.

Professional conduct and ethics

We have introduced a Code of Conduct for AFSP events and meetings as part of our wider work to strengthen organisational culture and governance. This provides a shared framework for respectful participation, helping us hold difference, disagreement and complexity in ways that protect dignity, inclusion and relational safety. It reflects our commitment to ensuring that AFSP spaces are welcoming, accountable and consistent with the values of systemic practice.

Board culture

We have continued to strengthen Board culture through greater relational presence, clearer communication, and more accountable governance there is still much more to do in this area capacity has been a challenge – staying connected with members, committees and staff while improving how decisions are made, communicated and reviewed is something we want to pay ongoing particular attention to.

Our aim is to build an Association where members feel better informed, more connected and more able to participate in shaping the future of the profession.

Membership engagement/benefits

Membership engagement remains central to AFSP's purpose. This year we have sought to strengthen the ways members can connect, contribute and benefit – through events, webinars, committees, branches, publications, consultation spaces and the development of a new website and member portal. This work is ongoing, and we recognise there is more to do in strengthening membership engagement, communication and participation.



Strengthening governance and accountability

Building clearer conditions for trust, decision-making and future leadership

Clearer governance

Continuing work on Articles, committee terms of reference, scheme of delegation and Board processes to clarify who decides what.

Professional conduct and ethics

Continuing to hold complaints, confidentiality, professional standards and organisational learning with care and legal responsibility.

Finance and reserves

Financial stewardship has been a significant area of Board focus this year. Trustees have reviewed the charity's systems, risks and controls, including how we protect the organisation from fraud, error, misappropriation and financial vulnerability. Where weaknesses or risks were identified, the Board has taken action to strengthen oversight, improve reporting, clarify delegated authority, and ensure appropriate checks and balances are in place. This work is not about blame; it is about responsible governance, learning, and protecting the charity for its members and beneficiaries. Strengthening oversight through the accounts process, dashboard review and formalising reserves thinking for sustainability.



Investing in infrastructure

A new website and member portal as a practical foundation for the next phase

New digital infrastructure

Member experience

Improved renewal, profile management and access to services.

Events and CPD

Better booking, communications and member engagement.

Public visibility

Clearer routes for public, employers and stakeholders to understand systemic practice.

Operational resilience

Less reliance on manual processes and stronger organisational memory.

This investment has required significant resource and patience. It is also part of a wider move from short-term fixes towards sustainable systems.



Professional standards and training

Supporting the quality, consistency and future development of systemic training

Blue Book Training Standards Review

Continuing the detailed review of training standards, competencies and learning outcomes, with feedback loops across committees and working groups.

Portfolio development

Developing clearer minimum standards and template approaches to support consistency across courses while allowing contextual adaptation.

Accreditation and registration

Maintaining professional standards work, including course accreditation, member registration pathways and UKCP-facing responsibilities.

Course lead connection

Continuing to support dialogue with training providers and course leads on the realities of training in complex service and university contexts.

Training standards are not only technical documents - they shape the future identity, confidence and accountability of our profession.



Association for Family &
Systemic Psychotherapy

Four nations, branches and membership connection

Building a more connected and representative Association

Four nations integration

Continuing to strengthen representation and connection across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland through Board representation, conference thinking and relationship-building. This year's conference in Glasgow and next year Wales.

Branches and networks

Recognising the contribution of branches and regional networks in keeping systemic community life visible, local and responsive.

Member voice

Continuing routes for members to raise ideas, concerns and aspirations through AGM questions, committees, Connecting in Conversations and direct engagement. We hope to implement more member surveys for feedback and find helpful ways for wider connections and benefits.

Connection is not a soft extra; it is the infrastructure of a membership organisation.



Influence, partnerships and visibility

Making systemic thinking visible in wider professional and policy spaces

Psychotherapy and the NHS

Contributing to national conversations about psychotherapy, evidence, workforce, commissioning language and the importance of relational care.

Stakeholder relationships

Continuing dialogue with UKCP, NHS England, BPS/DCP and wider psychotherapy partners to strengthen recognition and collaborative leadership.

International presence

Maintaining connection with international systemic communities including IFTA, EFTA and wider systemic networks.

Systemic practice is well placed to support leadership conversations that hold complexity rather than flatten it

The task ahead is to translate our values into language that commissioners, services, members and the public can recognise and use



Holding complexity through the year

Celebration and challenge have existed side by side

What has been energising

50th anniversary celebrations; member commitment; new volunteers; renewed partnerships; progress on infrastructure and standards.

What has been demanding

Staffing changes; reduced executive capacity; financial scrutiny; complaints and confidential matters; holding boundaries where curiosity, concern and speculation exceeded what could appropriately be shared.

How the Board has tried to lead

With steadiness, confidentiality where legally required, openness where possible, and a commitment to organisational learning rather than blame.

What members can expect

Continued focus on building a sustainable and relational Association: strong governance, clear professional standards, meaningful member benefits, better volunteer support, financial resilience, a committed Board culture, and a stronger voice for systemic practice.

We have been learning how to be both caring and boundaried, relational and accountable, ambitious and realistic



Looking ahead: 2026 priorities

From stabilisation into sustainable development

1 Embed the new website and portal

Make the member experience simpler, clearer and more connected.

Progress the ongoing work of updating Articles, reviewing policies, clarifying delegation, strengthening committee processes, financial oversight and accountability, and ensuring AFSP's structures are fit for the next phase of the organisation. Continue to review and strengthen AFSP's staffing structure so that roles, capacity and ways of working are sustainable, clearly aligned and able to meet the needs of members, committees, volunteers and the wider organisation.

2 Continue governance development

3 Progress Training standards

Move the Blue Book review and portfolio work through consultation and implementation planning.

4 Strengthen voice and visibility

Develop commissioner-facing evidence, NHS partnerships and public understanding of systemic practice. Hopefully a 10 years on evidence base following Peter Stratton's report in 2016!

5 Nurture the community

Value volunteers, four nations connection, committees, branches, members and staff. Review staffing structure and capacity

Thank you for staying in relationship with AFSP through a year of celebration, challenge and change



Finally...

Thank you for staying in relationship with AFSP through a year of celebration, challenge and change. As we look ahead, our work is to continue building an Association that is relational, accountable, sustainable and courageous enough to learn — one that honours our history while creating the conditions for systemic practice to thrive. ❤️ 🙏