

Chairman's Report

UKAS has recorded a strong performance and seen a number of important developments in the last year. As detailed in the accompanying Chief Executive's Report and the Financial Review, the volume of business grew across a wide range of sectors and there was a continued increase in the number of organisations coming forward to be accredited for the first time as well as current customers seeking to extend the scope of their existing accreditation.

There is without doubt a greater recognition and understanding across target audiences of the relevance of accreditation. This increased awareness has to a large part been driven by our productive engagement with Government departments, regulators, agencies and other parts of the Public Sector.

Bilateral discussions with individual departments and regulators about specific projects remain the key element of this dialogue. We have however again held a successful series of larger events that have attracted senior decision-makers from across the Public Sector and other key arenas. The AGM lunch in October allowed an important audience to hear Lord Carter of Coles set out his considered views on the positive role of accreditation in future. In December, a UKAS Think-Tank entitled "Quality and Safety in Health Provision – Smart Solutions" attracted a distinguished panel and an excellent attendance that explored the contribution that accreditation can make to the delivery of both safety and quality outcomes. More recently, we held our annual lunchtime reception at the House of Lords for senior civil servants with the theme "Standards and accreditation - helping Government to achieve more for less" and were delighted with a record response from our invitation list.

Underpinning our engagement with Government and its various agencies has been our continued close liaison with our sponsor department, the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS), who had inherited this role from the former Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS). I should record my thanks to officials there for their support, advice and guidance. They also played a key part in Parliament approving the statutory instrument, in December 2009, that provides our formal appointment as the National Accreditation Body, thereby implementing the UK's obligation under the European Regulation (EC) 765/08. This comprises part of a legal framework for the provision of accreditation services across Europe and gives further national and international recognition of the importance of accreditation in delivering trust, confidence and credibility across products and services in all sectors.

The year also saw us engaging with all the main political parties in the run up to the May 2010 General Election. The discussions were especially constructive as all recognised the relevance of an increased role for UKAS accreditation to their various ambitions as they developed their manifesto commitments to deliver increased government efficiencies and savings, better regulation and greater decentralisation.

Given the progress that has been achieved across so many fronts in challenging times, I must thank Paul Stennett, the senior management team and every member of the UKAS staff. Our record over the year is a testament to their skills and commitment. I should also thank the members of UKAS's Policy Advisory Committee and technical committees, and indeed all UKAS Members. They have continued to play a key role. In recognition of this, I am delighted that over the year, and aided by a number of members and stakeholders, we have developed plans for evolving their contribution to UKAS policy-making and governance in future.

Finally, I should thank my fellow Board members for the high quality advice and assistance that they provide throughout each year. Their individual and collective contribution has been invaluable. It was therefore with sadness that we saw Professor Colin Dennis stand down as a Non-Executive Director after some 12 years on the Board. Over that period, he brought a wealth of expertise and wisdom to our deliberations. However, we were delighted to welcome Sir Duncan Nichol as a new Non-Executive Director. Sir Duncan has been a long-time supporter of accreditation and brings to UKAS the experience gained from a long and distinguished career in a number of fields, most notably the healthcare sector and justice. I look forward to the expertise that Sir Duncan will bring to the UKAS team as we address the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead.

Lord Jamie Lindsay, Chairman