

Chair's Report – May 2022

1. Purpose of Report

To update Council about the Chair's activity and developments on HCPC issues and to give colleagues an opportunity to update Council on projects and initiatives referenced herein.

2. Reform – and regulatory flexibility

Of the health and care regulators, HCPC has some of the most out-of-date legislation. For example, during the Covid-19 pandemic, technically a change of Rules was required to allow us to send emails to registrants in certain circumstances (due to the urgency we anticipated this and got on with the job). In Fitness to Practise cases, when they reach a certain point in the process, HCPC is compelled to go to a full hearing and has no scope to be flexible – this invariably adds time to the process and additional cost, as well as stress for those involved. These examples (and there are many more) illustrate how reforming our legislation as a priority could help HCPC be the responsive and adaptable regulator we aim to be. We would be able to operate at greater pace, always being sure of course to keep patient safety first and foremost in what we do.

3. Capacity and capability

Employees and Council Members

Our three new Council Members, plus two existing registrant members, gave talks at the All-Employee Day on March 11. I am absolutely delighted to share an extract from the feedback:

Comments about the Council Members' talks:

- Absolutely loved the Council Members' talks. Can we have these more regularly? Lunch and learn with our council members? More visibility of the Council would be great.
- Steven Vaughn was fascinating and engaging. I really enjoyed his insight and energy on the topic. Would really love to see more of him around the org, and understand his priorities and aims as a new council member Maybe he (and others) could be featured in the newsletter?
- I always love hearing from our registrants and Helen did a great job! She was informative and helpful. I think all staff would benefit of having a greater knowledge of the roles of our registrants and our council would benefit from having more contact with the staff for whom their decisions impact.
- I really enjoyed the Council Member talks - it was good to hear more about the professions we work with - I'd be really keen to have more of these.

- Both talks I attended were fantastic. Rebekah's career is fascinating, and she delivered an engaging and informative presentation talking about what she has done. Steven's talk made me long to be in a lecture again!
- Interesting and insightful talk. Interactive. Very good discussions. Good, positive energy.
- It was wonderful to hear about the professions in a real-life context. Maureen was excellent!
- I think the Council Members' talks were really interesting and enjoyed them immensely, Valarie's session in particular. I am in awe of their achievements.
- Really well-crafted with consideration for the audience. Insightful, engaging, thought-provoking. Great presenters and excellent engagement from the floor with lots of questions etc. Great to have that visibility from Council members too.
- Really great to have the Council involved in days like today, as they bring a perspective of not just a being a Council member of the HCPC, but as an actual Registrant (/ or lay person).
- It was inspiring
- Funny and engaging and the content was very thought provoking.

What next?

The Senior Council Member and I discussed how we can quickly respond to the request for more Council Member visibility. July will be an in-person meeting and so we plan to set aside a couple of hours for an informal get-to-know you session, open to all employees. The details will be agreed in discussion with Council and the Executive Leadership Team.

4. Strategy and Finance

4.1. Sustainability

At its last meeting, through consideration of the evidence and in discussion with the Executive, it was agreed that the HCPC would remain in its current property for the foreseeable future. Extensive research on the options had been done taken in light of hybrid working, our requirements for hearings, and the property market. The need to maintain resolute focus on meeting PSA Standards was also a key factor in this decision.

HCPC charges less than other health and care regulators for its services, which are an essential component of patient safety. It is our objective to be 'best value regulator'. At the same time, the two year delay in achieving the latest fee rise, the fact that any rise is phased in to be synchronised with the renewals of professions' registration mean that it will be necessary, as previously flagged, to have a carefully calibrated fee rise. Over the last three years, HCPC has continued to deliver efficiencies and contain costs, while investing heavily in achieving improvements. The organisation needs to be effective as well as efficient, so that HCPC can protect patients by continuing to deliver its statutory obligations; and make the experience of being a registrant as smooth and supported as possible. HCPC has had to deal with a long legacy of under-

investment, and this needs to be corrected with great attention paid to the impacts of any changes.

I commend to Council the work done on financial reporting by Head of Finance Alan Keshtmand, under the aegis of Executive Director of Resources and Business Performance Alastair Bridges. It is clear, evidence-based and extremely well presented and explained.

4.2. Fitness to Practise (FtP) Improvement Board

The next Improvement Board (which I chair) will be on July 19. The PSA's reviews are of course significant. However, within the Fitness to Practise regime, it is essential that we know in 'real time' what is happening to performance, so that any necessary action may be taken as soon as a potential issue is spotted and not retrospectively. We have therefore developed, in conjunction with the DHSC, a set of metrics that give us the current 'pulse' of FtP performance.

We are pleased – but not complacent – about the PSA having commented during its Board meeting that the HCPC was approaching its FtP reporting with transparency. We make a point of acting on the PSA's feedback.

5. Communications

As previously shared with Council on the weekend of 14/15 May, and the week leading up to it, there was a media story regarding our renewal process for physiotherapists. I am keen to address some of the points made in the article, and in particular, correct some of the inaccuracies.

First, I want to make it clear that claims made in some quarters that we have 'struck off' thousands of physiotherapists, are wrong. These individuals were not struck off by us but were removed from the Register as they did not renew their registration in time. This is not a Fitness to Practise issue, and physiotherapists who are no longer on our Register are welcome to rejoin providing they sign the appropriate declarations and pay their fees.

As you know, renewal is an important part of maintaining public protection. Registrants are required to confirm that they meet all of our standards and are competent to practice.

When the three-month renewal window for physiotherapists closed on 30 April 2022, 55,765 of the 61,515 physiotherapists eligible to renew had renewed. 5,750 did not renew and therefore came off the Register. As I am sure other regulators experience, it would be highly unusual for 100% of a profession to renew. Some choose not to renew; this may be for a variety of reasons, such as retirement, career break, or a change of profession. The percentage of physiotherapy professionals who renewed was 91%, in line with our usual rates of between 90 and 97%.

As we regulate fifteen professions, our renewals process is phased which means that each profession, including physiotherapists, needs to renew every two years. For all of the professions we regulate, we follow the same procedure to remind

individuals of the need to renew. We communicate with their professional body and ask them to alert their members, we send registrants an email and a text message when the renewal window opens, and we send them an email reminder 14 days before the renewal window closes. If we do not have an email address for a registrant at the start of the process, we contact them first by phone and then by post. This is the process that was followed in recent months in respect of physiotherapists. When we issued our initial communication informing physiotherapists that they needed to renew, we know that 99.6% of those emails were successfully delivered.

We regularly post reminders on social media about the closure of the window, and we do likewise in our newsletter. Registrants do not need to wait for our email invitation to renew and can go onto our website to renew at any point during the window.

Registrants have a personal and professional responsibility to ensure their registration with the HCPC is up to date, and although we take steps to remind them of this responsibility, there will always be people who inadvertently do not renew and as a result come off our Register. The HCPC team worked seven days a week to get physios who had missed the window back on the Register, and 95% of the readmission forms have now been processed.

The HCPC team will be looking closely at our renewal processes to see what lessons we can apply in future, the better to support our professions and the workforce. While we followed our established process, we are committed to learning and improving in every aspect of what we do. We are now very close to having all physiotherapists who wished to renew back on the Register.

6. Chair's meetings - overview

Regular internal meetings, such as weekly catch up with CEO, ELT, Committee Chairs, attending Committees, are not included.

I am very pleased to confirm that the GMC Acting Chair, Professor Dame Carrie McEwan, has been confirmed as the regulator's substantive Chair.

Other recent meetings include the Chair of HEE and of the NMC.

In the period March – May I became an alumnus of the Women Emerging – Cultural Intelligence programme developed by Common Purpose Founder Julia Middleton.