
Chief Executive's report on organisational performance December 2024

Executive Summary

This report provides my assessment of the HCPC's organisational performance and highlights key developments and pieces of work since the Council last met in September 2024.

At the Council's next meeting in January 2025, my report will provide a detailed update of our performance against our key performance indicators, a review of delivery against our 2024-25 corporate plan and our strategic risks.

Previous consideration	This is a standing item, considered at each Council meeting.
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Purpose of report	The Council is asked to discuss the report.
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Next steps	The next report will be received in January 2025.
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Strategic priority	This report is relevant to all strategic priorities.
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Financial and resource implications	None as a result of this paper.
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EDI and Welsh language implications	None as a result of this paper.
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Chief Executive's Performance Report – December 2024

1. Introduction

This report provides my assessment of the HCPC's organisational performance and highlights key developments since the Council last met in September.

At the Council's next meeting in January 2025, my report will provide a detailed update of our performance against our key performance indicators, a review of delivery against our 2024-25 corporate plan and our strategic risks.

Recruitment

Recruitment took place for the permanent Head of Case Progression and Quality in November 2024 and we will update the Council on the outcome at the next meeting. My thanks to Paul Douglas during his time with us as Interim Head of Case Progression and Quality.

Speak up Guardian

I am pleased to share that we have appointed two Speak up Guardians: Claire Baker, Head of Adjudication Performance and Anna Raftery, Head of Assurance and Compliance. This follows recent discussions with our Employee Forum, as well as a helpful conversation with Dr Jayne Chidgey-Clark, the National Guardian for the NHS about the role of Speak up Guardians. Claire and Anna will provide a confidential source of support, advice and signposting to employees wishing to raise concerns or other issues, within the framework of the revised speaking up and whistleblowing policy. These appointments aim to build on existing mechanisms we have in place for colleagues to speak up and be listened to including our Let's Talk with leadership sessions, the Employee Forum, our pulse survey and existing HR mechanisms.

2. Engagement

Dash review

On 5 November 2024 I attended a regulators roundtable for the review of patient safety across the health and care landscape led by Dr Penny Dash, which is mapping the range of organisations that impact quality and focusing on six key organisations. The review follows on from the report into the operational effectiveness of the Care Quality Commission, which was published in October 2024 and will be used to more widely inform the Government's 10-year health plan.

Fuller Inquiry

As part of the Inquiry into the issues raised by the David Fuller case chaired by Sir Jonathan Michael, the regulatory, legislative and oversight measures that are in place to safeguard the dignity and security of the deceased are being considered,

including any potential need for future regulation. The HCPC has contributed to these discussions both in a seminar held by the inquiry attended by Brendon Edmonds (Head of Regulatory Development and Performance) and a separate CEO interview. We have set out our activities, the role and benefits of statutory regulation, the other types of regulation and the role for the Government in deciding on the regulation of professions (including on any necessary legislation)

Advanced Practice

Together with the Deputy Chief Executive Andrew Smith, Head of Policy, Rachael Gledhill and Policy Lead Matthew Clayton, we convened a meeting with the Chief Allied Health Professions Officers and Chief Allied Scientific Officers from across the four nations to discuss advanced practice. This meeting was an opportunity to share our clear position on how we regulate advanced practice and the work we have planned to continue supporting registrants working at this level. I have held separate meetings with Chief Allied Health Professions Officer and Chief Allied Scientific Officer colleagues who were unable to attend this joint meeting. I am grateful for everyone's input and expertise on this important subject.

Professional bodies

In November 2024 we continued CEO to CEO meetings with professional bodies, to discuss our work and projects for next year. This has included the Royal College of Podiatry, the Society of Radiography, and the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy.

On 2 December 2024 we will also be hosting our winter Professional Body Forum meeting. This will be held online, and all professional bodies that we work with are invited to attend and discuss issues of concern or areas of collaboration.

Registrants and employers

This year I have met with registrants and employers across the four nations including visits to Lewisham Hospital NHS Trust in South London, NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde and Belfast where I met with the Chief Paramedic Officer and Chief Allied Health Professions Officer for Northern Ireland. I look forward to continuing these types of engagements next year as one of my priorities as CEO; a forward plan of activity is being developed.

Stakeholder audit

Our recent internal audit on stakeholder engagement has provided an independent assessment of our capability in this area. The audit has identified three recommendations for improving our engagement activity, all of which are focused on achieving greater clarity in our processes and increasing information sharing across the organisation. These elements are key parts of the ongoing implementation of our communications strategy, which was agreed earlier this year and will be overseen through our usual governance processes.

My full meeting list is provided at [appendix A](#).

3. Regulatory Performance

Below I highlight some of the key points about the performance of our core regulatory functions of education and registration; a separate fitness to practise report is discussed as part of the Council's agenda today.

3.1 Education

Reducing regulatory burden/overlap

In line with my last report, we have continued to work with other regulators and professional bodies to consider how we can reduce areas of overlap – we are aiming to be a leader in the sector. Our aim is to continue to make good independent regulatory decisions, whilst considering and where possible aligning with the work of others to reduce overlap and burden for education providers.

There is a drive for this in the sector currently, with the Council of Deans of Health (CoDoH) calling for reducing regulatory overlap in their manifesto work for the July 2024 general election. We are currently working with specific stakeholders to understand the appetite for further reducing regulatory overlap and burden. We are now members of two inter-regulatory groups linked to artificial intelligence in education, and the use of data in education quality assurance. We took an update on this to the Education and Training Committee (ETC) meeting in November 2024.

The ETC were supportive of this work and were particularly keen for us to take regulatory leadership in this area, using our influence to drive change more broadly than areas we are in direct control of. My thanks to the Committee for their engagement with this work.

Education annual report – 2023-24

We took an addendum to the 2021-23 report to the Education and Training Committee in November 2024, which focused on our assessments from the 2023-24 academic year.

We will use the 2021-23 report and the 2023-24 addendum to produce engagement materials focused on key themes linked to our standards, to help our stakeholders understand HCPC requirements, how education provider have met our standards, and where they have experienced difficulties. We plan to publish materials in Q3, and undertake engagement activities in Q4. These materials will be future proofed, enabling them to be updated following future annual reporting exercises, so the materials available always show the current picture of education and training for the professions we regulate.

Equality, diversity and inclusion in education

When producing the Education Annual Report (2021-23), we noticed that we were not always consistent in applying our expectations linked to EDI. We therefore decided that we would:

- clearly define what we expect related to EDI in education for our regulated professions, linked to our standards of education and training (SETs), and the requirements set out in our standards of proficiency and standards of conduct, performance and ethics; and
- ensure we are clear with our stakeholders about our expectations.

In the short to medium term (from the 2025-26 academic year), this will help to enable consistent judgements are made about education provider/programme compliance with the relevant SETs, and ensure education providers, our partners, and members of the Education team understand our requirements.

In the longer term, we plan to feed evidence-informed findings from this work into the review of our SETs. This will provide a starting point for any developments required to the standards themselves.

We have worked with a range of stakeholders to develop our thinking so far and took a paper on this to the ETC in November 2024, who were supportive of our work in this area. We plan to produce outcomes to be agreed by the ETC in March 2025, following further work with the stakeholder groups.

3.2 Registration

As part of the restructure of the Registration team, we have concluded the recruitment of the three new senior Operational Manager roles. We are now progressing with recruitment to the Quality Assurance roles.

Customer service

Our contact centre continues to provide a good service for telephone, email and letter enquiries. The telephone call answer rate was 94% for August, 92% for September and 91% in October 2024.

Our performance target of responding to emails within five working days has been consistently met. The monthly median was one working day during August, three working days in September and one working day during October 2024.

This has been assisted using artificial intelligence (AI) and we continue expanding the use of this technology across the team and into other departments.

UK applications to join our Register

We have now exited the busy summer peak for UK applications. During the three month period from August to October 2024 we received 9,170 applications and 8,329 people were successfully registered via the UK registration route. The team has managed the demand well and the median time to assess and process UK applications has been five, seven and seven working days each month, respectively.

International applications to join our Register

During the three month period from August to October 2024 we saw a spike in the number of applications received (with 1,116 applications being received in August alone). A total of 2,399 applications to join the register were received August to October 2024. This is around 60% higher than originally budgeted for and the team is resourced to manage. In May 2024, the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) approved the recruitment of seven additional people on fixed term contracts which will help manage this demand with most of these positions now recruited. There were 1,378 people who were successfully registered via the international route during this three month period.

The median time to assess international applications in August, September and October 2024 was 47, 66 and 70 working days respectively (our service standard is 60 working days). The percentage of applications assessed within our KPI is not as high as previous months and below our target. This is mainly due to the high volumes, but the temporary additional resource approved in May 2024 will help manage this increased demand.

As part of the introduction of the new Registration operating model we have successfully recruited seven candidates to the new Registration Officer position, which will provide additional specialised capacity to manage assessment decisions.

3.3 Registration renewals

The renewal process has been running well.

- On 1 September 2024 operating department practitioners began their renewal period. At the time of drafting this report, 90.3% of operating department practitioners had renewed.

We continue to engage with the relevant professional bodies before and during the renewal windows, this includes us sharing renewal rates periodically and providing information to support registrants to renew their registration throughout the renewal window.

4. Policy and Standards

Standards of conduct, performance and ethics

The revised standards of conduct, performance and ethics and guidance on social media came into effect on 1 September 2024. All registrants are required to ensure that their practice meets the revised standards from that point onwards.

During the implementation period (October 2023 – September 2024), we have undertaken several internal and external workshops to inform registrants, professional bodies, education providers and colleagues of the revisions to the standards. Engagement with registrants will continue through the #myhpcstandards webinars.

Our guidance documents that accompany the standards of conduct performance and ethics have been updated to reflect the revisions, along with our website materials. We will be further reviewing some of our guidance documents including the guidance on conduct and ethics for students (as part of our review of the SETs) and our guidance on confidentiality towards the end of 2024.

The revised standards are published alongside a new easy read version of the standards. We have also published Welsh versions of the standards, the easy read standards, the guidance on social media and guidance on conduct and ethics for students.

Standards of education and training (SETs)

Our review of the SETs began in March this year. We have hosted workshops with the Education team and externally with education providers to find out more on how they use the standards and to gain some feedback which will inform our work. We asked attendees at the workshops their views on the standards, specifically what worked well, what did not work well, and suggestions for change over the review.

We have also presented updates on the review at the professional bodies' forum and the EDI forum in order to gain other stakeholders' views on the review and the standards more generally. This has also been complemented by individual meetings with professional bodies to give an overview of the review and to ensure personalised engagement with these groups. These meetings are continuing, and we have received positive feedback on our proposed review.

We are now looking at convening expert panels to move forward with formulating our proposals on changes to the standards for the consultation, which is due to commence later in the year. We have had a large amount of interest in joining these panels. We are now in place process of shortlisting. The panels will be made up of 10–12 experts, who should have specific experience or expertise on the panel topic, ranging across the 15 professions and from a range of small to larger sized organisations.

The topics for the panels that we look to convene will be:

- Use of technology e.g. artificial intelligence
- Simulation in learning
- Different models of learning
- EDI

English language proficiency

Our new English language proficiency requirements for international applicants will come into force on 29 January 2025. Applications which begin prior to this date will continue to use the current system, but all applications which begin on the launch date or afterwards will have to satisfy the new requirements.

These are:

- 1) a primary qualification gained in a country on our qualifying countries list; or
- 2) passing one of our recognised English language proficiency tests with the required grades.

The content of the qualifying countries list and the criteria we will use to decide on recognising new English tests were agreed by the ETC on 6 November 2024. In addition, this meeting also gave approval to the Occupational English Test (OET) alongside our existing recognised providers, the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) and Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL).

Our required results in OET tests have been benchmarked against existing tests and the common European framework (CEFR). We [published information about the changes](#) on 13 November 2024 and a programme of stakeholder engagement and external communication is now underway.

5. Resources

Fees

Following the publication of the Council's response to the recent fees consultation we have continued to liaise with officials in the Scottish Government and the Department of Health and Social Care on securing ministerial approvals and on agreeing plans for laying the necessary parliamentary Order.

Budget planning

Finance have worked with budget holders to complete the Q2 finance review and re-forecast, which is separately being presented to the Council. The review has identified some new pressures on legal costs which are being actively addressed through robust contractual discussions and stronger senior leadership accountabilities for managing legal budgets; there are also opportunities to bring forward some one-off items of spend into this financial year that would generate

benefits, in the context of a challenging financial outlook for the year ahead. Finance have also been leading the work on developing the draft 2025-26 budget and updated medium term financial plan and the People and Resources Committee (PRC) will hold a workshop the day after the Council meeting (6 December 2024) to discuss the principles underpinning the financial strategy and budget, in advance of the draft budget itself being discussed in the new year.

Technology roadmap

Good progress is being made against most items on the technology roadmap, including the fitness to practise frontloading and online concerns work. The project on the future partners operating model is now well under way, with a series of workshop having been completed on mapping out future payment pathways, and work on future systems and other changes in progress. The PRC received an update at its November 2024 meeting on progress against the roadmap and on investment planning for next year.

Pulse survey

HR worked hard with Communications and teams across the HCPC to ensure the highest ever responses to the Q2 pulse survey, which showed continued high levels of engagement and provided feedback on areas for further attention, which the ELT is actively reviewing. The PRC also discussed these at their recent meeting.

Recruitment

There has been a continued high volume of activity on recruitment to vacancies and HR have supported a number of team restructuring exercises as an enabler for continued work to build capability process improvement.

Appendix A - Chief Executive's external meeting schedule covering 27 September 2024 – 4 December 2024

Association of Clinical Psychologists (ACP) – Professor Mike Wang	4 Oct
Care Quality Commission (CQC) - Kate Terroni , Interim Chief Executive	9 Oct
DHSC – Phil Harper, Deputy Director – Professional Regulation	14 Oct
National Clinical Lead for Psychological Professions, NHSE - Dr Adrian Whittington	16 Oct
Professional Standards Authority (PSA) - Alan Clamp, Chief Executive	21 Oct
DHSC: Ministerial Reception Invitation	22 Oct
College of Paramedics (COP) - Tracy Nicholls, Chief Executive	23 Oct
Institute of Biomedical Science (IBMS) - David Wells, Chief Executive	31 Oct
Dash review regulators roundtable	5 Nov
Royal College of Podiatry (RCPOD) – Jane Pritchard, Chief Executive	6 Nov
Chief Allied Health Professions Officer for England, Suzanne Rastrick	6 Nov
DHSC – Phil Harper, Deputy Director – Professional Regulation	7 Nov
CAHPOs/CSO's joint meeting: Chief Allied Health Professions Officer for England, Suzanne Rastrick; Chief Scientific Officer for England - Dame Sue Hill; Chief Allied Health Professions Officer for Wales - Ruth Crowder; Chief Allied Health Professions Officer for Northern Ireland - Michelle Tennyson	11 Nov
Society of Radiographers (SOR) - Richard Evans, Chief Executive	14 Nov
Chartered Society of Physiotherapy (CSP) – John Cowman, Chief Executive	20 Nov
Chief Executives Officers Regulators Board meeting (CEORB)	22 Nov
Catherine Ross, Chief Scientific Officer for Scotland and Carolyn McDonald, Chief Allied Health Professions Officer for Scotland	25 Nov
HCPC Professional Body Forum meeting	2 Dec
Chief Allied Health Professions Officer for Northern Ireland - Michelle Tennyson	2 Dec
Unite - Jane Beach, Lead Professional Officer, Regulation	4 Dec