

Research strategy 2016-2020

1. Introduction

1.1 The HCPC strategic intent for 2016-2020 includes the following objective:

‘To ensure that the organisation’s work is evidence informed.’

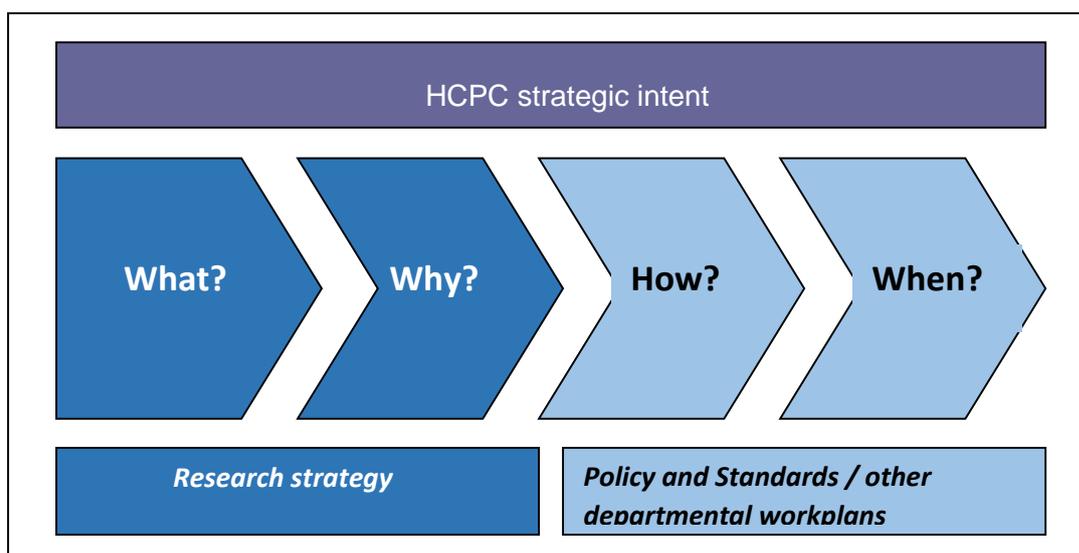
(Objective four)

1.2 Several indicative ways in which this objective might be achieved are outlined:

- To undertake research into the HCPC’s regulatory role and functions.
- To ensure that HCPC and other research findings contribute to the HCPC’s decision making.
- To ensure that research findings are disseminated, for example, through seminars to discuss findings with stakeholders.
- To ensure that the findings of HCPC research contribute to the development of wider regulatory policy.

1.3 This research strategy supports the delivery of the strategic intent for 2016-2020. Should the strategic intent change in this period, the research strategy would be revised as necessary.

1.4 The research strategy identifies the ‘what’ and ‘why’ for the research direction of HCPC; the ‘how’ and ‘when’ are addressed in the annual Policy and Standards Department workplan and in other directorate workplans as appropriate.



2. Why research?

- 2.1 Figure one below shows that research is one part of an evidence informed approach to regulation – which must also include regulatory analysis (e.g. policy analysis and analysis of data); stakeholder expectations, views and experiences (for example, experiences of the fitness to practise process); and the ‘collective wisdom’ or experiential knowledge of the Council, the Executive and its stakeholders.
- 2.2 By ‘research’ we are referring to a systematic means of studying a topic, area or subject to generate evidence. The main areas of research activity are in standards and policy development and in supporting the development and review of processes, particularly in benefiting from the views of stakeholders (see section three). ‘Research’ in this document is not intended to encompass every time we commission a third party to provide advice or to undertake evaluation work.

Figure 1: Evidence informed regulation



- 2.3 This strategy focuses on the contribution of research activities (which have, to date, been commissioned) to evidence-informed regulation.
- 2.4 The overall aim of research activities should be better decision making – that is, decisions which are more robust, credible and legitimate, contributing to the delivery of the organisation’s purpose of public protection.

2.5 The specific benefits of commissioning research include the following.

- Improved insight into the impact of what we do – for example, of our activities; of the consensus of stakeholders; and of effectiveness.
- Increased objectivity and independence of evidence gathering and analysis.
- Access to data (e.g. literature) or data subjects (e.g. service users and carers) that might otherwise be challenging to access or engage meaningfully.
- Triangulation of data – i.e. research adding weight to professional experience or the findings of engagement activities.
- Benefiting from the expertise of external research teams and their capacity to undertake research.

3. What research have we completed?

3.1 The amount and type of research commissioned by the HCPC has developed over time, with research evidence now more routinely contributing to decision making in a variety of different areas. There are three overarching areas of activity.

- **Standards / guidance development and review.** Research used to inform decision making on the introduction or amendment of standards and guidance. This includes understanding the potential impact of proposed changes and/or engaging stakeholders systematically to elicit their views.
- **Process development and review.** Research used to inform decision making on the introduction or amendment of processes. This includes engaging with stakeholders on their views on, and experiences of, our existing regulatory approach.
- **Thought leadership and general regulatory policy.** These are other research activities which do not or are not intended to directly influence standards, guidance or processes, but which are intended to / have had the effect of influencing our thinking and thinking / policy in the regulatory sector.

4. Objectives

4.1 The following are objectives for the lifetime of the strategic intent 2016-2020.

Objective 1. To commission / undertake research which supports better decisions, continuous improvement and the engagement of stakeholders

This will be achieved through the following.

- Continuing to use research as part of an integrated approach to standards and guidance development and to inform process development and review.
- Rigorous analysis of policy issues to identify areas where research evidence could make a useful contribution.
- Continuing to explore ways of making better use of our own data to generate intelligence.
- Involvement (where appropriate) of Council members and external stakeholders in the commissioning and governance of research projects.

Objective 2. To build internal capacity to manage effectively the delivery of research

This will be achieved through the following.

- A commitment to the review and continuous improvement of arrangements for research commissioning and governance.
- Centralisation of management of research activity within the Policy and Standards Directorate, with input from and regular liaison with other directorates.
- Ensuring that all team members are able to gain experience of devising, commissioning and/or managing research activity.
- Identifying and addressing training needs to increase research awareness and ability to manage external research teams.
- Keeping the most effective means of internal management of research activity under regular review.

Objective 3. To engage effectively with employees, Council members and stakeholders to disseminate the outcomes of research and identify themes and issues to be addressed through future research

This will be achieved through the following.

- Dissemination of research outcomes to Council, employees and stakeholders to achieve awareness and elicit discussion.
- Exploring opportunities for dissemination of research outcomes to the wider research community through articles in peer reviewed journals.
- Providing opportunities for employees, Council members and stakeholders to assist in identifying areas to be explored through research.