

**Agenda Item 10**

**Enclosure 7**

**Health and Care Professions Council  
06 December 2018**

**Draft Corporate Strategy 2019-24**

**For approval**

**From Jacqueline Ladds, Executive Director of  
Policy and External Relations**

Council, Thursday 6 December 2018

Draft HCPC Corporate Strategy 2019-2024

Executive summary and recommendations

### **Introduction**

This paper sets out the proposed HCPC Corporate Strategy 2019-2024. It highlights the environment in which we work, refreshed wording for our purpose, a new vision and the strategic priorities.

### **Decision**

The Council is requested to discuss and approve the draft document.

### **Background information**

In March 2018, The Council agreed to discontinue the existing strategic intent and instead publish a corporate strategy together with an annual corporate business plan (which would set out at a high level some of the work we plan to do in the coming year to achieve our strategic priorities).

The drafting of the Corporate Strategy has been informed by the strategic awayday and the employee workshops held in October. Further employee workshops, held in November, will inform the final wording for the vision and values.

Additional feedback received from Council members since the awayday has included requests to: include equality, diversity and inclusion in strategic priority 4; remove the reference to low cost in the foreword; and include a reference to collaborating with stakeholders in strategic priority 4. These have all been incorporated in the draft.

### **Resource implications**

Activities will be accounted for within departmental workplans and budgets for 2019-20.

### **Financial implications**

None

### **Appendices**

Draft HCPC corporate strategy 2019-2024

### **Date of paper**

22 November 2018

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## HCPC Corporate Strategy 2019-2024

### Foreword

Since its inception in 2002, the HCPC has pioneered a model of multi professional regulation with year on year growth in the number of professionals we regulate.

Today we regulate over 366,000 health and care professionals across diverse disciplines in the UK, including more than 90,000 social workers in England

We wish to remain at the forefront of multi-professional regulation, delivering efficient and effective public protection. However, like other professional regulators, we face many external challenges that require a clear response.

This document aims to inform our many stakeholders of our strategic direction and our priorities for the next 5 years, as well as the strategic risks we have identified.

We anticipate Social Workers in England will leave our Register some time in 2019. This will result in a reduction of almost 27% in our registrant numbers and is a major change for the organisation. In addition, while managing Fitness to Practise (FtP) concerns already represents the largest part of our activity, we have seen an increase in the number and complexity of concerns we receive.

At the same time, our stakeholders have rising expectations of our ability to handle these concerns in a timely, efficient and professional way. This is also reflected in the standards set by our own regulator the Professional Standards Authority (PSA).

We have deliberated internally and discussed our plans with our stakeholders. The Council has debated at length our

competing priorities and the best way of meeting the multiple challenges we face.

We are already investing significantly to meet the PSA's standards but we want to do more to manage concerns quickly and fairly, whilst also supporting registrants to avoid having concerns raised about their fitness to practise. Legislative changes should assist this process, but the timetable for this is not certain.

So, we plan to invest more in a prevention agenda to support professional practice to prevent problems before they develop into FtP concerns. This means engagement programmes with our stakeholders, particularly employers, registrants, educators and students. It also means possible changes to our education processes, understanding more about our registrants and their working environment and using the data that we collect to inform future activities.

We will work closely with our stakeholders to deliver these outcomes and help to shape the future agenda for professional regulation in the UK.

We will also collaborate with other regulators, learning from them and sharing our ideas. We want to help the governments and the administrations of the four countries deliver their plans and deliver better outcomes for all.

**Marc Seale, Chief Executive**

**Stephen Cohen, Deputy Chair**

## **About the HCPC**

We are an independent UK-wide multi-professional regulator with over 350,000 individuals from across 16 health and care professions on our Register. We have about 250 staff and are based in London. We are scrutinised by the PSA and accountable to the Privy Council.

### **We have clear statutory responsibilities**

- Set standards for the education, training, professional skills, knowledge and conduct of registrants.
- Publish a register of professionals who meet those standards.
- Approve education and training programmes that professionals must complete before they can register with us.
- Take action when registrants do not meet our standards.

### **Our overarching Purpose is**

To protect the public by maintaining standards and promoting confidence in the professions we regulate.

## The environment in which we work

Our statutory objective of public protection is clear, but there will be many changes, some significant, in the environment in which we operate over the lifetime of this Strategy. Our vision for success and the strategic priorities we have identified seek to ensure that our model of multi-professional regulation is able to respond to this ever-changing environment.

### Changing political landscape

Although we are an independent regulator, changes in government or government policy affect us. For example, the Government's decision to create a new regulator for social workers in England brings significant challenges to both our operations and our income. Similarly, the desire to simplify professional regulation, something recognised within the sector and articulated in the Government's *promoting professionalism, reforming regulation* consultation, is welcome. This includes the need for legislative change to reduce the burden of the FtP process. Crucially, it offers an opportunity to move away from the current reactive system to a model actively preventing problems from arising and before they become FtP concerns. This has already been a key focus for the HCPC and we are continuing to invest in new ways of working to achieve this.

Leaving the European Union and the impact this may have on our operational processes is also something we need to consider. We could see a shift in the geography of applicants and an increase or decline in international applications. We need to ensure our registration processes continue to support these changing demands.

In addition, there has been a clear trend over the last 30 years for more devolution. For us, this has meant an increasing number of stakeholders, the need to understand multiple political systems, increasing variations in service delivery and workforce planning.

### Economic and cost pressures

The economic pressures on the NHS and the wider health and care sector are well documented. The potential impact on staff morale or employment cultures, and the consequences this might have for professional regulation is something we need to focus on. In particular, the need to maintain our regulatory standards is crucial as this supports delivering high quality care. However, we do not want to place additional burden on our registrants, many of whom already work in high-pressurised environments. Our outcome-based, flexible approach will be important as will our ability to engage our stakeholders to ensure our model of regulation is seen as an enabler. Similarly, fulfilling the Council's intention to be as efficient as possible whilst continuing to fulfil our regulatory obligations and improve our processes will be important.

### A changing workforce

The introduction of new roles and ways of working and the integration of services is constantly evolving. Additionally, managing risk through the statutory regulation of more professions is something the Government continues to consider. Service providers and sector agencies are also continually looking to transform services in order to deliver high quality care. This requires engagement with policy makers and professional associations to ensure our Standards and guidance remain up to date and fit for purpose. Crucially, we can add value to sector initiatives by improving our ability to gather and share data about the professions on our Register.

### **Expectations of professional regulation**

We know from our own research that, in general, the public have high satisfaction in the services provided by our registrants. However, over the last six years we have seen a steady increase in the number of new concerns we have received, resulting in a 39% increase over this period. Members of the public continue to be the largest complainant group, making up 41% of the total number of concerns raised. However, we have seen an increase in the number of cases closed in the early stages and not progressing to a final hearing. It is possible that there is an increasing cultural willingness to complain but we need to ensure we are able to manage the associated impact to the quality and timeliness of our processes.

Similarly, our registrants have increasing expectations of the registration services we can deliver. Using innovation and technology is essential to further improve our functions and deliver benefits to those we regulate in line with modern expectations.

Finally, governments, our own regulator (the PSA), registrants and the public expect us to collaborate not only with our direct stakeholders but also with other healthcare regulators. We want to do more in this area and legislative change may facilitate this.

As well as these external influences, we have a number of internal drivers.

**Continuous quality improvement** – we continue to be committed to achieving a culture of continuous improvement by investing in our people and by achieving certification to international standards (ISO), for example in quality management and information security.

**Equality and fairness** – we are committed to ensuring equality and fairness in all our processes. This means, for example, our FtP process recognises the necessary balance between protecting the public and fairness to the healthcare professional and all those involved in the process. It also means we consider equality, diversity and inclusion in all our internal processes.

**Evidence-informed** – our aim has always been to be an evidence-informed regulator. We do this by using our own data and commissioning research into issues relevant to our role. The outcomes help us make better decisions, drive improvements to our systems and processes and supports our engagement with stakeholders.

## Our Vision is

To be at the forefront of multi-professional regulation, delivering effective public protection. Putting our stakeholders at the centre of what we do, we will support professional practise to help prevent things going wrong, deliver efficient services, draw on best practise and be an evidenced informed regulator.

### Our Strategic Priorities are:

- **Performance** – continue to improve our performance across all of our regulatory functions.
- **Communications and engagement** - ensure our communication and engagement activities are proactive, effective and informed by the views of our stakeholders.
- **Effective and efficient organisation** - ensure the organisation is fit for the future and able to anticipate and adapt to changes in the external environment.
- **Data, intelligence and research** - make better use of data, intelligence and research to inform our work in preventing harm.

### Success will be when:

- we work collaboratively with stakeholders actively seeking their views and opinions to inform our work;
- we are recognised as being an effective and efficient multi-professional regulator;
- our engagement activities help improve professionalism and reduce the incidence of FtP concerns;
- we are able to collect and use our data and our research effectively and intelligently to inform our own work and that of our stakeholders;
- we consistently meet the PSA's standards of good regulation; and
- our employees feel valued and engaged in our purpose.

### The Values\* we strive for are

**Transparency** – we communicate in a way that is open, fair and honest.

**Collaboration** – we work in partnership with our stakeholders.

**Responsiveness** – we respond to changes in the external environment.

**High quality service** – we strive for excellence in everything we do.

**Value for money** – we ensure that our resources are used effectively and efficiently.

\*final wording subject to further feedback from employees

## Our strategic priorities in detail

### Performance

#### Strategic priority 1: Continue to improve our performance across all our regulatory functions

We want to improve our performance in our regulatory functions. In the short term, this means securing improvements in our fitness to practise function to ensure we meet the PSA's Standards of Good Regulation on an ongoing and sustainable basis. It also means exploring new and different ways of assuring education programmes for the professions we regulate as well as delivering service improvements to our registration function.

#### What do we want to achieve

- Continuous improvement in our performance across all of our regulatory functions.
- Measurable improvements in the length of time taken to conclude fitness to practise cases.
- Increased confidence by our stakeholders that we can ensure the quality of our decision-making across all our regulatory functions.

#### To achieve this we will:

- continue to drive improvements in the quality and timeliness of our fitness to practise decision making and in the investigation and progression of cases;
- work with partners to explore new and different ways of assuring education and training programmes;
- seek to redesign our registration processes;
- ensure we have adequate financial and human resources to deliver our regulatory functions; and
- ensure that we are effective in quality assuring our regulatory processes through a thematic and risk-based approach to audits.

## Communications and engagement

### **Strategic priority 2: Ensure our communication and engagement activities are proactive, effective and informed by the views of our stakeholders**

We want to communicate and engage with our stakeholders in the most effective way. In particular, we want to be more proactive in influencing the regulatory policy agenda. We also want to strengthen our engagement in the four UK countries, ensuring that we can take account of differences in policy and practice. Importantly, this priority is about working with all our stakeholders to deliver activities which promote professionalism and focus on preventing things going wrong.

#### **What do we want to achieve**

- Our stakeholders across the four countries of the UK have increased understanding of and confidence in our regulatory functions and public protection role.
- Our views on key topics are clear to our stakeholders and we actively engage in influencing the regulatory policy agenda, including the necessary legislative changes to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of our regulatory functions.
- To collaborate with our stakeholders to help promote professionalism and prevent harm.

#### **To achieve this we will:**

- develop targeted and proportionate communication and engagement strategies which improve understanding of our regulatory processes and public protection role;
- strengthen our engagement with stakeholders in the four UK countries, ensuring that we are aware of and can take account of differences in policy and practice across the UK;
- ensure that our voice is heard in reforms of the regulatory sector through our relationships with stakeholders, including the four UK governments;
- develop closer liaison with service user and patient organisations so they can help us setting standards and developing policies; and
- engage with employers, registrants, students and graduate applicants, to improve understanding of our standards and the importance of professionalism.

## Effective and efficient organisation

### Strategic priority 3: Ensure the organisation is fit for the future and able to anticipate and adapt to changes in the external environment

There will be significant changes in the external environment over the lifetime of this plan. We need to ensure that we are forward looking in managing the organisation to anticipate and adapt to these changes. This includes continuing to ensure that our processes and systems meet stakeholder needs and expectations; and that we have adequate financial and human resources to deliver our workload.

#### What do we want to achieve

- The organisation is effective, efficient and financially sustainable and can demonstrate the impact it makes.
- The organisation is resilient and is able to adapt to changes in the external environment.
- Employees feel valued and supported, and fully able to contribute.

#### To achieve this we will:

- keep our financial sustainability under review to ensure we can invest in our operations to meet the changing expectations of our stakeholders;
- continue to invest in our people, focusing on improving our recruitment and retention, building capability and ensuring that we have the right skills and competencies to drive our current and future performance;
- embed a strategic approach to risk and performance management to ensure that oversight and scrutiny focuses on the right areas;
- continue to invest in processes and systems to improve the experience of our stakeholders;
- keep our governance arrangements under review to ensure that they continue to be fit for purpose.

## Data, intelligence and research

### Strategic priority 4: Make better use of data, intelligence and research evidence to drive improvement and engagement

We want to move 'upstream' and invest more in preventing the need for FtP action. This means collecting more data on our activities and doing more research so we can drive improvement in our policies, standards and processes and our engagement with stakeholders. For example, we could generate more intelligence from fitness to practise cases and use this to engage with stakeholders to help address the issues identified.

#### What do we want to achieve

- To identify issues and trends in our data which are relevant to public protection.
- Our stakeholders are better informed with relevant information and intelligence to inform their own work.
- Research evidence is used to drive improvement in our work and better outcomes.

#### To achieve this we will:

- continue to commission or carry out research relevant to our regulatory functions, ensuring that action plans are in place and that we regularly evaluate impact;
- invest in our ability to identify, collect and analyse data;
- collect and use our data so we can understand and respond appropriately to equality, diversity and inclusion matters;
- make more of the data we hold readily accessible, for example, by analysing key areas and publishing and disseminating the findings and by developing our approach to publishing and disseminating reports from our regulatory functions; and
- seek to collaborate with other regulators by sharing data and intelligence.

## Our strategic risks in summary

1. **Failure to deliver effective regulatory functions:** This includes the inability to fulfill our statutory obligations set out in the Health and Social Work Professions Order and the failure to meet the PSA's Good Standards of Regulation.
2. **Failure to anticipate and respond to changes in the external environment:** This includes the ability to respond and influence external drivers for change, like government policies affecting professional regulation, the impact of Brexit, devolution or a change in government as well as issues like workforce development, and new and emerging professions. It also includes awareness and responsiveness to advances in technology and systems.
3. **Failure to be a trusted regulator and meet stakeholder expectations:** This risk includes the management of stakeholder engagement and key relationships as well as reputation management.
4. **Failure to be an efficient regulator:** This risk includes the operational failure of processes, or the inability to manage data efficiently as well the vulnerability of IT security. It also includes financial security, timely and accurate reporting and the recruitment, retention and training of Partners, Council and employees.
5. **Failure of leadership, governance or culture:** This risk includes the effectiveness of Council/SMT, strategy setting and oversight, risk management and business planning. It also covers organisational culture including the existence of relevant policies for whistleblowing or anti-bribery for example and processes for performance development.