

# Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

2018 – 2020



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## **About Us**

We are the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC). We are a regulator and we were set up to protect the public. To do this, we keep a register of professionals who meet our standards for their training, professional skills, behaviour and health.

### **Who do we regulate?**

We currently regulate the following professions:

- Arts therapists
- Biomedical scientists
- Chiropodists / podiatrists
- Clinical scientists
- Dietitians
- Hearing aid dispensers
- Occupational therapists
- Operating department practitioners
- Orthoptists
- Paramedics
- Physiotherapists
- Practitioner psychologists
- Prosthetists / orthotists
- Radiographers
- Social workers in England
- Speech and language therapists

We may regulate other professions in the future. For an up-to-date list, please see our website at [www.hcpc-uk.org](http://www.hcpc-uk.org)

### **Protected titles**

All of the professions have at least one professional title which is protected by law. This means, for example, that anyone using the title 'physiotherapist' or 'dietitian' must be registered with us.

Anyone who misuses a protected title who is not registered with us, or who claims to be registered when they are not, is breaking the law and may be prosecuted.

## **How we protect the public**

To protect the public we:

- set standards for entry to the Register and for continued registration;
- approve education and training programmes that successfully deliver those standards;
- maintain a Register of individuals who successfully complete those programmes; and
- take action if a registrant may have failed to meet our standards for continued registration. Such action might include investigating and adjudicating allegations through our fitness to practise process. In serious cases, registrants may be removed from the Register.

## **About this document**

In this document, 'we', 'us', and 'our' are references to the HCPC. Health and care professionals on our Register are called 'registrants'.

Our registrants work in a variety of different settings and with a variety of different people. We refer to those who use or who are affected by the services of our registrants as 'service users'. A person who provides care to a service user is termed a 'carer'.

Where we refer to 'stakeholders', this encompasses anyone who engages with the HCPC's services and facilities. This may include our registrants, service users, carers, education providers, employers of our registered professions, complainants in fitness to practice proceedings, our partners and members of the public.

## Introduction

It is important to the HCPC to be a fair and inclusive regulator. We were set up to protect the public and we recognise that in the UK, the public are a culturally rich and diverse group. This diversity is reflected in our registrants and all those who interact with us.

We intend that everybody should be equally able to access our services and be treated fairly and supported when doing so. Nobody should experience discrimination, harassment or victimisation when they interact with us. In this policy, we set out our legal duties around equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI). We set objectives for developing our practice in EDI and explain how we will monitor our progress towards meeting them.

This document should be read alongside our annual EDI action plan, which sets out the practical steps that we plan to take to implement this policy.

## What does Equality, Diversity and Inclusion mean to the HCPC?

We understand that equality, diversity and inclusion are linked but distinct issues that may need tackling in different ways.

**‘Equality’** means that everybody has the same opportunities and is treated with the same respect.

**‘Diversity’** is concerned with representation and valuing individuals for the different perspectives they have to offer.

**‘Inclusion’** means ensuring that everybody has a voice and a means to participate, which may involve making reasonable adjustments to our usual processes.

Equality, diversity and inclusion are all important issues to the HCPC. This is something we aim to reflect throughout this policy and in our practice as a regulator.

### Equality

Challenge discrimination

Dismantle barriers



### Diversity

Value individuals

Celebrate differences



### Inclusion

Make reasonable adjustments

Widen access



## **Legal duties**

### **The Equality Act 2010**

The Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') is legislation that applies in England, Wales and Scotland. It protects people from discrimination, harassment or victimisation. It does this by specifying a number of 'protected characteristics'. It is against the law to discriminate against anyone because of:

- age;
- disability;
- gender reassignment;
- marriage and civil partnership;
- pregnancy and maternity;
- race;
- religion or belief;
- sex; and
- sexual orientation.

In respect of its public functions, the HCPC must also comply with the public sector equality duty. This duty sets out that we must have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

### **What does this mean?**

To meet the public sector equality duty, we must work to identify situations where people with a protected characteristic might suffer disadvantage, compared to people without, because of their protected characteristic. We have a responsibility to prevent such disadvantage (or, if this is not possible, to minimise it) wherever possible.

We must consider the unique needs of people who have protected characteristics and take steps to meet these needs. Where people with protected characteristics might be less able to participate, we must enable, encourage and celebrate their contribution.

Finally, we must tackle prejudice wherever we encounter it. This includes using communication and collaboration to dismantle barriers. We should aim to equip people with protected characteristics and those without to build a better future together, based on shared values and understanding.

## **Northern Ireland**

The Equality Act 2010 does not apply in Northern Ireland. The HCPC are the UK regulator for all of our registered professions with the exception of social workers, whom we regulate in England only.

While we are not listed as a public authority in the relevant legislation, we are nevertheless committed to the public authority duty set out in Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. This involves having due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity:

- between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation;
- between men and women generally;
- between persons with a disability and persons without; and
- between persons with dependants and persons without.

In addition, the Disability Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 requires that in carrying out its functions, a public authority shall have due regard to:

- the need to promote positive attitudes towards disabled persons; and
- the need to encourage participation by disabled persons in public life.

We are further mindful of national discrimination laws including the Sex Discrimination (NI) Order 1976, Race Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1997 and the Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (NI) 2006.

## **Welsh Language Act 1993**

The Welsh Language Act 1993 established that in the conduct of public business and administration of justice in Wales, the English and Welsh languages should be treated on a basis of equality. The HCPC is committed to delivering services to the public in Wales in the language of their choice.

In 2011, we published a Welsh Language Scheme ('the Scheme') that sets out how the HCPC will deliver services to Welsh speaking members of the public<sup>1</sup>. Following revisions to reflect changes in our regulatory duties, this Scheme was approved by the Welsh Language Commissioner on 15 February 2013.

In the future, our scheme will be replaced by Welsh Language Standards. In the meantime, we will continue to monitor and develop our existing Scheme. We report annually on our progress to the Welsh Language Commissioner.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.hcpc-uk.org/assets/documents/10003EEDWelshLanguageScheme2013.pdf>

## **Vision and values**

Our vision and values are set out in the HCPC's strategic intent 2016 – 2020.<sup>2</sup>

### **Our vision**

Our vision is to be recognised nationally and internationally as a model of good practice in public protection through the regulation of health and care professionals.

### **Our values**

Our values are a set of guiding principles which reflect both the social context in which the organisation operates and its aim to deliver effective and efficient regulation.

Our values are:

- Transparency
- Collaboration
- Responsiveness
- Value for money
- High quality service

We aim to incorporate our values into all the work that we do, and recognise that they are especially key to our commitment to EDI.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.hcpc-uk.org/assets/documents/10004E97Strategicintent2016-2020.pdf>



## **Equality, diversity and inclusion objectives**

These objectives aim to champion EDI throughout all that we do. We are mindful, nonetheless, that their implementation must be proportionate to our resources and overarching responsibilities as a regulator.

Our EDI objectives fall within the areas that we identified as core to our performance as a regulator in our corporate plan 2018-2020.

### **Performance**

1. To adhere to EDI legislation, meet regulatory standards for EDI and make certain that our practice as a regulator is fair, consistent and free from discrimination.
2. To be alert and responsive to EDI issues raised in the course of our work and in the regulatory sector and to manage them with integrity.
3. To appeal to, employ and maintain a diverse HCPC workforce that is reflective of the public we protect.
4. To promote robust professional values in our registrants by setting clear expectations around EDI in our standards, guidance and communications.
5. To set standards for education providers that support fair access to and equality of opportunity within the professions that we regulate.

### **Communications and engagement**

6. To deliver services, events, consultations, communications and publications that are relevant and accessible to all and that promote diverse engagement with us.
7. To work in partnership with other regulators to explore EDI issues and to ensure that our approach to EDI is contemporary, evolving and rooted in best practice.
8. To be mindful of diversity throughout the four countries, value and respect unique national perspectives and invite UK-wide participation in our work.

### **Effective and efficient organisation**

9. To ensure that all Council and Committee processes account for EDI considerations and the HCPC EDI action plan undergoes annual Council review.
10. To ensure that our EDI policies and practice are well embedded, clear and open to feedback from employees and stakeholders.
11. To deliver training in EDI to all our staff and partners, tailored where appropriate to their roles, and promote a culture of understanding and inclusivity among staff.

## **Data, intelligence and research**

12. To continue to seek EDI data from those we interact with and be proactive in improving how we collect, analyse and apply EDI data in our corporate decision-making.

## **Setting measures**

Our EDI objectives will be implemented, monitored and developed via an annually agreed action plan.

The annual action plan will set out specific, practical steps that the HCPC will take in that year to meet our overarching EDI objectives. Individual action points will be mapped against the objectives for transparency and for efficient progress analysis.

Ownership for implementation of and reporting on each action point will be clearly defined in the action plan. This ownership will be delegated to individuals at senior management or head of department level within each directorate.

Delivery of the action plan will be overseen by a named EDI manager from within the Policy and Standards team.

## **Measuring success**

The HCPC's EDI action plan will be valid for twelve months and be subject to annual review, revision and renewal.

### **Review**

Review and reporting upon the action plan will be managed through the organisation's Operational Management Team (OMT). Their review will fall in the first and third quarter of the action plan period.

Information will then be collated and reported to the Senior Management Team (SMT) and subsequently to the Council in the fourth quarter of the action plan period.

### **Revision**

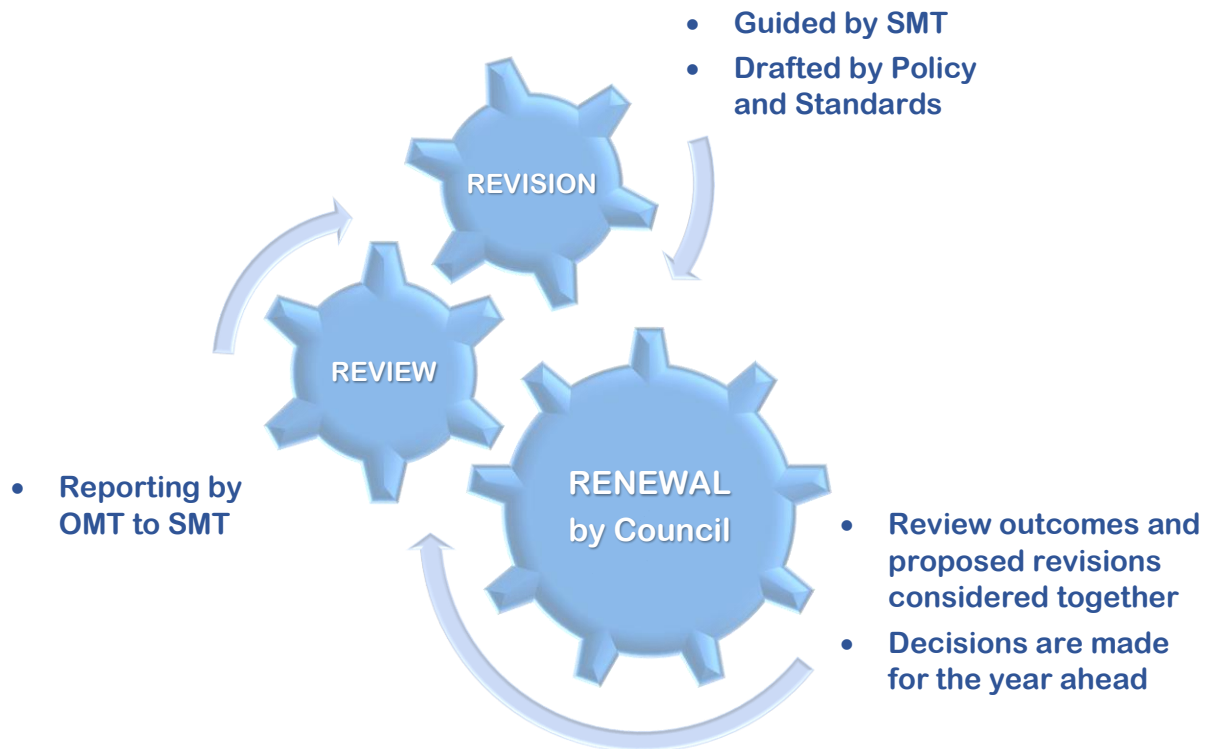
After all reporting, OMT will collaborate with the Policy and Standards team to propose action points that require revision or can be developed for the year ahead. An action plan for the following year will be drafted and submitted to Council in the fourth quarter of the twelve month action plan period.

### **Renewal**

The Council will consider the collated progress report together with the draft action plan for the coming year. The Council will determine to what extent the EDI

outcomes have been met by the action plan and use this to inform their decision on the draft plan for the following year.

Any revisions requested by the Council will be made until a new action plan can be approved. A summary report and the finalised action plan will be made available on the HCPC website for public inspection.



## Current period

The EDI objectives set out in this document will apply for the period of 1 January 2019 to 31 December 2020. They will be appraised and updated in line with any changes to the HCPC's corporate plan.

## Accountability

The Council are fundamentally accountable for the organisation's activities and processes and are responsible for ensuring the HCPC meet our duties in respect of EDI. This policy has been reviewed and approved by the Council. Going forward, the action plan review, revision and renewal process will ensure that the Council are kept up-to-date, informed and in control of the HCPC's EDI efforts.

In daily conduct of HCPC activities, accountability falls to our Senior Management Team (SMT). This team consists of three executive directors and the Chief Executive.

Responsibility for delivery of individual actions points will rest with action owners named in the action plan and collectively with the Operational Management Team (OMT).

Responsibility for managing the action plan review, revision and renewal process and policy will rest with the EDI manager.

We expect all our staff to support delivery of the action plan where possible and to engage with EDI issues as they arise within their daily role.

## **More Information**

You can read more about the HCPC and download copies of our standards documents and other publications from our website at [www.hcpc-uk.org](http://www.hcpc-uk.org)

The Equality and Human Rights Commission is responsible for promoting and enforcing equality and non-discrimination laws in England, Scotland and Wales. You can find more information about the responsibilities of different organisations under the Equality Act 2010 on their website at [www.equalityhumanrights.com](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com)

The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland is responsible for promoting and enforcing equality and anti-discrimination laws in Northern Ireland. You can find more information about the law in Northern Ireland and the duties it places on different organisations by visiting the Equality Commission's website at [www.equalityni.org](http://www.equalityni.org)

## **Contact us**

You can contact us if you have any questions about this policy, our action plan or the work that we do in respect of equality, diversity and inclusion. However, please be aware that we cannot offer legal advice.

Please direct enquiries to our Policy and Standards team:

email: [policy@hcpc-uk.org](mailto:policy@hcpc-uk.org)

tel.: +44 (0)20 7840 9815

Alternatively, contact our main switchboard: +44 (0)300 500 6184

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