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**Consultation on revised guidance on Continuing Professional Development  
(CPD)**

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 We are the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC). This consultation seeks the views of our stakeholders on revised guidance for registrants about our requirements for Continuing Professional Development (CPD).
- 1.2 In this document, you can find out information about the revised guidance and how to respond to this consultation. The draft revised guidance for consultation is published alongside this document on our website.
- 1.3 The consultation runs from **3 October 2016 to 13 January 2017**.

## 2. About the HCPC

- 2.1 We are a regulator and were set up to protect the public. To do this, we keep a register of professionals who meet our standards for their professional skills and behaviour. Individuals on our register are called 'registrants'.
- 2.2 We currently regulate 16 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

### **3. Continuing Professional Development requirements**

#### **The CPD standards and audit process**

- 3.1 The CPD standards became effective in 2006, with the first audits of registrants taking place from 2008.
- 3.2 There are five standards which in summary require a registrant to undertake CPD and keep a record of it; undertake a mixture of different types of learning relevant to their current or future scope of practice; and reflect on the benefits of their learning for their practice and for their service users.
- 3.3 Each profession renews its registration on a fixed date every two years. At point of renewal, we audit a random sample of 2.5% of each profession. Registrants are required to submit a profile demonstrating that they have met the CPD standards. If the CPD standards are met, registration is renewed. So far, the vast majority of registrants who have participated in an audit have been able to demonstrate that the standards are met and have had their registration renewed.

#### **Existing guidance**

- 3.4 When the CPD standards came into effect, we published two guidance documents: 'Your guide to our standards for continuing professional development' (referred to in this document as the 'short guide') and 'Continuing Professional Development and your registration' (referred to in this document as the 'long guide'). The short guide was sent to all registrants in 2006. The long guide builds on this content to provide more information about the process and how our standards can be met.
- 3.5 In addition, when a registrant is selected to participate in an audit, we send them information which explains what they need to do and the process in more practical detail – 'How to complete your Continuing Professional Development profile.'

#### **Continuing fitness to practise**

- 3.6 Since 2009 (with the help of a grant from the Department of Health) we have undertaken or commissioned a number of pieces of research to help us decide whether we should change our approach to 'continuing fitness to practise'. Continuing fitness to practise is a term which has been used to describe steps taken by regulators and others which support the maintenance of fitness to practise beyond the point of initial registration. Our existing continuing fitness to practise model is based around our CPD standards and audit process.

- 3.7 Our Council recently considered the outcomes of these research projects and concluded that, whilst useful, they did not immediately seem to suggest the need for any significant changes to our existing approach in this area – such as changes to the CPD standards or the creation of new processes.<sup>1</sup>
- 3.8 However, we always keep our standards and processes under regular review. In 2015, the Department of Health commissioned Newcastle University to undertake a study looking at the costs and benefits of our approach to CPD. We are currently awaiting publication of the final report. Once published, we will need to consider any recommendations and whether there are any changes as a result that we might need to consider. If we were to propose changing the standards or introducing any new processes in the future we would consult.
- 3.9 Although we are not proposing any changes to the standards or overall process at this stage, we would welcome any comments that you might have about the standards or our overall approach.

### **Perceptions and experiences of our approach to CPD standards and audits**

- 3.10 One of these pieces of research was carried out for us by Qa research. They carried out an online survey, focus groups and interviews with registrants and key stakeholders. The purpose was to gather views about the CPD requirements and on registrants' experiences of the audit process.<sup>2</sup>
- 3.11 The research found that the standards were generally well understood and that most participants did not consider that the standards or process needed to change. The research team also found that some registrants reported that the audit process had encouraged them to think about how they record their CPD and how they select which CPD opportunities to take.
- 3.12 The research made a number of recommendations, particularly about improvements we could make to standard correspondence and to our guidance. The revised guidance we are consulting on has drawn on the findings of this research.

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<sup>1</sup> HCPC Council, 19 May 2016. Continuing fitness to practise.  
<http://www.hcpc-uk.org/assets/documents/10005000Enc08-ContinuingFitnessToPractise.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Qa Research (2015). Perceptions and experiences of the HCPC's approach to continuing professional development standards and audits.  
<http://www.hcpc-uk.org/publications/research/index.asp?id=1145>

#### **4. The draft revised guidance for consultation**

- 4.1 We are consulting on a revised version of the long guide: ‘Continuing Professional Development and your registration’. This will replace the existing guidance of the same title. The short guide will no longer be published.
- 4.2 The short guide was produced for a specific purpose when the standards first came into place and is now distributed very little. We think that a single, concise, yet comprehensive document will be preferable to two guidance documents which duplicate each other in part.
- 4.3 We will continue to send registrants selected for audit information about what they need to do (‘How to complete your Continuing Professional Development profile’). This is also available on our website. We are currently reviewing our administrative processes for managing the audits as part of an ongoing project so will keep this document updated as and when we change our processes. We will also update it in line with the content of the revised long guide (once published after this consultation).<sup>3</sup> We will continue to use the website to provide clear information about our requirements, including publishing sample profiles which are produced jointly with the professional bodies.
- 4.4 We have made a number of changes to improve the style and content of the guidance, including the following.
- We have broken down block text and used bullet points, wherever possible. For example, there is now a straightforward bullet pointed summary of the CPD requirements (section two).
  - We have added a flow diagram summarising the audit process (section five).
  - We have abridged the information on putting a CPD profile together so it is clearer and focuses on the important key points (section six). Registrants who are selected for audit will continue to receive more detailed information about the audit process and completing a profile when we notify them of their audit. This information is also available on the website.
  - We have been clearer about the need in an audit to submit a dated list of activities to demonstrate that standard one has been met (section six). This was a theme in feedback from registrants who participated in the research.

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<sup>3</sup> The Registration Transformation and Improvement project is looking at redesigning our registration processes and introducing a new IT system. This includes improving how we manage the processes underpinning the CPD audits.

- There is developing evidence that interactive activities which involve learning with others, and third party feedback, can make a positive contribution to practice. Whilst they are not compulsory requirements, we have made reference to them to encourage registrants (section four).
- We have also encouraged registrants who have an annotation in the Register (for example, a prescribing annotation) to consider whether they should undertake CPD in this area of practice (section four).
- Overall, the guidance is shorter than the existing version, with material removed that is duplicative, out-of-date, unnecessary, or better placed on the website or in the separate information for registrants selected for audit.

4.5 For reference, the existing guidance is available on our website.<sup>4</sup>

4.6 Once the consultation has concluded, we will use the comments we receive to improve the draft guidance further. We will then work with the Plain English Campaign to edit the guidance. We then plan to publish it on our website as well as in hard copy.

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<sup>4</sup> [http://www.hcpc-uk.org/assets/documents/10001314CPD\\_and\\_your\\_registration.pdf](http://www.hcpc-uk.org/assets/documents/10001314CPD_and_your_registration.pdf)

## 5. How to respond to the consultation

5.1 We welcome your comments on the draft guidance. We have listed some questions to help you below. The questions are not designed to be exhaustive and we would welcome your comments on any aspect of the guidance.

Q.1 Is the guidance clear and easy to understand? How could we improve it?

Q.2 Could any parts of the guidance be reworded or removed?

Q.3 Do you have any other comments on the draft guidance or on our overall approach in this area?

5.2 You can respond to this consultation in the following ways.

- By completing our easy-to-use [online survey](#)
- By emailing us at: [consultation@hcpc-uk.org](mailto:consultation@hcpc-uk.org).
- By writing to us at the following address.

Consultation on CPD guidance  
Policy and Standards Department  
Health and Care Professions Council  
Park House  
184 Kennington Park Road  
London  
SE11 4BU  
Fax: +44(0)20 7820 9684

5.3 Please note that we do not normally accept responses by telephone or in person. We normally ask that consultation responses are made in writing. However, if you are unable to respond in writing, please contact us on +44(0)20 7840 9815 to discuss any reasonable adjustments that would help you to respond.

5.4 Please complete the online survey or send us your response by 13 January 2017.

5.5 **Please contact us to request a copy of this document in Welsh or in an alternative format.**

5.6 Once the consultation period is completed, we will analyse the responses we receive. We will then publish a document which summarises the comments we received and explains the decisions we have taken as a result. This will be published on our website.