
Chief Executive's report on organisational performance February 2022

Executive Summary

This paper provides the Council with updates on the organisation's performance since the November 2021 Council meeting. Due to the relatively brief time elapsed, the report focuses on stakeholder engagement and regulatory development.

A full report will be provided at the March 2022 meeting.

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 paper.
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Next steps	The next report will be received in March 2022.
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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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Chief Executive's Performance Report

February 2022

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1. Chief Executive's Organisational Assessment

Much of the Executive's focus over recent weeks has been on developing the Corporate Plan and associated budget for 2022-23. This has been very much a collaborative exercise between the Executive Leadership team and the wider Senior Leadership Group, building on the strategy mapping and prioritisation work shared with Council at its seminar in November. The draft Corporate Plan will be shared with Council at this meeting, with the draft budget and proposed investment priorities due to be considered by the People and Resources Committee on 3 February.

A full performance report with KPIs will be presented to Council in March. By way of an interim update, I am encouraged by the progress that has been made with the Fitness to Practice Improvement programme and that we are now seeing measurable signs of improvement. Sustaining and evidencing these improvements so that we meet the PSA's standards of good regulation will remain a priority focus for the 2022-23 Corporate Plan.

Similarly, we are seeing the positive impact of the improvement interventions made to our registration system and processes in the autumn last year and are on track with the development of online application capabilities. Online applications will bring significant benefits in terms of improving the applicant's user experience as well as reducing the amount of low value manual processing work that is currently required. The volume of international applications continues to exceed forecast numbers. The significant increase in applications has tested the resource resilience we currently have within the registrations team, and further supports the business case for moving more of the process online. As an interim measure, we are working with an external partner to provide additional capacity to help manage the increase volume and ensure we meet our service standards.

Our ambition to be a high-performing, adaptable and caring regulator can only be achieved through HCPC's people. Our people are our greatest asset. We rely on compassionate, skilled and motivated individuals who work collaboratively to deliver our important public protection mission. The remainder of my organisational assessment will therefore focus on developments in this important area.

Our [People Strategy](#) was launched at a (virtual) all employee event on 19 January with supporting internal and external blogs. The Human Resources & Organisational Development team have developed the People Strategy through close engagement with employees and external stakeholders, including staff surveys, workshops and exit interview data. We will be engaging with employees for their response to the strategy over the coming months. The new strategy also supports and aligns with our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) strategy and Registrant Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

An illustration of the interrelationship between our People and EDI strategies is the launch of the 'Beyond Barriers' inclusive mentoring programme. This is a structured and supported mentoring programme with a focus on the development of under-represented groups. The programme involves 14 staff (mentors and mentees). It is a six-month programme which has been designed in-house and intended to benefit both mentees and their mentors. The programme includes 'reflection and learn sessions', and bespoke sessions working in partnership with our external learning

provider) on understanding equality, diversity and inclusion and the barriers some people face in career progression. Participants are enthusiastic and feedback has been positive.

In addition, a six-month coaching and development programme has been launched for senior women in the organisation with the aim of supporting and developing the talent within the organisation.

'Becoming a compassionate regulator' workshops have also been held. 220 employees attended with most of the workshops being in the office. This gave many employees the opportunity to attend the offices and meet colleagues in person for the first time in 18 months. The aim of the workshops was to provide an opportunity to discuss our new Behavioural Standards and to consider how to embed them to improve registrant experience, and our interactions with one another. The focus was on the compassionate value and embedding this into our ways of working and behaviours. The workshops provided an opportunity for open, honest conversations about what compassion means and how to overcome challenges, including the pressure of high workloads. Employee feedback has been positive and the SLG is taking forward the outcomes and actions arising.

An all-staff event, which will be held in person, is being planned for 11 March. This will be the first time we have been able to gather the whole organisation together in one place during my tenure as CEO. The aim is to support employee engagement with our purpose and vision. Council members will be invited, and appropriate Covid related risk assessments and measures will be in place.

On the subject of Covid, further restrictions on employees attending HCPC offices were introduced following the Plan B measures implemented by the Government before Christmas. This reduced the number of registration colleagues working onsite. Like many other organisations, we have seen increased numbers of employees who have tested positive for Covid or have children/dependents who have tested positive and therefore need to self-isolate. Although the Plan B measures have been withdrawn, we are taking a cautious approach to increasing the numbers of employees working from the office. We are closely monitoring absence levels and any impact this is having on productivity.

On the recruitment front, I am delighted to welcome Alastair Bridges who joined HCPC on 17 January as Executive Director of Resources and Business Performance. Joining Alastair in the Resources directorate are: Alan Keshtmand as Head of Finance and Geoff Kirk as Head of IT and Digital transformation. This represents a significant milestone with all of the ELT and SLG posts now being filled. This means Neil Cuthbertson's engagement as Executive Director for Digital Transformation has now ended. I'd like to express my thanks to Neil for his contribution to HCPC, in particular his leadership of the development of the digital transformation strategy.

2. Stakeholder engagement summary

Strategic Relationships development

Following development of our strategic approach to relationship management last year, we are now implementing key elements of this approach, designed to deepen and strengthen our relationships and, in particular, improve our insight into and responsiveness to our professions.

In December, we convened the first meetings of our newly re-established quarterly HCPC-Professional Body Forum (two meetings were held consecutively on the same day to support effective participation). Around 20 of our 35 professional bodies attended with representation from 14 of HCPC's 15 regulated professions. Colleagues from across HCPC presented on topics for discussion, including our Education QA model, our Standards of Proficiency review, regulatory reform and Equality, Diversity & Inclusion. We also discussed our engagement approach with professional bodies. This engagement was positively welcomed, with professional bodies keen to develop their relationships with us and work more closely with us.

Over this period, we have also allocated relationship managers from across HCPC departments for each of our 35 professional bodies. Through January, relationship managers are making contact with their allocated professional body/ies and will be agreeing with each body how they would like to engage with us. Regular cycles of meetings are also being put in place at CEO and Executive level over the next 12 months as appropriate and have begun this month. High level and positive meetings have recently been held with BSHAA (the British Society of Hearing Aid Audiologists) and the RCSLT (Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists).

Intelligence from these engagements (and our engagements more widely) are now being captured on our 'OneNote' system, with highlights being shared at monthly Executive Leadership Team meetings and also available to relevant staff. This provides much improved insight for our senior team and staff into current issues with professional bodies and paves the way for continuing to develop and mature our relationships over coming months. Aligned to this, we now also regularly collate, update and share our key messages briefing to support all colleagues involved in external relationships.

We will continue to refine and develop our approach as it becomes more established and look forward to our next quarterly HCPC-Professional Body Forum in March. Over recent months, we have been developing a partnership project with Higher Education England focusing on our shared ambitions in relation to international applications, data and the development of guidance to support high quality professional practice. We look forward to updating Council on this work as it takes shape over the next period.

I am pleased to report that we have recently recruited to our first post based in Scotland, with our new Professional Liaison (PL) Consultant due to start in March. We continue to engage with colleagues in Scotland, including the Chief AHP Officer, to support our new PL Consultant's recruitment and induction. We were pleased that an AHP Director from NHS Scotland was kindly able to support this process. A key ambition of our Professional Liaison service is to grow our team so that we can

support work across the 4 UK nations, which we hope to achieve in the coming financial year.

In light of the ongoing impacts of the Covid pandemic, on 21 January, we published a [joint letter with the Chief Allied Health Professional Officers of England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales](#) recognising the professionalism and dedication of AHPs during the pandemic. The letter reiterated our commitment that our regulation will continue to take into account the context and environment within which our registrants are currently working. It also confirmed the shared commitment of the letter's signatories to ensuring the long-term prospects of AHPs in training and confirmed that we are working with the education bodies in the four nations to maintain as far as possible student education programmes.

Work to finalise our proposals to Council on updates to our Standards of Proficiency for each of our 15 professions is coming to a conclusion. Stakeholder engagement to help us finalise our recommended approach has been completed in December and January. In January we held a workshop with ETC working through proposed changes in detail, both for common Standards and profession-specific Standards, confirming the approach we will be recommending. A full paper will be provided at March's Council meeting, including recommendations and next steps.

Public Affairs - Professional Qualifications Bill

We continued to engage with peers including Baroness Fraser, Lord Lansley and Baroness Finlay during the Report Stage of the Professional Qualifications Bill in the House of Lords. We also engaged with representatives from BEIS, providing the Department with a quote welcoming the amendments Ministers proposed to the Bill in light of our representations. The Government accepted HCPC's views on the need to amend the Bill to include guarantees on maintaining regulatory autonomy and ensure that regulators would be fully consulted before the Bill's powers were exercised.

We are now satisfied that these amendments provide the necessary assurances that we were seeking regarding regulatory autonomy and consultation, and we appreciate the positive and constructive way that Government has worked with us and other regulators in developing these amendments.

We will continue to monitor the Professional Qualifications Bill in the Commons, and the legislative consent motion debates in the legislatures of the devolved nations, to note any specific concerns around health care professionals which are raised and respond accordingly.

Public Affairs – Health and Care Bill

As the Health and Care Bill progressed through the House of Commons in the autumn we continued to engage with a range of MPs with regards to the provisions in the Bill on regulatory reform.

The Welsh Senedd raised some concerns about the powers within Clause 123 (currently re-numbered as Clause 142) of the Health and Care Bill and we wrote to Welsh Health Minister Eluned Morgan sharing with her our latest thinking on

regulatory reform. The Government subsequently amended the Bill to give consultative rights to the Welsh Government and Senedd.

We engaged with Conservative MPs with a healthcare interest during the Report Stage in the Commons, and our Chair and I met with Dr James Davies MP in September. Dr Davies wrote to the Minister seeking certain assurances and clarifications regarding Clause 123.

During the debate on Clause 123 at Committee Stage, our thoughts on regulatory reform were positively referenced by MPs. A member of the Committee also wrote to Health Ministers seeking further clarification on regulatory reform issues and the use of Clause 123 powers.

The Bill began its progress through the House of Lords in early December. We provided information to peers including Baroness Fraser, Lord Lansley and Baroness Finlay on the provisions concerning regulatory reform in the Bill (by this time re-numbered from Clause 123 to Clause 142). The Chair and I met with Baroness Fraser and she wrote to the Lords Minister, Lord Kamall, asking for further clarity on the principles and criteria behind the use of Clause 142 powers.

At Committee Stage of the Bill, Baroness Fraser tabled a probing amendment to explore what criteria the Government intends to use in making an Order under Clause 142 to alter the professional regulatory framework. She met with Lord Kamall in January to discuss the amendment. We will continue our engagement with peers as the Lords Committee Stage progresses to seek further assurances on the use of clause 142.

Public Affairs – other engagement

The Chair and CEO met with the new Conservative Shadow Cabinet Secretary for Health & Social Care in Scotland, Dr Sandesh Gulhane, in December. We also wrote to the Health Ministers of the three devolved nations to raise the importance of the regulatory reform agenda in light of announcements from the PSA at the end of last year.

Following the Northern Ireland Executive's public consultation on a statutory duty of candour we engaged with key stakeholders including Suzanne Martin, Chief AHP of Northern Ireland, to highlight explanatory materials we had developed for registrants and to ask for her support with their promotion.

In January, CEO John Barwick spoke at the Westminster Health Forum policy conference on key issues for the health workforce and priorities going forward.

3. Regulatory Development

Education

2022 marks the start of our new quality assurance model as business as usual. Two of the key features of our new education QA model are:

- using data to inform risk-based decision-making
- working more collaboratively with education providers throughout the QA process – including adopting a regional approach to relationship management with education providers.

This very much aligns to the priorities in our five-year Corporate Strategy.

Registration

I'm pleased that since Council last met we have made several updates to our registration system based on feedback we had received from our Registrants. The upgrades include providing alternative ways for people to activate their account. This has had a positive impact with c7000 registrants using this new functionality since 30 November.

We continue to see a sustained increase in international applications. 3,126 applicants have successfully joined the Register which represents a 54% increase when compared to the same period last year. While this remains good news for the UK health and care workforce it continues to put the team under pressure. To cope with this increased demand the project to move international applications to an online application form is progressing to plan and remain on track to go live in March 2022. This will follow a short pilot/testing phase with applicants selected to participate in February. Moving applications online will improve the user experience and will also significantly reduce the time it takes to process applications as it removes the time consuming and inefficient data entry that is currently required.

In January, following a procurement exercise, we also selected a partner to provide surge capacity support to help us manage this increased volume. That partner will provide us with additional capacity to cope with the increased demand until the new online application form goes live. To be clear the HCPC remains the decision maker, following the assessment of each application by two Registration Assessors, as to whether or not an applicant can join the Register, but the supplier gives us important additional capacity to complete the data entry and verification checks.

Our other core registration services such as UK applications, CPD, readmissions and renewals remain within our service standards.

Fitness to Practise

As we begin 2022 it feels like a good time to reflect on the progress we have made in fitness to practise. Over the past twelve months we have delivered on the projects set out in our FtP Improvement Programme as we have updated Council at each of our meetings throughout 2021. It is worth reflecting that over that twelve month period we have implemented a new case management system, invested in our

people (and particularly those with management responsibilities) through the Perform Plus programme resulting in over sixty colleagues in FtP successfully gaining the Certificate of Lean Competency from Cardiff University.

We have also taken steps to improve the quality of our investigations with a new risk assessment tool and case plans being introduced last year. While it is still early days since those changes were implemented our internal monitoring of our performance against the standards we set ourselves is promising and we are broadly where we expected to be against the targets we set ourselves.

Change takes time and it is worth reflecting that between January and July we were delivering against 16 improvement projects. One often sees a dip in performance during the process of change. However, we have not only sustained our performance, we have seen improvements during the year. For example, as we reported to Council at our last meeting the median age of cases we conclude at the Investigating Committee stage (or before) is c20 weeks and we have seen a c15-20% increase in the percentage of cases within KPI in our investigations teams compared to where we were twelve months ago.

As we plan for next financial year we will continue be focussed on the quality and pace of our investigations. That means moving to frontloading investigations where it is right to do so and ensuring we have the right resource in place to support our teams in meeting the targets we have set ourselves. We have started some of that work now with recruitment for Case Managers beginning.

Change of this nature does take time and in particular for the benefits to be seen in our end to end case data. I'm pleased that we have seen measurable signs of improvement during 2021 while we have undertaken a significant amount of improvement work. We will continue to focus on quality and the pace of our investigations in 2022 and we will report to Council on the progress we are making against the targets we have set ourselves.

Chief Executive – John Barwick

Meeting schedule period covering 26 November 2021 – 26 January 2022

Health Improvement Scotland – annual MoU operation review	26 November 2021
Chief Executives of Regulatory Bodies Meeting	26 November 2021
Dr Sandesh Gulhane MSP	01 December 2021
Sarah Niblock, Chief Executive, UK Council for Psychotherapy (UKCP)	01 December 2021
Department of Health and Social Care – Director and Deputy Director of Workforce	02 December 2021
Unison quarterly meeting	06 December 2021
Allied Health Professions Federation (AHPF) Forum	07 December 2021
HENSE Q4 Forum 2021, Department of Health & Social Care	08 December 2021
Chief Executives of GMC, NMC and HCPC policy discussion	09 December 2021
GMB Union quarterly meeting	10 December 2021
Baroness Fraser – Health and Care Bill	13 December 2021
People Plan - AHP Workforce & Education Strategic Oversight Forum	15 December 2021
Scottish Government Health directorate quarterly catch up	16 December 2021
Chief Executives Steering Group Forum Meeting	17 December 2021
Westminster Health Forum Policy Conference - Speaker	12 January 2022
Health Education England, Advanced Practice	12 January 2022
Allied Health Professions, AHP's into Action Programme Board	12 January 2022
British Society of Hearing Aid Audiologists (BSHAA), David Welbourne, Chief Executive	21 January 2022
Julian Garcia, Mckinley Advisors, HCPC Research Agenda	21 January 2022

Suzanne Rastrick, Chief Allied Health Professions Officer for England, quarterly catch-up	21 January 2022
Care Quality Commission (CQC) Health and Social Care Regulators Forum	26 January 2022