

Council

Meeting Date	17 July 2025
Title	Communications Strategy Update
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Executive Summary <p>The communications strategy was agreed by the Council in July 2024 and set out a 2-year plan for improving the communications capability of the organisation, building the HCPC brand to improve the trust and confidence in our work, and increasing awareness of the important role we play in the health and care sector. This paper provides an update on progress against the strategy and highlights future work.</p>	
Action required	Council is asked to: <p>Note and review the progress made against the communications strategy and future work.</p>
Previous consideration	The Council approved the communications strategy in July 2024.
Next steps	Further updates will be provided via existing reporting channels and future strategic priorities for communications will be aligned to the wider corporate strategy development.
Financial and resource implications	The communications strategy is being delivered within the existing communications budget
Associated strategic priority/priorities	The strategy seeks to support across all strategic priorities but will have particular impact on 3. Develop insight and exert influence, 4. Be visible, engaged and informed, and 6. Promoting the value of regulation.
Associated strategic risk(s)	2. Our standards do not reflect current practice and/or they are not understood by registrants and our stakeholders.

	<p>3.b We are unable to maximise our use of the data we hold to share insights to protect, promote and maintain the health, safety and well-being of the public.</p> <p>4. We are unable to effectively build trust, engage with and influence our stakeholders reducing our ability to understand their perspectives and regulate effectively.</p> <p>5.b Our organisational values are not reflected at all levels of the organisation, leading to staff not feeling supported/trusted/listened too</p>
Risk appetite	Communications - Open
Communication and engagement	<p>Use this section to summarise engagement that has been undertaken with the public, other external stakeholders and internally (i.e. cross-organisational impact on other relevant teams and services, including those identified in departmental workplans), and any planned future engagement.</p> <p>If relevant, outline how the paper links to the objectives in the HCPC's communications strategy approved by the Council in July 2024 and any communication plan (if not already addressed in 'Next steps' above.</p>
Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) impact and Welsh language standards	The communications strategy considers and supports EDI objectives and achievement of Welsh language standards.

1. Summary

1.1. The communications strategy was agreed by the Council in July 2025 and aligned to the corporate strategy period. The communication strategy seeks to:

- increase understanding of our role and why our work matters with registrants, stakeholders, and the public;
- increase the impact of our work across the health and care sector by convening, leading or being part of conversations that matter to the existing workforce or the future of health regulation;
- shape our activity and its delivery so our audiences can access, contribute, and use it where and when they need it; and
- equip our employees to act as ambassadors for the HCPC, communicating coherently, consistently and powerfully about our work.

1.2. The activity to achieve those objectives was split across 3 workstreams:

- Deliver high quality communications across our corporate channels
- Build the capability of the communication function
- Develop organisational communications and engagement capability.

1.3. A summary of the strategy objectives and workstreams is included at Annex A.

2. Update against strategy activity

2.1 We have made significant progress against the activity set out in the communications strategy.

Summary of progress against activity					
Workstream	Total number of activity measures	Completed	In progress	To be started	% Completed or in progress
Deliver high quality communications across our corporate channels.	28	16	7	5	82%
Build the capability of communication function.	25	9	9	7	72%
Develop organisational communications and engagement capability.	16	6	7	3	81%
Total across all workstreams	69	31	23	15	78%

3. Measuring outcomes

3.1. As outlined in the original strategy, our baseline measures for communications prior to the strategy were either inconsistent or more tactical. Work has been undertaken during the last year to review how we track and report our activity and the impact it is making.

3.2. A key step forward is undertaking a new perceptions survey that has been included in the corporate strategy engagement activity. The survey will

introduce a new measure based on trust in the HCPC and our activity. This measure will form a key baseline for tracking the health of our brand over the coming years.

- 3.3. We continue to track more tactical measures across our corporate channels and are seeking to provide more visibility of key changes and, where available, insights to add more value to organisational decision making. Information about communication activity will be made available to the Council as it progresses to ensure they are informed and able to act as ambassadors for our work.
- 3.4. Our progress in building our communications capability is also evidenced in recent examples of our work including:

CPD Week 2025

- 3.5. We ran a successful CPD Week 2025 campaign which focused on raising awareness of the importance of CPD, myth busting our audit requirements and promoting support for registrants. It also sought to draw on influencers and partner endorsements to improve brand awareness. The campaign was a success with 33% increase in CPD page views, around 3,000 webinar attendees and various endorsements from stakeholders. The campaign will be run again in 2026.

Sexual Safety Hub Promotion

- 3.6. A short media and social media led campaign sought to raise awareness around our work to improve sexual safety and promote the support offered by our Professional Liaison team and new sexual safety hub. We focused the campaign on victims and how are data supported reports from professions about under reporting. We partnered with Sky News to proactively cover our new data report, and we were able to land messages about our support work and the need for legislative change to support better outcomes in Fitness to Practise (FTP). This led to a spike of nearly 1,000 more views to our hub and numerous requests for support to our Professional Liaison team.

Brand quick wins

- 3.7. We have delivered various small changes to improve the look and feel of our activity across several channels and projects, including the data hub dashboards and our social media content for key campaigns. We have also refreshed our induction materials for all staff to bring out the importance of brand in building trust and the shared responsibilities for all colleagues.

Resourcing model

- 3.8. We have undertaken a full review of our resourcing model which has led to a shift towards building our in-house capability. The new model will include three core functions: digital communications and content, strategic and internal communications and strategic relationships. To implement this model, we have:
- realigned existing roles and responsibilities in the team, including reviewing all job descriptions and created a new Strategic and Internal Communications team;
 - reduced our outsourced spend by over 50% for 2025-26, introducing clearer deliverables, contract management and new ways of working; and
 - recruited four permanent members of staff, prioritising recruitment to build our planning, digital content and internal communications capability.

Internal processes

- 3.9. To maximise the benefits of our in-house resources we have also redesigned our internal processes to ensure correct prioritisation of work and coordination across communications. The redesign has included new planning templates, a new meeting structure, regular team development days and a new commissioning process which will be launch to the organisation later this year.

4. Future priorities

- 4.1. We are continuing our work to achieve the strategy's objectives. The key areas of ongoing and future priority areas of work are as follows:

Ongoing recruitment

- 4.2 We have several new roles we are due to recruit to over the coming months including two communication officer positions and an additional officer role in the stakeholder team. Our intention is to continue to build our in-house capability over the coming year and only rely on outsourced provision in areas where we require specialist expertise or where we continue to have gaps in our capabilities or capacity.

Building our understanding of our audiences

- 4.3 We have a significant plan of external and internal engagement activity underway to support the development of the HCPC's next corporate strategy. This activity will not only allow the strategy to be co-produced by patients, partners, and colleagues, but also provide us with an opportunity to raise

awareness of our work and understand the perceptions and preferences of users. This work will be combined with data we already have to undertake a full channel review that will produce recommendations for our presence and use of our corporate communication channels (e.g. social media platforms).

Targeting our public affairs and the media activity

- 4.4 We are seeking to build awareness of our work and how we can play our part as a regulator in workforce planning with a wider range of stakeholders, including parliamentarians. Our public affairs work will seek to position the HCPC as a thought leader on the future of regulation and workforce. It will seek to draw attention to our data work, benefits of regulatory reform and key elements of research (e.g. AI). Our plans are not only about engaging policymakers, but it will seek to influence and shape the opinion of other stakeholders (professional bodies, other regulators, patient groups, and the media) and to develop wider advocacy for our work.

Website upgrade

- 4.5 We are undertaking work as part of the digital roadmap to build the capability of our website, which will seek to improve this channel and embed it as the core access point for all our key audiences (e.g. registrant portals). The development will also allow us to utilise features to improve the personalisation of content allowing us greater ability to surface key information in support of our standards. It will also strengthen our ability to adapt to changes in user behaviour (e.g. the use of AI over traditional search engines).

Brand refresh and Customer Relationship Management (CRM)

- 4.6 We are seeking to refresh our brand to bring out the values, personality and confidence of the organisation more clearly. The refresh will seek to make our brand more consistent and modern by making small changes to our brand guidelines, visual identity, tone of voice and brand tools (e.g. templates). It will be supported by internal communications activity to encourage adoption and linked to the launch of the new corporate strategy.
- 4.7 The refresh will also seek to support colleagues with key messaging and increased information to allow them to undertake advocacy on behalf of the organisation in the appropriate way. This will include improved social media guidance, media training for key colleagues, access to key messages for priority projects and issues and improved monitoring or horizon scanning of opportunities.

- 4.8 As part of the digital roadmap work, we will also be seeking to embed a CRM capability for communications and engagement work, and in the longer term join this with other CRM functions to provide an easier way for colleagues to share information. The implementation of any system will include a significant business change plan to ensure adoption and use of the system.

Annex A: Summary of Communications Strategy

We want to:

Excel in all our communications, building our brand, achieving our strategic objectives and delivering our work with impact.

By achieving our communications objectives of:

Communications
objectives

1) Increase understanding of our role and why our work matters among our registrants, stakeholders and the public.

2) Increase the impact of our work across the health and care sector by convening, leading or being part of conversations that matter to the existing workforce or the future of health regulation.

3) Shaping our activity and its delivery so that our audiences can access, contribute and use it, where and when needed.

4) Equip our employees to act as ambassadors for the HCPC, communicating coherently, consistently and powerfully about our work.

To achieve them we need to:

Communications
key workstreams

Deliver high quality communications across all our corporate channels.

Build the capability of our communications function.

Develop organisational communications and engagement capability.