

Council

Minutes of the meeting of the Health and Care Professions Council held in public as follows:

Date: Thursday 12 February 2026

Time: 11am

Venue: Videoconference via Zoom

Present: Christine Elliott (Chair)
Grzegorz Drozd*
Rebekah Eglinton
Helen Gough
Helen Grantham
John McEvoy
Lianne Patterson
Pameleta Ricketts (from item 4)
Catharine Seddon
Carl Stychin
Dabbi Taylor* (from item 5)
Kathryn Thirlaway (until item 4)

Apologies: David Stirling

In attendance:

James Afolabi, Financial Planning and Analysis Manager
Claire Amor, Executive Director of Corporate Affairs
Francesca Bramley, Governance Manager
Alastair Bridges, Executive Director of Resources
Laura Coffey, Executive Director of Fitness to Practise and Tribunal Services
Colette Higham, Senior Scrutiny Officer, Professional Standards Authority
Jamie Hunt, Head of Education
Alan Keshtmand, Head of Finance and Commercial
Noah Linley-Adams, Governance Officer
Patricia Morrissey, Head of Governance
Dave Munday, Lead Professional Officer (Regulation & Mental Health), Unite the Union
Kayleigh Parker, Communications Manager
Matthew Peck, Head of Communications, Engagement and Public Affairs
Bernie O'Reilly, Chief Executive and Registrar

* Council apprentice

Andrew Smith, Executive Director of Education, Registration and Regulatory
Standards and Deputy Chief Executive
Kate Steele, Partner, Capsticks LLP

Public meeting

1 Chair's welcome and introduction

The Chair welcomed those present to the meeting of Council, including a number of observers who were individually welcomed by the Chair.

1(a) Apologies for absence

1.1 Apologies were received from David Stirling.

1.2 The meeting was declared quorate.

1(b) Approval of agenda

1.3 The Council approved the agenda.

1(c) Declaration of members' interests in relation to agenda items

1.4 There were no interests to declare from Council members.

1(d) Minutes of the Council meeting on 4 December 2025

1.5 The Council approved the minutes as an accurate record of its meeting held in public on 4 December 2025.

1(e) Matters arising

1.6 The Council noted the updates on the matters arising from previous meetings held in public.

2 Chair's Report

2.1 The Council noted the Chair's report.

Performance reports

3 Chief Executive's Performance Report

3.1 The Chief Executive's performance report highlighted key areas of organisational performance and key developments in the reporting period since the Council's last meeting in December 2025.

3.2 The Council noted the report and the following points:

- The Executive Leadership Team (ELT) had reviewed and discussed the proposals arising from the all employee development day in November 2025, with key themes including collaboration, information/data sharing and artificial intelligence (AI). The ELT had committed to incorporating these ideas into existing projects and considering additional work through the corporate planning process. The momentum of enthusiasm across the organisation would be sustained through regular updates and feedback shared with employees through blog posts and all-employee briefings.
- The Chief Executive had published a blog post to all staff on 28 January 2026 regarding the Mann Review and the written evidence that had been submitted. The blog had highlighted International Holocaust Remembrance Day (28 January). Antisemitism awareness sessions had been commissioned and would be rolled out to the Senior Leadership Team and subsequently the wider organisation. The Policy team were engaging with a range of stakeholders to develop new antidiscrimination resources for learners and registrants who experienced discrimination, which were due to be published in early March 2026.
- Hundreds of colleagues had attended the latest hybrid all employee briefing on 10 February, where updates were shared on a range of topics including the standards of education and training review, the launch of the new sanctions policy and the results of the latest pulse survey.
- The strategic risk register would be refreshed to align with the new corporate strategy 2026-31. Strategic risk 2 remained at the increased score of 6 to reflect professional liaison and outreach vacancies, however a new Head of Professionalism and Upstream Regulation had been appointed and was due to commence in April 2026 and the recruitment for the outreach role in Scotland was nearing conclusion. The Council commended the Professionalism and Upstream Regulation team for their dedication and commitment.
- As a result of the increasing complexity of the Education team's quality assurance work, there had been challenges in consistently achieving the associated key performance indicators (KPIs). It was acknowledged that this was an education sector-wide issue, driven in part by an increase in more complex education programmes such as apprenticeships and partnership delivery models for education programmes. A review of the Education KPIs would be submitted to the Education and Training Committee meeting in March 2026 to consider how to ensure these remained meaningful and realistic.
- As a result of the continued improved operational performance and the reduction in the number of international registration applications, the international team had been scaled down in line with the HCPC's flexible resourcing model.

- Complaints continued to be higher than in previous years. Complaints relating to international applications accounted for the majority of feedback received and this was directly correlated to the previous increase in international application volumes which had resulted in delays in processing applications. As international application volumes had now reduced, it was anticipated that the number of complaints would also reduce in future reports.
- There had been progress on a number of corporate plan milestones, including Business Central, Fitness to Practise (FTP) frontloading and FTP legal services. The appointment of a new Head of Professionalism and Upstream Regulation would enable the Professional Liaison Service work, currently rated amber, to progress.
- Around 90 HCPC managers had attended on-site AI training in January 2026 to build knowledge and practical tools to support the safe, ethical and effective use of AI in line with the HCPC's AI policy. The training had been delivered by the Knowledge Academy and feedback from attendees had been very positive. Human oversight remained in place for all AI tools deployed at the HCPC and the importance of human quality assurance had been emphasised during the training. The Executive were working through the HCPC's governance model to underpin further AI developments such as the use of AI agents.
- Building on the success of last year's continuing professional development (CPD) week, a second CPD week would take place from 2 - 5 March 2026 to share evidence and best practice through social media and a series of webinars.
- The pulse survey response rate remained high and the Executive Leadership Team planned to monitor survey responses to capture the impact of ongoing change and transformation programmes. High-level themes emerging from the free-text survey responses would be shared with employees in future.

3.3 The Council sought clarity regarding the environmental sustainability of the HCPC's data storage arrangements. The Executive Director of Resources confirmed that the HCPC's data was stored on servers within the UK, in line with GDPR legal requirements. The greatest proportion of the HCPC's emissions related to purchased goods and services. The Executive planned to explore how the HCPC could seek to receive its 'share' of Microsoft's sustainability gains.

4 Fitness to Practise Performance Report

4.1 The Council noted the update on the progress of the Fitness to Practise (FTP) improvement programme against the targets set to improve the quality and timeliness of case management.

4.2 The Council noted the following points:

- The twelve week target for progressing a matter to interim order hearing from receipt of a concern was not being met and the median time taken was 29 weeks, which was due to six cases where new information was received in the later stages of the HCPC's investigation increasing the case risk profile and also a number of cases that had been subject to a third party investigation.
- Performance against the three week target for progressing a matter to an interim order hearing once the need for an interim order had been identified was seven weeks in December 2025, which was above the three week key performance indicator. This was due to a number of panels being adjourned.
- Monitoring of the quality and timeliness of risk assessments continued and in December 2025 the 80% adherence target had been exceeded, with 89% compliance reported. As performance at the target level had been embedded, work was under way to consider how to best support the teams to meet and exceed the stretch target of 90%.
- The 80% target for meeting the best practice standard for the quality and timeliness of case plans had also been exceeded in December 2025, with 86% compliance reported.
- 256 new concerns were received in December 2025, which was broadly consistent with previous months noting the monthly average since April 2025 was 246. This data would inform budget and resource planning for 2026-27.
- Following the introduction of case streaming in July 2025, the first streamed cases had concluded at the ICP stage well within the KPI time limit, suggesting the new process had improved FTP case timeliness. The new arrangements would continue to be monitored to assess their impact and an evaluation workshop had taken place in January 2026 to listen to feedback from the relevant teams.
- The median age of the open pre-ICP caseload was 51 weeks, which was broadly consistent with previous months. The oldest case had been listed for an ICP.
- The number of open cases at the post-ICP stage had remained broadly consistent. At the end of December 2025 there were 516 cases, 83 of which were listed for a final hearing.
- The median age of the post-ICP caseload was 23 weeks, which was within the KPI threshold of 39 weeks. The oldest case at the time of reporting was 319 weeks and this had concluded at a final hearing in January 2026.
- The median age of cases closed at the pre-ICP stage was 27 weeks, which was within the 33-week KPI threshold. Cases closed during the reporting period varied in age from less than one week to 330 weeks, demonstrating the focus on concluding cases across the age spectrum.

- The median age of cases concluded at a final hearing was 105 weeks, which meant the KPI target of 39 weeks had not been met. The youngest case concluded was 16 weeks, which reflected the positive impact of frontloading.
 - The response to the consultation on proposed changes to the sanctions policy had been published on the HCPC's website and the revised policy would come into effect for hearings taking place from 2 March 2026.
- 4.3 The Council sought assurance that the risks associated with the ongoing FTP legal services project were being managed to minimise disruption to business as usual across the FTP department. The Chair of the People and Resources Committee advised that the People and Resources Committee had received an update on the FTP legal services project at its extraordinary meeting on 29 January 2026. The project was progressing well and was being carefully managed to minimise any adverse impact on broader FTP capacity and/or performance.
- 4.4 The Council noted that the Finance Report highlighted staff vacancies across the FTP department and enquired as to how these vacancies were affecting the FTP teams. The Executive Director of Fitness to Practise and Tribunal Services acknowledged the challenges associated with the vacancies and high volume of activity; caseloads within the Case Management team had been higher than planned while new recruits were onboarded and trained. There had been a focus on communicating with the teams and managers, including support with case allocation and identifying cases that could be moved through to conclusion. The position was being closely monitored and would inform resource planning for 2026-27.

5 Finance Report

- 5.1 The Council noted the finance report outlining the HCPC's financial performance year to date to December 2025.
- 5.2 The Head of Finance and Commercial outlined the following points:
- The December 2025 year-to-date surplus was £825k excluding exceptional legal costs, against a forecast surplus of £625k. The variance was due to the year-to-date expenditure falling 1% below the forecast position, which was attributed to lower partner costs and vacant posts, noting a number of case manager roles had subsequently been filled.
 - The full-year forecast was a surplus of £273k, which was £12k higher than the previous forecast and £93k higher than the budgeted surplus of £180k. This was due to vacancies being filled and an anticipated increase in partner costs and cases progressing to final hearing at the towards the end of the financial year.

- Legal costs were £37k below the year-to-date forecast due to limited legal assessor availability and a lower number of final hearings than anticipated. This had impacted on FTP performance during the autumn, particularly capacity to schedule longer hearings, which on occasion were scheduled in multiple parts. Following a successful recruitment campaign, a number of new legal assessors had been appointed in January 2026.
- £213k of transformation funds and contingency funds had been released. The Executive had reviewed the position and were confident that these were no longer required as the end of the financial year approached.
- The investments portfolio full year forecast was £1.7m expenditure against a budget of £2.3m. Of this £1.7m, £1m had been committed to date. Overall, investment expenditure was on track with the exception of the sustainability spend of £596k relating mainly to the heating, ventilation and air conditioning system upgrade, noting these costs would be phased across 2025-26 and 2026-27 during the reforecast process as this was a multi-year programme. The work to deliver the technology roadmap was progressing into the tangible delivery phase and an update would be provided to the People and Resources Committee in March 2026.
- The HCPC continued to manage costs associated with the HCPC ergonomics programme and opportunities relating to investment income, SMS verification, partners costs and policy research.

Items for noting

6 Decisions outside of meetings

- 6.1 The report was noted. Iain McGregor had joined the HCPC as an Independent Adviser for Technology-Led Innovation on 9 February 2026 and was due to attend the Council and People and Resources Committee meetings in March 2026.

7 Council forward plan

- 7.1 The Council noted the forward plan. The people strategy had been deferred to the July Council meeting to follow the new corporate strategy, which was due to be submitted to the March Council meeting. The annual report from the Speak Up Guardians would also be deferred to the July meeting to enable reporting on the full financial year 2025-26 in line with external reporting timelines.

8 Council reflection

- 8.1 Grzegorz Drozdz, Council Apprentice, provided his reflections on the public meeting. Grzegorz had recently joined the HCPC as a Council Apprentice to gain insight into Council discussions and decision making. The meeting had demonstrated the HCPC's commitment to transparency and ethical regulation, aligned to the HCPC's role to protect the public and uphold professional standards. When compared to NHS Board meetings he had previously attended, a greater proportion of agenda items had been considered in the public session of the meeting. The meeting had been conducted professionally and there had been genuine recognition of the contributions of Council members and other attendees.
- 8.2 The Chair of the Council thanked Noah Linley-Adams, Governance Officer, for his valuable contribution during his time at the HCPC.

9 Resolution

- 9.1 The Council resolved that the remainder of the meeting would be held in private, because the matters being discussed related to the following:
- (a) information relating to a registrant, former registrant or application for registration;
 - (b) information relating to an employee or office holder, former employee or office holder or applicant for any post or office;
 - (c) the terms of, or expenditure under, a tender or contract for the purchase or supply of goods or services or the acquisition or disposal of property;
 - (d) negotiations or consultation concerning labour relations between the Council and its employees;
 - (e) any issue relating to legal proceedings which are being contemplated or instituted by or against the Council;
 - (f) action being taken to prevent or detect crime or to prosecute offenders;
 - (g) the source of information given to the Council in confidence; or
 - (h) any other matter which, in the opinion of the Chair, is confidential or the public disclosure of which would prejudice the effective discharge of the Council's functions.

Item	Reason for Exclusion
9	H
10	H
11	H
12	H
13	C
14	H
15	H

The meeting adjourned at 12.04pm.

Chair:

Date: