



HCPC
Corporate Plan
2024–25

Message from our Chief Executive and Registrar



Bernie O'Reilly
Chief Executive and Registrar

We are now entering the final two years of our Corporate Strategy 2021–26. This is the first HCPC Corporate Plan I have issued as Chief Executive, but this does not mean a change of direction for the HCPC, which has achieved significant progress since the creation of our Strategy four years ago.

The role of the HCPC is to set the standards for health and care professionals and, ultimately, to protect the public. We have made significant advances in the last financial year to meet the aims of our last Corporate Plan, and as a result of this hard work we are now meeting 16 of the 18 Professional Standards Authority (PSA) Standards of Good Regulation. We have achieved 85% of the project milestones we set in 2023–24. All of this ensures we are better able to serve the public.

One key focus of our plan for 2024–25 is to continue to improve user experience for our registrants, with a push towards an increased number of automated and integrated systems to include verification of documents and identity checks. We are also continuing to support the wider health and care sector on the critical issue of workforce planning by sharing our data and insights, collaborating on international recruitment, and continuing our programme of work on preceptorship.

This year's Corporate Plan is aligned with the six strategic priority areas set out in our Corporate Strategy. It sets out how we will continue to make progress on each priority area in 2024–25 and what we aim to achieve. As we begin looking towards the creation of our next corporate strategy, I am confident we have the right people, processes, and plans in place to launch into a more ambitious future, embracing advanced technology and new ways of working, underpinned by regulatory reform.

Our progress as an organisation could not be achieved without the hard work and dedication of the HCPC team, with whom I have thoroughly enjoyed working over the last nine months. I look forward to collaborating to deliver this plan, and ensuring that the public can access high quality care safely and with confidence.

Bernie O'Reilly

Who we are

The HCPC was established under section 60 of the Health Act 1999 as a regulator of health and care professions in the UK.

Our role is to protect the public. We achieve this by:

- setting the standards for education and training, professional skills, conduct, performance and ethics and continuing professional development for 15 health care professions;
- keeping a Register of professionals who meet these standards;
- approving education programmes that professionals must complete prior to registration; and
- taking action when registrants do not meet our standards.

We regulate:

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	Speech and language therapists

Our vision, purpose and values underpin everything we do

Our Vision

To be a high performing, adaptable and caring regulator that ensures public protection through strong, evidence-based regulation

Our Purpose

To promote excellence in the professions we regulate and champion high quality care that the public can access safely and with confidence

Our values:



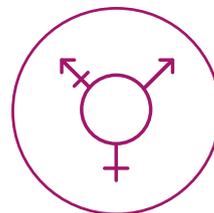
Fair

being honest, open and transparent



Compassionate

treating people with respect, empathy and care



Inclusive

collaborating with others and championing diversity



Enterprising

seeking opportunities to be creative and foster innovation to improve our performance

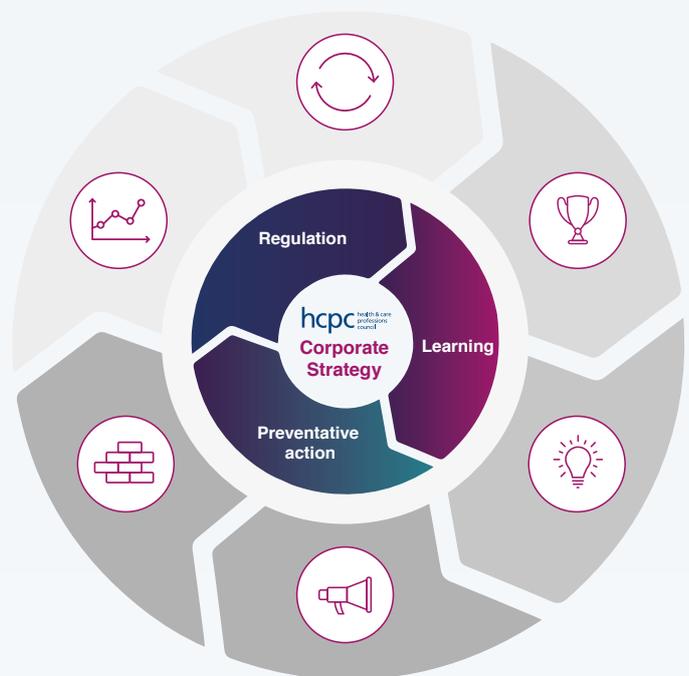
Our Corporate Strategy 2021–26

The next two years will take us to the end of our five-year strategy.

The five-year strategy was co-created with our stakeholders - patients and service users, our registrants, partners, professional bodies, education providers, trade unions and employers – by listening and working with them collaboratively.

To deliver the HCPC's core work of promoting public protection and effective regulation, we developed six priority areas of work, our aims for these areas and where we expected to be at the end of the five-year strategy period in 2026.

-  Continuously improve and innovate
-  Promote high quality professional practice
-  Develop insight and exert influence
-  Be visible, engaged and informed
-  Build a resilient, healthy, capable and sustainable organisation
-  Promote the value of regulation



Corporate plan 2024–25 context

This Corporate Plan sets out the major milestones for the next 12 months (FY 2024–25). We will also continue to engage our stakeholders to get their feedback on how successfully we are delivering and implementing the key work areas identified within our strategy.

In addition to the work set out in this Corporate Plan, the important day to day work we do across the organisation to protect the public continues. Our core regulatory activity in 2024–25 will include:

Our work in 2024–25



Carrying out
100
education programme
assessments and approvals



We anticipate that we will receive
21,400
new registration applications



Live and virtual events
reaching approximately
15,000
stakeholders



Efficiently renewing
124,566
registrants as part of the
two-year cycle



We expect to list
320
Substantive Final Hearings



Responding to
1,000
policy and ethical enquiries
regarding our standards



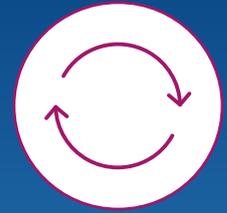
We expect to receive
1,900
new FTP concerns



Undertaking
2,863
CPD audits

Undertaking all this activity would not be possible without our dedicated employees and partners, each one of which has an important role to play in making our strategy a success and ensuring we deliver our regulatory purpose of protecting the public and promoting high quality professional practice across the 15 professions we regulate.

1 Continuously improve and innovate



To improve our performance against PSA Standards of Good Regulation and to innovate across all our regulatory functions to provide an enhanced user experience



In the first three years of our Corporate Strategy 2021–26, we have significantly improved our performance against the PSA Standards of Good Regulation.

We are now meeting 16 of the 18 standards, regaining two fitness to practise (FTP) standards and one standard linked to registration, and achieving the standard in Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) for the first time.

Our aim is to regain the two FTP standards, and we are confident we are on track to meet 17 of the 18 Standards of Good Regulation this year.

The performance and service improvements we have made mean we are now in a more stable position to plan for an ambitious future, making the best use of technology to provide an enhanced user experience for our registrants and all those who interact with the HCPC.

Our planned activity for 2024–25 will begin our work to prepare and build for the future.

Continuously improve and innovate

In 2024–25 we will further this aim by:

User experience

- ✓ Scope and design our future state user experience with a focus on services being online, self-service, automated and integrated. This will be informed by the outcome of the review being conducted in Q4 of FY2023–24.
- ✓ Pilot and test options to use technology such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) to improve the quality, consistency, and efficiency of our responses to enquiries.
- ✓ Implement Tone of Voice principles in the communications from our Registration team, building on what we have already implemented in Fitness to Practise.
- ✓ Fully implement the new team structures in Registration.
- ✓ Implement a new telephony system in the FTP department.
- ✓ Update our contact centre and online portals to provide Welsh language options in accordance with the new Welsh Language Standards.

Partners

- ✓ Following a review of the HCPC Partner¹ operating model, develop costed medium-term plans taking account of recent legal developments that enable further improvements in quality and financial management.

Education

- ✓ Use more of the data available from the Higher Education Statistics Agency, to inform education quality assurance activities and to assist financial forecasting for future registrant income.
- ✓ Continue to work with sector partners to reduce regulatory burden for education providers, whilst holding education providers and programmes to high regulatory standards.

Fitness to Practise

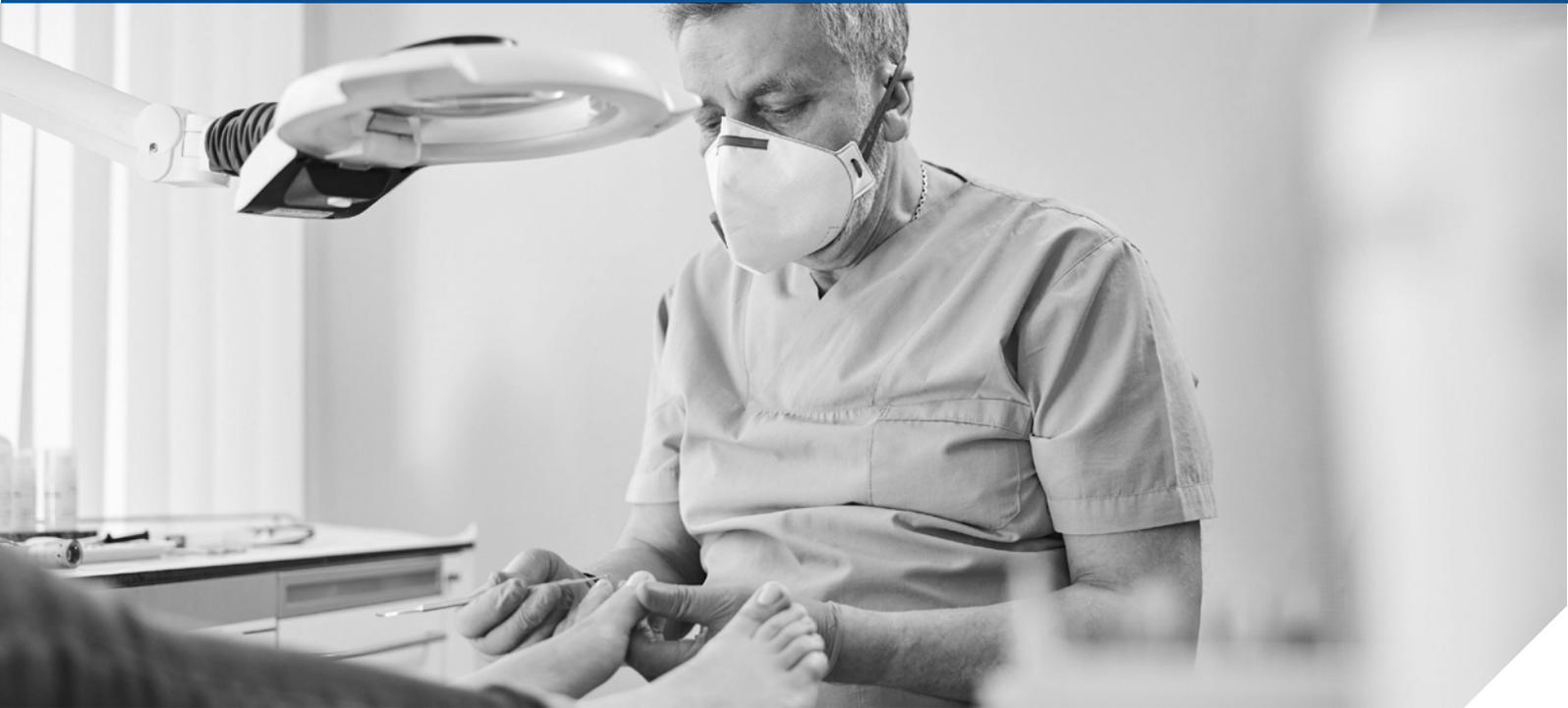
- ✓ Implement and embed changes to our FTP operating model and processes to support the introduction of in-house frontloaded investigations, including the establishment of a new legal team.
- ✓ Implement changes to our FTP case management system to align with our new operating model and processes.
- ✓ Review and optimise our scheduling and pre-hearing case management processes, to reduce the time taken to list for a final hearing.
- ✓ Review our sanctions policy to ensure our guidance for panel members is up to date and continues to support them to make decisions that are fair, consistent, and transparent.

1. Partners are HCPC registrants, members of the public and legal professionals who contribute their expertise to the HCPC and play important roles in the regulatory process.

2 Promote high quality professional practice



Enable our professions to meet our standards so they are able to adapt to changes in health and care practice delivery, preventing harm to service users.



In 2023–24 we ran a series of consultation workshops and successfully engaged with over 200 stakeholders on our plans to revise the standards of conduct, performance and ethics (SCPEs).

We also updated our guidance to registrants on the use of social media. The SCPEs set the standards for the behaviours expected of people on the HCPC Register, and the new standards come into effect on 1 September 2024.

In 2024–25, we will support our registrants and other key stakeholders with the implementation of the revised SPCEs.

Building on our successful approach to the review of the SCPEs, in 2024–25 we will conduct a review our standards of education and training (SETs).

A critical role we play as a professional healthcare regulator is setting the standards for the education and training of the health and care professionals of the future. This is of particular importance as all four nations of the UK begin to implement their respective workforce plans.

We will undertake extensive pre-consultation engagement to seek views from our stakeholders on the revised SETs, including on areas such as the use of technology, quality of placements, and sustainability.

Promote high quality professional practice

In 2024–25 we will further this aim by:

Standards of conduct, performance and ethics (SCPEs)

- ✓ Implement the updated standards of conduct performance and ethics, which take effect from September 2024.
- ✓ Promote and support registrants to embed the revised guidance on the use of social media.
- ✓ Update supporting guidance materials relating to the SCPEs.
- ✓ Deliver our Professionalism in Practice programme, which supports registrants and employers to embed and achieve the SCPEs.

Standards of education and training (SETs)

- ✓ Commence a review of the SETs, beginning with a pre-consultation engagement phase to gather stakeholder views, focusing on new and emerging issues such as the use of technology and AI.
- ✓ Procure and maintain an external partnership for the purposes of providing service user voice in HCPC work (see strategic aim 4) that will inform the SETs review.

English language requirements

- ✓ Following the English language requirements consultation that closed in January 2024 we will:
 - ✓ Publish the results of the consultation and final proposals for changes to our English language requirements, for applicants applying to join the HCPC Register via our international route to registration.
 - ✓ Implement the new requirements (including any associated system changes) from Autumn 2024.
- ✓ Increased support and partnering with employers to influence the creation of supportive cultures and working environments for registrants.
- ✓ Enhanced responsiveness to health delivery differences across the four UK nations through our expanded Professional Liaison Service.
- ✓ Improved understanding and embedding of our Standards and high quality professional practice among both UK and international registrants through our *#myhpcstandards* and *joining the UK workforce* programmes

3 Develop insight and exert influence



Learning from data and research to inform our decision making and share insights to protect, promote and maintain the health, safety and well-being of the public.



Central to our Corporate Strategy is to be an evidence-based regulator. In 2024–25, as we improve our internal infrastructure to allow us to use our data more effectively, we will continue to develop and publish our research and analysis.

Following on from our work on the revised SCPEs in 2023–24, which included updating our standards relating to professional boundaries, we will undertake research on professional boundaries with a particular focus on sexual misconduct. This will assist our work in FTP but also our upstream regulation work and enable our move towards a prevention-focused regulatory approach.

In 2023, for the first time, we were able to include EDI data analysis in our FTP Annual Report. In 2024–25, we will build on this

analysis, as we begin to create a more informed picture of the impacts of EDI factors on the FTP process and outcomes.

The HCPC is in a unique position, holding data on over 330,000 health and care professionals. We have published analysis of our UK and international route retention rates, and in 2024–25 we will publish the next iteration covering new registrations from 2018 to 2020 and tracked until 2024. Sharing our analysis on retention rates will help those responsible for workforce planning in the wider health and care sector, as well as inform our own work on preceptorship.

Develop insight and exert influence

In 2024–25 we will further this aim by:

Continue to improve data quality and infrastructure

- ✓ Building on foundational work carried out in 2023–24 to develop our data capability, we will establish minimum data sets for our core regulatory functions and address remaining gaps in the quality and consistency of these data sets.
- ✓ We will establish a road map towards achieving a high standard in our use of data to report on delivery of our regulatory responsibilities, and further build our in-house data capability.

New research activity

- ✓ Commission research into the impact of the increasing ethical use of AI by healthcare professionals on professional regulation.
- ✓ Following the update on maintaining appropriate professional boundaries in our SCPEs review, we will commission research to explore this area further with a particular focus on sexual misconduct.

Insights and Analytics

- ✓ Publish all 15 profession specific EDI factsheets simultaneously.
- ✓ Assess HCPC's processes through an EDI lens, including analysis of FTP case outcomes by diversity characteristics.
- ✓ Publish the second suite of the new registrant retention rate analyses, for both UK and internationally trained registration routes.
- ✓ Improve and increase the volume of Register analysis accessible on the HCPC website. For example, demographic descriptions of registrant populations including age, sex, and registration route.
- ✓ Establish two-way data sharing initiatives with key stakeholders.

4 Be visible, engaged and informed



We regulate, take and communicate decisions which are informed by a deep understanding of the environment within which our registrants, employers and education providers operate.



In 2023–24, we continued to engage and inform our stakeholders from registrants to service users, professional bodies, employers, and education providers through our programme of events, webinars and articles, as well as the work of our Professional Liaison Service.

In 2024–25, we will strengthen our engagement with the public and service users, through a partnership with the Patients Association to integrate the patient perspective on key HCPC projects and initiatives.

Last year we began a programme of site visits by our Chief Executive to the workplaces of some of our registrants. We plan to continue this in 2024–25. We will also conduct broader external engagement at sector events to add the HCPC's voice to topics which impact the entire health and care system including workforce planning, patient safety, and the use of technology.

We are now halfway through our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy (2021–26) and have built on the core foundations from our Action Plan to increase our data gathering and analysis.

Last year, we published analysis on EDI factors and FTP referrals, and in 2024–25 we will further this work to look at the impact of EDI factors on FTP outcomes and registration decisions. We will also develop an evidence-based framework for assessment of education providers as part of our education quality assurance.

Be visible, engaged and informed

In 2024–25 we will further this aim by:

HCPC Service User Strategy

- ✓ Establish a working partnership with the Patients Association. This will include the recruitment of a patient panel, focus groups, and sharing the HCPC's consultations and updates via Patients Association platforms. This partnership will also inform our work on the review of the SETs.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- ✓ Continue to deliver the EDI Strategy and Action Plan.
- ✓ Begin work required to maintain the revised PSA EDI Standard including collecting EDI data of FTP complainants, analysing EDI data for registration decisions.
- ✓ Develop an evidence-based framework for assessment of education provider performance against our education standards linked to EDI.

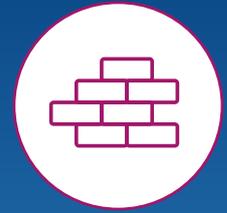
Stakeholder engagement

- ✓ Develop and implement a forward-looking programme for engaging and listening to registrants, employers, and other stakeholders around key issues including patient safety and workforce planning.
- ✓ Measure and evaluate the impact of our current engagement fora, such as the professional bodies forum.

Council Apprenticeship scheme

- ✓ Review learnings from the last four years of the scheme and evaluate its impact on the careers of our previous apprentices.
- ✓ Share our learning and insight with other regulators and organisations to widen its impact.
- ✓ Develop the Council Apprenticeship alumni network.

5 Build a resilient, healthy, capable and sustainable organisation



Employees feel valued and supported, and fully able to contribute. The organisation is resilient and able to quickly adapt to changes in the external environment.



In 2023–24, following a comprehensive consultation exercise, we implemented an essential increase in our fees to maintain our financial sustainability, alongside a commitment to carry out regular, incremental fee reviews in future. This has enabled us to set a balanced budget that is funding investment in further improvements while ensuring that we can continue to meet core regulatory and service standards.

We continued to make progress in line with our People Strategy including launching a reverse mentoring scheme, and new learning and development programmes for staff at all levels. We are also running regular pulse surveys which show good levels of employee engagement, while highlighting areas for further improvement.

We published our first sustainability statement in 2023, which set out our long-term commitment to becoming a net zero organisation, and our move to a carbon neutral, renewable tariff for our organisational energy use.

We have successfully maintained a high level of service and availability for our critical IT systems, with further progress in migrating them onto secure resilient cloud-based platforms. We have also initiated and delivered a number of change programmes, including a new recruitment portal that will help us attract high calibre candidates and further improvements to our FTP case management system. This work will continue into 2024–25.

Build a resilient, healthy, capable and sustainable organisation

In 2024–25 we will further this aim by:

Update the HCPC Fee model

- ✓ Develop framework for regular fee reviews to provide clarity about our future funding needs and ensure that the HCPC continues to be adequately funded.
- ✓ Consult on changes to fees recommended by the next regular review, for implementation in 2025.

People Strategy

- ✓ Build skills and capabilities for career development at all levels.
- ✓ Activities will include strengthening our succession planning framework, deploying our new recruitment portal, and rolling out new learning and development programmes.
- ✓ We will also monitor equality and diversity data to enable the advancement of underrepresented groups.

Digital transformation

- ✓ In accordance with our digital and corporate strategies, develop plans to implement learning from a 2023–24 review of our existing regulatory systems and platforms.

IT security modernisation

- ✓ Update our systems with new capabilities and features included in Microsoft's security software and strengthen cyber defences in line with evolving best practice.

Sustainability

- ✓ Maintain progress towards the long-term net zero ambition set out in the HCPC's corporate sustainability statement.

Business Central Phase 2

- ✓ Embed the newly implemented Business Central finance system across the HCPC, maximising the benefits it brings to transaction processing and how registrants are able to pay their fees.

6 Promoting the value of regulation



The public, registrants, students and employers understand the value and importance of regulated health and care professionals.



As an organisation, we want to promote the value of regulation. The HCPC provides and drives important initiatives in terms of education and continuous professional development, supporting registrants throughout their career. As outlined in our third strategic priority, we can also use the data we hold as a regulator of over 330,000 health and care professionals to inform and assist our stakeholders.

Last year we published our Principles of Preceptorship, to support HCPC registrants at key transition moments in their careers, and to help them in providing safe, compassionate and high-quality care. In 2024–25, we will focus on promoting these principles to employers. We will also continue to support new international registrants to successfully transition to UK practice through our *Joining the UK Workforce Programme*.

This year we will publish our first education annual report since our current quality assurance model was established, which focuses on key learning themes for education providers. In 2024–25 we will also publish a ‘state of the nation’ report for the 2023–24 academic year and engage with the sector to share further learning.

Our support starts before our registrants’ careers have begun. In 2024–25, we will increase our engagement with students, including scaling up the delivery of our *Becoming a health and care professional programme*, and delivering our third student competition focused on the updated SCPEs.

Promoting the value of regulation

In 2024–25 we will further this aim by:

Engagement with employers

- ✓ Promote our preceptorship principles and encourage employers to provide greater support for registrants who are new or returning to practice.
- ✓ Promote and encourage a shift to more positive workplace cultures for our registrants.

Registrant communication strategy

- ✓ Deliver an integrated communications campaign to increase awareness and provide an understanding of the revised standards of conduct, performance and ethics.
- ✓ Launch new content to support understanding of our continuing professional development requirements, both for registrants and their employers.
- ✓ Continue to improve the experience of registrants through compassionate and inclusive communication, including new supportive content for those joining the Register.
- ✓ Provide information and signposting for registrants on practising sustainably.

International registrants

- ✓ Collaborate with key stakeholders and employers who recruit and support international registrants.

Education annual reporting

- ✓ Engage with the education sector to share insight from the education annual report.
- ✓ Publish a 'state of the nation' report for the 2023–24 academic year and engage with the sector to share further learning.

Students

- ✓ Scale up the delivery of our *Becoming a health and care professional programme* for students, which supports learning about professionalism and the value of regulation.
- ✓ Deliver the next student competition, promoting and encouraging engagement with the updated standards of conduct, performance and ethics.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)



We have continued to deliver on the actions that keep Equality, Diversity and Inclusion central to our regulatory activities. We continue to meet the PSA's EDI Standard and we have engaged with the PSA as they developed their new approach to assessing regulators' performance against the EDI Standard.

With the support of our external EDI Forum we updated our SCPEs, with a real focus on our expectations of registrants in terms of treating people fairly. We also ran a number of specific consultation groups to help ensure that the new standards were themselves fair and comprehensible for registrants and members of the public from all backgrounds.

We also exceeded our target to collect EDI information from 80% of our registrants, and now hold EDI data for over 90% of the Register. This means we have access to a rich data set to help inform the HCPC's policies and processes.

In 2024–25 we plan to continue our analysis of this data, seeking to understand the impact of our regulatory activities on different groups in pursuit of our core value of fairness. We will also begin updating our SETs, building on the recent reviews of our other standards to increase the prominence and importance of EDI.

Our EDI Action Plan sets out in more detail how we intend to implement this important work to achieve our vision for the coming year.

Regulatory reform



Regulatory reform is a far-reaching programme of work to modernise and improve the legislative framework across all professional healthcare regulators. It will have a significant, organisation-wide impact on the way the HCPC operates in the future.

The Government are currently working to modernise the General Medical Council's (GMC) legislation. The HCPC welcomed this as the start of a wider process of reform, alongside the announcement that the HCPC and the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) will be next. Between them, the HCPC and the NMC regulate over a million health and care professionals, and a modern legislative regime will make a huge difference to our ability to regulate efficiently. We have continued to work closely with the DHSC, the other professional regulators and other stakeholders on the GMC's legislation which will form the blueprint for our reform.

From our preparatory work we know that regulatory reform will be a multi-year programme of work that will impact all parts of the organisation. At this point in time, the HCPC doesn't have sufficient certainty on the timetable for regulatory reform from the Government. While this remains the case, we need to continue to invest in the development of the HCPC so we do not lose the momentum of the past few years. Where applicable, we will ensure that the investments we make are cognisant of future changes that will come with regulatory reform.

If the timetable for regulatory reform is brought forward, then we will look at what areas within the Corporate Plan we can deprioritise to begin funding the work on regulatory reform. The HCPC requires regulatory reform in order to continue our improvement journey, and better serve registrants and the public.