



Safeguarding trust  
in professionals.

*Protecting the  
public.*

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Our Corporate Plan 2026-27

hcpc

# Our work in 2026-27

Our corporate plan sets out the work we will do in 2026-27 to progress towards a more proactive and preventative model of regulation. The plan marks the first step in achieving the priorities set against our recently-published new corporate strategy.

Our focus for the year ahead centres on deepening the role of patients and service users within our regulatory activity, supporting a resilient and adaptable healthcare workforce, and investing in the organisational capabilities that will enable high quality, future-ready services.

A key focus will be strengthening how we listen, how we use insight and how we act on emerging risks.

We are committed to embedding lived experience into our decisions, modernising our standards and processes so they reflect evolving models of care, and enhancing the quality of our data, intelligence and digital platforms.

Alongside this, we will continue to invest in the people, culture and leadership that underpin effective regulation. Creating a supportive, confident and digitally capable organisation is essential to delivering consistent, high quality public protection. We will modernise our systems, enable the responsible use of technology, and strengthen the resilience and sustainability of our core operations.

We also recognise the importance of preparing for the future regulation of hospital managers. Although the timing of this work is dependent on government decisions and is not expected to commence during 2026-27, it represents a significant future responsibility for the HCPC. Over the coming year, we will continue engaging with government and system partners to help understand the shape of our future work.

We regulate 15 professions that contribute essential services across the UK, and whose importance will only increase as care shifts towards being more preventative and community-based. Our work this year will strengthen confidence in these professions, improve the consistency and quality of our own work and support the delivery of safe, effective care.

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*The priorities in this plan reinforce our commitment to be a regulator that listens, acts early, supports the workforce, embraces innovation and prepares for reform.*

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**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 mission remains clear: We protect the public by setting clear standards for professionals, using evidence to encourage safe and inclusive care and taking action when things go wrong.

We want a future where the public receiving care from the professions we regulate is protected through strong, evidence-based regulation, delivered by a high-performing, adaptable and caring regulator.

**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



*We protect the public by setting clear standards for professionals, using evidence to encourage safe and inclusive care and taking action when things go wrong.*



## Our Vision

Protecting the public through evidence-based and proactive regulation, delivered by a patient-centred, adaptable regulator.

## Our Mission

We protect the public by approving education programmes, setting and upholding professional standards, using evidence to promote safe and inclusive practice, and taking appropriate action when things go wrong.

## Our Values

All our work is underpinned by our commitment to being:

**Trusted** - We act with integrity, earning confidence by being open, fair and accountable.

**Inclusive** – We collaborate with others and champion diversity.

**Compassionate** - We treat people with respect, empathy and care.

**Innovative** – We seek opportunities to solve problems creatively and foster new ways of working to improve our performance.

## Our Priorities

Putting patients at the centre of smarter, preventative regulation.

Supporting healthcare workforce development through proportionate, agile regulation.

Technology-enabled regulatory excellence and organisational sustainability.

Strengthening public protection through the regulation of NHS managers.



*We protect the public across the four nations of the United Kingdom.*

We support *safe and effective care* across multiple professions.



**In 2026-27 we will:**

- Build on the existing ways we listen to patients and embed lived experience into our regulation, strengthening the patient voice and building greater public trust and transparency.
- Undertake research to help us understand how we can further improve our processes and day-to-day interactions with the public, patients, service users and registrants.
- Undertake analysis to identify the profession-specific risk profiles that can lead to fitness to practise concerns to inform our approach to preventative regulation.
- Evolve our Professional Liaison and Outreach Service to be more strategic, risk-based and responsive to stakeholder needs. We will begin incorporating behavioural science into our work to strengthen how we understand and influence professional behaviour. We will focus our resources where they will have the greatest impact on public protection and the prevention of harm.
- Deliver multi-channel communication campaigns to improve understanding of our role, our regulated professions and the value of our insights, supporting greater public confidence and clearer awareness of how we prevent and address risk.

# Putting patients at the centre of smarter, preventative regulation

As set out in our five-year corporate strategy, we are committed to strengthening public protection by progressing towards proactive, preventative regulation.

Embedding patient and public insight, behavioural science and high-quality data across our regulatory framework will enable us to identify emerging risks earlier and intervene more effectively.

This long-term shift will ensure that the experiences of patients and service users remain at the heart of our regulatory approach.

Over the course of the strategy, we will deepen our engagement with service users, registrants and system partners to build a shared understanding of our role and support a culture of openness, safety and learning.

By integrating richer intelligence and behavioural insight into both our standards and our Professional Liaison and Outreach engagement, we will help prevent harm before it occurs and continue to build public trust in our regulation.



**In 2026-27 we will:**

- Review and modernise key regulatory standards including the standards of education and training (SETs), standards of continuing professional development (CPD) and our return to practice requirements, to ensure they reflect evolving models of care, new technologies and the needs of a diverse, multidisciplinary workforce.
- Continue the programme of work to make best use of HCPC data through the provision of high-quality analysis and insights that support workforce planning, early risk detection and targeted regulatory interventions, while expanding data-sharing and transparency through improved dashboards, outcome reporting, enhanced data analysis of Register retention and upgraded equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) insights to support system partners and build confidence in our regulatory outcomes.
- Commission research on registrants' use of AI to inform future regulatory approaches and develop our regulatory approach to the use of AI by registrants and applicants.
- Evaluate the impact of our 2025 English language requirements changes and implement further improvements to our UK and international registration processes ensuring fairness, clarity and a more streamlined experience for applicants and employers.
- Increase our capacity to undertake front-loaded investigations and strengthen case management resources to support timely, proportionate decision-making and a better experience for all parties.
- Commence a review of the threshold policy, which sets out the kinds of concerns we will accept for investigation, to ensure that the cases we progress are proportionate to the risk involved.
- Enhance witness support and the customer service we provide to all participants throughout the fitness to practise (FTP) process.
- Begin a project to improve how we list cases for hearings to reduce unnecessary delays and uncertainty for registrants, alongside undertaking data analysis to identify the key factors contributing to delays in case progression so we can better mitigate avoidable delays.

# Supporting healthcare workforce development through proportionate, agile regulation

Improving the fitness to practise process remains central to supporting a confident and resilient workforce. Timely, fair and proportionate case handling enhanced by increasing our in-house capacity to undertake frontloaded investigations, stronger case management and better support for all involved, with a strong focus on customer service quality, will help facilitate timely investigations and increase clarity for professionals and the public alike.

Our strategy commits us to modernising our standards and education frameworks to ensure our regulation keeps pace with changing models of care, new technologies and the expectations of a diverse workforce. Updates to the SETs, along with forthcoming reviews of CPD and return to practice requirements, will help ensure professionals can join or rejoin the Register safely and without unnecessary barriers.

As technology reshapes practice, particularly through growing use of artificial intelligence (AI), our regulatory approach will evolve accordingly. Research into how these tools are being used across professions will inform the development of standards and guidance that support safe, inclusive and innovative care.

Strengthening our analytical capability will provide clearer workforce insight and improve regulatory decision-making. Enhanced data models, dashboards and self-service tools will generate more meaningful intelligence on risk, performance and workforce trends, enabling targeted regulatory activity and supporting partners across the sector to plan effectively and improve resilience.



To deliver on our long-term vision, we will build a modern, resilient and high-performing organisation capable of regulating effectively in a rapidly changing health and care environment. This means investing in our people, strengthening leadership and accelerating our digital transformation so that we are equipped to respond to emerging risks, support the workforce and protect the public with agility and confidence.

We will focus on developing leaders at every level, ensuring colleagues have the skills and tools needed to adapt to future challenges, and reinforcing the behaviours and values that underpin a high-trust, high-performance organisation.

At the same time, we will enhance our technology and data so that they support streamlined and consistent regulatory services. By creating future-ready digital platforms, establishing robust data governance and using AI responsibly, we will enable more efficient processes, better user experience and deeper insight across all areas of regulation.



# Technology-enabled regulatory excellence and organisational sustainability

## In 2026-27 we will:

- Launch a renewed people strategy that strengthens leadership capability at all levels, builds digital skills and supports an inclusive and supportive culture, enabling a confident, adaptable workforce and consistent, values-led regulatory delivery.
- Further enhance our data platform and improve core systems, including our website, to improve user experience, strengthen analytics, support financial sustainability and enable more effective organisational decision-making.
- Refresh organisational values to reinforce the behaviours and expectations that underpin a high-trust, high-performance culture.
- Design a unified single contact centre operating model to ensure stakeholders get the right information from the right people when they need it, improving customer experience, reducing duplication and increasing service responsiveness.
- Launch a new digital and AI strategy to set the direction for how we adopt and use digital and AI tools across the organisation, supporting delivery of our technology roadmap and providing colleagues with modern, efficient ways of working.
- Strengthen long-term organisational sustainability by implementing measures that support financial resilience and advancing our environmental sustainability strategy, ensuring the HCPC can continue to deliver high-quality, responsible and future-ready regulatory services.
- Establish robust AI governance and expand the responsible use of automation to ensure AI-enabled processes are used safely and appropriately, supporting efficient regulatory operations.

# Strengthening public protection through *the regulation of NHS managers*

## We will:

In July 2025, the government announced its intention to introduce a statutory barring scheme for NHS senior leaders in England, signalling an important future development in the HCPC's regulatory responsibilities. High-profile system failures have highlighted the need for stronger safeguards and clearer accountability at senior leadership levels, and the HCPC has welcomed the commitment to provide the powers necessary to support this new framework. As the legislation is developed, we will work closely with government, NHS leaders, representative bodies and wider system partners to help ensure the scheme is effective, proportionate and firmly focused on public protection.

This development sits alongside the wider programme of regulatory reform underway across all healthcare regulators. Reform of the legislative framework represents a significant, multi-year transformation that will reshape how the HCPC operates.

A modernised regulatory system will deliver important benefits: more preventative, upstream regulation; greater shared learning across professions; improved efficiency through shared services and faster, more coordinated responses to emerging risks. We will continue to advocate for clarity on the timetable for reforms affecting the HCPC.

Across 2026-27, the HCPC will remain responsive to both the emerging legislative timeline for a hospital managers regulatory scheme and the wider reform agenda. While each brings different challenges and uncertainties, both share a common aim: strengthening public protection through more modern, coherent and proactive regulation. By maintaining this dual focus and building the internal capability required to adapt at pace, the HCPC will continue to protect the public effectively, support system partners and ensure readiness for future statutory responsibilities.

### Equality, diversity and inclusion

As we enter the final year of our current equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) strategy, we are now laying the groundwork for the next phase of our long-term ambition to ensure we are a fair regulator that people can trust. The progress made to date provides a strong platform for continuing to embed fairness across all our regulatory functions in 2026-27 and through to 2031. As with our broader strategic direction, collaboration with our stakeholders will be essential to shaping our next EDI strategy, ensuring it is evidence-driven, impactful and aligned with the needs of the sector.

Over the course of this strategy, we have strengthened our understanding of how different groups experience our regulatory processes.

Our analyses of regulatory functions mean we now publish data across the breadth of our fitness to practise and registration processes. Although we have taken reassurance from the

findings to date, which show little or no disproportionality, there are areas we will continue to interrogate to ensure that we meet our commitments to be fair and trusted regulator.

Our work to update the SETs, working closely with stakeholders across the UK, has brought a focus on EDI that ensures that the healthcare professionals of the future have fair training experiences and are prepared to meet the health needs of a diverse, 21st-century UK population.

Our determination to support all our registrants includes the ongoing development of resources for healthcare professionals who experience discrimination in their work or training, assisting them to use our standards to protect patient safety and remain safe in their own practice. It is work like this that means we continue to meet the PSA's EDI Standard and are committed to ongoing development across our whole EDI agenda.

*We are now laying the groundwork for the next phase of our long-term ambition to ensure we are a fair regulator that people can trust.*



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*Protecting the public.*