

# Protecting the public through the people who care

Health and Care  
Professions Council  
Corporate Strategy 2026-  
2031



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care

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Presented to Parliament and the Scottish  
Parliament pursuant to Article 44(2) of the Health  
Professions Order 2001

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2026

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ISBN 978-1-5286-6393-9

E03582710

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# We are pleased to share the HCPC's priorities for the years ahead in our new corporate strategy

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 are protected through strong, evidence-based regulation, delivered by a high-performing adaptable and caring regulator.

But how we achieve this must evolve as the world around us changes. Health and care services across the UK are under significant pressure. Rising demand, workforce shortages, and financial constraints are shaping how care is delivered. At the same time, innovation, new models of care, and an important focus on equality and inclusion are changing expectations of professionals and the public alike.

In this changing context, our strategy outlines where we will focus our efforts, the improvements we aim to deliver, and the values that will guide us along the way.

It sets out our priorities and direction, not every step we'll take to get there. The detail of our work will continue to sit in our annual work plans, which explain how we turn these priorities into action.

By setting out our priorities, we provide clarity and confidence about our direction. Together with registrants, the wider health sector and the public, we can ensure the HCPC remains a modern, responsive and effective regulator for the future.

## 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.

# The context in which we work

Health and care services across the UK are undergoing profound change

Demand remains high, with waiting lists and urgent care pressures continuing to challenge capacity. At the same time, the system is shifting towards care closer to home, greater use of digital technology, and a stronger focus on prevention and population health. These changes are reshaping the roles and responsibilities of the professions we regulate.

Workforce planning is a national priority and retention, development, and wellbeing remain critical issues. Many registrants face rising workloads and financial pressures, while education providers who must support the professionals of the future are under pressure too.

Regulatory reform is now firmly on the horizon, offering opportunities to modernise how we protect the public— through more agile, proportionate

approaches and faster resolution of concerns. At the same time, rapid advances in digital health and artificial intelligence are transforming clinical practice. These innovations bring huge potential benefits but also new risks, requiring clear boundaries and support to ensure safe adoption.

Patient safety and public expectations continue to evolve. People want timely access, transparency and compassionate care. Professional culture, equality, diversity and inclusion are central to delivering this, and ensuring our standards continue to enhance these elements will be essential.

Against this backdrop, our strategy sets out how the HCPC will respond over the coming years: enabling us and our registrants to take advantage of the new opportunities for safe and effective care these changes bring.

## Building on our recent work

We've made real progress in recent years: modernised standards, faster and fairer concerns handling, improved digital services, and better data sharing for workforce planning. Our new strategy builds on this foundation to make regulation more agile, support professionals to

adapt to new care models, and use technology to improve safety and experience.

## How we've mapped out our future

This strategy was co-produced with patients, registrants, professional bodies, education providers, employers and partners. We engaged the Patients Association, held workshops, ran a public survey and convened focus groups. Whilst we couldn't include every suggestion, the strategy reflects a broad range of views.

“Rapid advances in digital health and artificial intelligence are transforming clinical practice”

# Putting patients at the centre of smarter, preventative regulation

## Objective

To shift regulation from a focus on reacting when things go wrong to proactive regulation by embedding patient experience, data, and behavioural insight into our work, ensuring that the voices and needs of patients drive our priorities and decisions.

We place the public at the heart of everything we do and work proactively to protect them. We listen to individuals' experiences and learn from data and behavioural science, to shape standards, guidance and wider interventions that reflect what matters most to those receiving care.

By embedding these insights into our work, we can anticipate risks, support safe, compassionate and inclusive practice, and influence the environments and cultures in which care is delivered.

By focusing on what could prevent harm, we protect the public more effectively by shaping the standards that guide professional practice. This approach supports registrants to deliver safe, high-quality care and helps foster a culture where safety, quality, inclusion and patient voice are embedded from the outset.

We will:

- Embed lived experience and patient voice into how we regulate, strengthening our ability to identify risks and respond to emerging concerns.
- Apply behavioural science and data insight to influence professional behaviours, empowering professionals to speak up and learn from mistakes.
- Use safe, ethical technologies to generate real-time and predictive analytics that help prevent harm.
- Enhance the accessibility of our data, and deliver actionable insights that guide our regulatory work.

- Work with educators and employers to support prevention, early intervention, and safe, inclusive, high-quality practice.
- Continue our work to foster better working cultures within our professions, through our focus on areas such as sexual safety, exploring the principles of trauma informed approaches.
- Collaborate across health and care to build shared insight, improve services and amplify our impact.

“Our regulation listens, learns, and leads before harm occurs.”

# Supporting healthcare workforce development through proportionate, agile regulation

## Objective

To deliver modern regulation that strengthens the UK healthcare workforce by supporting safe, effective practice, removing unnecessary barriers, and adapting to the evolving and diverse needs of professionals and patients.

To meet the needs of a growing, diverse population and a complex care environment, regulation must actively support a strong, sustainable workforce that is empowered to innovate, collaborate, and adapt.

Our approach will be proportionate, agile, and enabling, supporting professionals to practise

safely and effectively while recognising the realities of modern healthcare, including, interdisciplinary teamworking and the use and impact of emerging technologies such as AI.

We will:

- Raise public awareness of our registrants' roles and expanded responsibilities in a changing healthcare landscape
- Establish HCPC as the definitive source of allied health workforce data for workforce planning across the four nations.
- Support innovation through outcome focussed standards and evolving our guidance to safely support and enable innovation.
- Enable flexible, interdisciplinary practice by aligning our standards and guidance with the realities of modern healthcare delivery, including team-based care and evolving scopes of practice.

- Improve our regulatory performance through innovation, collaboration and technology integration.
- Enable a future-ready, resilient workforce through regulation that supports continuing professional development and inclusive access to practice.
- Modernise our fitness to practise processes through legislative reform and risk-based policies that ensure proportionate, efficient case handling.

“Our regulation supports growth, adapts to change, and strengthens the workforce for the future.”

# Technology-Enabled Regulatory Excellence and Organisational Sustainability

## Objective

To invest in our people, harness emerging technologies and modernise our systems to deliver efficient, high quality, and user-focused regulation that meets the evolving needs of public protection.

We are committed to delivering high quality regulation that meets the expectations of the public, registrants, and stakeholders.

By simplifying processes and adopting smarter ways of working, we will improve outcomes, reduce burden, and enhance the experience of those we serve.

We will:

- Transform registrant services creating a seamless, accessible experience.
- Harness emerging technologies safely and transparently to enhance public protection, operational efficiency, and user experience.
- Deliver consistently high performance across all areas of our work by simplifying processes, strengthening accountability, and embedding continuous improvement.
- Empower our workforce by upskilling staff to use new technologies confidently, enabling them to focus on meaningful, value-adding work.
- Develop a forward-looking, inclusive, and resilient culture that empowers colleagues to contribute ideas and initiate change.
- Ensure financial sustainability and organisational efficiency that secures the protection of the public into the future.

“We invest in people, technology, and smarter ways of working to deliver high quality, efficient, and user-focused services.”

# Strengthening Public Protection through the Regulation of NHS Managers

## Objective

To extend regulatory oversight to NHS managers\* (in England) ensuring a consistent level of accountability, professionalism, and ethical leadership.

Leadership shapes culture, drives safety, and influences outcomes. Yet the most senior NHS hospital managers, as a defined professional group, have not previously been within the scope of healthcare professional regulation.

Bringing NHS managers into regulation is a strategic step toward stronger public protection. It ensures leadership is held to a consistent level of professionalism and accountability.

We will:

- Implement government-mandated barring system for NHS board-level managers and their direct reports\*, (in England) ensuring clear standards of conduct and accountability.
- Align our regulatory approach with wider healthcare reform, ensuring our work supports system-level improvements in safety, culture, and governance.
- Coordinate with other professional regulators and stakeholders to ensure consistency and oversight for dual-registered NHS managers.

\* the definitions of which senior leadership roles

“Our regulation recognises the power of leadership and ensures it is used to protect the public.”

will be within scope is yet to be determined and will be determined based on public protection impact.

Supporting professionals.  
Protecting the public.

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