



HCPC Corporate Plan 2025–26

Message from our Chief Executive and Registrar



The 2025–26 Corporate Plan sets out our work for the final year of our five-year Corporate Strategy. We have made significant progress since that strategy was set, and our focus is now on building on successes, ready for the next stage of development.

We achieved 92% of the project milestones we set in our previous Corporate Plan, including establishing our own in-house Fitness to Practise (FTP) legal team which builds on improvements to the quality and timeliness of our investigations; piloting the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) to improve the consistency and timeliness of our written responses to registrants who contact us; successfully implementing our revised standards of conduct, performance and ethics so that registrants and the public are clear on our expectations; and publishing insights from our own data on retention and diversity characteristics to support wider workforce decisions.

This year's Corporate Plan is aligned with the six strategic priority areas from our Corporate Strategy. It outlines how we will continue to make progress on each priority area in 2025–26 and what we aim to achieve.

In 2025–26 we will continue to use technology and innovation to improve the user experience for our registrants and those involved across our services. We will develop our work to support the wider health and care sector on the critical issue of workforce planning by sharing our data and insights; delivering against our technology roadmap and further improving our assessment processes for international registrants.

This year, we will develop our next Corporate Strategy as we seek to build on recent work. We will set out an ambitious vision for the HCPC, our regulatory role and the contribution we make to the wider sector. Developing our new strategy will be a collaborative process, seeking the engagement and feedback of our stakeholders, and ensuring patients and the public are placed at the heart of everything we do.

None of this work would be possible without the continued hard work and dedication of colleagues across the HCPC. We recognise the importance of fostering a supportive and inclusive culture for our employees. Updating our People Strategy and aligning it to our new Corporate Strategy will help continue the positive culture we have here and ensure the HCPC continues to benefit from a highly engaged and capable workforce into the future.

Finally, as we look forward to our work for the coming year I want to take this opportunity to say thank you to my HCPC colleagues and partners for their hard work and dedication in ensuring the public have safe, effective and high quality care.

Bernie O'Reilly

Bernie O'Reilly
Chief Executive and Registrar

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

Who we are

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:



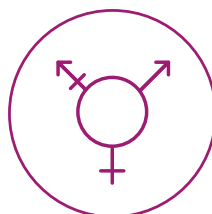
Fair

being honest, open and transparent



Compassionate

treating people with respect, empathy and care



Inclusive

collaborating with others and championing diversity




Enterprising

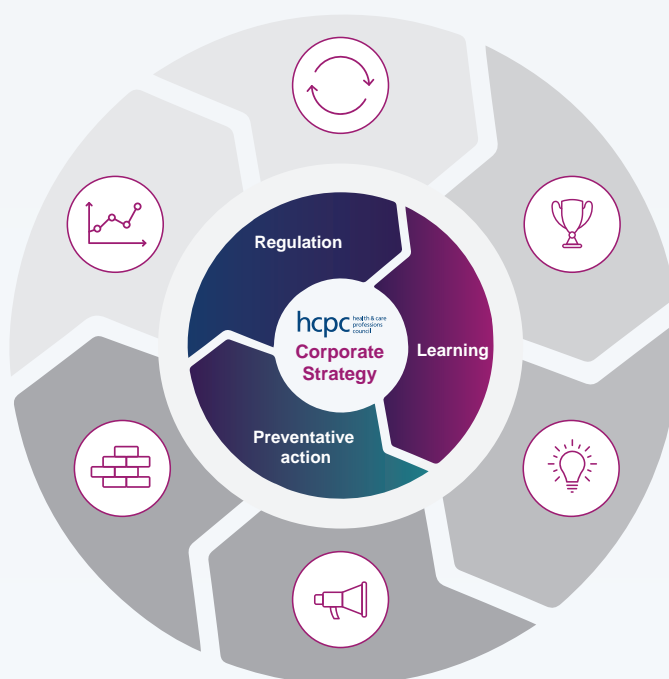
seeking opportunities to be creative and foster innovation to improve our performance

Our Corporate Strategy 2021–26

2025–26 will be the final year of our five-year strategy, which we developed with our stakeholders in 2020.

By listening to and working with patients and service users, our registrants, partners, professional bodies, education providers, trade unions and employers, we were able to shape how we could deliver the HCPC's core work of promoting public protection and effective regulation. Our six priority areas of work, the aims for these areas and where we expected to be at the end of 2026 are all outlined in our strategy and inform our corporate planning every year.

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



Corporate Plan 2025–26 context

The Corporate Plan sets out the major milestones for the next 12 months (FY 2025–26). As we implement the plan, our work will continue to be informed by our stakeholders to ensure it is meeting their needs and delivering against our regulatory purpose of protecting the public and promoting high quality professional practice across the 15 professions we regulate.

Our core regulatory activity in 2025–26 will include:

Our work in 2025–26



Responding to

800

policy and ethical enquiries regarding our standards



We will deliver over

240

learning sessions for registrants, employers and students



We will carry out

158

assessments of education providers and programmes



Undertaking

5,854

CPD audits



We anticipate that we will receive

24,900

new registration applications



Efficiently renewing

225,349

registrants as part of the two-year cycle



We expect to receive

2,150

new FTP concerns

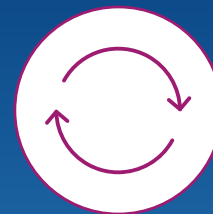


We expect to list

376

Substantive Final Hearings

1 Continuously improve and innovate



Aim: To improve our performance against PSA standards of good regulation and to innovate across all our regulatory functions to provide an enhanced user experience.



Since the first year of our Corporate Strategy 2021–26, we have regained a number of the PSA standards of good regulation in registration, fitness to practise (FTP) and equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI). This is a clear indication that our investment to continuously improve our performance across the organisation has had an impact, and we continue to target achieving all five of the PSA's fitness to practise standards.

We recognise there is still work to be done around the timeliness of our FTP investigations, which has been impacted in part by an increase in cases, a trend experienced by most professional regulators across the healthcare system.

Over 2025–26 we will continue to make improvements to our fitness to practise processes to improve the experience for those raising concerns and our registrants. We are constrained by the outdated legislation that governs how we work.

This, and other external factors, means that there will be occasions when processes will take longer than we want. We will be investing in our ability to capture and use data to provide further context to our reporting on fitness to practise.

We have also taken significant steps to improve the user experience of our services. At the start of our Corporate Strategy 2021–25 we did not have online registration capability. Now, all candidates can apply to register and renew online, and we are beginning to introduce the use of AI to assist in our written responses to registrants who contact us, as well as to help detect plagiarism.

Our focus for this year will be improving our guidance and support for registrants and others involved in the FTP process, as well as a comprehensive review of our international registration routes to improve the quality and consistency of our tests within the application process.

Continuously improve and innovate

In 2025–26 we aim to improve our performance against PSA standards of good regulation and to innovate across all our regulatory functions to provide an enhanced user experience by:

Registration

- ✓ Develop our assessment model of those who trained outside of the UK applying to join the HCPC Register.

User experience

- ✓ Initiate the first phase of a new customer contact approach which replaces our legacy telephony solutions and puts in place the foundations for improved interactions with registrants and other stakeholders.

Partners

- ✓ Design and implement changes to our partners operating model to improve the processes and systems that enable partners to contribute to our work.

Fitness to practise

- ✓ Continue to build on the improvements commenced last year, including embedding our newly established legal team, frontloading investigations, which involves gathering more evidence earlier in an FTP investigation, and reviewing our scheduling process to create greater efficiency.
- ✓ Support and provide guidance for registrants and witnesses involved in the FTP process, including enhancing our wellbeing support provision.

2 Promote high quality professional practice



Aim: 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.



We regularly review our standards to make sure they are relevant to current practice and can be clearly understood by our registrants.

Last year we implemented our revised standards of conduct, performance and ethics (SCPEs), after first publishing the revisions in October 2023, alongside revised standards on social media.

We also conducted extensive pre-consultation engagement to seek views from our stakeholders on revisions to our standards of education and training (SETs).

In 2025–26, we will continue to draft guidance to support the updated standards of conduct, performance and ethics and help our registrants and their employers with their implementation.

We will also conduct a formal consultation on the SETs and agree new standards, to include additional focus on the use of technology, the quality of placements and sustainability.

Promote high quality professional practice

In 2025–26 we will make further progress in enabling our professions to meet our standards so that they are able to adapt to changes in health and care practice and prevent harm to service users by:

Standards of education and training (SETs)

- ✓ Publicly consult on proposed amendments to the standards of education and training.
- ✓ Launch the revised standards.

Scope of practice

- ✓ Support registrants and employers to meet the HCPC's expectations for the safe and effective optimisation of scope of practice by developing materials on supervision and delegation, through a series of dedicated workshops.

Professional Liaison Service

- ✓ Enhance our ability to use our data and other insights to develop a more targeted and risk-based approach to our prevention work.
- ✓ Review and plan the future requirements of the service.
- ✓ Develop new and engaging ways to deliver learning and influence to extend the reach of the service.

Standards of conduct, performance and ethics (SCPEs)

- ✓ Create further revised guidance on confidentiality and safeguarding. Consider additional areas where guidance may be helpful.

3 Develop insight and exert influence



Aim: Learn 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.



In 2024–25 we improved our internal infrastructure to allow us to use our data more effectively, including creating a workforce profile from the demographic and diversity data of our registrants.

We conducted research on professional boundaries and developed and launched a new Sexual Safety Hub to raise awareness of the impact of sexual misconduct, and help improve the sexual safety of service users, registrants and students. We published insights from our own data and research including retention rates, and the diversity characteristics of those going through the different stages of our FTP process.

In 2025–26 we will obtain more complete data sets on registrant employment, which we expect will improve our visibility of emerging concerns relating to individual employers or locations.

We plan to commission research to better understand the extent to which registrants across our different professions, settings and the four nations use AI systems in their practice. We will explore how registrants understand the relationship between AI systems and their HCPC standards, and how confident registrants are in their understanding of this technology. These findings will inform how we can better support our registrants through the development of our standards and supporting material.

Develop insight and exert influence

In 2025–26 we will learn from data and research to inform our decision making and share insights to protect, promote and maintain the health, safety and wellbeing of the public by:

Research

- ✓ Commission research into the impact of the increasing use of AI by registrants working across our professions, settings and across the UK.

Data quality and infrastructure

- ✓ Further optimise the data we hold to inform and improve our systems and processes. This will support our insights and analytics work.
- ✓ Improve our external data reporting capability through self-service reporting tools shared on our website.

Insight and analytics

- ✓ Continue to publish analyses of our data to provide insights to our stakeholders. This will include more detailed analyses of our FTP diversity data, further developing our data hub, enhancing our professional profiles dashboards and providing insights from registrants' CPD activity.
- ✓ Collaborate and share our data across the sector in order to enhance public safety and professional practice. This will include exploring participation in a cross-regulator database, increased sharing of our data with professional bodies and further education data sharing and analysis.

4 Be visible, engaged and informed



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



As we enter the final year of our Corporate Strategy, 2025–26 will be an important year for the HCPC to review progress against the aims of this first strategy and begin to develop our next Corporate Strategy. As a multi professional regulator, the stakeholder engagement which we will conduct to create our new strategy is also an opportunity to inform and influence the wider health and care sector.

This year will also be the final year of our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy (2021–26). Last year we published analysis on EDI factors and FTP referrals, and in 2025–26 we will further this work to look at the impact of EDI factors on FTP. The HCPC now holds EDI data on 99% of its registrants, over 40% more than the previous year. We are delighted with the progress this demonstrates in terms of our EDI data collection.

Service user and patient engagement is a vital part of our role of protecting the public. The HCPC has worked with the Patients Association (PA) since 2022 to obtain direct service user feedback. In 2024–25 we signed a partnership agreement to enable us to build on this important part of our work, something we will continue to use and further develop this year.

In 2025–26 we will continue our programme of site visits by our Chief Executive to the workplaces of our registrants across the four nations, to remain engaged and develop an informed understanding of the environments in which our registrants operate.

Be visible, engaged and informed

In 2025–26 we will regulate, take and communicate decisions which are informed by a deep understanding of the environment within which our registrants, employers and education providers operate by:

Developing the HCPC's next strategy

- ✓ Review the success of the current Corporate Strategy (2021–26) and conduct engagement with a wide range of stakeholders to develop our next Corporate Strategy.
- ✓ Carry out a stakeholder perceptions survey and targeted user research to support our Corporate Strategy refresh and digital roadmap implementation.

Listening to our stakeholders

- ✓ Build on a successful Chair/Chief Executive programme of relationship building.
- ✓ Implement a refreshed stakeholder engagement plan that includes activity aligned to the HCPC's communication campaigns.
- ✓ Begin to establish a single customer relationship management (CRM) platform to allow better sharing of information and coordination of communication, engagement, quality assurance and complaint handling activity.
- ✓ Seek to amplify the voice of the service user in our work through targeted engagement with patient representative bodies such as the Patients Association.

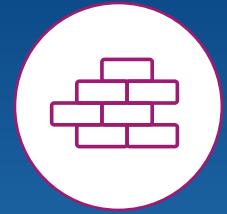
Strengthening our communication capabilities

- ✓ Implement a new Communications, Engagement and Public Affairs resourcing model.
- ✓ Develop and implement communication campaigns linked to our organisational priorities including on Standards of Education and Training.

EDI

- ✓ Delivery of our 2025–26 EDI Action Plan activities.

5 Build a resilient, healthy, capable and sustainable organisation



Aim: 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.



We made strong progress with our technology roadmap this year, and in 2025–26 we plan to build on this progress to increase the pace of delivery. Our focus will be on improving user experience and making better use of our data to provide insights through platforms which are both flexible and secure.

Last year, we consulted with our stakeholders on changes to our annual fees. As we outlined two years ago, we will continue with regular fee reviews as these are an integral part of ensuring the financial sustainability of the HCPC.

In 2024–25 we continued to make progress in line with our People Strategy including the launch of training programmes to support new managers, the development of our talent pool network and mentoring opportunities. We also introduced a Freedom to Speak Up Guardians scheme and Let's Talk sessions with senior leaders, to build on existing opportunities for colleagues to speak up and provide feedback. In 2025–26, we will continue to monitor the success of these Speak Up Guardians, to ensure they are being properly utilised and supporting organisational improvements.

Build a resilient, healthy, capable and sustainable organisation

In 2025–26 we will ensure employees feel valued and supported, and fully able to contribute. We will continue to ensure that the organisation is resilient and able to quickly adapt to changes in the external environment by:

Delivering the technology roadmap

- ✓ Moving towards an omni-channel customer contact approach; renewing the underpinning technology for the HCPC's website and customer portals to enable progress towards a unified customer contact experience; and implementing a single customer relationship management platform to improve services.

Improving financial sustainability and resilience

- ✓ Continue with regular, transparent fee reviews to maintain the HCPC's financial sustainability and enable investments in further improvements.
- ✓ Further develop our financial and procurement systems, to help ensure value for money and continued improvements in financial management.

Enhancing our People Strategy

- ✓ Deliver year 5 of our People Strategy: focus on attracting high quality candidates via our recruitment portal and workforce planning to build future resilience.
- ✓ Develop an updated People Strategy for the future to ensure that the HCPC continues to benefit from a highly engaged and capable workforce.

- ✓ Create the skills and development opportunities needed for the HCPC to deliver its responsibilities and for our people to develop in their careers.
- ✓ Monitor the impact of the introduction of the Freedom to Speak Up Guardians scheme.
- ✓ Maintain other speaking up and listening opportunities including Let's Talk sessions with senior leaders, the employee forum and our regular pulse surveys.

Improving our sustainability

- ✓ Maintain and optimise the HCPC's office estate to provide a safe and sustainable working environment, including progressing plans to end our reliance on gas-powered heating.
- ✓ Implementation of an Environmental Management System to improve our ability to monitor the environmental impact of our operations.
- ✓ Enhance procurement policy to include a focus on sustainability and supplier diversity.

6 Promoting the value of regulation



Aim: Ensure that the public, registrants, students and employers understand the value and importance of regulating health and care professionals.



We want to promote the value of regulation. The HCPC provides and drives important education and continuous professional development initiatives to support registrants to deliver safe and effective care throughout their career. As outlined in our third strategic priority, we can also use the data we hold as a regulator of over 350,000 health and care professionals to inform and assist our stakeholders.

Last year, we published our first Education Annual Report since our current quality assurance model was established. It found that quality assurance is central to the work of education providers, and that education providers proactively seek to understand and respond to challenges from within and outside the sector. Through this work, we noted that relationships between the HCPC and approved education providers are functioning well, and that the HCPC is viewed as a trusted education quality partner.

This year we will strengthen these relationships through the provision of further insights to our education providers based on an analysis of our assessments.

We promoted our Principles of Preceptorship to employers, helping new international registrants to transition to UK practice through our UK workforce programme. We will aim to increase understanding of the challenges faced by international registrants in this phase of their careers; and encourage employers to improve their support for international registrants.

As a multi-professional regulator, we have also been an active voice in shaping the future of health regulation. This year, we have submitted policy positions to a number of government consultations on reform to the health and care landscape and have engaged with political stakeholders across the four nations. We continue to be clear that modernising our regulatory framework is necessary to enhance the quality and safety of care.

In 2025–26, we will work closely with other regulators and professional bodies to help define and shape the future of the regulation of health and care professionals.

Promoting the value of regulation

In 2025–26 we will further our aim to ensure that the public, registrants, students and employers understand the value and importance of regulated health and care professionals by:

Education

- ✓ Analyse our assessments from the 2025–26 academic year, publish key findings, and engage with the sector to share learning.

Registrant health and wellbeing

- ✓ Review our progress against and the impact of the Registrant Health and Wellbeing Strategy, identifying any further work we can undertake to improve the experience of our regulatory processes for those involved.

Supporting new registrants to successfully transition to UK practise

- ✓ Through our Insights for Employers programme and the Employer Hub, increase understanding of the challenges faced by registrants who are new to UK practice, and encourage and support employers to improve the narrative around and support for international registrants.

Shaping the future of regulation

- ✓ Continue to raise the benefits to patient safety and the quality of care that regulatory reform will bring when meeting with stakeholders.
- ✓ Engage with other health and care regulators on how a modernised regulatory system should encourage greater joint working.
- ✓ Co-design policy proposals on a reformed regulatory system with patient groups.
- ✓ Advocate for a timetable to be brought forward on modernising the HCPC's regulatory framework.
- ✓ Respond to relevant Departmental consultations, emphasising how regulatory reform aligns with the Government's objectives in health and care.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)



In the last 12 months, we have made important progress on our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy. We now hold EDI data for over 99% of our 330,000 registrants, which means we can continue our vital work on developing our understanding of the impact of our regulatory activities.

Publication of our fitness to practise data is now routine, allowing us to identify if any groups of registrants are more or less likely to be involved in FTP processes, and what the impact of those differences are. Crucially, our analytical work has now started to report on the patterns we see at different stages of the process. Our future plans include more detailed analytical work, including research, to begin to understand the drivers behind any of the patterns of under- or over-representation of any groups that we may see.

This data has been fundamental to improving the way in which we ask international applicants to evidence that they meet our English language requirements, and how we strengthened our EDI requirements in both the standards of proficiency and the standards of conduct, performance and ethics. The work

on our standards expanded our expectations around EDI and reinforced our commitment to promoting inclusivity and equality in practice. To support registrants, we have hosted webinars to discuss these changes, providing guidance on how to implement EDI principles effectively.

Our dedicated work in this area means that we continue to meet the PSA's EDI Standard and we have made clear progress in demonstrating how we meet their enhanced expectations since updating the way in which they review our performance.

In 2025–26, we will make greater use of our data and will build our research capabilities to understand the patterns that we may see. We will also review our standards for education and training with an enhanced focus on EDI, to ensure learners from all backgrounds receive the support and training they need to progress their careers and deliver high quality care to the diverse populations that comprise the UK public. Building on our work in recent years to update all our standards, this ensures that all HCPC standards reflect our determination to be fair and ensure fairness for the public who rely on our regulation.

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.

A modernised regulatory system enhances patient safety through upstream regulation, with a greater emphasis on learning and best practice across professional disciplines. This requires collaborative working between health and care regulators and the establishment of shared services to enhance efficiency. This model would increase public protection and deliver results rapidly, while promoting collaboration and early preventative action on emerging challenges to the current model.

The Government is currently working to modernise the General Medical Council's (GMC) legislation, which the HCPC has welcomed as the start of a wider process of

reform. In 2024–25 we have continued to work with the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), professional regulators and other stakeholders on this legislation, which will form the blueprint for our own reform.

We also continue to engage with DHSC around policy positions on our fitness to practise procedures, governance arrangements, and operating framework. We are pleased with the direction of the proposed reforms, which we think will provide us with modern and flexible legislation which enables us to best protect the public.

We know that regulatory reform will be a multi-year programme of work that will impact all parts of our organisation. At this point in time, the HCPC does not have certainty on the timetable for reform from the Government. While this remains the case, we continue to advocate for a timetable to be brought forward during our regular engagements with DHSC.