



Snapshot

Annual review of performance 2016/17

Regulator reviewed: **The Health and Care Professions Council**

Key facts & figures:

- 350,330 registrants as at 31 March 2017
- regulates practice in the UK of 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 language therapists, and social workers in England
- £90 annual registration



Standards of good regulation

Core functions

Annual performance review 2016/17

Met

(number of Standards)

Guidance & Standards

4/4

Education & Training

4/4

Registration

6/6

Fitness to Practise

4/10

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Focus on: **Activities and actions demonstrating how the HCPC is meeting the Standards**

The HCPC has met all the Standards of Good Regulation for Guidance and Standards, Education and Training, and Registration. However, in the last three performance reviews we have identified areas of concern around Fitness to Practise and following a targeted review have concluded that six FTP Standards are not met.

REGISTRATION: PROCESS IS FAIR, EFFICIENT AND TRANSPARENT

The HCPC did not meet this Standard in our last performance review but have met it for this year. We are reassured that the HCPC has taken steps to amend its registration appeal process. Information provided to us for our targeted review demonstrates that revisions made by the HCPC have increased transparency and identified methods to improve consistency of decision-making.

GUIDANCE AND STANDARDS: REGULATORS TAKE ACCOUNT OF STAKEHOLDERS' VIEWS IN DEVELOPING/REVISING GUIDANCE

The HCPC conducted a number of public consultations during 2016/17, including on its revised confidentiality guidance, social media guidance and revised standards of proficiency for social workers. The social media guidance was developed following feedback from health professionals who indicated that they would welcome further guidance on this subject to help them meet the HCPC's social media requirements.

REGISTRATION: RISK OF HARM AND OF DAMAGE TO PUBLIC CONFIDENCE IS MANAGED IN A PROPORTIONATE AND RISK-BASED MANNER

We carried out a targeted review to check how the HCPC responded to a legislative error that enabled orthoptists (who diagnose and treat visual problems involving eye movement) to sell and supply certain medicines. The HCPC outlined measures taken to manage the risks arising from the error, including: notifying the Medicines and Healthcare Regulatory Authority and NHS England, requiring orthoptists to complete HCPC-approved post registration

training; ensuring clarity in its communications (and those from the British and Irish Orthoptist Society). We are therefore satisfied that the HCPC took a pragmatic and proportionate approach to minimise any risk to public confidence caused by the error.

FITNESS TO PRACTISE

Following our review, we have concluded that six of the 10 FTP Standards have not been met by the HCPC this year. Our concerns focus on how well the HCPC is protecting the public and relate to:

- a potential barrier to progressing complaints caused by the revised Standard of Acceptance (SOA), the HCPC's threshold for accepting complaints
- the quality of risk assessments being undertaken, and the approach taken by the HCPC in seeking interim orders
- the sufficiency of some of the HCPC's investigations
- the HCPC's process for discontinuance and disposal of cases by consent, as well as its approach to health concerns in FTP cases
- mixed performance in the time taken to progress complaints through the fitness to practise process
- some concerns around the reasoning and consistency of the HCPC's FTP decision-making.

We recognise the work that the HCPC is undertaking to improve their performance against these Standards, including additional staff training, redrafting/providing new guidance, conducting audits, data checks, and reviews of new processes.

We also recognise that the HCPC has made progress and successfully reduced the number of older FTP cases during 2016/17.

However, these measures have not had enough time to impact on performance this year, but we look forward to seeing progress made in our next performance review and we will continue to monitor the outcomes of cases where these processes are adopted.