



# Snapshot

Annual review of performance 2019/20



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

**Key facts & figures:**

- Maintains a register 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 and language therapists in the United Kingdom
- 281,467 professionals on the register at 31 March 2020
- Annual registration is £90, paid over a two-year cycle

## Standards of good regulation met

General Standards	4/5
Guidance and Standards	2/2
Education and Training	2/2
Registration	4/4
Fitness to Practise	1/5

We look carefully at a range of evidence to decide whether each Standard is met or not. The total number of Standards met does not on its own give the full picture of how a regulator is performing. Read the full performance review to find out more.

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# Focus on: How the HCPC is meeting the Standards

The HCPC has only met one of the five Standards for fitness to practise. We have had concerns about the HCPC's performance in fitness to practise since we audited this function in 2017. We will be monitoring how the HCPC plans to address our concerns and achieve improvement.

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## GENERAL STANDARDS

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The HCPC met four of the five General Standards this year. We found that the HCPC did not have an adequate source of information about its registrants in respect of their protected characteristics. It also does not routinely seek to establish such information about patients, service users and others. The HCPC did not meet Standard 3 as a result. Since the period under review, the HCPC has been working to improve the level of data it collects and its understanding of this data, and we welcome these developments.

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## STANDARDS AND GUIDANCE: ENSURES GUIDANCE IS UP-TO-DATE, ADDRESSES EMERGING AREAS OF RISK, AND PRIORITISES PATIENT AND SERVICE USER CENTRED CARE AND SAFETY

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This year the HCPC started to review its Standards of Proficiency to ensure they remain fit for purpose and are well understood by registrants, service users and carers, education providers and the public. The HCPC also updated its guidance on the use of social media in response to issues about live tweeting by registrants whilst delivering care to patients.

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## EDUCATION AND TRAINING: MAINTAINS UP-TO-DATE STANDARDS WHICH ARE KEPT UNDER REVIEW, AND PRIORITISE PATIENT AND SERVICE USER CENTRED CARE AND SAFETY

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Following its decision to increase the threshold level of qualification for entry to the register for paramedics, in April 2019, the HCPC published a policy statement which provides guidance on when it will consider amending the level of qualification required for entry to its register. During the review period, the HCPC also adopted the Royal Pharmaceutical Society's competency framework as its standards for all prescribers. The HCPC will assess whether programmes meet these new standards through its annual monitoring process from the 2019-20 academic year.

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## REGISTRATION: RISK OF HARM/DAMAGE TO PUBLIC CONFIDENCE BY MISUSE OF A PROTECTED TITLE/ACT IS MANAGED IN A PROPORTIONATE AND RISK-BASED MANNER

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We conducted a targeted review of this Standard because we noticed an increase in the number of complaints received about alleged misuse of title and wanted to understand what was causing the increase. The HCPC told us it delivered a public awareness campaign about its protection of title function in 2019/20, and also changed how new cases are categorised. Training was also delivered to staff on how to identify and act on any potential misuse of title matters arising from applications to join the register. The HCPC considered that these changes had increased the number of complaints received.

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## FITNESS TO PRACTISE

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The HCPC has not met four of the five Standards for fitness to practise. Following our audit of a sample of closed fitness to practise cases, we were satisfied that the initial ('triage') stage of the HCPC's fitness to practise process is operating as intended. However, the cases we reviewed demonstrated that our longstanding concerns had not yet been fully addressed. Our concerns are about:

- quality/timeliness of the HCPC's investigations into issues raised about registrants
- decision-making at all stages of the HCPC's fitness to practise process
- HCPC's compliance with its own policies
- quality/frequency of risk assessments completed by staff
- record-keeping
- the customer service and support provided to those involved in fitness to practise proceedings.

The HCPC recognises that it has more to do to address our long-standing concerns and has recently strengthened its focus by developing a new change plan for fitness to practise. This plan details the structural and process changes required to improve its performance. We will continue to closely scrutinise the HCPC's performance in this area.