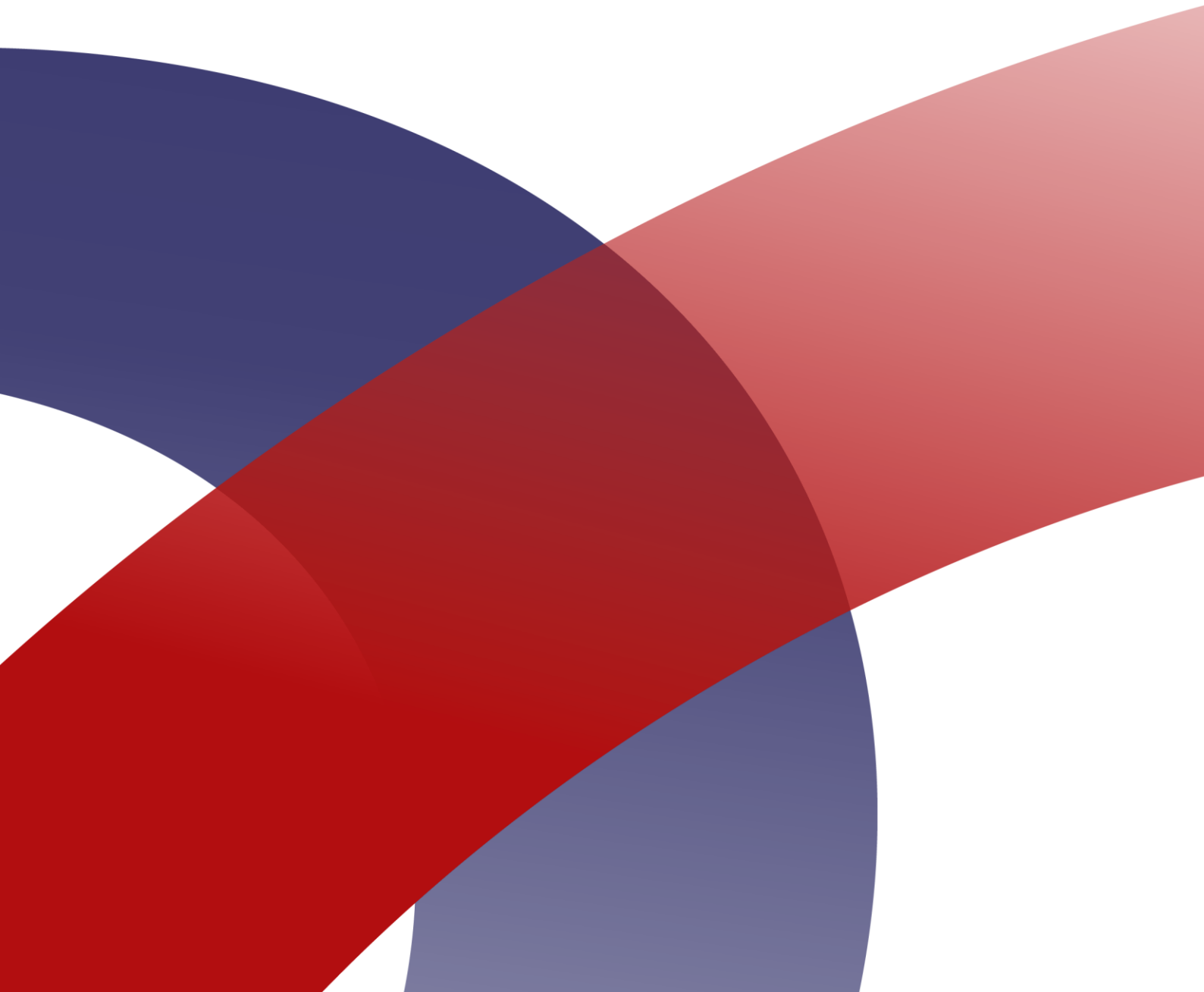




# HCPC STAKEHOLDERS: PERCEPTIONS AUDIT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



## REGISTRANTS

Registrants report high levels of knowledge of the HCPC, the process of investigating a registrant's fitness to practise, and the registration renewal process.



Most say they are confident in the HCPC and view it as effective across all of its regulatory functions. Confidence is particularly strong in the HCPC's role in maintaining and publishing the Register and setting standards. This is then followed by the HCPC's role in investigating concerns about a registrant's fitness to practise, and the approach to education and training programmes.

The majority of registrants have engaged with the HCPC in the past 12 months, commonly via the website and email – with most saying they would like to receive email more than any other type of communication.

## PUBLIC AND SERVICE USERS



Most members of the public understand the purpose of regulation and have used at least one of the services provided by the professions HCPC regulates, typically physiotherapists, radiographers and paramedics. Women continue to be significantly more likely than men to say they have used any health and care professional services, as are those aged 55 and over, compared to the younger age groups. Most service users say they were satisfied with their last contact and report high levels of trust in their health and care professional. The most common reasons given for this level of trust are being treated with dignity and respect, and the communications skills of the registrant.

Only a minority report having a serious concern about the skills and conduct of a health and care professional. If they were to raise concerns in the first instance they say it would be with either the professional body, the employer and then the HCPC. Those that have raised concerns in the past, did so with the employer. A small number said they wouldn't know how to go about raising a concern.

## EDUCATORS



The majority of educators report having a good knowledge of, and confidence in, the HCPC, correctly identifying its purpose and reporting a great deal of knowledge about most of its standards. The one area educators have less reported knowledge of, is in fitness to practise, possibly because this is more of an in-workplace issue which is less likely to be covered at qualifying stage.

## EMPLOYERS



The majority of employers of registrants say they are confident in the HCPC overall and report a good level of knowledge about health and care regulation, as well as about the HCPC. Most understand the purpose of fitness to practise and report knowing at least a fair amount about the process, and when registrants should self-refer. Where employers have had concerns about a HCPC-registered employee's fitness to practise they have either raised these concerns formally through relevant channels at work or with the HCPC. Overall, most employers have a good understanding of the HCPC's standards and when they should be referred to, as well as the registration renewal process and the majority are confident in the preparedness of graduates emerging from HCPC-approved education for practice.

# QUALITATIVE INTERVIEWS

## IMPRESSIONS



Stakeholders interviewed tended to be knowledgeable about the HCPC and its remit to ensure public safety. Stakeholder impressions are broadly positive, informed by interactions with the HCPC in meetings and conferences. Where negative impressions are present, they largely arise from perceptions of the fitness to practise process, with participants reflecting that it appears to be too lengthy and onerous on those who are involved.

## EFFECTIVENESS



Those who are familiar with the HCPC regard it as effective in the way it prioritises public safety in all its functions, particularly the HCPC's approach to continuing professional development (CPD) in focusing on learning and how this benefits a registrant. Stakeholders would like the HCPC to do more to support registrants as they go through the fitness to practise process and to focus on measures to prevent problems with registrants' professional practise from arising.

## STANDARDS



Confidence in the standards was high, with stakeholders saying that they feel it ensures a high level of protection for the public. Stakeholders, particularly those representing professional bodies, mention the way in which the HCPC standards are useful as a foundation for development of best practice. Trade union stakeholders tend to say issues arise at practice level when employers inconsistently enforce or support the meeting of standards, which may lead to fitness to practise cases. However, it was recognised that it is beyond the HCPC's remit to monitor the reporting practices of employers.

## EDUCATION



Education sector stakeholders are enthusiastic about the HCPC's collaborative approach to the development of the Standards of Education and Training which underpin education and training programmes. Some expressed a desire for the HCPC to be more strategic and future-looking in this area, to ensure they continue to support the development needs of the future workforce. The need for HCPC to engage with employers on inconsistent learning and development support for newly qualified registrants was also highlighted.

## ENGAGEMENT



The HCPC is regarded as effective in the way it collaborates with stakeholders. Trade union and service-user organisations would welcome more engagement with the HCPC, such as helping to develop understanding on the role of the regulator. Aligning with the HCPC's strategic priorities, two interviewees in the devolved nations are particularly keen that the HCPC has a more prominent presence in their nations.

## CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE HCPC



When asked what they regard as challenges for the HCPC in the next few years, stakeholders mention the challenge of workforce shortages in the UK which will affect the HCPC's stakeholders, the perception of fee increases for registrants and the potential impact of Brexit on registrants. Stakeholders also mentioned three key opportunities:

1. Using HCPC data about registrants to better understand current trends in the profession and workforce
2. Widening the regulator's remit to encompass more professions
3. Becoming more forward-looking, innovating in its communications and observing changes in the professions it regulates.