

Chair's Report – February 2024

1. Purpose of Report

To flag developments at HCPC from the Chair's perspective and to update on activities of note.

2. HCPC People

I am delighted to share that David Stirling has agreed to be the **Senior Council Member**. I thought you would appreciate some possibly lesser known facts about David, who says, as Director of Healthcare Science, NHS National Services Scotland (NSS):

“There are many routes into a career in Healthcare Science. I studied Biological Sciences at Edinburgh University, before going on to a PhD in Reproductive Endocrinology. After post-doctoral positions with the University of Texas in Dallas, and the Imperial Cancer Research Fund in Edinburgh, I joined NHS Lothian as a Clinical Scientist in 1991.

Whilst at NHS Lothian, I established a genetic testing service for bleeding disorders and a molecular pathology service, which detected cancer mutations which influence disease progression and response to therapeutic treatments.

During my time with NHS Lothian, I also had the great pleasure of establishing training programmes for Clinical Scientists in Haematology and Molecular Pathology and I was seconded to work with the Scottish Government on a part-time basis as Healthcare Science Officer.

In 2014, NSS established the first Director of Healthcare Science post in Scotland and I was delighted to be appointed. The highlights of my career have all been collaborations with some exceptional scientists and equally brilliant medical nursing and allied health professional colleagues to improve services for the Scottish population.

NSS touches on an enormous range of aspects of healthcare in Scotland and offers huge opportunities for us to continue this work.”

At HCPC, David is on the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee and was previously a Partner. He is currently a Lay Member on the Parliamentary Committee for Standards and has been a member of the Academy for Healthcare Science Regulation Council and a Director of the Association of Clinical Scientists.

2024 marks the HCPC's fourth cohort of **Council Apprentices**. This is wonderfully positive.

I would like to quote from the inspiring email that one of our 2023 Apprentices, Damien Baker, wrote to Council and HCPC team members, last December:

“As I officially end the apprentice role at the end of the month, I just wanted to reflect on my time at the HCPC over the past year. I think it is fair to say at the start of this apprenticeship I was apprehensive, nervous and questioned if I had what it took to have a seat at the table. I soon learned that the table I was at was a safe one, one that allowed for spirited debate, a place where different viewpoints and levels of understanding is not only accepted, but encouraged. As I think back on the year and consider what I have learnt, thinking about the conversations I have been privileged to be a part of and to have my voice and views feel valued, I am truly saddened that the journey has come to an end...

...While I have learned invaluable skills within governance and the role of a non-executive, I have also learnt that the people leading the HCPC genuinely care about the registrants and upholding public protection. As a registrant, I am excited to see where regulation goes in the future and I look forward to the opportunity to work with you as individuals and the HCPC as an organisation again the future.”

A warm welcome to this year's cohort, Geraldine Kinkead-Richards:

Geraldine is a registered Occupational Therapist. She is currently working as a specialist Occupational Therapist in Paediatrics across health and education for the NHS and as a self-employed associate. Previously she has worked across a range of sectors within healthcare, where some of her work has centred on innovation. This includes involvement in piloting implementation of digital health technology within primary care and recognition by St George's University for outstanding practice education support.

Geraldine has a keen interest in accessible and inclusive learning and workplace wellbeing as well as an interest in understanding how digital innovation for efficiency quality education and training could contribute to supportive and safe practice for professionals.

And to Jordan McKenna:

Jordan is a registered Operating Department Practitioner (ODP) with over 12 years of experience. Jordan is currently seconded to NHS England as the Regional AHP International Recruitment Lead for the North East and Yorkshire Region. Jordan has held numerous roles previously at Leeds Teaching Hospitals which include time as a Resuscitation Officer, Senior Practice Learning Facilitator and Matron. Jordan also teaches on many advanced resuscitation courses across the country.

Jordan has a key interest in international recruitment with a particular focus on pastoral and wellbeing support. He also has a passion for audit and data analysis and how these can benefit change and project management.

In his free time, Jordan volunteers as a Community First Responder for Yorkshire Ambulance Service. Jordan is also a keen footballer for a local team and an enthusiastic golfer.

It was a pleasure to be involved in the selection process, supported by my Council and Executive colleagues.

An essential component in the smooth running of Council is an excellent **Governance Team**. It is therefore reassuring and assuring to have Karen Flaherty now on board as Head of Governance and her recently recruited Governance Manager Fran(cesca) Bramley.

A final note on **Reverse Mentors**. Valerie Webster, Alastair Bridges, Andrew Smith, Zoë Allan and I met Tehmina Ansari, HR Lead on the project (as well as being an ECB qualified cricket coach and much else besides...) to debrief on the programme's progress. We were heartened to learn that having overcome some initial hesitation, our mentors had got into their stride and were seeing the value in having these relationships. Those of us being mentored certainly do and it was a great pleasure to have a cadre of mentors actually attending the previous, in-person Council.

3. PSA Standards

The Fitness to Practise (FTP) Performance Improvement Board I chair met in February. As Council will hear, performance remains consistent, explainable and the business of meeting Standards is well understood by the HCPC team. Our focus is on maintaining existing Standards and meeting the outstanding two.

I would particularly emphasise:

Phase 2 of the Improvement Programme has focused on the delivery of initiatives in relation to Standard 18 to develop and enrich the support we provide for those involved in the FTP process. We have also continued activity to ensure we are embedding the improvements delivered in Phase 1.

In Phase 2 we have delivered:

- **Our Lay Advocacy Service** – to support members of the public and witnesses who may find it challenging to engage with the FTP process. This service is available at any time during the FTP process.
- **Our intermediary service** – to support registrants or witnesses with communication needs to participate in an FTP hearing.
- **Our Registrant Support Service** – to provide emotional support and practical advice to all registrants involved in the FTP process.
- **New tone of voice in our templates and new fact sheets** – taking a more person-centred approach to how we engage with others and explain our processes.
- **Renewed focus on keeping parties updated on their cases** – revised Best Practice Standard on Customer Service, training for team members, new letter templates and monitoring via front-line checks. We have seen a decrease in the number of complaints we receive about our communication, which indicates these changes are starting to have an impact.
- **New Fitness to Practise customer service survey** – sent to participants at case closure to seek feedback on customer service, timeliness and quality of communication.

We emphasised at the meeting our focus on data as evidence of sustained improvement. Anecdotal case studies, whilst instructive and important, need to be assessed in terms of accuracy, currency and continuing relevance.

4. Stakeholders

I have attended a range of meetings with key stakeholders, most recently the Patient Safety Commissioner, a leading healthcare policy academic and the General Pharmaceutical Council Chair.

Less obvious but important is the time I spend supporting and occasional challenging, internal HCPC Executive colleagues on a regular basis.

5. Fee increase for registrants

The anticipated fee rise having come into effect, I have been involved in the shaping of recommendations that Council will shortly be discussing. Due to HCPC legislation, these smaller incremental rises will necessitate a level of consultation and parliamentary processes in Westminster and Holyrood.

6. External engagements

I was a participant and guest at a global leadership summit (in Atlanta) on mentoring. This is part of my extra-mural activities and I find it both enriches my skills and expands my network relevantly.

7. Committees

With the help of the Chair & CEO Office, we are ensuring that there are development opportunities and balance in our committee memberships. More anon.

In **closing my first report of the year**, I have been encouraged by one of my informal reverse mentors, to say that it is my fifth year of chairing Council. Done! During my final three years (and a bit) of tenure, I have set some big ambitions for Council and the Executive team. I feel confident in doing so because we have a collectively dynamic, capable and committed joint leadership team. A unitary mindset, in fact.