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## Stakeholder Perceptions Survey

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### Executive Summary

Between October and December 2021, HCPC ran a survey to help us better understand the perceptions our stakeholders have of the HCPC and to allow us to measure progress against the aims of our 2021-26 Corporate Strategy, EDI Strategy and Registrant Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

Through the survey, we aimed to measure current confidence in HCPC and understanding of our public protection role, and to understand perceptions of the HCPC as:

- a fair, inclusive and compassionate regulator
- an approachable, responsive regulator that engages and listens to its stakeholders
- a leading voice in multi-profession regulation

In total just under 1,300 responses were received, the majority of which, 79%, were from registrants.

As the attached paper sets out, it is important to note that this survey is based on a self-selecting sample of a small proportion of our stakeholders as a whole. For example, while registrants comprised the largest respondent group, the registrant response rate was approximately 1 in 300. These types of factors mean that caution must be exercised in assuming survey outcomes are generalisable across either the whole register or a wider population group.

The paper provides the key findings of this survey for stakeholder groups who provided the largest number of responses: registrants, students, education providers and professional bodies. The paper also outlines work that HCPC is or is planning to undertake in relation to the survey's findings and how we are developing our engagement with key stakeholder groups.

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Previous consideration	Concluding this stakeholder perceptions survey meets a key milestone within the current (2021-22) Corporate Plan. Updates to Council on progress have been provided within the quarterly Corporate Plan milestone tracker.
Decision	Council is asked to note and discuss: <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. survey findings and actions being taken in respect of them</li><li>b. the limitations of this type of survey and need to exercise appropriate caution in relation to outcomes</li><li>c. that survey findings have informed development of the 2022/23 Corporate Plan (presented at this meeting in a separate paper)</li></ol>

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Next steps	Pending Council's approval of the 2022-23 Corporate Plan, actions in response to survey findings will be taken forward accordingly.
Strategic priority	Strategic priority 3: Develop Insight and exert influence. Strategic priority 4: Be visible, engaged and informed.
Financial and resource implications	<p>Analysis for this project was carried out in-house by our Insight &amp; Analytics team. Significant support was provided from across the Professional Practice and Insight Directorate, including our Communications and Professional Liaison teams.</p> <p>While analytical work can now be carried out in-house, we may wish to consider the costs and benefits of engaging minimal external support to support us to achieve a more representative sample in future. Further surveys are due at the mid and end-point of our 2021-26 Strategy; such considerations would not impact upon the 2022-23 budget.</p>
EDI impact	This survey contributes to the development of HCPC's EDI work as it allows us to understand stakeholder perceptions of our EDI activity and supports development of our approach.
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The Health & Care Professions Council

# HCPC Stakeholder Perceptions Survey 2021

*Council Report*

## Background

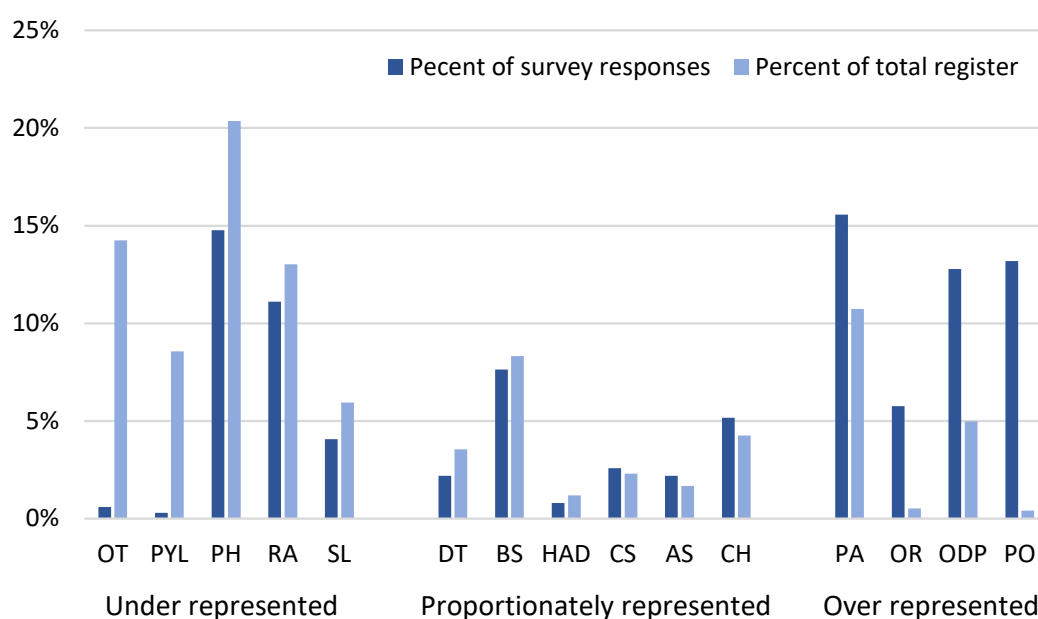
1. Between October and December 2021, we ran a survey to help us better understand the perceptions our stakeholders have of the HCPC and to allow us to measure progress against the aims of our 2021-26 Corporate Strategy, EDI Strategy and Registrant Health and Wellbeing Strategy. The survey questions are provided in Appendix 1.
2. Through the survey, we aimed to measure current confidence in HCPC and understanding of our public protection role, and to understand perceptions of the HCPC as:
  - a fair, inclusive and compassionate regulator
  - an approachable, responsive regulator that engages and listens to its stakeholders
  - a leading voice in multi-profession regulation
3. We intend to carry out two further surveys to help measure HCPC's progress, one at the midpoint in approximately 2 years' time and a further survey at the end of the Strategy (2026).
4. We invited the stakeholder groups listed in Table 1 to complete the survey using a variety of channels including direct emails, newsletters, webpage content and social media posts. We also asked stakeholders to publicise to their members / constituencies as appropriate (e.g. students were targeted through education providers).
5. A total of 1,278 responses were received with registrants accounting for 79% of the total responses. The group with the highest response rate was professional bodies (Table 1).

*Table 1: Survey Responses by stakeholder group*

<b>Stakeholder group</b>	<b>Responses (n)</b>	<b>Response rate (%)</b>	<b>% of total responses</b>
<b>Registrants</b>	<b>1,007</b>	<b>&lt;1</b>	<b>79</b>
<b>Students</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Education providers</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Professional bodies</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Employers</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>&lt;1</b>
<b>Regulators</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>&lt;1</b>
<b>Members of the public</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>&lt;1</b>
<b>Service user organisations</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,278</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>100</b>

- Response rates and counts mean caution should be exercised when interpreting the findings. The nature of surveys of this type is that respondents are self-selecting and therefore outcomes do not necessarily provide a representative sample. Response rates were higher amongst some professions than others (Figure 1). The three largest professions (physiotherapists, occupational therapists and radiographers) were somewhat under-represented. Paramedics (our fourth largest profession) were over-represented. It is possible that some respondents sought to use the survey as an opportunity to raise specific concerns with HCPC – for example, one respondent focused throughout the survey on concerns about the use of the professional title of ‘chiroprapist’.

Figure 1: Survey Responses by Profession



- Due to the response sizes, analyses in this report focus on the four largest stakeholder groups: Registrants, Students, Education Providers and Professional Bodies. Response rates or numbers means that meaningful conclusions are difficult to draw for other groups.
- For future surveys, we will consider the value of engaging external support to secure more representative samples across a wider range of stakeholder groups.
- Due to the fact that registrants comprised by far the greatest stakeholder group, overall conclusions are very similar for both registrants and the complete survey. This report focuses on individual stakeholder groups but the responses for the complete survey are shown in Appendix 2.
- The following sections set out key findings in relation to each of the four largest stakeholder groups, including actions we are taking in response to findings. We also then set out actions we are taking to improve our engagement with other organisations where response rates were low.

## Survey findings

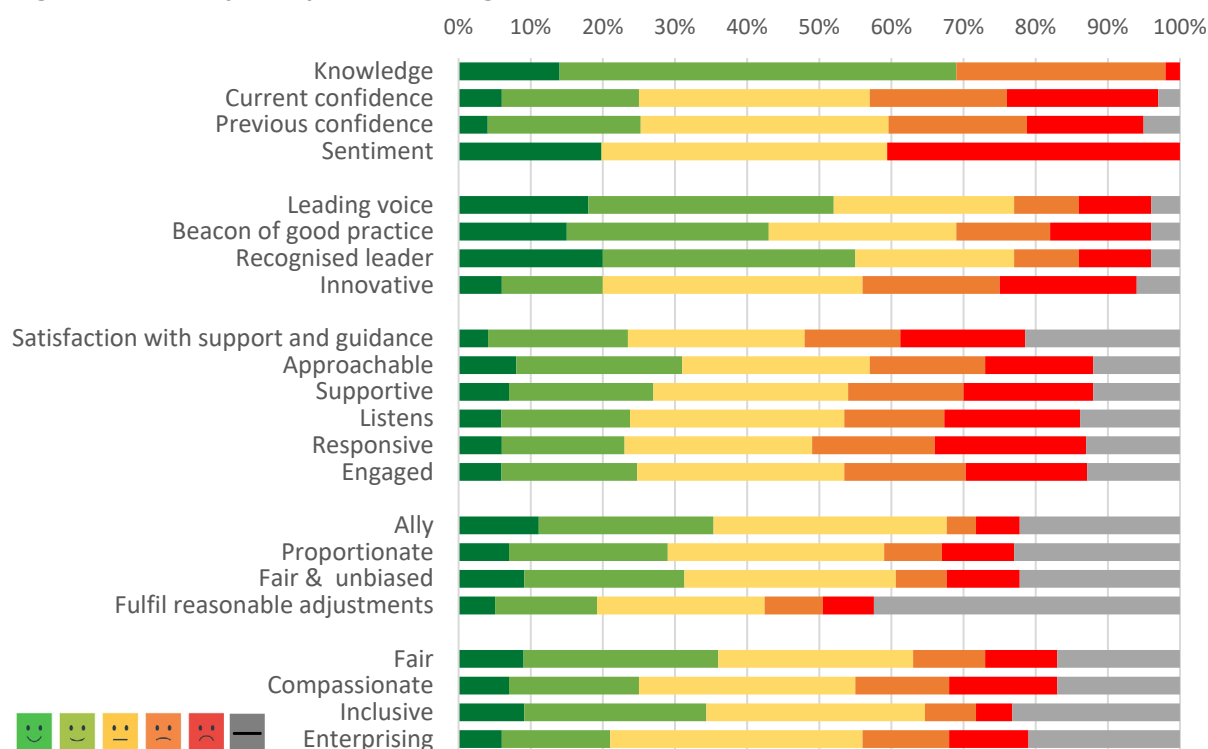
### *Registrants*

11. Although the biggest group in terms of number of responses, the low response rate (1 in 300 registrants) combined with the self-selecting nature of the survey approach means that it is not possible to be certain that these views are representative of, and generalisable to, the whole registrant population. Analysis below should therefore be treated with appropriate caution. Nonetheless, key messages from this critical stakeholder group may be instructive to some degree (Table 2).
12. Responses received suggest improving HCPC's responsiveness and engagement are the key areas of desired improvement for registrants (Table 2). The survey period aligns with a period of an ongoing improvement programme in our fitness to practice approach and during which our Registration Department has been impacted by unprecedented increases in the numbers of applications and resultant contacts. While a significant majority of registrants reported good knowledge of the HCPC, responses in suggest lower awareness of our EDI work and our values (Figure 2).
13. Key priorities for HCPC in relation to these areas for improvement are included in our 2022/23 Corporate Plan, in particular we would flag our work to:
  - Improve the responsiveness and processing times of our Registration function, including through the establishment of 'surge support' capability and reviewing our operational model
  - Continuing to focus on Fitness to Practise improvement, including progressing our registrant health and wellbeing strategy, including in relation to our tone of voice, increasing the support available for registrants involved in fitness to practise cases and developing the provision of lay advocacy support.
  - Improving registrant communications, including the development of a registrant communications strategy focusing on enhancing registrants' understanding of the HCPC role in promoting public safety. This will include considering how we tailor our digital content to optimise our reach. It will also cover our web presence and social media including in relation to the promotion of our values and EDI work.
  - Improving registrants' experiences of our system by improving our online registrant services and the accessibility of our communications.
  - Delivering our EDI action plan.

Table 2: Key messages - Registrants

Question group	Positive messages	Areas for improvement
<b>Confidence, perceptions and understanding of HCPC</b>	Knowledge of the HCPC considered high  Highest level of confidence has increased on previous year.	Overall confidence  Sentiment
<b>HCPC as a leader and influencer</b>	Relatively confident in the HCPC's leadership role and as a beacon of good practice	Innovation
<b>Visibility and engagement of HCPC</b>	-	All areas of responsiveness and engagement
<b>HCPC as a champion of equality, diversity and inclusion</b>	Low levels of negativity regarding HCPC's role as an EDI champion.	Awareness of the HCPC's activity in relation to EDI.
<b>HCPC values</b>	Low levels of active disagreement that HCPC is well described by its values.	Awareness of the HCPC values  Enterprise

Figure 1: Survey Responses - Registrants



## **Students**

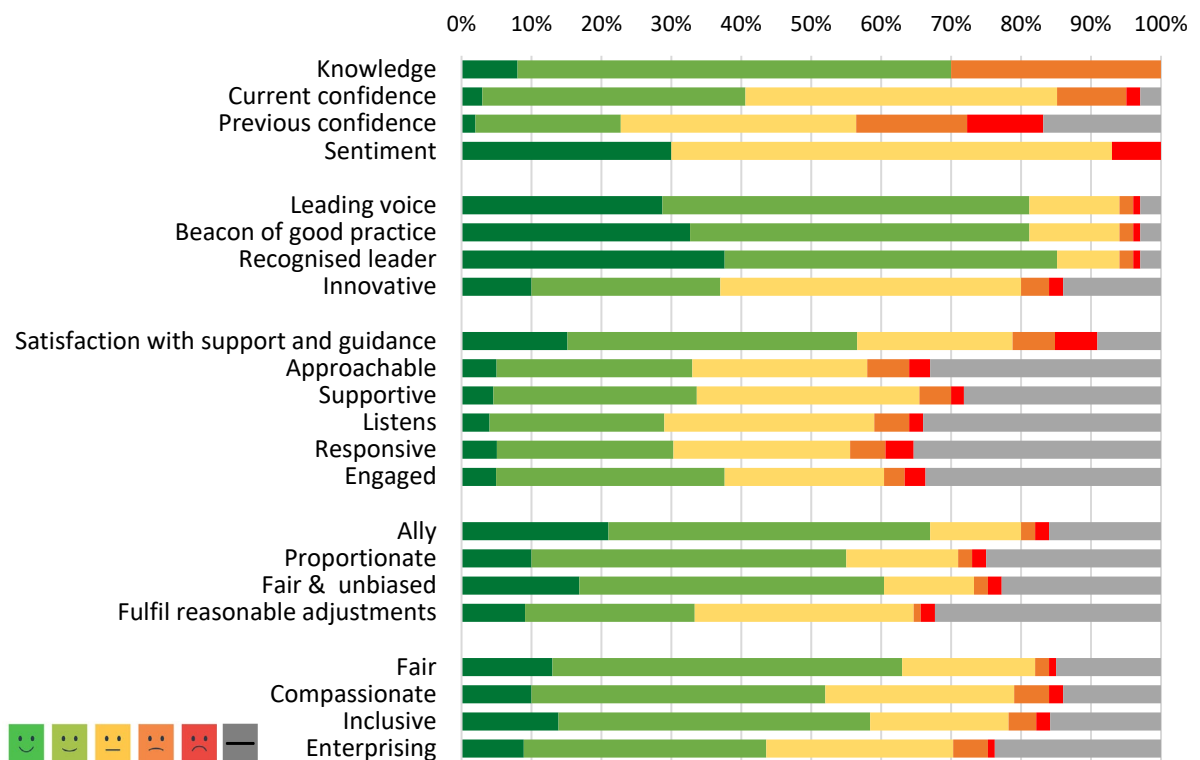
14. Student respondents exhibited very low levels of negativity and relatively high levels of 'don't know' responses in comparison to registrants (see Figure 3). These differences seem logical in that students would have had little, if any, direct involvement with the HCPC so might be less informed and have had less exposure to our fitness to practice role than registrants.
15. While responses do not suggest any particular areas of concern for students, as with registrants, responses received from students suggest benefits would be created through improving the HCPC's visibility and engagement with students (see Table 3). As our CEO report to Council mentions, HCPC has been developing new events and our engagement with students over the past year. This includes via our digital student hub. We will be maintaining and building on this next year, as set out in our corporate plan, for example, in relation to:
  - Continuing to develop our digital student hub to widen our reach
  - Launching our first ever student competition to promote knowledge of the role of regulation and our Standards to support high quality professional practice
  - Carrying out research into preparedness for practice to understand whether any additional support may be beneficial in the transition from graduate to autonomous practitioner, including whether different support may be needed for newly qualified registrants from any particular protected characteristics
  - Developing guidance to support preceptorship (the early career stage)
16. In addition, our new education quality assurance model, launched in 2021 and being embedded in the coming year, will help us to be more responsive to student complaints or issues raised.



Table 3: Key messages – Students

Question group	Positive messages	Areas for improvement
<b>Confidence, perceptions and understanding of HCPC</b>	Considerable increase in confidence. Little negative sentiment expressed.	Overall confidence.
<b>HCPC as a leader and influencer</b>	Very confident in the HCPC leadership role and as a beacon of good practice.	Innovation.
<b>Visibility and engagement of HCPC</b>	Very low levels of negativity regarding HCPC's visibility and engagement.	Visibility (1/4 said 'don't know').
<b>HCPC as a champion of equality, diversity and inclusion</b>	Very low levels of negativity regarding HCPC's role as an EDI champion.	Awareness of HCPC's activity in relation to EDI.
<b>HCPC values</b>	Very low levels of active disagreement that HCPC is well described by its values.	Awareness of HCPC's values.

Figure 2: Survey responses - Students



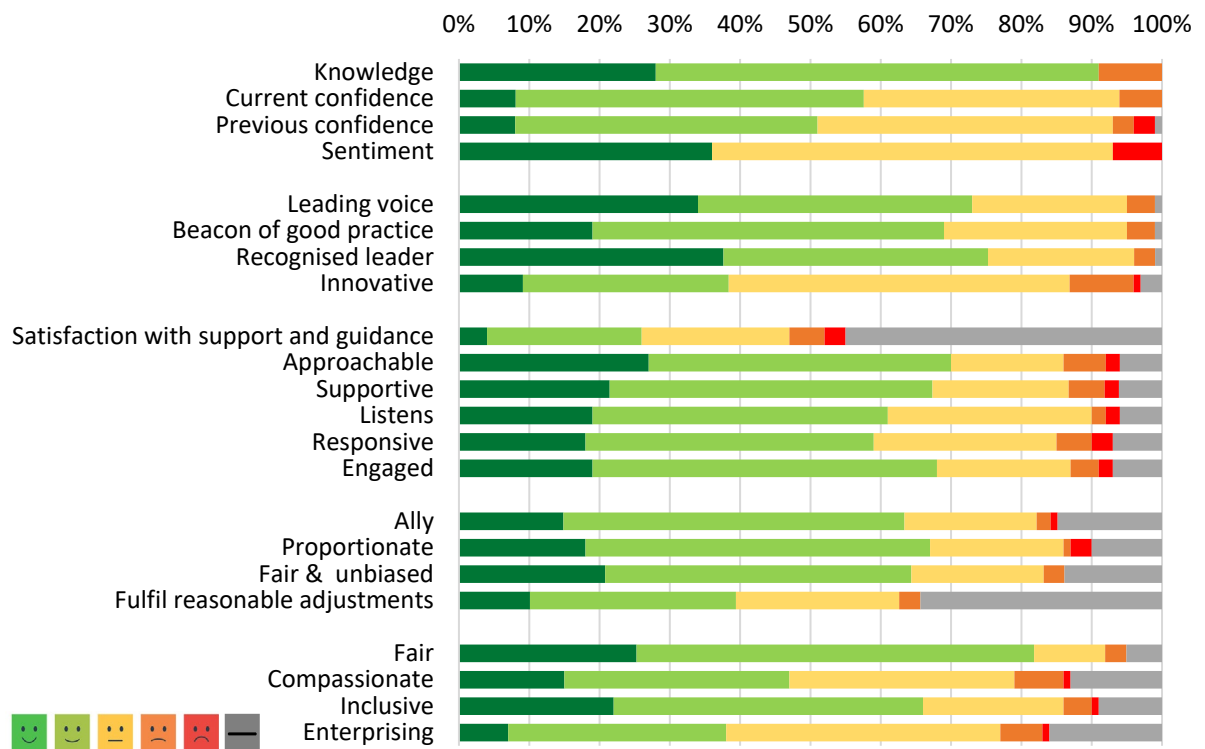
## ***Education providers***

17. Education providers who responded exhibited very high levels of positivity and very low levels of negativity (Figure 4); testimony to the efforts of the HCPCs Education team in maintaining effective relationships and communications with education providers. Unlike with registrants and students, the responses received from education providers suggest visibility of, and engagement by the HCPC are relatively high with the exception of a large gap in the knowledge of HCPC support and guidance (Table 4). Consistent with the views of the other stakeholder groups, two of the least positive areas were innovation and enterprise.
18. Key activities in relation to our education providers are to continue to develop and roll out our new Education quality assurance (QA) model and maintain high levels of engagement with providers. In particular, key areas of focus for 2022/23 as set out in our corporate plan:
- Review, quantify and report on the benefits of the new QA model following the first year of its operation
  - Develop support materials for external stakeholders
  - Launch our education provider self-service portal to manage all provider interactions

Table 4: Key messages – Education providers

Question group	Positive messages	Areas for improvement
<b>Confidence, perceptions and understanding of HCPC</b>	Very low levels of negativity. Increasing degree of confidence	Overall confidence
<b>HCPC as a leader and influencer</b>	Very confident in the HCPC leadership role and as a beacon of good practice	Innovation
<b>Visibility and engagement of HCPC</b>	Very high levels of positivity about the HCPC's visibility and engagement	Awareness of HCPC's support & guidance
<b>HCPC as a champion of equality, diversity and inclusion</b>	Very high levels of positivity in relation to HCPC's role as an EDI champion	Awareness of HCPC's reasonable adjustments
<b>HCPC values</b>	Very low levels of active disagreement that HCPC is well described by its values.	Enterprise

Figure 3: Survey responses – Education providers



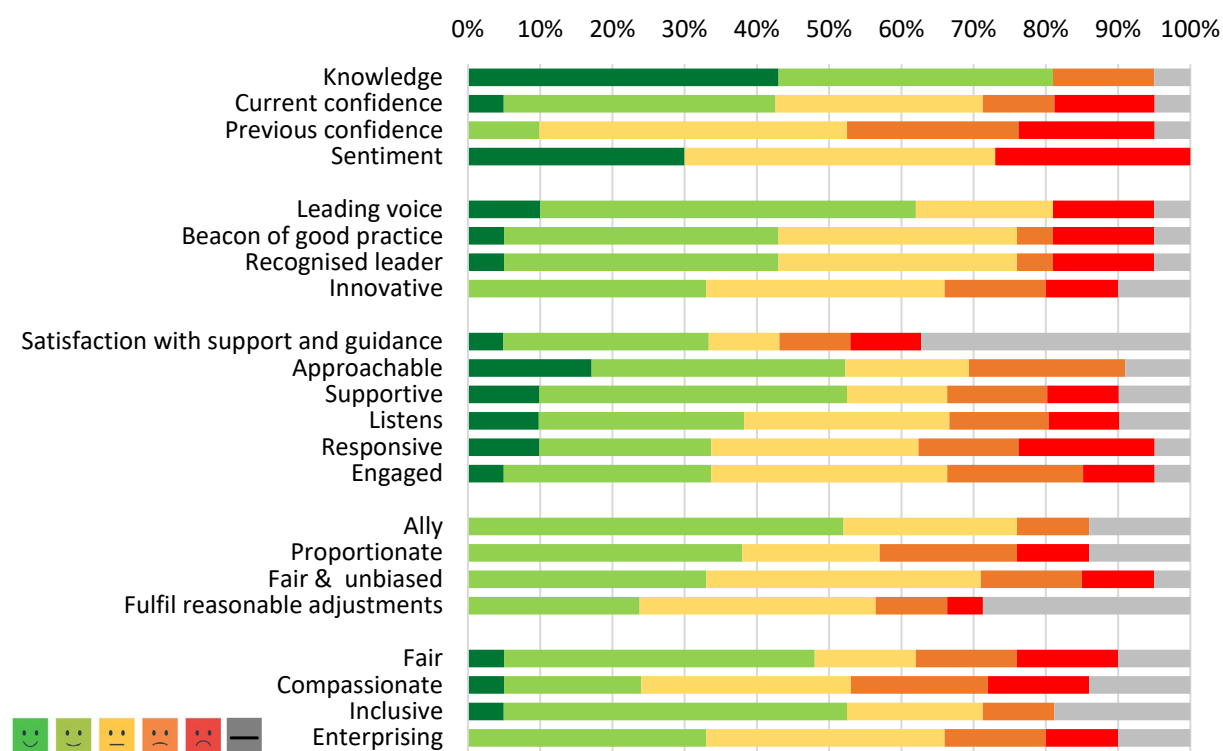
## **Professional bodies**

19. Professional bodies had the highest response rate of all stakeholders (51%) although the size of the total response (n=21) does mean one or two views could substantially alter the individual percentages. In general, professional bodies' responses (Figure 5) were similar to those of registrants (Figure 2), though somewhat more positive, albeit with a lower level of conviction. Particularly striking was the increase in confidence from the previous year. This could be due to the fact that HCPC has recently established a new quarterly professional body forum and provided each professional body with a named relationship manager to promote effective engagement. As with other stakeholders, the responses received from professional bodies suggest improved visibility of, and engagement with the HCPC are critical to all suggested areas for improvement (Table 5).
20. This year we have striven to improve our relationships with professional bodies and survey outcomes suggests this is having an immediate positive impact. Nonetheless, there are clear areas for further improvement. In 2022/23 we will:
- Continue to embed and mature relationships with professional bodies and develop and improve structures and mechanisms to engage more closely with them and other stakeholders.
  - Improve our resourcing for stakeholder engagement with the recruitment of a dedicated Strategic Relationships Lead and additional support in our communications team.
  - Evaluate the first year of our relationship management model to support ongoing improvement.

Table 5: Key messages – Professional bodies

Question group	Positive messages	Areas for improvement
<b>Confidence, perceptions and understanding of HCPC</b>	Fourfold increase in confidence since previous year.	Overall confidence
<b>HCPC as a leader and influencer</b>	Reasonably confident in HCPC leadership role	Innovation
<b>Visibility and engagement of HCPC</b>	Higher levels of positivity than for registrants and students.	Awareness of support and guidance. Responsiveness
<b>HCPC as a champion of equality, diversity and inclusion</b>	Majority see HCPC as an ally with no strong disagreement.	Proportionality and fairness in decision-making
<b>HCPC values</b>	Majority see HCPC as inclusive with no strong disagreement.	Compassion

Figure 4: Survey responses – Professional bodies



## ***Engagement with other stakeholders***

While numbers were not sufficient to provide analysis in relation to other stakeholder groups, our corporate plan sets out a number of initiatives to improve relationships in key areas. We hope that this will not only lead to more effective engagement with HCPC, but that our survey will be able to measure the impact of these by gleaning views from greater numbers of stakeholders in future iterations.

### ***Employers***

In 2022/23 we will develop our digital employer hub and increase subscriptions to 'Insights', our employer newsletter. Our Professional Liaison team will also partner with identified employers and deliver a programme of employer events. The team will work with and train employers so that they make the right referrals to fitness to practice (FtP) and provide better support to those involved in FtP cases.

### ***Service users and representative organisations***

In 2022/23 we will review our approach to engage the public who use our registrants' services to consider how we can learn from others to strengthen our approach. While we currently engage service users across key areas of work, we want to mature and improve our approach, learning from the successes of other regulators in this respect. Within this, we would also like to build our relationships with patient representative bodies.

A vital part of our engagement plan which will improve our engagement with a number of our key stakeholder groups relates to the planned expansion of our Professional Liaison Service. In 2022/23, the Service is set to grow to achieve a presence in each UK nation, increasing our opportunities to engage and collaborate with stakeholders, and improving our support for employers, registrants and students across each of the four UK nations.

### ***Other regulators***

We continue to engage in cross-regulator fora. We maintain and develop numerous relationships across different professional healthcare regulators in diverse areas including policy, EDI, HR, Partners and FtP. As new Senior Leadership Team members have been recruited in recent months, our networking has developed to include relationship building in areas such as IT & Digital and Insight and Analytics. As numbers are relatively small, we will consider whether we target this group in future surveys.

### ***Government bodies***

Government bodies were not targeted in the survey as relationships are led mainly at Chair/CEO level, numbers are relatively small and our approach would not be likely to benefit from analysis of an anonymised survey. This year we have developed and deepened our relationships as our senior team has grown this year and we will continue to do so in the following period. We regularly report on engagement at this level to Council within our CEO report.

## A note on other surveys

Whilst not directly comparable due to differing methodological approaches, our findings in relation to registrant confidence are broadly similar to stakeholder surveys undertaken by other professional healthcare regulators in the past two years:

- HCPC (2021) Registrants expressing lack of confidence in the regulator: 40%
- GDC (2020) Dental professionals with negative perception of the regulator: 65%<sup>1</sup>
- GMC (2020) Doctors expressing lack of confidence in the regulator: 52%<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> General Dental Council. *Stakeholder Perceptions Research (2021)* [GDC Stakeholder Perceptions Report \(gdc-uk.org\)](https://www.gdc-uk.org/research-and-statistics/gdc-stakeholder-perceptions-research-2021) (Q04a)

<sup>2</sup> General Medical Council. *Corporate strategy and perceptions tracking (2020)* [Corporate Strategy and Perceptions Tracking 2020 \(gmc-uk.org\)](https://www.gmc-uk.org/our-work/strategy-and-perceptions-tracking-2020) (Fig 2.12)

## Appendix 1: Survey questions

### **Confidence, perceptions and understanding of HCPC**

- **KNOWLEDGE:** *How much, if anything, would you say you know about the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC)?* [A great deal/ A fair amount/ Not very much/ Nothing at all]
- **CURRENT CONFIDENCE:** *How confident or unconfident do you feel overall in HCPC as an organisation?* [Extremely confident/ Very confident/ Somewhat confident/ Not so confident/ Not at all confident/ Don't know]
- **PREVIOUS CONFIDENCE:** *Thinking back 12 months ago, how confident/unconfident were you in HCPC as an organisation?* [Extremely confident/ Very confident/ Somewhat confident/ Not so confident/ Not at all confident/ Don't know]
- **SENTIMENT:** *What are the first three words that come to mind when you think of the Health and Care Professions Council?* [3 Free text boxes, character limit of 10]

### **Views of HCPC as a leader and influencer**

- **LEADING VOICE:** *How strongly would you agree or disagree with the statement: HCPC is the leading voice in multi-profession regulation (multi-profession means that we regulate a number of different health and care professions)?* [Strongly agree/ Agree/ Neither agree nor disagree/ Disagree/ Strongly disagree/ Don't know]
- **BEACON OF GOOD PRACTICE:** *How strongly would you agree or disagree with the statement: HCPC is recognised as a beacon of good practice?* [Strongly agree/ Agree/ Neither agree nor disagree/ Disagree/ Strongly disagree/ Don't know]
- **RECOGNISED LEADER:** *How strongly would you agree or disagree with the statement: HCPC is recognised a regulatory leader?* [Strongly agree/ Agree/ Neither agree nor disagree/ Disagree/ Strongly disagree/ Don't know]
- **INNOVATIVE:** *How strongly would you agree or disagree with the statement: HCPC is innovative?* [Strongly agree/ Agree/ Neither agree nor disagree/ Disagree/ Strongly disagree/ Don't know]

### **Visibility and engagement of HCPC**

- **SATISFACTION WITH SUPPORT & GUIDANCE:** *HCPC strives to offer support and guidance to its stakeholders. How satisfied or unsatisfied have you been with the support and guidance you have received when engaging with HCPC?* [Very satisfied/ Satisfied /Neither satisfied nor unsatisfied/ Unsatisfied/ Very unsatisfied/ Don't know or not relevant]



- **APPROACHABLE:** *Thinking about your last engagement with HCPC, how strongly do you agree/disagree with the following statement: HCPC is approachable* [Strongly agree/ Agree/ Neither agree nor disagree/ Disagree/ Strongly disagree/ Don't know]
- **SUPPORTIVE:** *Thinking about your last engagement with HCPC, how strongly do you agree/disagree with the following statement: HCPC is supportive* [Strongly agree/ Agree/ Neither agree nor disagree/ Disagree/ Strongly disagree/ Don't know]
- **LISTENS:** *Thinking about your last engagement with HCPC, how strongly do you agree/disagree with the following statement: HCPC listens* [Strongly agree/ Agree/ Neither agree nor disagree/ Disagree/ Strongly disagree/ Don't know]
- **RESPONSIVE:** *Thinking about your last engagement with HCPC, how strongly do you agree/disagree with the following statement: HCPC is responsive* [Strongly agree/ Agree/ Neither agree nor disagree/ Disagree/ Strongly disagree/ Don't know]
- **ENGAGED:** *Thinking about your last engagement with HCPC, how strongly do you agree/disagree with the following statement: HCPC is engaged* [Strongly agree/ Agree/ Neither agree nor disagree/ Disagree/ Strongly disagree/ Don't know]

### **HCPC as a champion of equality, diversity and inclusion**

- **ALLY:** *Thinking about HCPC as an organisation, how strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statement: HCPC is an actively anti-discriminatory organisation that upholds and promotes best practice in equality, diversity and inclusion and is an active ally for change.?* [Strongly agree/ Agree/ Neither agree nor disagree/ Disagree/ Strongly disagree/ Don't know]
- **PROPORTIONATE:** *Thinking about HCPC as an organisation, how strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statement: HCPC's regulatory decision-making is proportionate?* [Strongly agree/ Agree/ Neither agree nor disagree/ Disagree/ Strongly disagree/ Don't know]
- **FAIR & UNBIASED:** *Thinking about HCPC as an organisation, how strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statement: HCPC's regulatory decision-making is fair and free from bias?* [Strongly agree/ Agree/ Neither agree nor disagree/ Disagree/ Strongly disagree/ Don't know]
- **FUFIL REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS:** *To what extent are you confident that HCPC fulfils its obligations to make reasonable adjustments? (Reasonable adjustments are things that HCPC can do to ensure that, if you are a disabled person, you can access and use our services, for example providing information in large print or braille)?* [Extremely confident/ Very confident/ Somewhat confident/ Not so confident/ Not at all confident/ Don't know]

## HCPC values

- **FAIR:** Thinking about HCPC as an organisation, how strongly do you agree or disagree with the following word or phrase 'Fair' as a descriptors of HCPC? [Strongly agree/ Agree/ Neither agree nor disagree/ Disagree/ Strongly disagree/ Don't know]
- **COMPASSIONATE:** Thinking about HCPC as an organisation, how strongly do you agree or disagree with the following word or phrase 'Compassionate' as a descriptors of HCPC? [Strongly agree/ Agree/ Neither agree nor disagree/ Disagree/ Strongly disagree/ Don't know]
- **INCLUSIVE:** Thinking about HCPC as an organisation, how strongly do you agree or disagree with the following word or phrase 'Inclusive' as a descriptors of HCPC?
- **ENTERPRISING:** Thinking about HCPC as an organisation, how strongly do you agree or disagree with the following word or phrase 'Enterprising' as a descriptors of HCPC? [Strongly agree/ Agree/ Neither agree nor disagree/ Disagree/ Strongly disagree/ Don't know]

## Appendix 2: Complete survey population responses

