

Updated standards of proficiency:
themes of the key changes

Registrants must:

8.6: understand the qualities, behaviours and benefits of leadership

8.7: recognise that leadership is a skill all professionals can demonstrate

8.8: identify their own leadership qualities, behaviours and approaches, taking into account the importance of equality, diversity and inclusion

8.9: demonstrate leadership behaviours appropriate to their practice

Background

Analysis of the feedback to our consultation on the standards of proficiency highlighted a need to emphasise the role and importance of leadership at all levels of practice.

HCPC registrants are highly skilled professionals who deal with complex challenges on a regular basis, and all registrants can demonstrate leadership without needing to be in a managerial role.

It is important that registrants understand this, and see leadership an essential part of their day-to-day work and activity.

The updated standards are in effect from **1 September 2023**.

These updates to the standards of proficiency were made after a detailed review process, to ensure they reflect the reality of current practice.

Registrants should use their **professional judgement** when applying these standards.

What does this mean for registrants?

Leadership is not just about the management or supervision of others. It is an attribute all registrants should be able to demonstrate in their everyday practice.

Seeking opportunities to develop your leadership skills and demonstrate them in practice is important for professional development and the provision of good care. Developing as a leader will also be key to meeting other HCPC standards, for example around health, safety and wellbeing, openness and honesty and equality, diversity and inclusion.

There is no set way to meet this standard, and there is no list of attributes that constitute leadership. Meeting this standard will mean thinking about leadership in the context of your role and workplace, considering how you may already be showing leadership and exploring whether you can do more, either individually or as part of a team.

A registrant in a non-managerial role could display leadership by taking the initiative when they see a better way of doing things. They could make suggestions for improvements to their manager, or work with colleagues to test and implement changes. Leadership can also be shown in the small, day-to-day moments that impact and influence others. For example, when showing patience to a service-user as they explain their needs, or when responding to challenging behaviours with kindness and compassion.

A registrant in a more managerial role could demonstrate leadership by creating a working environment that seeks to deliver high-quality compassionate care and makes continuous improvements to service delivery. They might do this by ensuring that individuals are listened to and given objectives that recognise their uniqueness, whilst aligning with overarching team objectives and organisational goals.

Every individual on the HCPC Register is required to meet the standards of proficiency as far as they relate to their scope of practice

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Case study

Arjun, a Clinical Lead Physiotherapist, is working to ensure service-users receive consistently safe and effective treatment across the various departments he manages. Arjun knows that this will require the understanding and support of the whole staff team, and therefore uses a collective leadership model.

Arjun sets out the “why” to the staff team, using the data from complaints and incidents to illustrate the situation. The team agree that there is room for improvement. Arjun consults with all staff members on their suggestions.

Some staff suggest analysing the Trust’s data and determining where the greatest needs lie. Some suggest looking at the evidence for best practice and sharing it. Others feel that consistent training in all clinical areas should be rolled out but feel that they don’t have the skillset to deliver this.

Arjun listens to the proposals and understands that an in-house modular training programme, which is evidence-based and co-created by the team, may provide the solution the Trust needs. He suggests this to the team.

Staff members who were passionate about certain areas step forward to help. They are listened to, trusted and given scope to develop their suggestions, irrespective of grade or position. They proactively develop their knowledge and skills in their chosen areas. Later, with Arjun’s support, the staff members lead on the development and delivery of the training modules.

As a result of Arjun listening and giving staff autonomy, the department has a programme to ensure a consistent approach to care that is evidence-based, service-user centred and staff-driven. This results in better service user outcomes, improved staff satisfaction and reductions in clinical errors.

This case study highlights that effective leadership in healthcare is about engaging all team members respectfully and compassionately, irrespective of grade, age, personality or skill set, and ensuring that service-users’ needs are the focus of everyone’s work.

Resources

Collective leadership

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/hsc-collective-leadership-strategy>

Compassionate leadership

<https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/publications/what-is-compassionate-leadership>

AHP Leadership programmes

http://www.ahpf.org.uk/AHPF_Leadership_Programmes.htm

Leadership in healthcare evidence base

<https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/publications/leadership-and-leadership-development-health-care>

Each of the four UK nations provide leadership training programmes

<https://nhs.walesleadershipportal.heiw.wales>

<https://leadingtochange.scot>

<https://leadership.hscni.net/Home/Index>

<https://www.leadershipacademy.nhs.uk>

Professional bodies can provide further information and training programmes on leadership development.

HCPC definition of leadership

<https://www.hcpc-uk.org/updated-sop/leadership>

HCPC’s gap analysis tool: identify and address gaps in your current practice

<https://www.hcpc-uk.org/gap-analysis-tool>

HCPC’s webinar on leadership

https://www.youtube.com/the_hcpc

Further information in the updated standards of proficiency around leadership

<https://www.hcpc-uk.org/updated-sop/leadership>

For full information on the updated standards of proficiency, see the HCPC website.

The key changes in the updated standards of proficiency can be grouped into a number of themes, of which this is one. The other themes are: digital skills and new technologies, equality, diversity and inclusion, leadership, registrants’ mental health, and promoting public health and preventing ill-health.

The changes in the updated standards extend beyond these themes. The full standards for all professions can be downloaded from the HCPC website.