Council

17 July 2025

hcpc | health & care professions council

People and Resources Committee meeting on 12 June 2025

Committee Chair's summary to Council

It was encouraging to see the public meeting being observed by quite a few of the HCPC team who are neither Committee nor Council members.

The Committee received reports from the Resources directorate, HR, Finance and Partner teams, including the annual equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) report for the latter. In addition, we received an update on the Employee Forum and on the technology roadmap and had presentations for comment on a revised proposed procurement policy and the draft financial strategy. All the documents and presentations were of a high standard. Key themes and points that I would bring to your attention are as follows:

- Many KPIs are being achieved or exceeded.

- The HCPCs finances remain strongly affected by variations in International Recruitment, despite recent fee changes. It is unclear whether this is due to the changes in the English language competency requirements, although it is very likely. This notwithstanding, the team will be reviewing the situation at the quarter end as well as seeking to gain a better understanding of any possible future trajectory. This may have wider implications for the HCPC's plans should the situation not stabilise.

- Additional new team members in Business Change should assist with the complexities of delivery of the technology roadmap as well as tightening up forecast of performance, such as investments.

- HR results remain strong with minor concerns around recruitment of an Automation Developer and a low response rate to the employee survey by the Fitness to Practice team. All of which are being addressed.

- Partner recruitment remains good and the Committee were assured that although more granular analysis would be useful, the processes within recruitment and deployment are fair and inclusive.

- It is a shame that we had no Employee Forum representatives present and the Committee would encourage HCPC employee team members who are interested to take up this important role.

- The revised procurement policy, including some minor amendment, is commended to the Council.

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- The revised financial strategy represents a balanced and considered approach to maintaining financial stability and control in the light of the wider challenges HCPC faces. Of note, not unrelated to the international recruitment situation, the need for regular and timely fee reviews is important. Including some minor amendment the financial strategy is also commended to the Council.

- The progress along the technology roadmap continues despite the not insignificant challenges in its delivery.

John McEvoy
Chair of the People and Resources Committee

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People and Resources Committee

Minutes of the People and Resources Committee meeting held in public on:

Date: Thursday 12 June 2025

Time: 2pm

Venue: Videoconference (Microsoft Teams)

Present: John McEvoy (Chair)
Neville Hounsome
Alice Gair*
Helen Grantham
Pameleta Ricketts
Valerie Webster

Apologies: None

In attendance:

Vida Adusei, Registration Advisor
James Afolabi, Financial Planning and Analysis Manager
Fatma Ali, Head of HR and OD
Aihab Al-Koubaisi, Financial Controller
Claire Amor, Executive Director of Corporate Affairs
Francesca Bramley, Governance Manager
Alastair Bridges, Executive Director of Resources
William Byrne Hill, Registration Officer
Michael Charbonneau, Partner Officer
Laura Coffey, Executive Director of Fitness to Practise and Tribunal Services
Alan Keshtmand, Head of Finance
Geoff Kirk, Head of IT and Digital
Patricia Morrissey, Head of Governance
Ife Ojo, Commercial Business Partnering Manager
Uta Pollman, Partner Project Lead (for item 10)
Andrew Smith, Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Director of Education, Registration and Regulatory Standards
Carl Stychin, Council member
Rick Welsby, IT Service Delivery Lead

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* Council Apprentice

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Public meeting

1   Welcome and Introduction

1.1   The Committee Chair welcomed those present to the meeting of the People and Resources Committee (the Committee), including those attending or observing the meeting for the first time.

2   Apologies for absence

2.1   There were no apologies.

3   Approval of agenda

3.1   The Committee approved the agenda.

4   Declaration of members' interest in relation to agenda items

4.1   There were no interests declared.

5   Minutes of the People and Resources Committee meeting held in public on 13 March 2025

5.1   The Committee approved the minutes as an accurate record of its meeting held in public on 13 March 2025.

6   Matters arising

6.1   The Committee noted the updates on the matters arising from previous meetings held in public.

Performance Reports

7   Resources Directorate Performance Report

7.1   The Committee received a paper from the Executive Director of Resources, providing an update on performance in the areas covered by the HCPC's corporate enabler functions for April 2025.

7.2   The report showed continued good performance reported against most key performance indicators (KPIs).

7.3   Following a temporary dip in performance during the previous reporting period, the KPI target relating to the speed of invoice processing had been met, with 96% compliance reported in April 2025.

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7.4 The Defender Secure Score had increased from 74% in the previous reporting period to 80% for April 2025 and the Microsoft Secure Score had increased from 71% in the previous reporting period to 73.8% in April 2025.

7.5 Office attendance was reported at 22% for January 2025, which exceeded the hybrid policy benchmark of a minimum of 20%. The attendance reported on a Saturday related to scheduled weekend maintenance work.

7.6 A financial deficit of £158k had been reported, resulting in an amber rating for the year to date surplus key performance indicator. It was acknowledged that this was the first month of the financial year. Further details had been provided in the finance report submitted to the Committee.

7.7 Although hearings utilisation had remained rated as red, the utilisation had increased from 0% in January 2025 to 9% in April 2025. Medium to long term options to increase the use of tribunal spaces were under review and would be discussed during the private session of the Committee meeting.

7.8 The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee had received a full update regarding the ongoing cyber attack at its meeting on 11 June 2025. The Executive Leadership Team (ELT) had approved plans to strengthen the multi factor authentication process and this was expected to substantially mitigate the financial impact.
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7.9 The Committee sought clarity regarding the reported difficulties in recruiting to the automation developer role. The Executive Director of Resources clarified that this was a challenging recruitment market and the HCPC's remuneration package had been benchmarked to ensure competitiveness. Alternative recruitment approaches would be considered if the challenges in recruiting to the role continued.

7.10 The Committee discussed the £309k investment portfolio underspend. The Executive Director of Resources clarified that the investment portfolio targets for 2025-26 were ambitious and the key delivery risks were internal capacity and identifying suitable external partners. The ELT had recently approved a restructure of the Business Change team to increase internal capacity, which was expected to bring expenditure more closely in line with the forecast over time.

7.11 The Chair of the Committee emphasised the importance of using plain English and defining terminology such as 'process improvement work' in the report to ensure ease of comprehension.

8 HR Performance Report

8.1 The Committee received the HR performance report from the HR Business Partner covering the fourth quarter of the 2024-25 financial year, which outlined the performance of the organisation in line with the KPIs from the HR function.

8.2 The Committee noted the following points:

- the slightly decreased pulse survey participation rate of 69% for the latest survey, noting employee satisfaction had increased from 82% to 83%, noting

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the Fitness to Practice Case Progression and Quality team, which had the lowest response rate, had shared feedback through a local survey and the themes were being addressed;

- the positive overall performance in staff retention, turnover, and health and wellbeing initiatives;

- the significant progress made in direct recruitment initiatives including the careers website, which had resulted in a 61% increase in the number of applications received compared to the previous quarter and a reduction in agency staff usage, with plans to refine screening processes and improve the management of fixed term contracts to further reduce agency reliance;

- the updating of HR policies in line with legal and ethical best practice, including a revised transgender policy to align with the Supreme Court ruling, an updated neonatal leave policy and the development of an artificial intelligence (AI) policy;

- the launch of the management development programme and senior leadership programme and a 100% annual personal development review (APDR) completion rate;

- the increase in long term sickness absence levels, which were being closely monitored to ensure targeted support was in place, noting also the increase in musculoskeletal sickness absence that was coincidental and did not relate to home working; and

- the concerns relating to salary and career progression that had been highlighted through exit interviews, which would be addressed through the pay matrix review and wider workforce planning project;

8.3   In response to a question, the Head of HR and OD clarified that the pay policy review would be submitted to the Remuneration Committee in October 2025 for recommendation to the Council for approval in early 2026. Pay bands were benchmarked every three years and benchmarking was also undertaken for new roles as these arose, whilst acknowledging affordability constraints.

8.4   In view of the fluctuating numbers of international applications, the Committee sought clarity regarding the flexibility and agility of the HCPC's workforce model. The permanent establishment for 2025-26 had been agreed, but the workforce had been scaled up and down through the use of fixed term contracts to meet varying levels of demand. The position would continue to be closely monitored by the Registration team, the Head of HR and OD and the Head of Finance and Commercial.

8.5   The Committee reflected on the Supreme Court transgender ruling and emphasised the importance of a compassionate approach to support the wellbeing of colleagues who had been impacted by the legislative changes. It was noted that to date, the HR department had received no queries from colleagues regarding the ruling.

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9 Finance Report

9.1 The Committee received a paper from the Financial Planning and Analysis Manager presenting the financial position as at the end of April 2025, with a commentary on the major variances, risks and opportunities.

9.2 The Financial Planning and Analysis Manager highlighted the following points:

- the year-to-date deficit of £158k, which was £168k adverse compared to the modest surplus budget of £10k for month 1 of the new financial year;

- the year-end forecast deficit of £0.5 million against a budgeted surplus of £180k based on current international application levels, noting this included the additional income from the recently approved fee increase;

- the adverse expenditure variance of £254k, which was mainly due to the decrease in international applications, with 316 applications received in April compared to the 734 assumed in the budget;

- the favourable income variance of £86k, mainly due to vacancies; and

- the deep dive financial review planned at the end of quarter 1 to identify any required changes to the full year forecast.

9.3 The Committee discussed the trends in international applications. The number of international applications received in April was significantly lower than the average number received prior to the spike in January 2025. The position would remain under close review and by September 2025 it would be possible to evaluate whether this was a longer term trend or an isolated fluctuation linked to the introduction of new requirements for evidencing English language proficiency, which had been clearly communicated. This may have contributed to the spike in applications as the new process required applicants who were previously able to self-declare proficiency to sit an English language test.

9.4 The HCPC had good insight into international recruitment through close working relationships with NHS England. The 10 year health plan due to be published imminently would provide further insights into the Government's position.

9.5 In view of the complex and changing environment, the Committee emphasised the importance of planning for the likely international recruitment trajectory over the medium term. The Executive Director of Resources confirmed that the quarter 1 review could include financial modelling for various application trend scenarios, contingency plans and potential cost efficiencies to maintain the HCPC's financial stability. The importance of regular fee reviews was emphasised in view of the unpredictability of international application numbers. The Heads of Finance and Commercial, Education, Registration and Insight and Analytics met regularly to review the position. The Committee suggested that the Executive consider seeking to develop an understanding of the international recruitment trajectory over the next three to five years through engagement with external agencies such as the King's Fund.

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10 Partner Report

10.1 The Partner Project Lead joined the meeting for this item. The Committee received the Partner report for the fourth quarter of the 2024-25 financial year, which provided an overview of a number of performance metrics.

10.1 The Committee noted the continued high level of partner recruitment activity during the reporting period.

10.2 Michael Charbonneau had recently joined the HCPC as Partner Officer to increase the Partner team's capacity.

10.3 In response to a question, the Partner Project lead confirmed that applications were fully anonymised during the application and shortlisting stages of the recruitment process to remove all identifiable data.

People

11 Partners equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) annual report

11.1 The Committee received the partners equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) annual report for the period 30 November 2023 to 30 November 2024. The report included an analysis of partner EDI data, a comparison of partner and registrant EDI data and a review of EDI data at each stage of the recruitment process. The insights from the report would inform the approach to future partner recruitment campaigns to ensure there were no barriers to the successful appointment of any groups to the HCPC's pool of partners

11.2 The Committee enquired as to how the HCPC encouraged a diverse range of applicants during partner recruitment campaigns. The Partner Project Lead clarified that the approach varied according to the role, emphasising that the potential cohort of applicants for registrant partner roles was defined by the size of the registrant pool. Current partners and, if appropriate, the whole pool of registrants for a specific profession, were contacted during registrant partner campaigns alongside engagement with professional bodies. During lay partner recruitment campaigns, the Partner team engaged with diversity boards.

11.3 In response to a question, the Executive Director of Fitness to Practise and Tribunal Standards clarified that HCPC panel members were randomly selected, with the exception of registrant panel members who were required to be a registrant for the relevant profession. The HCPC had previously sought legal advice on this process, and it was understood that the Professional Standards Authority were not supportive of any interventions that would influence a panel's composition.

Action: Future partner EDI annual reports would include an analysis of the EDI profile for individual professions regulated by the HCPC.

12 Employee Forum update

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12.1 The Committee received a verbal update from the Head of HR and OD.

12.2 Although the Employee Forum had not met formally since January 2025 due to limited availability of Forum members, the Forum had been consulted in relation to change projects and during the policy review process and had maintained communication with the Speak Up Guardians.

12.3 There were processes under way to fill the remaining Employee Forum vacancy and to elect an Employee Forum chair, following the end of the term of office of the previous chair. The next Employee Forum meeting was scheduled to take place on 4 July 2025.

12.4 The Committee sought assurance that capacity was not a barrier in attracting and retaining Employee Forum members. The Head of HR and OD confirmed that the terms of reference for the Employee Forum included allocated time for representatives to undertake their Employee Forum work. Line managers of representatives were also made aware of the time commitment required to undertake the role.

The meeting was briefly adjourned.

Finance and investment

13 Procurement policy

13.1 The Commercial Business Partnering Manager provided the Committee with a comprehensive summary of the revised procurement policy, which had been updated to reflect the principles and procedures of the Procurement Act 2023, which came into effect in February 2025.

13.2 As well as key structural and content changes, the policy included revised proportionate procurement thresholds, with the threshold for formal tender being raised from £25k to £100k to allow greater flexibility and a focus on larger projects.

13.3 The Committee reflected as to whether seeking a single quote for contracts below £10k in value was a sufficiently robust process. It was clarified that this threshold was in line with other health care regulators and supported efficient decision making. On balance, this was considered to be a proportionate approach.

13.4 In response to a question, the Head of Finance and Commercial clarified that there was an established internal process for costing in-house options.

13.5 The Committee queried whether there was flexibility for the HCPC to use alternative routes to the Government direct supplier system to ensure best value for money. The Head of Finance and Commercial confirmed that the preferred procurement route for each contract was agreed through discussions between the Finance and Procurement teams and the relevant contract owners.

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13.6 The Committee recommended the procurement policy to the Council for approval, subject to rephrasing the first bullet point under paragraph 8.2, which stated that options reducing carbon emissions, waste and resource consumption would be 'prioritised', to avoid any inference that environmental sustainability would take precedent over quality and delivery.

Action: The policy statement regarding environmental sustainability would be updated in line with the Committee's feedback prior to submission to the Council for approval.

14 Financial strategy

14.1 The Committee received the updated financial strategy, which set out how the HCPC would achieve financial sustainability, delivery value for money and maintain financial controls. The strategy had been updated to include the HCPC's move to regular biannual fee reviews to maintain financial sustainability, a revised approach to business cases to align to HM Treasury's Green Book and to reflect the Public Contract Regulations 2015 and the Procurement Act 2023. The financial strategy supported the delivery of the corporate strategy 2026-31, which would provide a broader strategic context and would set out longer term opportunities for the HCPC including innovation.

14.2 The Committee approved the financial strategy subject to expanding the investment strategy section to reference learning lessons from investments by reviewing outcomes at an appropriate level.

Action: The investment strategy section of the financial strategy would be updated in line with the Committee's feedback prior to submission to the Council for approval.

15 Technology roadmap delivery update

15.1 The Head of IT and Digital presented a progress update on the delivery of the HCPC's technology roadmap approved by the Council in May 2024. The Council had received an update on the technology roadmap at its last meeting on 22 May 2025. As the Head of Business Change was unable to attend the meeting due to sickness, the planned update on investment and benefits realisation had been deferred to the Committee meeting in September 2025.

15.2 The following points were noted:

- There had been significant progress made during the first year to improve user experience, data, intelligence and automation and to deliver flexible and secure platforms, with a revised and updated project plan now in place. Key achievements included the launch of the online concerns portal, a refreshed intranet and the implementation of the Business Central financial system.

- Artificial intelligence (AI) pilots would inform the HCPC's longer term design of business processes across the organisation, acknowledging the products

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currently in use may not be the overall long-term solution. As the AI market was changing rapidly, the sustainability of partners would be taken into consideration when evaluating broader, longer term solutions.

- During quarter 1 2025-26 key workstreams included user research to inform the development of an omnichannel customer contact centre, establishing minimum datasets and a common data dictionary and developing an enterprise architecture framework, which had been slightly delayed due to lack of capacity.

- A revised project plan had been agreed to develop a data platform as this was a larger project than initially anticipated.

- The HCPC would seek to optimise the balance between third party technology partner expertise and in house solutions to maximise quality and value for money.

15.3 The Committee sought assurance that employees would be supported through what would be a significant period of change. The recent restructure of the IT department, including a new automation developer role, would provide additional capacity to support the roadmap delivery. The Business Change team was also expanding to provide sufficient capacity and capability to support teams through the change management process. The Executive Director of Education, Registration and Regulatory Standards acknowledged the challenges of delivering an ambitious £1.5m investment programme and emphasised the ELT's continued focus on supporting employees through this period of significant change.

15.4 In response to a question, the Head of IT and Digital described how the modular approach enabled flexibility in delivering the components of the roadmap, noting that the prioritisation of roadmap projects was influenced by a number of external and internal factors and therefore was subject to change.

Governance

16   Committee forward plan

16.1 The Committee noted the forward plan.

17   Resolution

17.1 The Committee resolved that the remainder of the meeting would be held in private, because the matters being discussed related to matters which, in the opinion of the Chair, were confidential or the public disclosure of which would prejudice the effective discharge of the Council's functions.

The meeting was briefly adjourned.

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