

RCN Response
Health and Care Professions Council
Consultation on the Revised Guidance on Continuing Professional Development

Response to consultation questions

Question 1: Is the guidance clear and easy to understand? How could we improve it?

The guidance is clear and easy to understand. We agree that an updated single set of guidance is appropriate, especially given the unnecessary duplication in the two earlier versions.

However, it is important that there is a summary of the key points of the guidance which is available and accessible in an online format to compliment the updated longer guidance. This could simply be a list of the key requirements with links to the relevant sections of the guidance on the website. In addition to the profile case studies mentioned in the consultation document, additional complimentary resources such as videos and/or illustrations could be helpful explanatory tools for registrants.

The guidance rightly acknowledges the emerging evidence about the positive impact that interactive activities involving learning with others and reflecting on third party feedback can have on practice. Flagging this is helpful for registrants in selecting the type of CPD to undertake and ensuring that their CPD activities are suitably varied. Linked to this, we would encourage the HCPC to consider how the issue of professional isolation can be addressed for lone practitioners, and to include advice on this issue.

Although one of the key standards for CPD is that the registrant undertakes 'regular' CPD, there is no definition or explanation of what is meant by 'regular'. More detail with an explanatory example would be helpful for registrants to understand how to ensure they are meeting the standards.

We note that the guidance does not currently link to the HCPC Code of Conduct or any other guidelines or standards which are relevant for ensuring safety and fitness to practise. The guidance could be improved by making a stronger emphasis on public protection, not simply to focus on the process itself and how to complete it.

In relation to the five standards, numbers 3 and 4 require that registrants:

3. Seek to ensure that their CPD has contributed to the quality of their practice and service delivery;
4. Seek to ensure that their CPD benefits the service user

The guidance and standards themselves would be improved with a stronger emphasis throughout the rest of the guidance on the need to focus on the learning

outcomes from CPD, and being able to demonstrate evidence of how this led to changes and improvements in practice, as well as the impact on service-users. We would argue that the term 'seek to ensure' in these requirements is insufficient and could be strengthened to 'be able to demonstrate' how the specific activity was selected on this basis, and provide evidence of the outcomes and reflection on these.

In the section on 'Keeping your record' the HCPC could encourage registrants to reflect on the learning outcomes of the activity undertaken and the impact of the learning on their practice as part of their record of the CPD. In addition to maximising the learning potential, this would help to ensure that registrants are prepared for potential auditing.

In relation to the point about 'explain any gaps' on P.4 of the guidance, we believe that clarification is required about whether this refers to a gap in CPD activity or outcome.

Question 2: Could any parts of the guidance be reworded or removed?

The guideline is repetitive at times and could be further shortened to ensure it is concise and information is not unnecessarily duplicated. For example, the paragraph on 'seek to ensure' is repeated.

Question 3: Do you have any other comments on the draft guidance or on our overall approach in this area?

We are keen to emphasise the inter-professional agenda and the need for better alignment between the standards and guidance for CPD in different professions which work closely together, often performing the same or very similar jobs (e.g. nurses and ODPs may do exactly the same job in the same setting with the same line manager). We are concerned that there is potential for confusion and inequity of CPD opportunities between them, particularly for employers.

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