



THE BIG QUESTION

THIS MONTH WE ASK

“What are your thoughts on the Health and Care Professions Council fee rise?”



The Health and Care Professions Council

The *Biomedical Scientist* contacted the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) to ask if a representative would like to take part in the article.

A spokesperson declined and said “the reasons for the HCPC’s proposed fee increase are set out clearly in the consultation document which accompanies the HCPC’s online survey”.

The introductory message from the Chair and the Chief Executive and Registrar of the HCPC in the consultation documents states: “These proposals are underpinned by a careful financial analysis of what is necessary for the HCPC to continue delivering our regulatory responsibilities. Without the increase we are seeking, the HCPC faces no longer being financially sustainable.

“This is a consultation; we want to hear the views of our registrants and others with an interest in our work. We will carefully consider the views you express and take them into account in finalising our proposals.” It continues: “We know registrants face challenging times and so we are committed to considering ways in which we can provide them with further support”.

The spokesman said: “The HCPC is running a series of webinars to provide further details about our proposals and to address questions people may have. These are open to anyone who would like to know more about the proposals, including registrants. More information about them can be found on our consultation page.”



Dan Smith

**Haematology Manager
Oxford University Hospitals**

The HCPC argument is two-fold. “Since 2015 there has been only one increase in the HCPC’s fees. This was due in 2020 but delayed to 2021 and the amount was reduced, in part because of concerns about the impact on registrants of the COVID pandemic. This delay and reduction have contributed to the shortfall between our income and our expenditure.”

This is true, but it was the decision of the HCPC not to increase the fee by smaller and more manageable amounts over several years and it is their decision to propose to increase by double the rate of inflation and quadruple average earnings in one hike.

They are proposing to spend money on working with employers to secure protected CPD time and improving communication and engagement. Is it a priority of registrants to pay more money to get the HCPC to act as lobbyist for more CPD time?

They are also improving communication “to inform what we do and how”. Is it registrants’ priority to pay more money so HCPC can use our funds to justify their role to us?

One issue that is clear in the consultation is very few of us (only 10%) claim tax relief on the registration fee that we are all entitled to do. Regardless of the fee increase, a cost saving would be claiming the income tax relief on both HCPC and IBMS fees.

If you do not file a tax return, you can claim tax relief using the form P87: *Tax relief for expenses of employment*, available to download from the HMRC website.



Anas Nasir

**LIMS Analyst and Specialist
Biomedical Scientist
Synnovis**

It’s been a 12-hour work day. I’m currently on secondment and after finishing that shift, I went to cover the late shift in the lab. The lack of staff across the health service is not a new issue. Staff go over and beyond to ensure service provision. When someone calls in sick or leaves it can have significant effect on rotas, spreading thinner something which is almost stretched to its limit.

The HCPC states that the fee increase is integral to financial viability. If so, one way to overcome this deficit is to have more registrants, especially at a time when the burden of many is carried on the shoulders of the few. Estimated future energy bills are approximately 10% of my gross salary. That’s not financially viable. The cost to fulfil basic necessities is ever increasing and there is now a potential increase in the cost to be allowed to work.

For my secondment, I do not need to be HCPC registered, but I relish working as a biomedical scientist and have been keeping competent for when the secondment ends. Can I still afford it? Maybe it’s time to hang up my lab coat. I’ve volunteered to cover shifts in the lab over the holidays. I just hope that while many thousands of professionals are working at that time, the fees we must pay to allow us to do so are put to the best possible use.

To see the consultation page visit the website bit.ly/HCPC_consultation to view the consultation documents visit bit.ly/HCPC_fees