

In August, the HCPC updated their standards of proficiency for the first time since 2015. The changes, which will come into effect on 1 September 2023, have been made following an extensive period of engagement with a wide range of stakeholders – including the IBMS.

The revised standards set clear expectations of a registrant's knowledge and ability in a healthcare service that has changed dramatically in the wake of the pandemic. They have also expanded to have more focus on the registrant's mental health and their understanding of equality, diversity and inclusion.

Given what we have undergone over the past few years, I think updating the standards at this juncture is crucial. It will help us as HCPC registrants to continue delivering excellence in our profession and, in turn, enable us to ensure that the public can access high-quality care safely and with confidence.

As the changes approach, we must remember that we cannot assume fitness to practice just because we have been working in the profession for "x" number of years, or because we are intelligent people with plenty of common sense. The new standards are the new requirements for practice – and if we are not familiar with them then we are not fit to practice.

It is not enough to assume that we are inclusive or that we know how far we can venture into our own stress or tiredness before it results in a mistake. The new standards are there to keep us practising

DELIVERING EXCELLENCE



IBMS Chief Executive
David Wells on why we need to meet the new HCPC standards.

at the highest level of professionalism and to keep our patients safe. We will all need to read, understand and reflect on them.

To hold our heads up as professionals, we have to walk the walk. A colleague of mine who encountered an allegation of malpractice comes to mind when I say this. A resolute professional, they took the appropriate action and reported the allegation to the HCPC – which resulted in a fitness-to-practice hearing. After the evidence was reviewed, it was clear that they were in no way responsible for any malpractice and, on the contrary, were an exemplary professional.

However, they did not risk their career and position because they knew they would be absolved. They did it because

they knew the standards of proficiency. They acted as a true biomedical scientist – they reflected, understood the process, applied their knowledge and then let the evidence speak for itself.

Now it is time for us all to act with that same professionalism and make sure that we review and meet the new standards ahead of time. As biomedical scientists, we will soon be confirming that we have reflected, understood and applied them to our practice.

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