

Professional Standards Authority (PSA) Business Plan 2024/25



Professional Standards Authority for Health and Social Care Business Plan 2024/25

Presented to Parliament pursuant to Schedule 7, Paragraph 16 (1B) of the National Health Service Reform and Health Care Professions Act 2002, as amended by the Health and Social Care Act 2008 and the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

Laid before the Scottish Parliament by the Scottish ministers under the National Health Service Reform and Health Care Professions Act 2002, as amended by the Health and Social Care Act 2008 and the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

Laid before the Northern Ireland Assembly in accordance with the National Health Service Reform and Health Care Professions Act 2002, as amended by the Health and Social Care Act 2008 and the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

Laid before the Welsh Parliament in accordance with the National Health Service Reform and Health Care Professions Act 2002, as amended by the Health and Social Care Act 2008 and the Health and Social Care Act 2012.



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ISBN 978-1-5286-4917-9

E 03130199 07/24

Printed on paper containing 40% recycled fibre content minimum

Printed in the UK by HH Associates Ltd. on behalf of the Controller of His Majesty's Stationery Office

Summary of PSA 2023-26 Strategic Plan

Vision

Safer care for all through high standards of conduct and competence in health and social care professionals.

Mission

To protect patients, service users and the public by improving the regulation and registration of health and social care professionals.

Strategic aim 1

To protect the public by delivering highly effective oversight of regulation and registration.

- To deliver our statutory duties, targeting our resources where there is greatest risk to the public.
- To support high standards in health and social care regulation and registration through our performance review, section 29 reviews, accredited registers, policy and communications functions.
- To review and improve our processes (including legislative changes where necessary) to ensure they are effective and efficient.

Strategic aim 2

To make regulation and registration better and fairer

- To lead the development of more effective regulation through reviewing our standards, and undertaking other activities including research, policy advice and quality improvement initiatives, such as sharing good practice.
- To promote, influence and support regulatory reform.
- To promote and monitor equality, diversity and inclusion in our work and in those we oversee.

Strategic aim 3

To promote and support safer care for all

- To work with others to establish the full range of functions recommended in *Safer care for all* for Health and Social Care Safety Commissioners in each of the four countries of the UK.
- To work with UK governments to develop regulatory strategies to support the workforce strategies.
- To work with regulators, Accredited Registers and other stakeholders to: promote positive workplace cultures; resolve any conflicts between business priorities and patient safety, and between safe spaces, accountability and the duty of candour.

1. Business Plan 2024/25

Policy and Communications

- 1.1 Our focus in 2024/25 will be on providing advice and guidance on regulatory reform and the implementation of reform, including making any necessary changes to PSA functions and processes arising from reform. We will also seek opportunities to use reform to further improve regulation and registration.
- 1.2 We will deliver the *Safer care for all* action plan for 2024/25. This will include relevant research, working with stakeholders on equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) issues, the development of regulatory strategies by UK governments and looking at what more professional regulation can do to support just and learning cultures.
- 1.3 We will continue to monitor and respond to inquiries and consultations, and to monitor the impact of regulatory policy.

Communications and engagement

- 1.4 We will implement our Stakeholder Engagement Strategy and associated plans. We will carry out any communications and engagement arising from regulatory reform.
- 1.5 We will hold our annual events, both online and in-person, including a symposium, research conference and seminars in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. We will complete the updates to our website to optimise its performance and improve our accessibility for diverse audiences.
- 1.6 We will conduct our annual stakeholder survey. We will continue to provide communication and engagement support for regulation and registration improvement activities.

Regulation and Accreditation

- 1.7 The work of the Regulation and Accreditation directorate covers four of the PSA's statutory functions: reporting to Parliament on the work of the regulators (performance review); reviewing regulators' final fitness to practise decisions (section 29); advising the Privy Council about regulators' appointments to their Councils; and managing the Accredited Registers Programme. In addition, it deals with concerns raised generally about regulators and Accredited Registers.

Performance review

- 1.8 The performance review team will continue to review all 10 regulators and report to Parliament on their performance.
- 1.9 We will complete the first annual cycle of performance reviews using the revised expectations for our EDI standard in 2024/25. We will also review our Standards of Good Regulation to identify where changes are needed.
- 1.10 The team will continue to monitor the changes that will be implemented as part of the Government's work on regulatory reform and be considering whether our processes

need to be amended.

Section 29

- 1.11 The section 29 team reviews the decisions of the regulators' fitness to practise panels to consider whether these are sufficient to protect the public. If it considers that they are insufficient, then the PSA can refer the case to the relevant court.
- 1.12 The PSA receives all decisions which fall within our jurisdiction. We have a risk-based and proportionate approach to looking at decisions, the efficiency of which has been endorsed by an internal audit into our section 29 work. We do not review cases where the registrant has been removed from the register or some others (for example, further suspension) where in our view the decision is likely to be sufficient to protect the public. In practice, this means that around 30% of cases are closed without review.
- 1.13 For the remainder, we undertake a short initial review to establish whether there are concerns about the decision. If there are, we seek further information (typically, the papers before the panel and a transcript of the hearing) so that we can assess whether those concerns suggest that the decision may be insufficient to protect the public. This represents about 90-120 decisions per year across all regulators; around 4-5% of the caseload. If the concerns remain, then we hold a case meeting with advice from external lawyers before we decide whether to refer the case. We typically refer 15-20 cases per year. Over 90% of the cases we bring are upheld by the courts or settled, with the relevant regulator agreeing that the decision was insufficient to protect the public. We also share learning points from our reviews with the regulators to support improvements in fitness to practise processes.
- 1.14 In 2023/24, the PSA received 2,385 cases. Numbers have been increasing year on year since a significant drop during the first year of the pandemic, although this increase slowed in 2023/24. Our initial expectation is that the number of cases in 2024/25 will be in the region of 2,600. Our existing resources will be able to accommodate the expected number of cases.

Accredited registers (AR)

- 1.15 During the year we will continue to assess new applications and applications for renewal, including carrying out in-year monitoring and any targeted reviews. We will introduce the first cycle of reviews using the new EDI standard in 2024/25. We will continue to work with the NHS and the Government to raise awareness of the Accredited Registers programme and align to areas of workforce need.
- 1.16 We will seek to increase access of Registers to criminal records checks, where eligible under the current legislative frameworks in place across the UK.
- 1.17 We will also review our Standards for Accredited Registers to identify where changes are needed.
- 1.18 The Accredited Registers work is not funded by fees from the regulators. It is funded in full by the registers.

Appointments to the regulators' governing bodies

- 1.19 The PSA reviewed 13 appointments processes in 2023/24. We expect that number to be similar in 2024/25.

Concerns

- 1.20 The PSA continues to receive concerns about the regulators. In 2023/24 there were 358, which represented a similar number to the previous year. There is no obvious trend in the number we receive, but we have no reason to believe that there needs to be any change to the resources devoted to this work.

Corporate Services

- 1.21 The team provides the following services: finance, human resources (HR), information and communications technology (ICT), information security, governance, risk management, audit, facilities, health and safety, business continuity, procurement and office administration.
- 1.22 The team works to ensure that the PSA is an independent, effective, value for money organisation. It supports the Board and executive in delivering the functionality and smooth operation of the organisation.

Work for 2024/25

- 1.23 In the coming year, the team will continue to support the general operation of the PSA while embedding the improvements and efficiencies introduced in 2023/24.
- 1.24 HR and Governance continue to provide day-to-day support, overseeing all recruitment and responding to all staffing issues and HR matters. In 2024/25 they will be heavily involved in administering the recruitment of four new Board members. They will also implement year two of the 2023/26 People Strategy.
- 1.25 Finance will continue to provide effective day-to-day running of the finance function, overseeing all financial transactions, procurement, and payroll. They will build on the improvements to financial reporting and budget management delivered in 2022/23 and 2023/24. This will include continuing their proactive oversight of all procurement.
- 1.26 ICT will continue to provide effective day-to-day helpdesk support, contract management and cyber security. Their focus will be embedding the cloud IT strategy that was rolled out in 2022/23 and 2023/24.

Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

- 1.27 In 2023/24, we continued our work on EDI. We completed the delivery of our legacy action plan and introduced a new Equality Impact Assessment Toolkit. We developed a new action plan focusing on ongoing inclusion for staff and added an external objective to further develop our leadership in the EDI space.

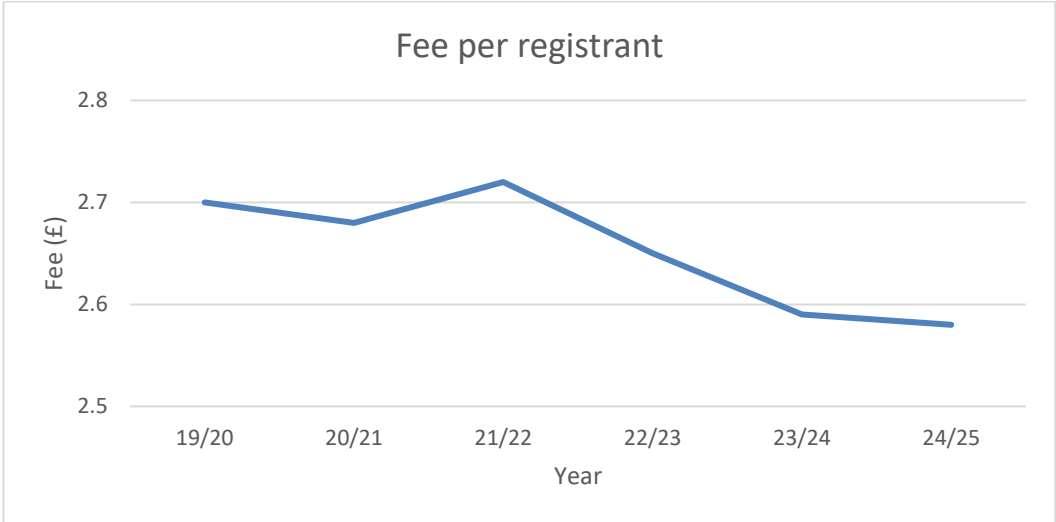
2. Finance and Resources

- 2.1 The PSA operates as an independent body with statutory duties. It is accountable to Parliament.
- 2.2 The PSA is funded through:
- Fees collected from the regulatory bodies that it oversees, which fund the costs of its regulatory and standards functions.
 - Income arising from the accreditation of voluntary registers.
 - Income for advice and investigations that are specifically commissioned by the Secretary of State and/or the Devolved Administrations.
 - Income from other activities, for example, fees from the provision of advice and advisory services to governments, regulatory bodies and other similar organisations in the UK and abroad.
- 2.3 The PSA is required by the Health and Social Care Act 2012 to consult with the regulatory bodies advising them of its proposed budget requirement.

Value for Money

- 2.4 We are committed to delivering value for money. We aim to do so in three ways: carefully reviewing expenditure and controlling costs; systematically evaluating core processes to identify improvements in effectiveness and efficiency; and maximising the benefits of our work in the interests of better regulation and registration. We continue to monitor benefits realisation across our work and to allocate resources to maximise value for money.
- 2.5 Since 2021/22 the Accredited Registers function has been self-funding. Our work to improve the performance review process concluded in early 2022 and delivered a more proportionate approach that more effectively promotes and supports improvements in the regulators. During 2023/24 and 2024/25 we are reviewing our section 29 function which may identify further effectiveness and efficiency improvements.
- 2.6 Our strategic plan for 2023-26 sets out our plans to maximise the benefits of our work, with a particular focus on contributing to improvements in regulation through research, policy advice, and the sharing of good practice.
- 2.7 As a result of a review in 2022/23 we made the decision to close the NHS Pension Scheme to new starters from April 2023 and introduce a Defined Contribution scheme in its place. Although savings will not materialise immediately we expect to generate significant savings in the long term from this major change.
- 2.8 We restructured the Performance Review team in 2023/24, introducing a Head of Performance Review post to replace the vacant Assistant Director role. We also replaced a Head of Legal role in the section 29 team with a Lead Lawyer. In the Finance team, we replaced a Finance Officer role with a Finance Administrator post to more accurately reflect the responsibilities. All of these changes have delivered cost savings.
- 2.9 We continue to have virtual meetings for our Scrutiny Committee, Nominations Committee and for Board workshops, which delivers savings in travel and subsistence costs for Board members.

- 2.10 We relocated to new office premises in March 2023. As a result of downsizing and the introduction of hotdesking and hybrid working we have reduced our annual accommodation spend by around £100,000. Throughout the relocation project we kept costs to a minimum by securing free legal support from the Government Legal Department Property Law Hub, courtesy of the Department of Health and Social Care.
- 2.11 By implementing our IT Cloud Transformation Roadmap in 2022/23 and 2023/24, we reduced annual capital expenditure by £50K compared to previous years and delivered long term savings in operational IT costs.
- 2.12 We are conscious of the financial pressures faced by many registrants working in health and social care. The average cost per registrant of the PSA’s regulation and standard-setting work in 2023/24 was £2.59. This compares with £2.65 in 2022/23, £2.72 in 2021/22, £2.68 in 2020/21 and £2.70 in 2019/20, as shown below. On the basis of registrant numbers as at 1 January 2024, our fee per registrant in 2024/25 is £2.58.



Assumptions

2.13 The assumptions for business as usual in 2024/25 that we built our budget on are as follows:

- A pay increase for all staff and Board members of 4% from April 2024 and a one-off non-consolidated payment of £750 to staff in Bands 1 and 2.
- That based on the recovery costs averaged over the last three years, we will recover 25% of total expenditure on legal advice related to section 29 cases.
- That the total cost of legal action will be broadly similar to previous years.
- That the number of fitness to practise cases will be approximately 2,800.
- That staffing numbers increase by one compared to the beginning of 2023/24 (due to the addition of a Policy Officer as a result of work arising from regulatory reform).
- That no legislative changes that amend the duties of the PSA to an extent that will impact on our costs, will be introduced during the year.
- That DHSC will progress regulatory reform as planned.

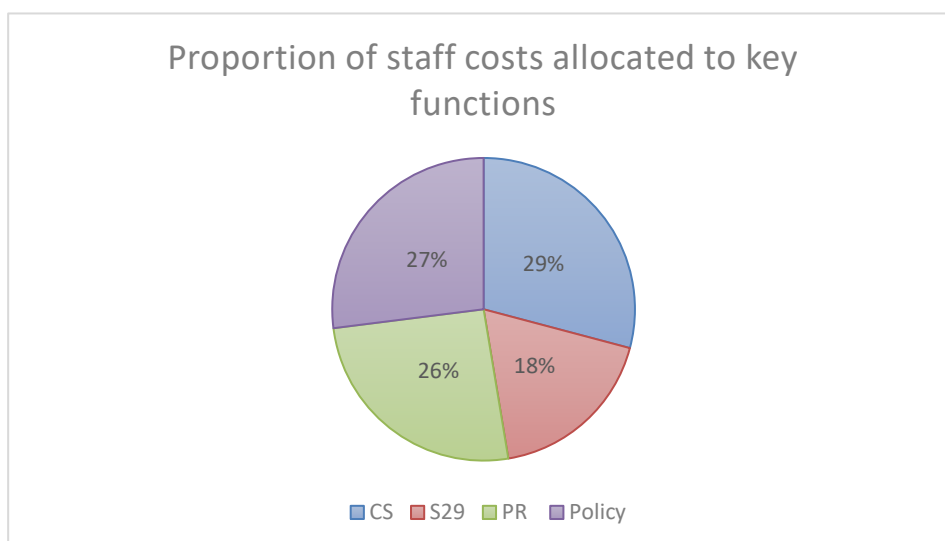
2.14 In comparison to the budget for 2023/24, costs have increased in relation to staffing and inflation on some non-staff costs. We have decreased costs in relation to: office rent; recruitment; staff travel; and publications/communications.

2.15 The staffing establishment as budgeted for 2024/25 is:

Posts	2023/24	2024/25
Chief Executive	1	1
Directors	3	3
Assistant directors	2	1
Heads of functions	6	6
Managers	6	7
Technical specialists	4	4
Officers and advisers	17	18
Administrators	3	3
Total	42	43

2.16 These 43 posts equate to 41.1 full-time equivalents.

2.17 The overall increase in the fees required from the regulators in 2024/25 is £232,000 (5%).



Indicative Budgets

	2024/25 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Regulation and standards		
Net operating expenditure (excluding depreciation for assets purchased during the year and database amortisation)	5,109	4,687
Capital expenditure	50	50
Subtotal	5,159	4,737
Reserves refunded	(290)	(100)
Total funding requirement	4,869	4,637

Expenditure breakdown

	2024/25 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Expenditure		
Staff costs	3,615	3,295
Other administrative costs	1,621	1,540
Income		
Operating income	(127)	(148)
Net operating expenditure	5,109	4,687

	2024/25 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Capital expenditure		
Information technology	40	40
Fixtures and fittings	10	10
Capital expenditure	50	50

Administrative costs

	2024/25 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Board appointments	100	0
Recruitment	15	32
Training and conferences	73	75
Other HR	14	20
Staff travel	10	10
Other Admin	40	48
Occupancy	324	331
Audit	68	72
Corporate Legal	10	10
ICT	136	151
Board pay	113	102
Board expenses	32	28
Policy conferences	45	60
Commissioned policy advice and research	75	50
Communications	45	21
Engagement	109	107
S29 legal	369	372
Scrutiny and Quality(S&Q) general legal	20	31
Other S&Q	23	20
Depreciation	0	0
Total administrative costs	1,621	1,540

Operating Income

	2024/25 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Section 29 cost recoveries	119	143
Other operating income	8	5
Total operating Income	127	148

2024/25	Staff costs £'000	Other net costs £'000	Total Costs £'000
Policy	976	274	1,250
Corporate Services	1,053	927	1,980
Section 29	660	293	953
Performance Review	926	0	926
Totals	3,615	1,494	5,109

Accredited registers (Indicative budget for information only)

	2024/25 Budget £'000	2023/24 Budget £'000
Income		
Fees	702	583
Total	702	583
Expenditure		
Pay costs	462	404
Non pay costs	232	197
Total	693	601
Total surplus/(deficit)	8	(18)

3. KPIs

Area of work	Key performance indicators
Finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budgeted income / expenditure variance less than 5%
ICT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resolve 85% of helpdesk calls within one day System unavailability below 10 hours in any month
Information security	No incidents reported to the Information Commissioner's Office
Information requests (FOI / SAR / EIR)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100% Subject Access Requests dealt with within statutory deadlines All (100%) Freedom of Information Act requests dealt with within statutory deadlines
Complaints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100% of complaints acknowledged in five days Response to all complaints to be completed within 28 days
Section 29 decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of cases received [compared with same period last year] Number of Cases considered at a case meeting or statutory deadline meeting [compared with same period last year] Appeals lodged [compared with same period last year] 100% of relevant decisions considered within statutory deadline [compared with last year]
Performance Reviews	100% of 2024 performance reviews published within three months of end of review period

Public concerns about Regulatory bodies	100% of concerns acknowledged within five working days
Accredited Registers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 90% of registers have a full assessment within three years of previous assessment. • 90% of decisions are made on the annual check within one year of the previous assessment. • 95% of Conditions are reviewed within two months of when they were due. • 100% of targeted reviews are completed within four months of the date initiated. • 90% of decisions about new Standard 1 applications are made within four months of receipt. • 90% of decisions about full accreditation (Standards 2-9) are made within eight months of receipt.
Social Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total number of followers across our social media channels (and number of new followers) • Number of engagements with our social media posts
Website usage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year-to-date data on website usage from April 2024 to date with same period last year in brackets • Total page views across the website • Check a Practitioner landing page and practitioner specific pages • Accredited Registers home page and related Accredited Registers pages

E-03130199
978-1-5286-4917-9

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