Understanding the prevalence of fitness to practise concerns
Outline

• Data, intelligence, prevention?
• Research – social workers and paramedics
• Emerging findings
• Learning and future actions
Data – intelligence – prevention?

‘...preventing and reducing harm, promoting professionalism, improving quality and encouraging compassionate care require a coordinated approach by regulators, employers, educators and professional bodies.’

Professional Standards Authority, Regulation rethought (2016)

• Focus on preventing and reducing harm
• Increasing fitness to practise numbers in some professions
• Systematic analysis at high volumes
• Data versus intelligence
• Using our data more intelligently and working with others
Physiotherapist cases – 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2017

• Breaches of professional boundaries – inappropriate behaviour with colleagues; inappropriate relationships with patients; sexually motivated behaviour with patients

• Dishonesty – failure to declare criminal convictions; financial dishonesty

• General performance issues – poor communication; poor clinical skills; failure to refer patients; record keeping

• Criminal convictions – indecent / sexual assault; drink driving; fraud
## Paramedics and social workers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Profession</th>
<th>Complaints per 1000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paramedics</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social workers in England</td>
<td>12.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biomedical scientists</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupational therapists</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Physiotherapists</strong></td>
<td><strong>2.7</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practitioner psychologists</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radiographers</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>All professions average</strong></td>
<td><strong>6.2</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Research

- Literature review (n=698 entries)
- Delphi consultation with international experts (n=14)
- Interviews (n=26) and focus groups (n=21)
- Case review (n=284)
- Workshops to explore the findings

- Explore a persistent trend – qualitative and quantitative
- Empirical evidence to test our assumptions
- Prevention: ‘So what?’
Emerging findings

- Very little robust, comparative data on prevalence
- Themes:
  - Complex and challenging environments
  - Operational pressures
  - Public perceptions and expectations
  - Professionalism and professional identity (paramedics)
  - Social and emotional vulnerability (social work)
Possible tools for prevention

- **Individual level** – selection, training/education, supervision and development of individuals
- **Organisational level** – factors such as leadership, workload, staff development provision, resources & support
- **Societal/Political level** – public attitudes and expectations, educate the public, media & regulatory activities, research to deepen understanding
Emerging findings from the case review

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Closed at initial stage</th>
<th>Closed by Investigating Committee</th>
<th>Final hearing</th>
<th>Total</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Paramedics</strong></td>
<td>30</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social workers (England)</strong></td>
<td>173</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>232</td>
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</table>
Paramedics and self-referrals
Learning and future actions

• Final report in September 2017

• Communication, engagement and dissemination will be crucial (and challenging)

• Some ‘quick wins’

• Value in looking at cases at all decisions points to generate learning

• Development and testing of a typology of cases for routine data collection

• In-house analysis of cases looking at particular themes, characteristics or professions, with a focus on action
Thank you for listening

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