

Factsheet

Protecting titles

The Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) is the statutory regulator of 15 professions. Our responsibilities are set out in the Health Professions Order 2001 (the order)

For more information, about us, see our website: www.hcpc-uk.org.

Each of the professions we regulate has one or more designated titles protected by law (Article 39 of the Order). Anyone who uses one of these titles must be on our Register. The table below sets out the professions we regulate, together with their designated titles

Profession	Designated title (or titles)	
Arts therapist	Art therapist Art psychotherapist	Dramatherapist Music therapist
Biomedical scientist	Biomedical scientist	
Chiropodist / podiatrist	Chiropodist	Podiatrist
Clinical scientist	Clinical scientist	
Dietitian	Dietitian	Dietician
Hearing aid dispenser	Hearing aid dispenser	
Occupational therapist	Occupational therapist	
Operating department practitioner	Operating department practitioner	
Orthoptist	Orthoptist	
Paramedic	Paramedic	
Physiotherapist	Physiotherapist	Physical therapist
Practitioner psychologist	Practitioner psychologist Registered psychologist Clinical psychologist Counselling psychologist Educational psychologist	Forensic psychologist Health psychologist Occupational psychologist Sport and exercise psychologist
Prosthetist / orthotist	Prosthetist Prosthetist and Orthotist	Orthotist
Radiographer	Radiographer Diagnostic radiographer	Therapeutic radiographer
Speech and language therapist	Speech and language therapist	Speech therapist

Misusing titles

Under Article 39(1) of the Order, it is a criminal offence for a person, with intent to deceive (whether clearly or by implication), to:

- claim that they are on the HCPC Register;
- use a designated title protected by the Order to which they are not entitled; or
- claim falsely that they have qualifications in a profession regulated by us.

The words 'by implication' mean that an offence may be committed even if the designated title is not used directly (for example, if an unregistered person described the service they provide as 'chiropractic' or 'physiotherapy').

Using a title with a prefix

A person is unlikely to commit an offence if they use a designated title with a prefix which clearly indicates they are not fully qualified, such as 'trainee' or 'student', or a prefix which clearly indicates they do not treat people, such as 'animal', 'equine' or 'veterinary'. By using prefixes like this there is no intention to deceive.

Third parties

A person does not commit an offence if, without their knowledge or agreement, a third party (individual or organisation) describes them using a designated title. For example, a newspaper article may incorrectly identify a person as a registered professional without any intention to deceive on the part of that person.

A third party who makes false claims about another person's title would be committing an offence if they knew the information was incorrect and did so with the intention to deceive.

What we do

We aim to make sure the law is kept to and that members of the public are protected from being misled into thinking a person is a registered professional when they are not.

When we receive information that a designated title might be being misused, we contact the person or third party concerned (or both), explain the law and tell them that they should not misuse the title. If there is evidence to show that they are committing an offence, we may also send a 'cease and desist' notice, which sets out what action we may take if the person or third party continues to commit the offence.

In most cases, the person or third party is unaware of the law, or has simply made a mistake. We appreciate this and if they stop ('cease and desist') misusing the title, we will take no further action.

However, if a person or third party does not respond to us or continues to commit an offence, they may be prosecuted, which could lead to a criminal record and a substantial fine.

Further information

For more information about protecting titles, contact our Fitness to Practise Department.

Phone: 020 7840 9814 or 0800 328 4218

Email: ftp@hcpc-uk.org.

