

Communications – Jacqueline Ladds

Events

Approximately 95 registrants attended the final two Listening Events for 2006 – 2007 in Aberystwyth and Worcester. The 2007 – 2008 programme started in April in Portsmouth and Folkestone with approximately 144 attendees. Feedback from both sets of events was positive and evaluation reports for both have been included in these meeting papers for the Committee to note. Our next set of Listening events will take place in Dumfries and Lancaster on 10 and 12 July 2007.

The HPC exhibited at the Patient Information Forum in Hammersmith in February and the Managing Long Term Conditions conference in Telford in March – the audience at each was a mixture of GPs, patient representative groups, NHS PALs representatives, GP Practice Managers and District/Community Nurses. Feedback on the usefulness of both exhibitions is mixed and evaluation reports have been included in these meeting papers for the Committee to note. Our forthcoming programme includes Primary Care 2007 in May, the Institute of Biomedical Science Congress in September 2007 and NHS Employers in October 2007.

Since the last report, the Department has given six talks across the UK to groups of students and registrants including University College London (speech and language therapists), University of Leicester (chiropractors/podiatrists) and The National Hospital for Neurology and Neurosurgery (registrants). During June we will be delivering a talk at Coventry University to physiotherapy students and speaking about CPD at the Annual BUPA conference.

Internal Communications

The recommendations from the audit have now been disseminated throughout the organisation and incorporated into the communications workplan. Work will start shortly on the review of the intranet and planning for the All Employee AwayDay (18 May) is well advanced.

Publications

The tenth edition of our e-newsletter, HPC In Focus, was published on Friday 5 April. Since publication, nearly 800 people have downloaded this issue from the website. As standard, the newsletter is sent direct to over 3,000 email addresses - and this number continues to increase. The next edition will be published on Friday 1 June.

The department continues to manage the publications process for departments, working on the Approvals and Monitoring, Fitness to Practise and Corporate annual reports, as well as the guidance on confidentiality (for consultation) and the consultation document for the standards of conduct, performance and ethics. The department has also supported the recent review of all application and renewal forms and accompanying guidance notes. The refresh of our visual identity is progressing well and will be reported as a separate item on the Committee agenda. The in-house production of an updated 'house style' (and supporting guidance documents) is nearing completion. This, along with a range of production process information, will form part of a new, dedicated 'Publications' section on the HPC intranet.

The Department is also responding to approximately 6-10 requests per week for information. Recently there have been a lot of requests for car stickers. Around 70% of requests are for promotional materials such as these and the 'Be safe be sure' leaflets. Many registrants who request these express their desire to assist in the promotion of the HPC as well as their own registered status. We receive a significant number of requests from employers for car stickers and posters to distribute to employees. Approximately 25% of requests are from education providers for publications, such as the standards of proficiency and standards of conduct, performance and ethics, to distribute to students.

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Media and Campaigns

Since our last report we have issued three Fitness to Practise press releases on professionals who have been struck off or suspended. We have also issued press releases on the publication of our fees consultation key decisions document and the new speech and language therapist council member.

Through March and April coverage has included nine pieces of FTP coverage in a range of print including The Daily Telegraph, The Daily Mail, South Wales Evening Post and Oldham Advertiser. We have received eight pieces of coverage in professional journals including The Operating Theatre Journal, The Biomedical Scientist, Chiropody Review, Synergy News, Podiatry Now and the Journal of Podiatric Medicine.

In addition to this, the department has responded to 18 press enquiries on a range of issues, mainly FTP. Press releases can be viewed on the HPC website and the March and April monthly coverage reports together with some copies of articles are attached.

We issued a press release in response to the Government's White Paper on the future of healthcare regulation which was published on 21 February. As reported in the February Communications Committee we secured coverage in The Daily Telegraph and Marc carried out nine radio interviews which were broadcast across 24 local radio stations including the Midlands and Channel Islands.

We have appointed a press agency to work with us on a media programme for the year and are in the process of appointing an advertising and design agency to support our public facing communications. Plans for this work will be more fully reported at the next committee meeting.

Web

'Phase 2' of the website development continues. This work will involve improvements to the usability of the website, including enhanced search and display facilities and a slight restructure to the navigation to make the education and FTP information more accessible. The content management system is also being improved which will benefit website administrators. The hpc-uk.org site is receiving approximately 70,000 hits per month and the Web Manager is currently working on the production of regular statistical information which can be used for reporting and planning purposes. This will be reported as a separate item on the Committee agenda.

Public Affairs and Stakeholder Communications

Anna van der Gaag and Christine Farrell represented the HPC at the April meeting of the Joint UK Health and Social Care Regulators PPI Group and Christine Farrell presented on the "International context of PPI in the education and training of health professionals" at the group's recent "Involving service users in the accreditation of education providers" seminar which was the second in the series on sharing experience and good practice in patient and public involvement for the regulatory sector. Reports are included in the meeting papers for the Committee to note.

Staffing

We anticipate the new Public Affairs Manager to start on 16th May 2007. The team recently attended an awayday which was facilitated by GB Training. The aim was to explore preferred communication styles and team roles (Belbin). We also put theory into practice and spent a day creating a sensory garden for a respite home for disabled children. The feedback has been very good and all team members felt it was worthwhile and an opportunity to reinforce our team working and values.

HPC monthly coverage report

The following coverage appeared between the 1 and 31 March 2007

Fitness to Practise

- Date: 6 March 2007
Publication: Oldham Advertiser
Title of article: Physio Cleared of Inappropriate Behaviour
Summary: A blind physiotherapist has been cleared who was accused of behaving inappropriately towards a female patient has been cleared by a London disciplinary inquiry....
- Date: 6 March 2007
Publication: Eastbourne Today
Title of article: Bungling Physio Struck off Register
Summary: A former physiotherapist at the DGH (Bharavi Kilaru) who provided the wrong size of walking sticks to patients has been struck off by the Health Professions Council (HPC)...
- Date: 22 March 2007
Publication: Dudley News & County Express
Title of article: Topless Photos – Scientist Warned
Summary: A former Dudley scientist who took photos of his neighbour sunbathing topless has been cautioned by his professional body....

Professional Bodies

- Date: February/March 2007 Edition
Publication: The Operating Theatre Journal
Title of article: HPC Launches Third Council Elections
- Date: March/April 2007 Edition
Publication: Chiropody Review
Title of article: Former HPC President awarded CBE
- Date: March/April 2007 Edition
Publication: Chiropody Review
Title of article: Health Professions Council Elections 2007
- Date: March 2007 Edition
Publication: The Biomedical Scientist
Title of article: The Health Professions Council: setting standards, protecting the public
- Date: Spring 2007
Publication: The Journal of Podiatric Medicine
Title of article: Health Professions Council – Friend or Foe?

HPC monthly coverage report

The following coverage appeared between the 1 and 30 April 2007

Fitness to Practise

Date: 4 April 2007
Publication: IC Wales (Welsh national website)
Title of article: Bungler banned from baby scans
Summary: Neil Sandford has been barred from examining expectant Mums' scans for three years after his mistakes were revealed.

Date: 24 April 2007
Publication: South Wales Evening Post
Title of article: Auction in eBay costs paramedic
Summary: A Swansea paramedic who put a training manual he had stolen from his employers for sale on eBay has been suspended for one year by the HPC.

Date: 26 April 2007
Publication: The Daily Telegraph
Title of article: Paramedic left patient and went home
Summary: A paramedic who diverted his ambulance from taking a dying woman to hospital so that he and his colleague could finish their shift on time has been found guilty of unprofessional conduct.

Date: 26 April 2007
Publication: The Daily Mail
Title of article: Woman died when 999 man clocked off
Summary: A woman died after a paramedic stopped off at an ambulance station to change shift rather than take her straight to hospital

Date: 28.04.07
Publication: Liverpool Echo
Title of article: Racism probe and Mersey Ambulance
Summary: Detectives investigate paramedic Lesley Millen's claims of racial bullying.

Date: 30.04.07
Publication: Liverpool Daily Post
Title of article: Paramedic in bullying and abuse claims
Summary: Detectives are investigating claims by Lesley Millen that she was the victim of a race hate campaign by colleagues.

Professional Bodies

Date: April 2007
Publication: The Bulletin
Title of article: Reflections on the HPC

Date: April 2007
Publication: Synergy News
Title of article: Professional regulation proposals

Date: 4 April 2007
Publication: Podiatry Now
Title of article: Discussing the issues of regulation (Pam Sabine)

Professional regulation proposals

Radiographers required to prove fitness to practice every five years

Radiographers will be required to prove their fitness to practice every five years, according to proposals in the new White Paper on the regulation of health professionals.

The paper, entitled *Trust, Assurance and Safety - The Regulation of Health Professionals in the 21st Century*, makes it clear that the overriding aim of regulation should be patient safety and quality of care.

It states that regulation is as much about sustaining, improving and assuring professional standards as it is about identifying poor practice.

Karen Middleton, chief health professions officer, welcomed the paper: "Partnership between regulators, employers and clinicians can only help ensure that clinicians maintain their fitness to practice and therefore continue to provide high quality care."

The HPC, along with other regulators is now working to determine the most appropriate arrangements.

"As yet we don't know what form revalidation will take. It's possible that for registrants working in the NHS it will be linked with KSF and appraisals," said Victoria



Revalidation may be linked to KSF and appraisals, says the HPC.

Nash, communications manager at the HPC.

"The HPC may take a more 'hands on' approach to people working outside the NHS. The White Paper emphasises the importance of the frequency and intensity of revalidation being proportionate to the risks inherent in the work of the practitioners involved."

The HPC will be informed by Department

of Health and the Council for Healthcare Regulatory Excellence (CHRE). "We also hope to learn from the GMC who will begin the process of revalidation or re-licensing before other regulators do," said Victoria.

"As usual, consultation with stakeholders and registrants will be an integral part of developing the system and the standards we use to assess registrants."


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Paramedic left patient and went home

A PARAMEDIC who diverted his ambulance from taking a dying woman to hospital so that he and his colleague could finish their shift on time has been found guilty of unprofessional conduct.

Royden Harrill, of Malmesbury, Wiltshire, and Adam Rathbone, a technician for whom he was responsible, attended a GP's surgery in Malmesbury to transfer "an extremely ill patient" to Royal United Hospital in Bath. As they

waited for the GP's letter of referral, Rathbone called Malmesbury ambulance station to arrange a crew swap because it was five minutes before their shifts ended. The pair handed over the vehicle and minutes later the woman went into cardiac arrest. The new crew resuscitated her at the roadside, but she died on the way to hospital.

A record of the disciplinary panel of the Health Professions Council said that ambulance crews were

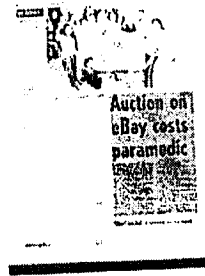
banned from changing shift while a patient was being managed, in an emergency or where the situation was urgent.

Harrill, who has 15 years' experience, has been allowed to continue working since the incident in Nov 2005, but the panel imposed conditions on his right to continue working over the next 18 months, including demonstrating evidence of patient assessment skills and the clinical decision making process.


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Auction on eBay costs paramedic

A SWANSEA paramedic who put a training manual he had stolen from his employers for sale on eBay, has been suspended for a year by the Health Professions Council (HPC).

Karl Thorne had committed an "abuse of trust and had brought the profession into disrepute" the HPC's Conduct and Competence Committee ruled.

Panel chair Sandy Yule said past and present colleagues had spoken highly of Thorne.

But she added: "This is a serious breach of trust and action must be taken on your registration."

The committee heard Thorne was convicted of theft on February 13 last year at Swansea Magistrates Court.

He had admitted seven charges of theft and asked for 20 similar offences to be taken into consideration.

He was given 180 hours' community punishment and ordered to pay £50 costs.

He has since repaid a total of £2,470 to the trust.

The committee heard that, while employed by the Welsh Ambulance Service Trust as an

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ambulance training officer, it was revealed he was offering an Institute of Healthcare Development (IHD) ambulance training manual for sale on internet auction site eBay.

Police were informed and an investigation was carried out, leading to his arrest on October 3, 2005, and a search of his home.

A number of items were recovered and when he was interviewed, he admitted stealing various items from the trust.

He was immediately suspended and resigned on October 21, 2005.

According to a probation report prepared for the magistrates court, Thorne, who has been working as a trainer for a private ambulance service, stole the goods because of the amount of debt he was in.

Panel chair Sandy Yule, giving the decision, told him: "You have admitted stealing a considerable amount of property from your employer. This is an abuse of trust and brings the profession into disrepute."



Woman died when 999 man clocked off

A WOMAN died after a paramedic stopped off at an ambulance station to change shift rather than take her straight to hospital.

Royden Harrill was yesterday allowed to keep his job despite being found guilty of unprofessional conduct over the woman's death from a heart attack minutes after he clocked off.

The 37-year-old paramedic was told the patient was 'acutely unwell' when he and a junior colleague collected her from a GPs' surgery, a disciplinary panel of the Health Professions Council heard.

But he failed to perform a proper diagnostic test and, rather than drive her straight to hospital, requested a changeover of crews because he was five minutes from the end of his shift.

The panel heard that Harrill drove to Malmesbury ambulance station in Wiltshire without his emergency blue lights flashing and with the woman, whose condition was deteriorating rapidly, in the back.

He and the colleague swapped with a night crew who headed immediately for the Royal United Hospital in Bath. But the woman went into cardiac arrest and, despite attempts to resuscitate her, died before they got there.

The panel heard that Harrill's actions were contrary to rules banning crews from changing shift in an emergency and represented 'a reckless disregard of procedures and practices'.

Harrill, a paramedic instructor with a previously unblemished 15-year record, was found guilty of unprofessional conduct but allowed to keep his job under several conditions, including that he undergo tests on his patient assessment skills.

The panel said he had 'identified errors of judgment' and that such conduct 'is unlikely to occur again'. A spokesman for the Great Western Ambulance Service confirmed that Harrill was still working as a paramedic and said there were no plans to dismiss him.