

**draft****The Health Professions Council**

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MINUTES of the twenty-second meeting of the Communications Committee held at **11:00am on Wednesday 24 October 2007** at the Health Professions Council, Park House, 184 Kennington Park Road, London, SE11 4BU.

**Present:** Mrs A Turner (Chairman)  
 Mr O Altay (for items 7 – 21)  
 Mrs M Clark-Glass  
 Ms C Farrell  
 Mrs D Haggerty  
 Miss M MacKellar  
 Mr M Woolcock

**In attendance:**

Mr C Bendall, Secretary to Committees  
 Miss N Blunck, Public Affairs Manager  
 Ms T Fraser, Temporary Administrator/Secretary to Committees  
 Mr T Heiser, Events Manager  
 Mrs J Ladds, Director of Communications  
 Ms P Richardson, Publications Manager  
 Mr G Ross-Sampson, Director of Operations  
 Ms V Smyth, Communications Manager  
 Ms R Tripp, Director of Policy and Standards

**Item 1.07/18 Election of the Chairman**

- 1.1 The Vice-Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed Mr M Woolcock to his first committee meeting.
- 1.2 The Vice-Chairman noted that the position of Chairman was vacant, and asked for nominations. Mrs Clark-Glass proposed that Vice-Chairman should be nominated as Chairman and this was seconded by Miss MacKellar. There were no other nominations and the Vice-Chairman was nominated as Chairman.

- 1.3 The Chairman asked for nominations for the position of Vice-Chairman. The Committee agreed to nominate Mr M Woolcock as Vice-Chairman. There were no other nominations.

**Action: NO'S (by 13 December 2007)**

**Item 2.07/19 Apologies for absence**

- 2.1 Apologies for absence were received from the President and Mrs S Griffiths.
- 2.2 The Committee noted that the Chief Executive and Registrar was unable to attend.

**Item 3.07/20 Approval of agenda**

- 3.1 The Communications Committee approved the agenda.

**Item 4.07/21 Minutes of the Communications Committee held on 24 May 2007**

- 4.1 It was agreed that the minutes of the twenty-first meeting of the Communications Committee be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

**Item 5.07/22 Matters arising**

- 5.1 It was noted that the following matters arising were addressed later in the agenda;

1. Patient and Public Involvement report
2. Director of Communications Report
3. Committee Self-Evaluation:
4. Strategy and Workplan:
5. Update on Website Developments:
6. Listening Event Evaluation Reports:

- 5.2 It was noted that the comments from the last meeting on the Partner Conference Evaluation Report would inform future evaluations.

**Item 6.07/22 Director of Communications' report**

- 6.1 The Director of Communications informed the Committee that her replacement while she was on maternity leave would be Ms R Tripp

(as acting Director of Communications). She also noted that Ms Smyth would be taking maternity leave from March 2008.

6.2 The Chairman wished Mrs Ladds and Ms Smyth well.

### **Item 7.07/23 Committee self-evaluation**

- 7.1 The Communications Committee received a paper for discussion/approval from the Executive.
- 7.2 The Committee noted that in the first section that dealt with operational issues, the ratings were 'good' and 'very good', while items focused on looking forward, the future of the committee and expertise contained more 'fair' ratings.
- 7.3 The Committee noted that many of the Committee members were new at the time of the evaluation and that methods could be put in place to get new members up to speed.
- 7.4 The Committee noted that the Executive felt that it was valuable to get feedback from registrant members' perspectives. It was also noted that having a good Chairman was more important than having a communications expert to chair meetings. It was suggested that a communications expert could be co-opted onto the Committee or that capacity in communicating with the public needed to be built outside the Committee process.
- 7.5 The Committee noted that the evaluation form and the process around it was to be revised, based on suggestions from the Council Away day.
- 7.6 The Committee congratulated the Communications Director and her team, noting that the Committee had improved greatly, and that the members felt positive about its work.
- 7.7 The Committee noted that there were large gaps between meetings, and felt that one more meeting a year, or a more informal event (such as an 'away day') might be appropriate. This would build on the enthusiasm of committee members, and help to address the need to be more forward-looking. The Communications Director agreed to discuss the possibility of an additional event with the Chairman and the Secretary to Council.

**Action: JL (by November 2007)**

**Item 8.07/24 Report on the Communications workplan progress from 1 April 2007 to 30 September 2007**

- 8.1 The Communications Committee received a paper from the Director of Communications to note. The Committee received a progress report on the Communications Department's progress from 1 April 2007 to 30 September 2007 on achieving the objectives in the communications strategy. An outline of planned work for the next six months under each objective was also provided.
- 8.2 The Committee thanked the Communications Department for its high quality work in the last six months.
- 8.3 The Committee noted that there was flexibility in the workplan to re-prioritise and deal with unexpected developments (e.g. changes of government). For example, capacity had been built in to respond to possible changes as a result of the White Paper.
- 8.4 A member asked if there was a process for ensuring Council members and alternates were informed of decisions from Professional Liaison Group (PLG) meetings. It was noted that although there was no formal process, all PLG papers went on the website, updates were provided in the 'HPC In Focus' newsletter, and the minutes went to the Council. This raised the wider issue of how the HPC supported alternates, which the Executive planned to consider in the future.

**Action: NO'S (Ongoing)**

- 8.5 A member asked whether the workplan had the right balance between targeted groups (e.g. registrants, parliamentarians) and the public and patients. The Committee noted that the Executive felt that the balance was right, and was more focussed on the public and patients. The Committee also discussed communication with professionals (both registrants and other advocates such as Age Concern) as conduits for information to the public.
- 8.6 It was suggested that the Committee discuss at a future meeting what the balance should be between targeted groups and patients and the public, as well as which approaches were most effective.

**Action: JL (by May 2008)**

### **Item 9.07/25 Communicating with the public – campaign update**

- 9.1 The Communications Committee received a presentation from the Communications Manager. She discussed work over the past six months to build HPC's profile, advocacy campaigns targeted at the public, referrers and registrants, and public relations activities focused on raising HPC's profile with key health and consumer journalists.
- 9.2 One member asked if HPC provided a clinic pack, noting that provision of a frame/mount with HPC branding for registrants to display their registration certificates might be an effective communication device.
- 9.3 The Committee noted that current Yellow Pages advertising by the HPC was aimed at the chiropractors and physiotherapists categories, because a large proportion of them were in private practice. Depending on how successful it was, more professions might be targeted in future years.

### **Item 10.07/26 HPC In Focus – electronic newsletter report**

- 10.1 The Communications Committee received a presentation from the Publications Manager. She discussed the results of a survey of the electronic newsletter, 'HPC In Focus'. The results on the whole were very positive, and the Publications Manager would work on suggestions for improvements for the next issue.
- 10.2 The Committee noted that the percentages under the heading 'Breakdown of professions/respondents' were in fact meant to be the actual numbers of respondents in each category. The Committee noted that the response rate was around 3% of readers. The Committee noted that recipients of the newsletter often forwarded it on and suggested that this could be explored further in future surveys.

### **Item 11.07/27 Public Affairs and Stakeholders report**

- 11.1 The Communications Committee received a paper from the Public Affairs Manager to note. She discussed how the majority of her work had been focussed on employers and Parliamentarians as priority stakeholders and that the next step would be to provide a co-ordinated approach to working with professional bodies and increasing stakeholder activity in the four home countries.

- 11.2 The Committee commended the Public Affairs Manager on her work to date. They also noted the need for HPC to be seen on the platform with other healthcare regulators at stakeholder events. It was noted that it might be useful in the future to engage with local councils and councillors in order to disseminate information.
- 11.3 There was a discussion on the need to have a good database of employers that included NHS and private practices and more generally for HPC to develop a better understanding of the different ways and places in which registrants engaged in work.

### **Item 12.07/28 Patient and Public Involvement report**

- 12.1 The Committee received a paper from the Director of Communications to note. She discussed how Shepherd Taylor Partnership had been commissioned to undertake a scoping exercise of HPC's patient and public involvement (PPI) activities. Their findings included four recommendations, which would be addressed through existing or forthcoming workplan activities.
- 12.2 The Committee suggested that there was a need for a debate on PPI at a future meeting. This would address the use of language; embedding PPI in the organisation's culture, and the need to be action focused. The Committee agreed with the word 'fresh' to describe HPC's modern approach to regulation. In terms of public and patient involvement, the Committee agreed that lay members of the Council did not remain outsiders for long but became part of the organisation. The Committee noted that it was important to decide on next steps.
- 12.3 The Committee noted that some of the papers to note might have been more appropriately included as papers for discussion/approval.

### **Item 13.07/29 Committee membership**

- 13.1 The Communications Committee received a paper from the Executive. The Committee noted that Mr M Woolcock had been appointed to the Committee.

### **Item 14.07/30 Standing orders**

- 14.1 The Communications Committee received a paper from the Executive to note.

**Item 15.07/31 Date of Committee meetings 2008-09**

- 15.1 The Communications Committee received a paper from the Executive to note. The Committee noted that an additional 'away day' style meeting would be investigated for next year.

The Committee received the following papers for information:

**Item 16.07/32 Listening Events Evaluation report**

**Item 17.07/33 External Exhibition Evaluation report**

**Item 18.07/34 Website Statistics report**

**Item 19.07/35 Press Coverage report**

**Item 20.07/36 Any other business**

- 20.1 There was no other business.

**Item 21.07/37 Date and time of next meeting**

- 21.1 The next meeting of the Communications Committee would be at 11:00am on Monday 25 February 2007.