

**Health Professions Council
Council Meeting – 31 May 2007**

SECRETARIAT WORKPLAN

Executive Summary and Recommendations

Introduction

The attached document is a workplan for the Secretariat for the financial year 2007/2008. The document sets out the Secretariats projects and priorities for the year ahead. This is the first time Council has considered a workplan from the Secretariat.

Decision

The Council is asked to:

- Discuss the workplan
- Agree to keep the document under review and request that the Executive amend the workplan as appropriate and bring it back to Council in 6 months time.

Background information

None

Resource implications

The resource implications are discussed as part of the document.

Financial implications

The workplan's assumptions form part of the agreed budget for the Secretariat department for 2007/8.

Appendices

None

Date of paper

21 May 2007

Secretariat Department

2007 – 2008 Work Plan

Niamh O'Sullivan

May 2007

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2007-05-22	a	SEC	AGD	Secretariat Workplan	Final DD: None	Public RD: None

Introduction

The HPC Secretariat was established in January 2004. Its role is to support the Council, committees and profession liaison groups of the HPC so that they are carry out their governance role effectively. The Secretariat works closely with the President, Chairmen and members of Council and with members of the Executive in providing this support.

Main Areas of Responsibility

The Secretariat main areas of responsibility are:

- (i) Provision of support, and implementation of best practice in relation to support, of Council and Committees
- (ii) Implementation of governance processes and procedures which have been agreed by Council
- (iii) Work with Council and Committees in review and updating of standing orders and related documents
- (iv) Organisation of induction and on-going training of members as agreed with the President and members
- (v) Provision of information for members in the form of a members' information pack and members' extranet
- (vi) Design of members' self-assessment system for agreement by Council, organisation of members performance reviews and implementation of required follow-up
- (vii) Work with the Electoral Reform Services in the management of the annual elections
- (viii) Work with the Appointments Commission and the HPC President in the management of the recruitment process for the appointment of lay members
- (ix) Organisation of annual meeting and Council away day
- (x) Preparation of timetable for, and drafting content of, annual report
- (xi) Drafting policies and procedures in relation to the Freedom of Information Act and Data Protection Act

This document

This document: This document sets out the Secretariat workplan for the year 2007/2008. However, as explained below, it should be noted that the workload of the Secretariat over the coming year will be impacted by the timetable for the implementation of the governance changes proposed in the White Paper.

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Resources

The Secretariat consists of four employees as follows;

Colin Bendall	Secretary to Committees
Sophie Butcher	Secretary to Committees
Niamh O'Sullivan	Secretary to Council
Alison Roberts	Team Administrator

Secretary to Committees

The support of Committees is divided between two committee secretaries. The distribution of some of the other activities undertaken by the Secretariat, i.e. organisation of members' induction and training, performance review etc, between the two posts recognises the fact that the workload in support of some committees is higher than that for others.

Secretary to Council

The Secretary to Council is responsible for the management of the department. The Secretary provides support to the Council. A major part of this work involves drafting governance policies and processes for agreement by Council.

Team Administrator

The team administrator provides administrative support for the department and organises the Council away day and annual meeting. She also works with the finance department in the administration of members' claims.

Secretariat Activities 2007 – 2008

Support for Council and Committees

The provision of secretariat support for Council and its Committees will continue to be the main focus of the Secretariat's activities. Currently the Secretariat supports the Council, four statutory committees and three non-statutory committees.

Following a Council decision in March 2007 the Secretariat will take over provision of Secretariat support for the Chairs Liaison Group and will also support the three Professional Liaison Groups which are due to be set up this year.

The Secretariat will also work with the President to review the format of Council agendas and meetings to ensure that these allow the Council to engage in strategic planning and to make best use of members' time.

The timescale for completion of this objective is ongoing

This activity links to risks 1.1, 4.1 and 4.3 of the risk register.

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Members' Training

Since the inception of the Council all members have taken part in a series of induction days. The Secretariat will continue to organise induction days for new members following election and appointment.

The Secretariat has worked with the HPC Parliamentary Agent to provide members and the executive with training on the Council's responsibilities under the Health Professions Order 2001. Similar training sessions will be organised for new members of Council and the Executive over the autumn of 2007.

In line with the equality and diversity project plan, training on equality and diversity issues has been planned for 9 July 2007 and has been offered to all members.

The Secretariat will work with the Audit Committee in organising an annual training session for the Committee and also in sourcing other training in line with the Committee's needs.

Following analysis of the members' self-assessment reviews further training will be offered to individual members as required.

This activity links to risks 4.3, 4.5 and 4.6 of the risk register.

The timescale for completion of this objective is – July – December 2007

Provision of Information for Members

A members' information pack was first produced in February 2004. Since that date it has been updated on an annual basis and the content has expanded considerably year on year. Members were issued with updates for the pack in March of this year and planning is already underway for next year's version. The Secretariat plans to undertake a review of the information pack which will involve gaining feedback from members on how they use the pack and how this could be amended or expanded to meet their needs.

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Feedback regarding the pack and suggested amendments will be given consideration in the production of the update.

This activity links to risk 4.1 and 4.5 of the risk register.

The timescale for completion of this objective is – February 2008.

Members' Extranet

During the past year the Secretariat has established a members' extranet. This is accessible to all Council and non-Council Committee members and some members of the Executive. All updated Council policies are available on the extranet. There is also a news section and an information board. Progress in encouraging members to use the extranet is proceeding steadily. It is envisaged that in 2007-2008 the Secretariat will undertake further work in promoting this facility and will gather feedback from members on how they use the site and what they wish the site to contain. Following this the content will be expanded in line with users' needs.

The timescale for completion of this objective is – August 2007 - ongoing

This activity links to risks 4.5 of the risk register.

Members' Self-Assessment System

Over the course of the past year the Secretariat has worked with the President and the Council in the design and implementation of a competency based self-assessment system. Telephone and face-to-face interviews have been organised with the President for all members. The Secretariat will be working with the President to evaluate the system. As agreed by Council the results of the evaluation will be fed back to Council at the away day in October.

The timescale for completion of this objective is – October 2007

This activity links to risks 4.5 and 4.6 of the risk register.

Members' Skills Audit

In March 2007 the Council agreed to undertake an audit of members' skills in relation to their work on the Council. The Secretariat will work with the President in administering the skills audit and preparing a database of the results. Further work in this area will be undertaken when the White Paper proposals are implemented.

The timescale for completion of this objective is May 2007 and ongoing

This activity links to risks 4.3, 4.5 and 4.10 of the risk register.

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Regulators' Governance Group

Over the past year the Secretary to Council has taken the lead in working with other regulators in setting up a governance group to compare processes and discuss issues of common interest. The group met for the first time in July 2006. To date there have been 3 meetings. There are currently 15 members. A group emailing system has also been established and members meet on an individual basis from time-to-time. The Secretary to Council will take the lead over the coming year in expanding the membership of the group and also in organising further meetings.

The timescale for completion of this objective is – ongoing.

This activity links to risk 4.1 of the risk register.

Impact of the White Paper

The White Paper, Trust, Assurance and Safety – The Regulation of Health Professionals in the 21st Century has proposed a number of changes in the governance arrangements of the 9 health regulators. These proposed changes include smaller Councils which will be appointed by the Appointments Commission. It is also proposed that registrant members will no longer have alternates. The changes will require a Section 60 Order and amendments to the relevant rules. The Secretariat will work with the HPC Parliamentary Agent and the Department of Health to ensure that the new rules are agreed by Council and delivered to the Privy Council according to an agreed timetable.

Currently the Secretariat works with the Electoral Reform Services (ERS) to organise and run the series of annual elections. It would appear from the current timetable for the implementation of the changes proposed in the White Paper that it is unlikely that there will be elections in the spring of 2008 and that in the future all members will be appointed. The Secretariat will work with the President and the Appointments Commission in the appointments and reappointments process.

The timescale for completion of this objective is – tba

This activity links to risks 4.10 of the risk register.

Document Retention, Freedom of Information and Data Protection

During the past year the Secretariat has established a searchable electronic storage facility for the retention of Council and Committee papers. All Council and Committee papers are uploaded onto the system. The Secretariat is working with the Information Technology Department to enable all members of the Executive to have access to this facility.

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The Secretariat has assumed responsibility for recording and ensuring that requests for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI Act) are actioned within the timetable set out in the HPC FOI publication scheme. The Secretariat will be carrying out a review of the HPCs policies relating to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998 to ensure that these are in line with best practice.

The timescale for completion of this objective is April 2008.

Review of Standing Orders and Related Documents

Since its inception in April 2002 the Council has agreed a number of governance documents. These are updated as required. The Secretariat will work with the President, the Council and the Executive in ensuring that these documents are kept up to date and that they continue to be fit for purpose.

This activity links to risks 4.3 of the risk register.

The timescale for completion of this objective is ongoing.

Privy Council – Relationship Management

During the past year the Secretary to Council has become responsible for the management of the HPC's relationship with the Privy Council Office and also the management of processes associated with changes to the Health Professions Order 2001, the Rules and other related legislation. Over the coming year this work will involve working with the HPC Parliamentary agent and the Department of Health on the Section 60 Order relating to the regulation of the Applied Psychologists and also working on charges to legislation following adoption of the EU new general directive.

In order for the Health Professions Council to carry out its functions effectively it has become apparent that it will be necessary to amend certain sections of the Health Professions Order 2001 and the related rules. Over the coming year the Secretariat will take the lead in raising the profile of this future project among members of Council and the Executive. The Secretariat will create a central database which will record all the amendments needed and will facilitate discussions between the Executive and the Department of Health regarding a timetable for the implementation of these amendments.

The timescale for completion of this objective is July 2007 – April 2008

This activity links to risk 14.4 of the risk register.

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Team Development

The Secretariat is a small department which provides a wide range of services to Council and Committee members and the executive. Team members undertake relevant training in order to maintain and improve the quality and the range of services provided. As part of the annual performance and development review system a programme of development which is tailored to the specific requirements of each team members' role is agreed. For the coming year the following has been put in place;

Colin Bendall – Secretary to Committees

Support in attending courses outside of work time in order to undertake the qualifying exams for membership of the Institute of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators (ICSA).

Sophie Butcher – Secretary to Committees

Training in relation to Freedom of Information and Data Protection Acts.

Niamh O'Sullivan – Secretary to Council

Completion of process for becoming a fellow of the Institute of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators

Alison Roberts- Team Administrator

Training in advanced excel and use of databases.

The timescale for completion of this objective is ongoing.

This activity links to risk 14.4 of the risk register.

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Appendix 1: Achieving Secretariat Objectives in 2007-2008

Objective	Activity	Risk Register Item	Start Date	Completion Date	Lead
Facilitate the governance role of Council and Committees	Provision of support the Council, Committees, Chairmen's Liaison Group and PLGs	1.1 4.1 4.3	April 2007	Ongoing	Team
Members' Development & Training	Provision of induction and Health Professions Order Training for new members Provision of equality and diversity training for all members Updating members' information pack Review and promotion of members' extranet Review of members' competency based self-assessment system currently being piloted Co-ordination of members' skills audit	4.3 4.5 4.6 4.1 4.5 4.5 4.5 4.6 4.3 4.5 4.10	June 2007	Ongoing	SB ¹ SB SB SB NO'S/ SB NO'S/ AR
Sharing of governance information among regulators	Organisation of email contact and meetings of governance leads from regulators,	4.1	Ongoing	Ongoing	NO'S

¹ Sophie Butcher

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Ensure an effective appointments process for Council members	Work with the President and the Appointments Commission in the appointments and re-appointments process	4.10	Ongoing	Ongoing	NO'S
Ensure that HPC's FOI and Data Protection policies are in line with best practice	Review of HPC's policies relating to FOI and Data Protection		July 2007	April 2008	NO'S/SB
Ensure standing orders etc are up-to-date and in line with best practice	Work with President to ensure that documents are amended as required	4.3	April 2007	Ongoing	NO'S ²
Relationship with Privy Council	Management of amendments to legislation	14.4	July 2007	April 2008	NO'S
Team Development	Put in place a personal training programme for each team member	14.4	April 2007	April 2008	Team

² Niamh O'Sullivan

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