

Education and Training Committee

Public minutes of the 49th meeting of the Education and Training Committee held as follows:

Date: Thursday 9 June 2011

Time: 10:30 am

Venue: The Council Chamber, Health Professions Council, Park House, 184 Kennington Park Road, London SE11 4BU

Members:

Eileen Thornton (Chair)	Gill Pearson
Gerald Armstrong-Bednall	Penny Renwick (Items 1-5)
Mary Clark-Glass	Jeff Seneviratne
Helen Davis	Robert Smith
John Donaghy	Jois Stansfield
John Harper	Annie Turner
Stephen Hutchins	Joy Tweed
Jeff Lucas	Diane Waller
Arun Midha (Items 1-5)	Stephen Wordsworth

In attendance:

Osama Ammar, Acting Head of Education Development
Liz Craig, Education PA
Alison Croad, Policy Officer
Anna van der Gaag, Chair of the Council
Abigail Gorringer, Director of Education
Michael Guthrie, Director of Policy and Standards
Steve Rayner, Secretary to the Committee
Marc Seale, Chief Executive
Tracey Samuel Smith, Education Manager
Charlotte Urwin, Policy Manager

Part 1 – Public Agenda

Item 1 Chair's introduction

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed the members to the Committee.

Item 2 Apologies for absence

- 2.1 Apologies were received from Deep Sagar and Stuart Mackay.

Item 3 Approval of agenda

- 3.1 The Committee approved the agenda.
- 3.2 A member raised the issue of commendations in visitor reports, and whether it was appropriate for HPC to continue to issue commendations. The Committee agreed to discuss the issue under item 12 – Education annual report 2010.

Item 4 Declaration of members' interests

- 4.1 There were no declarations of interest.

Item 5 Minutes of the meeting of 10 March 2011 (ETC 23/11)

- 5.1 The minutes were accepted as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

Item 6 Matters arising from previous meetings (ETC 24/11)

- 6.1 The Committee noted that the list of actions agreed at previous meetings.

Item 7 Director of Education's report (ETC 25/11)

- 7.1 The Committee received a paper from the Director of Education detailing the work of the Education Department (the Department) between March and June 2011 and providing updates on ongoing projects.
- 7.2 The Committee noted that the report had two new sections, which would be included in future reports. A summary of complaints processed by the Department between 2009 and 2012 had been included following a request by the Committee at its meeting of 10 March 2011. The report also included a table detailing the number of approved programmes by profession.

- 7.3 The Committee noted the department had undertaken analysis of the complaint data as part of an internal process review, but the data range was too small to draw significant trends from.
- 7.4 The Committee noted that a new permanent structure for the Department had been agreed. Brendon Edmonds and Paula Lescott had been appointed as Education Managers. Osama Ammar would remain in the role of Acting Head of Education Development until August when he would leave HPC to become the Head of Education at the Academy for Healthcare Science.
- 7.5 The Committee congratulated Mr Ammar on his appointment, and thanked him for all of his work.
- 7.6 The Committee noted the Director's report.

Item 8 Outcomes of consultation on post-registration qualifications (ETC 26/11)

- 8.1 The Committee received a paper for discussion/approval from the Executive outlining responses to a consultation on HPC proposals regarding post registration qualifications and the annotation of the HPC register.
- 8.2 The Health Professions Order 2001 included powers for the HPC to approve and record post-registration qualifications. The consultation had been undertaken as part of work to develop criteria by which HPC should decide whether to record a post registration qualification as an annotation on the register. The consultation also asked stakeholders for their views on annotating qualifications in neuropsychology and podiatric surgery on the register.
- 8.3 The paper included a summary of the responses to the consultation, and a discussion paper from the Executive. The discussion paper included analysis of the consultation responses and recommendations for further work.
- 8.4 The Committee held a discussion of the paper, during which the following points were made:
 - 8.4.1 Annotation had the potential to make the Register clearer for lay people.
 - 8.4.2 The Council's decision to annotate must be based on risk. It should only be considered when the Council is satisfied that a specific annotation was necessary in order to improve public protection. There should be a clear evidence base for such a decision.
 - 8.4.3 The assessment of risk should be based on evidence of harm, or evidence that the standards did not adequately protect the public, rather than on hypothetical risk.

- 8.4.4 The Council should only decide to annotate the register for a post registration qualification when it was satisfied that that the scope of practice for that area put the public at risk that was not already covered by the standards of proficiency. As the professionals already worked within an existing regulatory structure, it was important that any policy on annotation was both proportionate to the risks posed and cost-effective.
- 8.4.5 HPC's new professions process already included provision for the Council to recommend statutory registration for professions which included high risk factors as part of their scope of practice such as:
- invasive procedures;
 - interventions with the potential for harm; or
 - exercise of judgement which can substantially impact on health or welfare.
- 8.4.6 Healthcare practitioners regularly moved between scopes of practice throughout their careers.
- 8.4.7 It was the nature of professions to develop, grow and often change in scope. Specialisations which may be candidates for annotation could become standard practice in a profession over time. If the Council decided to annotate the Register for certain professions it would need to consider the process by which it would remove obsolete annotations.
- 8.4.8 Any criteria for annotation must ensure public protection over and above that which is already provided by special interest lists maintained by professional bodies. The HPC should be careful to avoid replicating the role of professional bodies. It was important therefore that the HPC only annotated the Register in exceptional circumstances.
- 8.4.9 As a public authority it was part of the HPC's role to publish information that helped the public assess their own safety. Nevertheless many HPC registrants performed roles outside their profession's typical scope of practice. It would be impossible to publish or even capture data on all of these roles.
- 8.4.10 The question was asked; whether there was sufficient evidence that annotation of the Register for specialisms would increase public protection?
- 8.4.11 If evidence became available that annotation increased public protection it would be appropriate for the Committee to consider recommending the practice to the Council. In order to be proportionate in the use of its powers, the Council should only consider annotation if there was a proven risk that the public would not be protected without it.

8.5 The Committee agreed that it would not be proportionate to recommend that the Council annotate the register to record post registration qualifications until it had evidence that annotating the register increased public protection.

8.6 The Committee agreed that any public statement should set out the HPC's approach to 'annotation of the Register' rather than to 'post-registration qualifications' to provide greater clarity about the purpose of the statement.

ACTION: Policy Manager to provide a paper to the Committee on 8 September 2011 comprising:

- And investigation into the evidence base for annotating the register;
- draft criteria by which the Council would consider annotation; and
- a draft public statement on annotation.

Item 9 Consultation on draft standards of proficiency for social workers in England (ETC 27/11)

9.1 The Committee received a paper for discussion/approval from the Executive which provided a draft consultation on the HPC's proposals regarding draft standards of proficiency for social workers in England.

9.2 In July 2010, the government published the 'Liberating the NHS: Report of the arms-length bodies review' report. This report outlined the government's intentions to abolish the General Social Care Council (GSCC) in England and transfer its regulatory function to the HPC. The Health and Social Care Bill which sets out the detail of the transfer was published in January 2011.

9.3 As part of the preparations for the transfer of the register the Council was required to approve standards of proficiency for social workers in England. The HPC had set up a professional liaison group (PLG) of key stakeholders to help prepare the standards, which were included within the text of the consultation document.

9.4 The Committee recommended that the Council approve the consultation on the draft standards of proficiency for social workers in England.

ACTION: Policy Manager to submit the Committee's recommendation, as outlined in paragraph 9.5, to the Council on 7 July 2011.

Item 10 Consultation on the threshold level of qualification for entry to the Register for social workers in England (ETC 28/11)

10.1 The Committee received a paper for discussion/approval from the Executive which provided a draft consultation on the threshold level of qualification for entry to the Register for social workers in England.

10.2 Every time the HPC opened a new part of the Register it was required to amend the standards of education and training to set the threshold level of qualification for the incoming profession.

10.3 The Committee recommended that the Council approve the consultation on the threshold level of qualification for social workers in England.

ACTION: Policy Manager to submit the Committee's recommendation, as outlined in paragraph 10.4, to the Council on 7 July 2011.

Item 11 Ownership of the curriculum framework for supplementary and independent prescribing (ETC 29/11)

11.1 The Committee received a paper for discussion/approval from the Executive regarding a request by the Department of Health (DH) for the HPC to take ownership of the curriculum framework for independent and supplementary prescribing. The paper also provided views of professional bodies about the ownership of the framework and analysis from the Executive.

11.2 The DH was developing the curriculum framework as part of the project to extend independent prescribing rights to chiropodists/podiatrists and physiotherapists. The Committee had received regular updates on the project, most recently at its meeting of 10 March 2011.

11.3 The Committee recommended that the HPC was not the appropriate body to take ownership of the outline curriculum framework for education providers to prepare Allied Health Professionals as independent and supplementary prescribers. In reaching this recommendation, the Committee provided the following reasoning:

11.3.1 The HPC fully supports the principle that it is the role of professional bodies to own, promote and develop scopes of practice and curricula.

11.3.2 Whilst acknowledging that some regulators own the curriculum framework for their profession, the HPC does not administer curriculum frameworks for any of its 15 constituent professions. Ownership of a framework, whether for individual or for groups of professions, would create a significant inconsistency in HPC's business model.

11.3.3 The Committee noted the conclusion of the consultation that other bodies specifically intended to promote inter-professional learning, such as the Allied Health Professions Federation, may be better placed to take ownership of the framework.

ACTION: Policy Manager to submit the Committee's recommendation as outlined in paragraphs 11.4 to the Council on 7 July 2011.

Item 12 Education annual report 2010 (ETC 30/11)

- 12.1 The Committee received a paper for discussion/approval from the Executive providing a draft of the fifth annual report of statistical information and analysis relating to the HPC approval and annual monitoring processes.
- 12.2 The report covered the academic year 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010, and would be subject to the HPC publication process before publication.

Visitors reports

- 12.3 The Committee noted that 37% of visitors' reports had taken longer to produce than the service level target of 28 days.. There was no clear reason for this significant number of reports being produced outside of 28 days, although work was being done in a number of areas to improve the compliance rate. Education managers reviewed this data regularly, and in the academic year 2010/11, the number of reports taking longer than 28 days was substantially less than 37%.
- 12.4 The Committee agreed that the data for visitors' reports should be kept under review. If the target of 28 days was unrealistic in the light of the changing circumstances of visitors reports (for instance an increase in the frequency of Education Provider observations) the target should be reviewed.

Commendations in visitors reports

- 12.5 The Committee noted the data on commendations awarded to programmes as part of HPC visitor reports.
- 12.6 Observations from an increasing number of education providers indicated that the HPC policy of providing commendations only in exceptional circumstances had the potential to cause resentment. Particularly when programme had been given commendations by other reviewing bodies.
- 12.7 The Committee asked the Executive to provide analysis on the usefulness of commendations, particularly in the context of the broader quality assurance agenda.

ACTION: Director of Education to provide a paper to the Committee on 8 September 2011 on the effectiveness of issuing commendations in visitor reports.

- 12.8 The Committee approved the text of the annual report, subject to minor editing changes. The Committee agreed that the relevant statistical information should be published on the HPC website.

Item 13 An introduction to HPC's education processes (ETC 31/11)

13.1 The Committee received a paper for discussion/approval from the Executive introducing a publication which brought together information on the HPC approval and monitoring processes to make it easier to understand for education providers and other stakeholders.

13.2 The Committee approved the text, and agreed that, subject to minor editing changes, the document: 'An introduction to our education processes' should be published.

Item 14 Withdrawal of approval from historic programmes (ETC 32/11)

14.1 The Committee received a paper for discussion/approval from the Executive providing a list of approved education programmes that are recorded as closed. These programmes either have no students, or have students but are no longer recruiting additional cohorts.

14.2 At its meeting on 27 September 2007 the Committee agreed the process for withdrawal of approval from closed programmes to ensure that education providers could not re-establish training programmes which led to HPC registration.

14.3 The Committee agreed:

- that the programmes listed in appendix 1 of paper ETC 32/11, which have submitted their consent, have their ongoing approval status withdrawn; and
- that the programmes listed in appendix 2 of paper ETC 32/11, which have not submitted their consent, have their ongoing approval status withdrawn.

ACTION: Director of Education to write to the providers of programmes listed in appendices 1 and 2 of paper ETC 32/11 with the Committee's decision to withdraw approval from those programmes recorded as closed.

Item 15 Practitioner Psychologists - list of approved programmes (ETC 33/11)

15.1 The Committee received a paper for discussion/approval from the Executive regarding revisions to the published list of practitioner psychologist programmes approved by the HPC.

15.2 The paper provided proposed changes to the list of approved programmes resulting from information received by the Education Department on intake dates not already identified. The Committee had considered similar changes to the list at previous meetings.

15.3 The Committee accepted the amendments to the currently approved programmes outlined in Appendix 1 of paper ETC 33/11; and the

amendments to the historically approved programmes outlined in Appendix 2 of paper ETC 13/11.

Item 16 Approved mental health professionals (AMHPs) (ETC 34/11)

- 16.1 The Committee received a paper for discussion/approval from the Executive providing regarding a provision of the Health and Social Care Bill 2011, that statutory responsibility to approve the training programmes of AMHP's should pass from the GSCC to the HPC.
- 16.2 The paper provided an analysis of the provision from the Executive, along with recommendations for further work.
- 16.3 The Committee noted that proposals included an option to annotate the register to record AMHP qualifications, although HPC was not required by the legislation to do so.
- 16.4 The Committee noted that there was not an absolute link between holding an AMHP qualification and performing the functions of an AMHP. Local authorities have to approve individuals before they can act as AMHPs in line with statutory requirements. Therefore, if the qualification was annotated, this would only denote that a practitioner was eligible to be appointed by a local authority to exercise the functions of an AMHP under mental health legislation.
- 16.5 In terms of the logistics of annotating the Register, the Committee noted that there was no existing central record of GSCC and HPC registrants holding an AMHP qualification or who were approved as AMHPs, although local authorities maintained their own local records of approval.
- 16.6 The Committee noted its earlier decision; that it would not be proportionate to recommend that the Council annotate the register to record post registration qualifications until it had evidence that annotating the register increased public protection.
- 16.7 The Committee noted the information outlined in the paper about how the Executive intended to manage the HPC's forthcoming responsibilities to approve AMHP programmes against published criteria.
- 16.8 In light of its discussion of this paper, and its previous discussion on post-registration qualifications, the Committee was not minded to agree that AMHP qualifications should be annotated on the Register at this time.

Item 17 Transfer of regulatory functions from the GSCC to HPC (35/11)

- 17.1 The Committee received a verbal update from the Chief Executive regarding the project to transfer regulatory function from the GSCC to the HPC.

17.2 At the Council meeting on 14 October 2010, the Council agreed that there would be a standing item on every Council and Committee agenda, whereby the Executive would update the meeting on the progress of the project. As the project was developing rapidly, a verbal report on progress would be made to each meeting.

Transition project

17.3 Various work was ongoing with GSCC in advance of the transfer. This included preparations by IT, Operations and Fitness to Practise to test the data transfer and work on the approvals process by Education.

Social work reform board

17.4 The Chair of the Council provided an overview of the work of the Social Work Reform Board, of which she was a member.

17.5 The Social Work Reform Board (SWRB) was set up to take forward the recommendations of the Social Work Task Force for the reform of social work, led by the social work sector itself. It brought together employers of social workers, educators, regulators, service users, government and the social work profession itself, to bring about social work reform.

17.6 The Reform Board had five key strategic aims:

- an overarching professional standards framework, to inform the design and implementation of education and training and the national career structure for social workers;
- standards for employers and a supervision framework, setting out the work conditions social workers need for safe and effective social work practice;
- principles for a continuing professional development framework, for social workers to develop specialist knowledge and improve their practice;
- proposed requirements for social work education, to give students the right skills and knowledge to join the profession; and
- proposals for effective partnership working, to provide better practice placements for degree students, and continuing professional development (CPD) for social workers.

17.7 The Board had strong links to Professor Eileen Munro's review of frontline child protection. This review built on the foundations being laid by the SWRB, and particularly highlighted the importance that CPD would play in supporting the learning culture of the profession.

The Committee noted the following papers:

- Item 18 Revalidation research project reports (ETC 36/11)**
- Item 19 Policy and Standards Department workplan 2011-12 (ETC 37/11)**
- Item 20 Voluntary registration of students (ETC 38/11)**
- Item 21 Service user involvement research – update (ETC 39/11)**
- Item 22 Transfer of regulatory functions from General Social Care Council – approval and monitoring processes (ETC 40/11)**
- Item 23 Revising profession specific standards of proficiency (ETC 41/11)**
- Item 24 Health and character declarations (ETC 42/11)**
- Item 25 Education and Training Committee Panel decisions (ETC 43/11)**
- Item 26 Report from Committee representative at external meeting (ETC 44/11)**

Item 27 Date and time of next meeting

27.1 10.30 am - Thursday 8 September 2011

Item 28 Any other business

28.1 There was no further business.

Chair

Date