

Council, 7 February 2018

Fees review update

Executive summary and recommendations

Introduction

The HCPC's fees were last increased on 1 August 2015. Previous reviews of the five year plan have indicated that financial pressures, including higher rates of inflation and the loss of income when social workers transfer to Social Work England, may mean that a further fee increase is necessary in the medium term.

The process of increasing our fees takes at least nine months (and can be subject to delays outside of our control). It is then a further two years after the effective date of any increase before all registrants will pay the new fee and the full benefit of the increase is received. The timeline of a fee increase is set out in Appendix 1.

The EMT have agreed a project to review HCPC's cost base and the expected impact of the transfer of social workers, building on the work done in 2016 when the creation of SWE was first announced, and the discussions around the corporate plan and budget for 2018-19. This project is planned to produce a paper for Council in July, to enable Council to decide whether to consult on an increase in HCPC fees, including the option of removing the graduate discount.

Decision

The Council is asked to note that the Executive intends to bring a paper to the Council in July 2018, to enable a decision on whether to consult on an increase in HCPC fees.

Resource implications

None directly

Financial implications

None directly

Appendices

Appendix 1: timeline of a fee increase

Date of paper

30 January 2018

Appendix 1: Timeline of a fee increase

The fees that the HCPC charges are set out in the Health and Care Professions Council (Registration and Fees) Rules 2003. Any change to the fees requires amendment of these Rules.

The Health and Social Work Professions Order 2001 requires that the HCPC consults on its proposals before varying its Rules or fees. Consultations are normally open for 12 weeks, and at least nine months should be allowed for the whole consultation process, including Council's approval of the proposal for consultation, our analysis of the responses and preparation of our own response to the feedback.

The amended Rules then need to be laid in the Westminster and Scottish Parliaments for a period of 40 days, as a draft statutory instrument subject to the negative resolution procedures. The 40 day period only runs while the parliaments are in session. The amended rules can be prayed against in either parliament, which would then require a debate. Following the end of the 40 day period, if no members have prayed against the amended rules, they become law and the new fees come into effect.

When fees are increased, existing registrants start to pay the new renewal fee from the date on which their profession enters its next two year renewal cycle. Therefore it takes two further years from the effective date before the full benefit of a fee increase is received, and the whole process, from start to the point at which all registrants are paying the full fee, is nearly 3 years.

| Week | 0 | 8 | 10 | 22 | 30 | 34 | 40 | 144 |
|-------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--------------------------------|
| Stage | Executive analyses finances and prepares proposals for Council | Council reviews prop'sls for consult'n | If Council agrees, consultation open for responses | Executive analyses responses, prepares proposed response for Council | Council reviews response to Consultation | If Council agrees, amended Rules laid in parliaments | If Rules not prayed against, new fee becomes effective | All registrants paying new fee |