

### Education and Training Committee meeting on 6 March 2024

#### Committee Chair's summary to Council

Performance for education and registration remains consistently good overall, the majority of key performance indicators (KPIs) being achieved within the set timeframes and valid justification for any outside of the KPI target.

The Committee heard the proposed topics for review that fall within the Standards of Education and Training and planned timescales for the review. Artificial intelligence, sustainability and apprenticeships are key topics for consultation. The Committee approved the planned approach to the review.

Members were surveyed to determine how they viewed the focus, engagement and effectiveness of the Education and Training Committee. The dataset overall was positive but gave some points for reflection. Future consideration is to be given to greater communication and inclusion for the independent committee member(s). Themes arising from the survey findings will be discussed with other committee chairs for comparison.

In view of recent changes to the administration of Education and Training Panels there were some changes to the Committee's standing orders. To further improve efficiency, members agreed to reduce monthly routine panel membership to two Committee representatives unless circumstances required additional resourcing.

The Committee was asked to consider the early findings from the English Language Proficiency consultation, which were largely in support of the changes recommended. External expertise would be sought to inform the list of qualifying countries with a 75% English speaking population and the list of test providers. The Committee discussed risks associated with being overly restrictive and agreed that close impact monitoring of changes would be critical to identify and respond promptly to any problems arising. It was agreed that the Committee would receive and review any significant changes to the English Language Proficiency paper prior to its presentation at Council.

There was general praise for the quality of the Education 'State of the Nation' Report covering 2021-2023 academic years, evidencing that the new quality assurance system has been successfully embedded. The education team were encouraged to

highlight their successes and offer a succinct summary of findings to the wider stakeholder audience.

Education providers have been requesting guidance around artificial intelligence (AI) and maintaining academic integrity, which prompted a paper establishing the HCPC's current position, expectations and high-level engagement plan. Sources of national guidance and information were provided in the paper. Further consideration of AI in education will be given during the Standards of Education and Training review.

*Helen Gough, Chair of the Education and Training Committee*

## Education and Training Committee

### Minutes of the meeting of the Education and Training Committee held in public as follows:

- Date:** Wednesday 6 March 2024
- Time:** 10am
- Venue:** Videoconference (Microsoft Teams)
- Present:** Helen Gough (Chair)  
Penny Joyce  
Steven Vaughan
- Apologies:** Katie Thirlaway

### Attendees:

Francesca Bramley, Governance Manager  
Brendon Edmonds, Head of Regulatory Development and Performance  
Karen Flaherty, Head of Governance  
Rosemary Flowers-Wanjie, Policy Manager (for item 9)  
Rachael Gledhill, Head of Policy and Strategic Relationships  
Richard Houghton, Head of Registration  
Jamie Hunt, Head of Education  
Thomas Miller, Policy Manager  
Andrew Smith, Executive Director of Education, Registration and Regulatory Standards and Deputy Chief Executive

## Public Agenda

### **1 Welcome and introduction**

1.1 The Chair welcomed those present to the meeting.

### **2 Apologies for absence**

2.1 Apologies for absence were received from Katie Thirlaway, who had helpfully provided some feedback and questions in advance of the meeting in relation to the items to be considered, which the Chair would share during the meeting.

### **3 Approval of agenda**

3.1 The Committee approved the agenda.

3.2 It was noted that the item relating to the English language proficiency consultation feedback had been moved to the private session of the meeting as the analysis was still at an early stage.

### **4 Declaration of members' interests in relation to agenda items**

4.1 No interests were declared.

### **5 Minutes of the Education and Training Committee meeting held in public on 8 November 2023**

5.1 The Committee approved the minutes as an accurate record of its meeting held in public on 8 November 2023.

### **6 Matters arising**

6.1 The Committee noted the matters arising from its previous meeting.

6.2 It was agreed that the Head of Governance would continue to progress arrangements for the seminar relating to data and statistical process control (SPC) charts with the Chair of Council as part of the Council's development programme and this action could be closed.

## Performance Reports

### **7 Registration Performance Report**

7.1 The Committee received a report from the Head of Registration, which outlined performance for the period from October 2023 to January 2024 and service improvements under way.

7.2 The Committee noted the good performance across the main registration services and contact centre. The following areas were highlighted:

- the median application assessment time for UK applications during the period was between two and four working days, significantly below the service standard of ten working days;
- the number of international applications had been reducing since the end of the second quarter of 2023-24, however, the team were maintaining performance against the service standard of 60 working days in which to make a first decision;
- the renewal periods for occupational therapists, biomedical scientists and radiographers had ended during or shortly after the reporting period and there had been an increase in the renewal rates for each profession compared to the previous renewal periods;
- the report now included details of readmission applications after the renewal period had ended as previously requested by the Committee;
- the performance targets for responding to enquiries by telephone, email and post had been maintained;
- delays with appeals beyond the median performance standard of 100 days were likely to continue as there had been a further cancellation of a hearing day; and
- the quality assurance frontline checks continued to be developed providing a good level of ongoing assurance as well as identifying learning through the findings.

7.3 The Committee recognised the challenges presented in managing the fluctuations in international applications and maintaining the service standards.

7.4 The channels used by registrants to contact and communicate with the HCPC were being considered as part of user experience and design work, informed by the data from the Registration team. This would give a better understanding and enable the HCPC to anticipate registrants' needs and preferences and around communication and to support these through digital technology where possible. While the resource implications were not significant, there would be a need for postal communication in a minority of instances as a reasonable adjustment to ensure services were accessible to those with disabilities and when sending original documents.

7.5 The changes to the renewals process, improvements to and more proactive communications and online applications through the registrant portal implemented in the last two years had improved the renewals process for registrants with fewer contacts and enquiries received. This may also have had an impact on renewal rates. All the professions were now familiar with the new system and communication methods introduced in the previous renewal

process. The relevant professional bodies were also supporting the HCPC in communicating with registrants.

**Action:** In relation to both performance reports, it was requested that any changes or new developments were highlighted in the summary to allow the Committee to focus on the areas of greatest potential significance and impact.

## 8 Education Performance Report

8.1 The Committee received a report from the Head of Education, which outlined the performance measures across the operational processes in the Education team and current performance against these.

8.2 The Committee noted that:

- more performance measures had trended down and were rated as 'amber' or 'red', which was due to small sample sizes for some measures and a complex case involving a programme proposed below the qualification threshold level of entry to the register in the approval process;
- performance for time taken to complete the performance review process had dropped, reflecting the impact of a spike in reporting activities and a slight backlog in case progression and planning, however, with five cases concluded, it was expected that performance would return to within service levels as current performance was closer to meeting expectations than in previous years;
- the spot check outcomes measure showed compliance had reduced since the last report, which did not reflect any concerns about the quality of the reports or decision-making but rather the timeliness of delivery as measured at particular progress points as a result of higher levels of compliance checks;
- the current focus on performance review should lead to an improvement in performance in the next few months and this was currently in a better position than in the previous year; and
- progress with performance review assessments had been demonstrated in the recent quality assurance audit, which had given this area the highest possible rating for a first review of 'green/amber' with four recommendations, all of which were being addressed.

8.3 The Committee noted the balance to be struck between monitoring and delivering performance measures related to timeliness and the quality of the service. There were also limitations on the sensitivity of the data where small sample sizes were involved and the Head of Education was keen to understand whether using statistical process control (SPC) charts could help address this by highlighting special cause variation over a longer period and where measures needed to change due to a change in process, for example to reflect that the HCPC was setting fewer conditions.

## Consultations and Reviews

### 9 Planning for the Standards of Education and Training review

9.1 The Policy Manager joined the meeting for this item and explained the purpose of the periodic review of the standards of education and training (SETs) in ensuring the standards remained relevant and up to date. The planned approach to the review, including the timeframe, and the pre-consultation engagement and the range of stakeholders to be consulted were also set out.

9.2 The topics identified for the review were:

- blended learning;
- use of technology, such as artificial intelligence (AI);
- simulation in learning;
- apprenticeships and earn and learn routes;
- data-led decision-making;
- sustainability;
- equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) practice in education;
- service user and carer involvement in education; and
- SET 1 thresholds.

9.3 The Committee provided its views on the following areas:

- seeking specialist expertise on the topics during engagement as part of the review from external reference groups, including outside of healthcare;
- involving placement coordinators in employers in the stakeholder engagement;
- ensuring that the research on the use of AI encompassed its use in both professional practice and in the delivery of education in an appropriate learning environment;
- making sure that the consultation would consider whether any changes to the SETs were needed so that the SETs continued to be outcome focused rather than specific and the option to provide guidance or information to registrants about specific topics as an alternative; and
- ensuring a balance between the HCPC's role as a regulator to set standards and reflecting where practice was developing ahead of the standards.

## Governance

### 10 Review of Committee effectiveness

10.1 The Committee noted the feedback provided from Committee members and

attendees in response to the questionnaire circulated in advance of the meeting and the themes identified.

- 10.2 The review had provided some helpful points for reflection, particularly in relation to ensuring that the independent Committee member was kept informed about the interaction between the Committee and Council as part of the feedback loop. The Committee Chair would also compare the themes with those raised in the reviews being carried out by other Council committees.

## 11 Review of standing orders

- 11.1 The Committee reviewed the proposed changes to the standing orders and requested the following additional changes:

- to have a clearer separation of the provisions applying to the Committee and those applicable to the Education and Training Panel (ETP); and
- to reduce the membership of the ETP to two members of the Committee with arrangements for a reserve in the event of absence or incapacity.

- 11.2 The Committee members highlighted the absence of the student voice, which had previously been represented in the membership of the Committee.

**Action:** The Chair and the Head of Governance would consider options to incorporate the student voice to a greater extent in the work of the Committee.

## 12 Committee forward plan

- 12.1 The Committee noted the proposed programme of business for 2024. The plan would continue to be reviewed and updated during 2024.

- 12.2 It was highlighted that although there would be two annual reports presented in 2024, this would revert to annual reporting in November in future years.

## 13 Resolution to move the meeting to private session

- 13.1 The Committee resolved that the remainder of the meeting would be held in private, because the matters being discussed related to matters which, in the opinion of the Chair, were confidential or the public disclosure of which would prejudice the effective discharge of the Committee's or Council's functions.

The meeting was briefly adjourned.

Signed .....

Date .....