

Communications Committee - 18 February 2010

Q4 progress report for the communications department

Executive summary and recommendations

Introduction

The attached paper provides a progress report for Committee members on the activities undertaken by the communications department in Q4 (1 January – 31 March 2010). Information about activities in November and December have been included, where relevant and of interest, as Committee last met in November 2009.

Decision

The Council/Committee is asked to agree the progress report.

Background information

The day to day work of the communications department is set out in the 2009-10 annual workplan. The activities detailed in the plan are set against the objectives in the communications strategy. Both the strategy and workplan were approved by the Communications Committee in February 2009.

This report is intended to provide a top level summary for Committee members of progress made on the activities detailed in the workplan and how these achieve the objectives set out in the communications strategy.

Resource implications

Activities set out in this paper are accounted for within the departmental workplan.

Financial implications

Activities set out in this paper are accounted for within the communications budget.

Appendices

Q4 progress report

Objective 1: to raise awareness and understanding of the HPC's role in regulation across all our audiences, we will:

	Main activity	Description	Key deliverables	Progress Q4
1.1	Manage the publications process and support departments in the production of a range of publications	Liaise with departments including FTP and Education on annual reports. Manage the publications process, advise on content of publications and edit, proof, gain feedback from public/patients/stakeholders where relevant and ensure effective dissemination.	Present a positive image of the HPC and promote understanding of its role, Increased transparency and accountability and improved profile with stakeholders	Work continues on the production of the SOPs for hearing aid dispensers (seeking Council approval in February) and the 'guidance on conduct and ethics for students' and guidance on health and character' have been published. Minor amendments to 'How to make a complaint' brochure made and uploaded to website
1.2	To identify need and produce new publications in conjunction with other departments	What is the HPC, guide to filling in your cpd profile, cpd review report, organisation review document, research and policy updates (x6)	Improved understanding of HPC requirements Increased accessibility	The Publications Manager has continued to work with the CPD communications manager and the Director of Policy and Standards in the production of the 'review of the first cpd audit (due for publication March) and with the Fitness to Practise department in the production of 'information for witnesses' brochure (due for publication in March)
1.3	Continue to distribute publications and brochures on request and ensure availability of publications in large print, Braille, Welsh etc	Respond to requests within reasonable timescale, log requests, maintain stock levels	Improved understanding of HPC requirements Increased accessibility for different audiences	We have received a high volume of requests for the new publications on 'Guidance on health and character' and 'Guidance on conduct and ethics for students'. We have sent out approximately 1350 copies of the student guidance since it was published in January. Other publications that remain popular are the Standards of conduct performance and ethics, CPD long guides and Standards of education and training. In December, 48 of our HPC public awareness packs were requested which equals 1200 leaflets and 96 posters. In January this figure was 41 packs (1025 leaflets and 82 posters).

	Main activity	Description	Key deliverables	Progress Q4
1.4	Develop the website and its content by working with departments to support their requirements and identify opportunities for development	Develop website by in particular improving the navigability, and search function. Add sections for specific audiences, eg: new registrants, and students. Develop ideas, proposals and prioritise	Increased understanding of the HPC	The website has been successfully transferred to a new service provider, giving improved performance, security, and statistical reporting, as well as integrating the new online registrant portal into the site. Work is now underway to update the homepage and create some more audience specific pages/content.
1.5	Maximise the opportunities to increase coverage about the HPC in the national, regional, professional and consumer press	Continued implementation of the department's media strategy through - work with departments, identifying news stories, writing articles and issuing releases - implementation of contact programme with journalists, ensuring relevant HPC staff fully media trained and continued development of media infrastructure (eg media lists, coverage reports) in place to support this work - development of joint media campaign with professional body to raise awareness of protected title	Coverage reflects better understanding of issues by journalists and supports our leading regulator role Improved public understanding of the titles we protect	General releases were issued on the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch of the consultation on removing the health reference as a requirement for entry to the Register • Conclusions on the proposed statutory regulation of dance movement therapists • Conclusion on the proposed statutory regulation of psychotherapist and counsellors. Joint media campaign - we have made initial contact with the Football Association and are considering a campaign to highlight the importance and benefits of using a registered physiotherapist in football.
1.6	New professions	Implement communications project plan across all communications functions, publications, web, media, events, public affairs	Communication of registration requirements and public awareness of the regulation of new professions	Counsellors and psychotherapists: we continue to monitor media and online coverage, press release issued post Council on conclusions to PLG work, blog updated regularly and HPC representatives attended 'Psychological therapies in the NHS' conference in London Hearing aid dispensers: preparations underway including production of website FAQs, artworking SOPs, drafting joint letters (due March) and media planning to announce opening of the Register (1 April) Practitioner Psychologists: divisional meetings attended this quarter are reported in 4.1.

Objective 2: to extend our reach to the public enabling them to easily access information about the HPC, we will:

	Main activity	Description	Key deliverables	Progress Q4
2.1	Continue to promote the Fitness to Practise hearings	Issue weekly alerts, write and issue release for suspension and strike off, focus coverage in local and regional media List hearings and include case studies in HPC In Focus	Increased level of coverage in regional media and increased promotion of public protection role	We continue to issue weekly media alerts, respond to journalist queries, liaise with media at hearings and since November 2009, 16 ftp press releases have been issued on registrants that have either been suspended or struck off. Press coverage reports are uploaded to the Council extranet.
2.2	Ensure the continued dissemination of public information literature	x 2 GP waiting room distribution, x 1 PALs, and Wales Community Health Council distribution as well as research and determine viability of distribution to pharmacies, Citizens Advice Bureaux, LINKs and local authorities Continued promotion to registrants through A5 flyer in renewals, professional press, events	Promotion of public protection role -- focussed, cost effective way of reaching the public	Completed in Q3 Preparatory work for next GP and pharmacy waiting room distribution underway (due Q1) in line with private sector hearing aid dispensers A5 flyer is sent with each renewal certificate and copies included at all HPC events and external conferences
2.3	Promote "registered with the HPC" concept to registrants and ensure continued access and usage	Promote through existing channels, eg HPC In Focus, A5 renewals leaflet, Listening Events	Engaging with registrants and working with them to promote public awareness	Currently with the legal team at BDB to draw up regulations and condition of use and enforcement criteria. Web form and pages being developed, leaflet promoting the logo drafted
2.4	Continue internet and advertising presence through existing channels, eg Yell.com and develop new channels	Maintain a presence in Yellow Pages, renew Yell.com adverts and Google adwords Research websites where we should have a presence, make contact with relevant organisations	Continued reinforcement of public protection role	Held meeting with Yell.com to discuss options for advertising in next financial year. Google adwords are continually monitored and some minor refinements to wording made in this quarter
2.5	Ensure GPs and referrers are informed about the HPC	Undertake research into best way to reach GPs, develop appropriate programme of communications based on research eg direct mail, referrers guide, conferences and events	Improved understanding of HPC's role	Research undertaken by GfK Healthcare completed and reported in December. Currently planning activities for next financial year
2.6	Continue to participate in patient and public involvement activities through participation in the joint UK health regulators PPI group	Undertake joint activities as set out in the agreed PPI group workplan, including joint leaflet, development of website	Promotion of public protection role and raised awareness of HPC	The Press and PR Manager continues to attend PPI meetings. The latest meeting held was in February. The Press and PR Manager is participating in preparations for a further good practice seminar with a focus on 'seldom heard' and mental health.

Objective 3: to influence the regulatory agenda through ongoing dialogue and engagement with key stakeholders, we will:

	Main activity	Description	Key deliverables	Progress Q4
3.1	Develop HPC's profile in the home countries and devise channels of communication which ensure stakeholders are informed and fully aware of our work and role in healthcare regulation	Work with Policy, continue to research contacts and ideas, develop contact programme and encompass public affairs work across all stakeholder audiences, including Parliamentarians, employers, professional bodies and various health departments Undertake at least 2 visits to each home country for meetings with stakeholders and conference attendance	Improved understanding of the HPC's role in healthcare regulation	Conferences attended in Q4 include The Welsh Connection, NES AHP conference in Edinburgh and the Scottish Regulation Event. Further visits to the three nations will be planned for next financial year.
3.2	Continue to keep Parliamentarians informed and aware of our work and role in healthcare regulation	Contact and meeting programme, fringe speaking membership of the Health Hotel, participation in all three main political party conferences, written briefings – especially around new legislation, parliamentary roadshows and exhibitions, attendance and exhibitions at home country political party conferences, development of e-politix exposure and advertising/editorial/ interview opportunities opportunities in relevant magazines and publications and continued parliamentary monitoring	Raised awareness and improved signposting of our role in the future of regulation and public protection	Parliamentary monitoring continues Briefings have been issued to the APPG on deafness and to peers for the Lords debate on private sector hearing aid dispensers. The Policy Department has also written a detailed briefing for the Department of Health to give to Ministers.
3.3	Continue to keep employers informed and engaged with the HPC across all activities and on specific issues	Programme of at least five Employer Events across the UK, communication in the form of letters and emails on key areas of importance such as renewal of registration, speaking engagements, exhibitions and conferences and rolling programme of news items in bulletins and on the website	Promote the HPC's key messages to employers, improved understanding of HPC's role and how we can assist employers	Employer events held in Q4 included Belfast and Glasgow. (Employer events in London and Cardiff held in November). We received good attendance at all the events and positive feedback. The programme included a general presentation and then workshops on cpd and ftp
3.4	Continue to keep professional bodies informed and engaged with the HPC across all activities and on specific issues	Rolling programme of meetings including annual meetings on renewals and cpd, ongoing communication and updates on key issues, attendance and speaking engagements at conferences and exhibitions, ongoing articles and news stories in professional body journals, newsletters and website, advertising/editorial opportunities in relevant journals and publications	Promote the HPC's key messages to professional bodies and therefore registrants Improved relationship and understanding of the role of the HPC and increased ways of working together	See activity in 4.3 and 4.7. The Director of Communications has also attended some of the annual professional body meetings with the CEO and Chair including British Dietetic Association and the British Psychological Society.
3.5	Ensure patient representative groups, advocacy groups and service users are informed and engaged with the HPC	Research contacts (eg LINKs) and ideas (eg local authorities), implement contact programme as required, attendance at relevant events and conference, promotion of public information materials	Improved understanding of HPC's role	Undertaking planning for next financial year. Policy is currently undertaking a consultation on the removal of the health reference and patient groups will have been included in this as part of the consultation list.

Objective 4: to engage with our registrants to ensure they understand the benefits of regulation, the work of the Council and what is required of them, we will:

	Main activity	Description	Key Deliverables	Progress Q4
4.1	Continue participation in external exhibitions by taking stands and researching new opportunities	Focus on professional exhibitions, research new conferences to attend, ensure literature and banners up to date and relevant, ensure right representation from HPC (eg Registrations, Fitness to Practise)	Communication of messages Opportunity to listen to feedback and raise HPC profile and present positive image	Attended following BPS divisional annual meetings: Clinical Psychologists (December), Occupational Psychologists (January), Educational and Child Psychology (January). HPC representatives will be attending the following conferences <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BAAT (February) • World Health Professions Conference on Regulation (February) • BAPO (March) • Health and Wellbeing (March) • The Care Show (March) We are also booking conferences and exhibitions from April 2010 onwards
4.2	Organise Listening Events across the country for registrants	Review presentation, develop interactive format, ensure UK-wide presence, source and brief panel, book venues, issue invitations and produce evaluation reports	Opportunity to listen to feedback Improved understanding of the HPC's role and activities	Listening events held in Exeter and Truro in February and planned for Shrewsbury and Swansea in March Date and venue planning underway for 2010 events
4.3	Continue to communicate HPC's work and activities in the professional press	With departments identify news/stories, issue releases, write articles. Issues to cover include fees increase, cpd audits, council appointments, registration and renewals and key projects and activities	Improved understanding of what we require of registrants and increased level of coverage	The Press and Public Relations Manager continues to write, issue articles and work with professional body publications to promote a range of issues particularly registration renewals and CPD. Coverage has been achieved in a range of journals including OT News, Dietetics Today, Synergy News, Podiatry Now.
4.4	Communicate with registrants through HPC In Focus, developing its content and circulation	Undertake development work across this year (re: content, distribution, media) Continue to work with depts on content and identify opportunities to increase distribution through for example adverts in professional journals, A5 flyer with certificates, sign up sheets at talks etc.	Better informed registrants	The following issues of this bi-monthly e-newsletter have been published <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 26, issued Friday 4 December 2009 • 27, issued 5 February 2010

	Main activity	Description	Key deliverables	Progress Q4
4.5	Launch and maintain the information programme for students on HPC approved courses	Work with Registrations and Education Departments, identify needs of audience Implement new media including DVD/website, provide guidance for course tutors etc	Improved understanding of HPC requirements of registrants and stimulate debate about importance of registration	Completed in Q3 and previously reported to Communications Committee
4.6	Ensure registrants are aware of our continuing professional development audit requirements	Manage communications element of project plan, participate in project meeting, co-ordinate communications activity across team. Manage and undertake programme of presentations.	Communication of CPD standards and guidance to registrant and employers	All Listening Events (November/January and March) have a CPD focus including a detailed presentation, Q&A and publications available. The Employer Events included a workshop on CPD.
4.7	Support the registration renewals process	Liaise with registration regarding the ongoing renewal of professions' registration. Feed information into ongoing communications with employers and professional bodies. Ensure clear information provided online.	Communication of requirements, support lower lapse rates	Radiographers: news items uploaded to website for issue of renewal forms and final notices, liaison with Society of Radiographers to encourage promotion of renewal period, articles submitted to Synergy magazine Physiotherapists: meeting held with Chartered Society of Physiotherapists to discuss communications, news item uploaded to website for issue of renewal forms, article submitted to Physiotherapy Fronline.
4.8	Communicate the 2009 registration fee rise	Manage communications element of project plan, including media, web and events where relevant	Clear communication to registrants of what fees pay for, and why independent regulation is important.	Completed in Q2. Information continues to be included in briefing notes for panel members at Listening Events and Employer Events and for staff at conferences
4.9	Support the online applications and online renewals project	Manage communications element of project plan, participate in project group, input to the technical development of this project (Web Manager) and advise on design of the web pages as required (Publications Manager).	Communication to applicants and registrants about online facility.	Web Manager is part of the project team and has attended project meetings. Information in briefing notes for Listening Events, Employer Events and conferences.

Objective 5: to further strengthen and ensure effective internal communications within the organisation, we will:

	Main activity	Description	Key deliverables	Progress Q4
5.1	Organise all employee meetings	Set dates in advance, book council chamber and catering, organise programme of speakers, ensure correct set up on the day	Improved understanding of HPC's ongoing work and activities and the Council's direction	Preparation for February all employee meeting underway – presentations will include a private sector hearing aid dispenser
5.2	Maintain the intranet ensuring it is up to date, business led and accessible	Liaise with departments re: currency of information, and updating information. Gain feedback from employees on content. Develop processes and content in response.	Provide information which enables employees to deal efficiently and effectively with enquiries	The new intranet site has been successfully launched, and each department can now contribute to the site with news and work information. The Quality Management System has also been integrated into the new intranet design.
5.3	Organise all employee events	Set dates, book venues Agree format, issues invitations Evaluate	Improved internal communications and team building	All employee December lunch held at Gibson Hall. All employees attended
5.4	Organise the annual all employee awayday	Set dates, book venue Agree format, speakers, issues invitations Evaluate	Improved understanding of the HPC's strategic aims and direction	Completed Q2 Preparations for 2010 event underway.
5.5	Produce the all employee newsletter	Work with departments to collect copy, write and edit content, ensure printed for each all employee meeting	Improved understanding of cross departmental and organisational activities	Preparation for HPC Update underway – articles to include information on private sector hearing aid dispensers, practitioner psychologists, conferences, consultations on health reference, new publications and council/committees update