

Communications Committee - 18 February 2010

Patient and Public Involvement Statement of Intent

Executive summary and recommendations

Introduction

This attached paper is intended to outline the Health Professions Council's commitment to patient and public involvement activities and provides a top level summary of the range of activities undertaken by the HPC.

Decision

The Committee is invited to discuss and approve the attached document (subject to any changes agreed at the meeting and any minor editing amendments).

Background information

See paper.

Resource implications

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

Financial implications

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

Appendices

None

Patient and Public Involvement - statement of intent

Introduction

This paper aims to provide a top level summary of the patient and public involvement work currently being undertaken by the Health Professions Council.

Background

Since its inception in 2001, the Council has demonstrated a commitment to patient and public engagement through the almost even split of lay and professional members, its inclusion of patient groups in early work on disability and registration and its participation in the joint regulators' patient and public involvement forum.

The 2007 White Paper 'Trust, Assurance and Safety – the regulation of health professionals in the 21st century' clearly highlighted the importance of patient and public involvement in the regulatory environment. It stated that regulators should give "a clear assurance about their overriding commitment to patient and public interest and to guard against well-intentional professional introspection that might fail to take account of wider social and cultural changes and expectations".¹

Furthermore, Niall Dickson's 2008 report 'Enhancing confidence in healthcare professionals regulation' went further stating that 'all healthcare regulators should continue to participate in the joint Regulators' PPI Group and each regulator should have an agreed set of arrangements which demonstrate that they are actively engaged with and involving patients and the public'.

More recently the Department of Health's report on 'Extending professional and occupational regulation' published in July 2009 also references the need for stakeholder engagement and discusses the importance of patients, public and employers in decisions about regulation.²

The Council continues to be committed to the importance of patient and public involvement and is acutely aware of its benefit, particularly as regulation of professionals is about patient safety and protection of the public. The Council has strived to undertake a range of activities to engage stakeholders in the work that it does.

The following paragraphs sets out the type of public engagement work that the Council has undertaken and its impact on the operational activities of the organisation.

¹ Paragraph 1.11

² Chapter 6, page 50-55

Current activities

1 Consultations

Whenever we set standards or issue guidance, we consult on these with relevant interested groups of stakeholders. We keep a consultation list of people and organisations, including patient representative groups and consumer organisations, with an interest in what we do. Anyone who requests can be added to this list so that they are sent a hard copy of any consultation papers. If you would like to be added to our consultation list please send the following details to the Policy and Standards department (address below):

Your name

Your organisation (if you want your organisation added)

Your position

The address and email to which you want the consultation sent

You can provide us with these details by post, email, or by phone.

Consultations

Policy and Standards Department

Health Professions Council

184 Kennington Park Road, London, SE11 4BU

Email: consultation@hpc-uk.org

Phone: 44 (0)20 7840 9815

As part of our commitment to meeting good practice we follow the Government Code of Practice on Consultation. For information about the Code and the consultations we run please visit <http://www.hpc-uk.org/aboutus/consultations/about/>

2 Professional Liaison Groups

The Council is committed to ensuring that the development of future policies and regulatory work, which is often carried out through professional liaison groups, benefits from patient and public input at an early stage.

When the Council establishes a professional liaison group (PLG) this group will often include people from third sector and patient organisations. For example, the Health, Disability and Registration PLG included representatives from disability groups and organisations, the review of the standards of proficiency PLG had a patient representative and the Psychotherapist and Counsellor PLG had representatives from Witness and the 'We need to talk' charities.

This involvement in the early stages of key projects helps us to develop and implement appropriate policies based on a broad range of stakeholder perspectives.

In order to support attendance and involvement in the PLG, there is a policy on reimbursement of expenses. This is set out in the Professional Liaison Groups' operating manual and states that 'members of a PLG, other than Council members, have their expenses reimbursed by the Council if required, but will not normally be

eligible to receive an attendance allowance. However in exceptional circumstances the PLG chair may agree to pay an attendance allowance to external members, particularly in cases where, without this allowance, the individual would not be able to participate in the PLG'.

For more information about Professional Liaison Groups and a copy of the operating manual please visit <http://www.hpc-uk.org/aboutus/professionalliaisongroups/>

3 Research with members of the public

The Council is committed to undertaking a wide range of research projects, particularly with members of the public, and using the findings to inform strategies and develop activities across the organisation.

The communications department has undertaken research with members of the public to gauge opinions and views as well as obtain feedback on specific pieces of work. This includes the development of the website, production of public facing materials, the development of a registration logo and the implementation of public facing information campaigns, for example the Be Healthwise campaign aimed at older people and their carers. This campaign illustrates our targeted approach to informing and engaging with the public and, through the use of research and the older people seminar (organised by the joint regulators' PPI forum) ensures we are listening to external stakeholder views.

More broadly, the department has undertaken research projects into the public's perceptions, attitudes and knowledge about the HPC and protected titles which have informed communication strategies, including registrant and public facing information communication campaigns.

For details of research undertaken by the communications department visit <http://www.hpc-uk.org/mediaandevents/marketresearch/>

The Fitness to Practise department has recently undertaken research into the expectations and views of complainants. The findings of this research, which are not yet public, carried out in late 2009, will be used to develop appropriate and relevant information (print and online) for complainants.

Similarly, the Policy department has also undertaken research which is used to inform policy development. The most recent example is the qualitative research undertaken through Witness to gain a better insight into service users' experiences of the psychotherapy and counselling profession.

4 Participation in the joint regulators' patient and public involvement forum

The HPC is a member of the joint regulators' patient and public involvement forum and will continue to play an active role in the forum's activities and work.

Set up in 2005, the group consists of a staff representative and a lay Council member from each of the health and social care regulators in the UK (for example General Medical Council, Nursing and Midwifery Council, the General Dental Council).

This forum is an important source of sharing information, expertise and good practice and is an operational PPI resource for the regulators. It has a project based work plan which sets out joint projects and initiatives for the group.

Activities undertaken jointly have included research into public use of the online registers, a good PPI practice handbook, a joint regulators' leaflet and a series of good practise seminars which have focussed on engaging with the public, for example seldom heard, education, older people and mental health. HPC was a key contributor to the conception and development of the seminar series which included active involvement of patients, carers and third sector organisations.

Next steps

The Council is committed to patient and public involvement in it's work and will continue to undertake the activities set out above.

For more information please contact the Communications Department.

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