
Communications Committee

Minutes of the 31st meeting of the Communications Committee held as follows:-

Date: Thursday 17 February 2011

Time: 11:00 am

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

Present: Sheila Drayton (Chair)
Julia Drown
Morag MacKellar
Arun Midha
Joy Tweed
Diane Waller

In attendance:

Mr C Bendall, Secretary to the Committee
Ms J Ladds, Director of Communications
Dr A van der Gaag, Council Chair

Item 1.11/1 Apologies for absence

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed Joy Tweed to her first meeting of the Committee and welcomed two observers to the meeting.
- 1.2 There were no apologies for absence.

Item 2.11/2 Approval of agenda

- 2.1 The Committee approved the agenda.

Item 3.11/3 Declarations of members' interests

- 3.1 Members had no interests to declare in connection with the items on the agenda.

Item 4.11/4 Minutes of the Communications Committee meeting of 4 November 2010 (report ref: CC 1/11)

- 4.1 It was agreed that the minutes of the 30th meeting of the Communications Committee should be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

Item 5.11/5 Minutes of the private part of the Communications Committee meeting of 4 November 2010 (report ref: CC 2/11)

- 5.1 It was agreed that the private part of the minutes of the 30th meeting of the Communications Committee should be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

Item 6.11/6 Notes of Communications Committee strategy meeting of 4 November 2010 (report ref: CC 3/11)

- 6.1 It was agreed that the notes of the strategy meeting of 4 November 2010 should be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

Item 7.11/7 Matters arising (report ref: CC 4/11)

- 7.1 The Committee received a paper to note from the Executive.
- 7.2 The Committee noted the actions list as agreed at the last meeting.

Item 8.11/8 Director of Communications report

- 8.1 The Committee received a verbal report from the Director of Communications.

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8.2 The Committee noted that the Communications Officer (Events) had resigned because she would be leaving the UK. The post had been filled and the new employee was due to start work on 28 March 2011.

Item 9.11/9 Communications department progress report for quarter 3 (report ref: CC 5/11)

9.1 The Committee received a paper for discussion from the Executive, giving a progress report against the activities and objectives in the Communications Department workplan for 2010-11.

9.2 In discussion, the following activities were highlighted:

- work on several publications, to be published between February and June 2011;
- dealing with requests for publications. The mostly frequently requested publications in the quarter had been 'Standards of conduct, performance and ethics'; 'Guidance on conduct and ethics for students'; and 'Continuing professional development and your registration'. 180 public awareness packs had also been distributed during the period;
- development of the HPC website, including improvements to information on events and the addition of Really Simple Syndication feeds for news stories and press releases. The HPC Check microsite was due to be enhanced by April 2011. The Committee agreed that the Web Manager should give a presentation to its next meeting on the changes to the HPC Check microsite;

Action: TG (by 22 June 2011)

- development of a communications workplan for the transfer of regulatory functions from the General Social Care Council to HPC. HPC would monitor the progress of the Health and Social Care Bill through Parliament and would submit evidence to the Public Bill Committee. HPC would be represented at GSCC conferences in Leeds and London and would continue to develop its relationship with Community Care magazine;
- informing and engaging employers, through employer events held across the UK. The Committee noted that these events had been held in smaller towns and cities. Approximately 20-60 people had attended each event. Feedback on the events had been very positive. The Committee noted that members could express an interest in attending these, and other, HPC events;

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- work to communicate with practitioner psychologists had been deferred. The Executive felt that it would be more effective to do this work from January 2012, because the grandparenting period for the profession would close in July 2012; and
- providing information for complainants in fitness to practise cases, by producing a video on understanding fitness to practise hearings. The Committee noted that this had been developed by the Fitness to Practise Department, with support from the Communications Department. The Committee noted that the Fitness to Practise Committee had seen the video at its meeting on 16 February 2011 and had been very impressed with it;

9.3 The Committee agreed that the report demonstrated a wide range of work and activities by the Communications Department. The Committee thanked the Director of Communications for the report.

Item 10.11/10 Draft communications strategy and draft workplan 2011-12 (report ref: CC 6/11)

- 10.1 The Committee received a paper for discussion/approval from the Executive.
- 10.2 The Committee noted that the draft communications strategy and the draft workplan were both subject to amendment, as the Government had published a Command Paper on 16 February 2011, 'Enabling Excellence: Autonomy and Accountability for Health and Social Care Staff'. The document proposed that HPC should regulate herbal medicine practitioners and that voluntary registration will in future be the government's preferred option for regulation of groups which were currently unregulated.
- 10.3 The Committee noted that the Executive would amend the draft strategy to include reference to the proposed change of the HPC's name to the Health and Care Professions Council and the contribution of other departments and Council members to communications.
- 10.4 The Committee considered the draft communications strategy. The Committee noted that HPC was due to regulate social workers only in England from 2012. The Committee agreed that this would be an additional complication for communications work, as HPC would need to clearly communicate that there were different regulation arrangements for social workers in the other countries of the UK.
- 10.5 The Committee considered the draft communications workplan. In discussion, the following points were made:

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- the Executive intended to undertake all the activities listed in the workplan for 2011-12. The Committee agreed that the workplan should explain that the Communications Department would be proactive and reactive to developments and would re-prioritise work as necessary. The Committee noted that the Executive would report any changes in the workplan to the Committee;
- the Executive intended to carry out research into methods of service user engagement and this would be added to the workplan;
- the Committee noted that the Executive believed that the workplan could be delivered by using the resources and employees included in the draft budget for 2011-12. No increase in the department's employees was planned for 2011-12; and
- the workplan included an extract from the HPC risk register on communications risks. The Committee noted that full register was considered by the Audit Committee and the Council. The Director of Communications was due to give a presentation on communications risks to the Audit Committee on 16 March 2011.

10.6 The Committee approved the draft communications strategy and department workplan for 2011-12, subject to the amendments above and any minor editing amendments.

Action: JL (ongoing to March 2012)

Item 11.11/11 Transfer of social workers Register (England): Draft communications workplan (report ref: CC 7/11)

- 11.1 The Committee received a paper for discussion/approval from the Executive.
- 11.2 The Committee noted that the workplan identified the key audiences, messages and objectives for the project to transfer regulatory functions from the General Social Care Council to HPC. The workplan also included the communications channels which would be used and the potential risks and mitigations of these risks
- 11.3 The Committee noted that the workplan was an operational document which would develop over time. The Executive would consider whether there should be a separate communication plan about the proposed change of HPC's name to the Health and Care Professions Council. The Executive would also consider how to communicate with existing registrants about the proposed name change.
- 11.4 In discussion, the following points were made:

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- HPC would need to clearly communicate that it would be responsible for regulating social workers only in England;
- the Executive should review the list of stakeholders in the workplan. It was suggested that this should include service user groups; Local Involvement Networks in the NHS; and Health Watch; and
- service users should be encouraged to respond to any consultation by HPC on the draft standards of proficiency for social workers.

11.5 The Committee approved the workplan, subject to the comments made above and any minor editing amendments.

Action: JL (ongoing to August 2012)

11.6 The Committee noted that the Executive would report progress to future meetings of the Committee.

Action: JL (ongoing to November 2012)

Item 12.11/12 Communications department draft budget 2011-12 headline figures (report ref: CC 8/11)

- 12.1 The Committee received a paper to note from the Executive.
- 12.2 The Committee noted that the total draft budget for 2011-12 was £1.113m, which was slightly less than the budget for the current financial year.
- 12.3 The Committee discussed whether it should continue to receive the headline figures of the draft budget, as the Finance and Resources Committee and the Council were responsible for considering the budget and received more detailed information. The Committee noted that the papers presented to the Finance and Resources Committee and the Council were readily available to members. The Committee agreed that, while it did not have responsibility for considering the communications budget under its terms of reference, it should continue to receive the headline figures as background information.

The Committee noted the following papers:

Item 13.11/13 Committee membership (report ref: CC 9/11)

Item 14.11/14 Dates of Committee meetings in 2012 (report ref: CC 10/11)

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Item 15.11/15 Any other business

15.1 There was no other business.

Item 16.11/16 Date and time of next meeting

16.1 The next meeting of the Committee would be held at 11.00 am on Wednesday 22 June 2011.

16.2 Subsequent meetings would be held at 11.00 am on:

Thursday 8 November 2011
Thursday 23 February 2012
Wednesday 13 June 2012
Tuesday 6 November 2012

Chair

Date

Unconfirmed

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