

Communications Committee 6 November 2012

Transfer of regulatory functions from the General Social Care Council

Executive summary and recommendations

Introduction

This paper provides an update to the Communications Committee on communications activities in relation to the transfer of regulatory functions from the General Social Care Council (GSCC). It covers communications work undertaken since the last Communications Committee in February 2012 and a specific section on social workers renewal communications.

Decision

This paper is for information only. No decision is required.

Background information

See introduction.

Resource implications

All communications activities to the date of transfer (1 August 2012) are accommodated through the project plan budget. Resources post-transfer are included in the approved Communications budget.

Financial implications

As above.

Appendices

- Appendix 1: Selection of social work media coverage
- Appendix 2 - Selection of media coverage, articles and advertisements on social work renewal

Date of paper

28 October 2012

Communications Committee 6 November 2012

1. Transfer of regulatory functions from the General Social Care Council

Introduction

- 1.1. This paper provides an update to the Communications Committee on communications activities undertaken in relation to the transfer of regulatory functions from the General Social Care Council (GSCC) to the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) since the last meeting in February 2012, and includes a specific section on renewal communications for social workers in England.

Background information

- 1.2. On Tuesday 27 March 2012, the Health and Social Care Bill received Royal Assent and became the Health and Social Care Act 2012. The GSCC ceased operation on Tuesday 31 July, ahead of its final abolition, as part of the Arms' Length Body Review, on Monday 1 October 2012. Its regulatory functions transferred to the HCPC and our Register was opened to social workers in England on Wednesday 1 August 2012.
- 1.3. Key Council decisions during the course of the project have been the decision on student registration and fitness to practise (10 May 2012), transitional arrangements for student registration (19 June 2012), approval of the standards of proficiency (29 March 2012) and their subsequent publication (25 June 2012).
- 1.4. The communications team were in regular contact with their counterparts at the GSCC up to the date of the transfer
- 1.5. The Director of Communications represented the department on the major project board for the transfer of social workers and attended regular meetings. A communications plan for the transfer was written in collaboration with the GSCC, and monitored, reviewed and implemented by the communications team.
- 1.6. We worked closely with other departments at the HCPC, including the Education, Fitness to Practise and Registration teams, to communicate issues relevant to social workers.

Communications activities to date

- 1.7. Set out below are the key activities we have undertaken since the last Communications Committee on Thursday 23 February 2012. Section two of this paper looks specifically at renewal communications for social workers in England.

Media

- 1.8. We worked closely with the GSCC Communications team and the HCPC Fitness to Practise department to prepare for fitness to practise media enquiries and coverage. This included, attending a GSCC hearing, meeting the GSCC communications team to discuss high profile cases, outlining our differing approaches to fitness to practise to journalists at Community Care, holding regular catch-up meetings with the HCPC Fitness to Practise department to discuss and update website information and prepare reactive lines.
- 1.9. Social work media activity is monitored on a daily basis.¹ Themes in the media from February to October 2012 have been continuing professional development, student registration, differing approaches of the GSCC and HCPC, standards of proficiency and renewal.
- 1.10. Position statements issued on:
 - the standards of proficiency for social workers in England and the professional capabilities framework (joint statement with The College of Social Work);
 - the Council decision on the interim arrangements for assuring social work students' fitness to practise, which received coverage from BASW, ADASS and Community Care
 - student registration; and
 - the standards of proficiency for social workers in England and the professional capabilities framework (joint statement with the Social Work Reform Board).
- 1.11. Press releases issued on:
 - publication of standards of proficiency for social workers in England (June);
 - publication of online video presentation of social worker transfer (July); and
 - the HCPC takes over regulation of social workers in England (August).
- 1.12. News items published and social media channels updated on:
 - online video on social workers transfer (July);
 - purpose of the standards of proficiency for social workers in England (July);
 - information mailing to social workers in England (July);
 - live web TV show on the transfer of social workers in England (July); and
 - memorandum of understanding between the HCPC and other UK social care regulators (August).
- 1.13. Blog pieces published on:
 - student fitness to practise: finding a proportionate way forward (June);
 - standards of proficiency for social workers in England (July);
 - the end and the beginning: social workers in England have a new independent regulator (August); and
 - accountability and the adult social care workforce (September).

¹ See Appendix 1 – Selection of social work media coverage

1.14. Articles published on²:

- why social work students do not need to register with professional regulator (The Guardian);
- HPC on social workers regulation: We consider every case differently (The Guardian);
- registration of social workers in England (Professional Social Work magazine, BASW); and
- new regulators for social work (Compass).

1.15. On Wednesday 1 August, we launched a broadcast campaign in collaboration with Markettiers4DC for the transfer of social workers in England and name change. The potential audience reach of the broadcast campaign was over 19,378,441. Radio coverage included live and pre-record interviews, with Marc Seale and Anna van der Gaag, for a range of national and local stations including BBC Radio 5 Live Morning, LBC 97.3, BBC Radio Cambridgeshire, BBC Radio Manchester, BBC Radio Humberside, BBC Cornwall, BBC Radio Devon, Sunrise Yorkshire, The Bee and 106.5 Central Radio. A live web TV session enabled social workers and service users to submit questions directly to Marc Seale and independent social worker Joanna Nicholas for answers in real time. This session was also recorded and then uploaded to the HCPC YouTube channel.

1.16. Additional activities include:

- updates on social media following Royal Assent;
- responding to questions on Facebook and Twitter on the regulation of social workers, publication of the standards of proficiency and fees;
- regular contact with reporters from Community Care, Professional Social Work (BASW), Social Work Matters (The College of Social Work);
- public information campaign, including advertisements in Moderngov (Conference edition 2012), and House Magazine (Labour Conference Edition);
- links to new social worker webpages sent to key journalists;
- communications on social work appointments to Council (September); and
- interview with Anna van der Gaag on student fitness to practise (Professional Social Work, BASW).

Parliamentarians

1.17. Activities relating to parliamentarians include:

- parliamentary monitoring; including the passage and Royal Assent of the Health and Social Care Bill into the Health and Social Care Act 2012;
- information published on PoliticsHome; and
- ministerial questions answered on student registration (5 questions, May 2012) and the student suitability scheme (2 questions, July).

² See Appendix 1 – selection of media coverage

Stakeholders

- 1.18. The stakeholder team's current focus is on renewal communications for social workers. Please see the final section of this paper for further detail.
- 1.19. Between February 2012 and Wednesday 1 August 2012 the stakeholder team met with the following organisations:
 - All Party Parliamentary Group (social work meeting);
 - Association of Directors of Adult Social Services;
 - ASWEB;
 - British Association of Social Workers;
 - CAFCASS;
 - Community Care Inform;
 - GSCC;
 - Local Government Association;
 - NSPCC (webinar);
 - Recruitment and Employment Confederation (social work sector group);
 - Skills for Care;
 - Social Care Institute for Excellence;
 - The College of Social Work;
 - Unite; and
 - Unison.
- 1.20. We also have representation on the following groups:
 - Communications strategy (Social Work Reform Board);
 - Employer standards advisory implementation group (Local Government Association);
 - Social work education network (Social Care Institute for Excellence); and
 - Workforce development network (Association of Directors of Adult Social Services).
- 1.21. Social work specific employer events held in:
 - Manchester (9 May);
 - Newcastle (30 May);
 - London (31 May); and
 - Birmingham (14 June).
- 1.22. We spoke to a total of 367 delegates across the programme of events, which covered the impact of the Health and Social Care Act 2012, the role of the HCPC, our standards, fitness to practise, registration processes and approach to CPD. Attendees included employers, Directors and Assistant Directors, HR staff, managers, team leaders, front line social workers and delegates from the voluntary sector.
- 1.23. We also undertook a mailing to 1,850 employers with information about the social work student suitability scheme and resulting communications.

Events

1.24. Social worker specific information events held in:

- London (22 May);
- Bristol (23 May);
- Manchester (27 June);
- Liverpool (28 June);
- Newcastle (12 September);
- Leeds (13 September);
- Birmingham (19 September); and
- Plymouth (20 September).

1.25. We spoke to a total of 1,180 delegates at these events, which informed General Social Care Council (GSCC) registrants about the transfer, provided information about the HCPC and our registration and CPD processes. Common questions arose on CPD, the registration fee, HCPC's interaction with employers and the renewal process.

1.26. We also commissioned a recording of an information event session to allow social workers who were unable to attend the events to access the information online and share the videos with their colleagues. As of Thursday 25 October 2012, the combined total of views across the seven videos was 5,772; with the most popular sessions being the background to the transfer, renewal of registration and from PRTL to continuing professional development (CPD).

1.27. We have attended the following exhibition and conferences:

- Compass, Birmingham (5 March) – joint HPC / GSCC stand. We received 100 visits to the stand and spoke to social workers, social work students and local authority employers.
- Community Care Live, London (16-17 May) – joint HPC / GSCC stand and workshop. We received 535 visits to the stand and spoke to social workers and social work students.
- LGA Unison conference, Bournemouth (17-18 June) – HPC stand. We received 46 visits to the stand and spoke to social workers, staff representatives, employers and managers.
- North West Social Work Show, Manchester (15 October) – HCPC stand and two presentations. We received 170 visits to the stand and spoke to social workers, social work students and employers.
- National Children and Adult Services Conference, Eastbourne (24-26 October) – HCPC stand.

1.28. We also worked with the Education Department on a series of events to inform education providers about the transfer. These events highlighted the key differences between the HPC and the GSCC models of approving and monitoring education programmes and have been held in:

- London (28 June);
- Birmingham (11 July);
- Leeds (18 July);
- London (3 October); and
- Liverpool (11 October).

1.29. In addition to the events above, many organisations and local authorities have requested talks for their employees. Presentations have been given by members of the Communications and Policy teams, and include:

- BASW (23 March);
- North East London Boroughs (25 June);
- CPD practice learning for conference practice educators (28 June);
- Devon County Council (11 July);
- Essex County Council (12 July);
- East London Foundation Trust (18 July);
- Bournemouth (24 July);
- London South East Boroughs (31 July);
- Doncaster (23 August);
- Mental health professionals, London (4 September);
- West London Alliance Social Work Partnership (6 September);
- South West London Boroughs (10 September);
- Luton (18 September);
- Oxfordshire (27 September);
- Enfield (4 October);
- BASW annual conference for social work independents (6 October); and
- Harrow County Council (11 October).

Web

1.30. We have created dedicated webpages for the transfer of social workers in England, including frequently asked questions, and focussing on the following areas:

- timeline for the transfer;
- background information;
- about the GSCC transfer;
- HCPC application forms (post-transfer);
- HCPC registration renewal;
- fitness to practise (conduct);
- standards;
- information for education providers;
- CPD (PRTL);
- social work student suitability scheme;
- video presentation on social work transfer; and
- interview with HCPC Chief Executive Marc Seale on the renewal of social workers in England.

- 1.31. We have two spotlights on the home page of the website to direct social workers to the dedicated pages listed above and specifically to the video on renewals and CPD for social workers in England.

Publishing

- 1.32. The standards of proficiency for social workers in England were published on Monday 25 June 2012. Following this, an information mailing was sent to 87,000 social workers in advance of the transfer, to provide them with preliminary information about registration renewal and copies of the Standards of proficiency, Standards of conduct, performance and ethics, Your guide to our standards of continuing professional development, and Why your HCPC registration matters leaflet.
- 1.33. We have had approximately 3,800 new subscribers to In Focus as a result of promotion via social worker events, and have published the following articles to update readers on the transfer:
- events update - Issue 40 (April); Issue 41 (June); Issue 42 (August);
 - student fitness to practise and registration - Issue 41 (June);
 - standards of proficiency published - Issue 42 (August);
 - social work student suitability scheme - Issue 42 (August);
- 1.34. In addition, over 40 publications have been updated to include social workers as part of the name change project. See separate paper to Committee.

HCPC employees

- 1.35. Articles published in HCPC Update to inform employees about the transfer include:
- the Health and Social Care Bill; partner recruitment; fitness to practise - Issue 20 (March);
 - standards and registration cycle; events - Issue 21 (April);
 - standards of proficiency; events; application forms; partner recruitment - Issue 22 (May);
 - interim arrangements for assuring students' fitness to practise; standards of proficiency for social workers in England published; events round up; education seminars - Issue 23 (June);
 - information mailing to social workers in England; social work student suitability scheme; education seminars; updated FAQs on website - Issue 24 (July);
 - project successfully delivered; review of open conduct cases from the GSCC; social workers registration update; broadcast campaign - Issue 25 (August); and
 - social worker information events; recruitment of social work partners now complete - Issue 26 (September).
- 1.36. All employee meetings were held on Tuesday 21 February and Tuesday 17 July in which employees received briefings from the Chief Executive on the transfer.

- 1.37. Social care updates and monitoring are included in Issues Brief each week, which is published internally and externally via email and the HCPC website. Employees also receive updates via internal posts, news items and the media centre hosted on the intranet.

2. Social workers in England renewal communications

- 2.1. The renewal window for social workers in England opened on Saturday 1 September 2012 and will close on Friday 30 November at 6pm.
- 2.2. Our Registration Department are leading the renewal process and have written to 88,063 social workers with details of how to renew online. We are working closely with the department to provide communications support to the operational activities. They recently wrote to 68,000 social workers to remind them to renew their registration and will shortly be writing to employers, where known, advising them of individuals who have yet to renew.
- 2.3. We have put a workplan in place which focuses on communicating the importance of renewing online and before Friday 30 November 2012. This targets both social worker registrants and their employers as well as key stakeholders, for example the professional bodies and organisations representing social workers.
- 2.4. The workplan includes a range of activities which are set out below and is monitored and reviewed on a weekly basis with the Registration department.
- 2.5. We are currently planning communications on lapsing and readmission for those social workers who do not renew before Friday 30 November 2012. Our Registrations Department will notify social workers who lapse. We will also communicate lapsing rates with all stakeholder organisations listed in paragraph 2.6 and ask them to send out information via their networks.

Stakeholder organisations

- 2.6. The stakeholder team are in regular contact, including meetings and email updates, with major employers, professional bodies and stakeholder organisations including:
 - Association of Directors of Adult Social Services;
 - Association of Directors of Childrens Services;
 - Barnardo's;
 - British Association of Social Workers;
 - CAFcASS;
 - Family Action;
 - Local Government Association;
 - NSPCC;
 - Recruitment and Employment Confederation;
 - Social Care Institute for Excellence;
 - Skills for Care;
 - TACT;
 - The College of Social Work; and
 - Unison.

Social worker renewal update: email to stakeholders

- 2.7. Three email bulletins have been sent to stakeholders to date including new information and content on the introductory mailing, renewal leaflet, and renewal video to push out to users.
- 2.8. As a consequence of this work, stakeholders are disseminating information via e-bulletins to members and via news items in newsletters and on websites.

Social workers in England renewal leaflet

- 2.9. We have published a renewal leaflet to promote renewal for social workers in England. Activities include:
 - news item published and social media channels updated on renewal poster for social workers in England (August);
 - article published in HCPC In Focus - Issue 43 (October);
 - over 2,500 leaflets sent to stakeholders and employers to date;
 - included in delegate packs at National Children and Adult Services Conference (24-26 October 2012);
 - available at North West Social Worker Show, Manchester (15 October 2012) and Naidex (17-18 October); and
 - included with presentation slides at social worker specific information events.

Targeted media and PR

- 2.10. We have worked with relevant organisations to place:
 - a journal article for Association of Directors of Adult Social Services;
 - an article in the Local Government Association 'First Magazine' for Council Leaders;
 - articles in Professional Social Work (BASW);
 - an interview with Community Care on CPD and renewals; and
 - information on all social media platforms.³

Advertising

- 2.11. We have placed online advertising which will run to the end of the renewal window:
 - BASW online banner;
 - BASW e-bulletin (sent directly to 14,000 social workers); and
 - Community Care online banner (estimated 2,500 views per day).

³ See Appendix 2 - Selection of media coverage, articles and advertisements on social work renewal

2.12. We have also placed full page colour advertisements⁴ in:

- Professional Social Work Now (BASW); and
- Local Government Chronicle (readership of 33,600; 46% of subscribers are Chief Executives, Directors and Assistant Directors and 32% are managers).

Online media

2.13. We have recorded an interview with Marc Seale on renewals and CPD for social workers in England, which has been:

- highlighted via a news item, press release and social media channels;
- uploaded to You Tube (1,019 views in four weeks as of Thursday 25 October);
- covered by Community Care, BASW, and Children and Young People Now; and highlighted this via a spotlight on the HCPC website.

2.14. We have published news items and updated social media channels on the importance of social workers renewing their HCPC registration.

Presentations

2.15. We continue to give social work specific presentations which highlight the importance of renewing before Friday 30 November 2012, including those listed in paragraph 1.28, and the four post-transfer information events noted in paragraph 1.23.

Employer mailing

2.16. We have written to Directors and Assistant Directors of Adult and Children's Services informing them of the importance of renewal. This mailing was sent to 1,100 Directors and Assistant Directors and landed the week commencing Monday 1 October.

Newsletter

2.17. We have published articles in HCPC In Focus on:

- renewal information for social workers in England - Issue 43 (October); and
- information events for social workers - Issue 43 (October).

Next steps

2.18. Over the coming month our focus will be on:

- further PR options with a focus on employers; and
- communications on lapsing and readmission for those social workers who do not renew before Friday 30 November 2012.

Date of paper: October 2012

⁴ See Appendix 2 - Selection of media coverage, articles and advertisements on social work renewal

Appendix 1 – Selection of social work media coverage

March 2012

6 March 2012 www.guardian.co.uk

Professional development for social workers – why bother?

Hilary Tompsett explains how professional development will be affected by the impending closure of the General Social Care Council.

13 March 2012 www.guardian.co.uk

Social Work Day 2012: Social workers' anxiety over assessment focus

Social workers fear that the ascendancy of care management is preventing them utilising their wider expertise for adults in need.

20 March 2012 www.basw.co.uk

World Social Work Day: Risk of social workers falling off register

As social workers mark World Social Work Day today, the British Association of Social Workers (BASW) issues a warning about a twin threat to both the profession in England, and to service users.

20 March 2012 www.careappointments.co.uk

Employers dropping 'social worker' from job titles are undermining public protection

As social workers mark World Social Work Day today, the British Association of Social Workers (BASW) issues a warning about a twin threat to both the profession in England, and to service users.

May 2012

10 May 2012 www.basw.co.uk

BASW's disappointment at HPC's refusal to register social work students

BASW has expressed disappointment at the conclusion of the Health Professions Council (HPC) that registration of social work students by the same body that regulates qualified practitioners is not necessary to protect the public in the long term.

10 May 2012 www.communitycare.co.uk

Register of social work students in England 'unnecessary'

The Health Professions Council (HPC) looks set to phase out the register of social work students after it takes over as regulator in England later this year.

23 May 2012 www.communitycare.co.uk

What you should know about the CPD switchover

When the register of social workers in England transfers to the Health Professions Council (HPC) on 1 August, changes will be made to how your continuing professional development (CPD) is monitored and assessed.

25 May 2012 www.guardian.co.uk

Why social work students do not need to register with professional regulator

From August, social work students in England will no longer need to be registered. The chair of the regulator explains why.

June 2012

11 June 2012 www.communitycare.co.uk

Regulating social work students: the different approaches

A wall of opposition met the Health Professions Council's (HPC) recent announcement that it has no plans to register social work students in England in the long term.

20 June 2012 www.epolitix.com

Student social workers: Ensuring fitness to practise

In recent months, we have been examining the most appropriate mechanism for assuring the fitness to practise of students during their education and training, writes Anna van der Gaag, chair of the Health Professions Council.

20 June 2012 www.basw.co.uk

Concerns persist about axing student register as HPC launches temporary measures

The Health Professions Council (HPC) has responded to significant concerns about its abolition of student registration by launching a new 'suitability scheme' to oversee education providers in the role they will be expected to play as arbiters of trainee social workers' fitness to practise.

26 June 2012 www.basw.co.uk

The average social worker in England is 46 and female

An assessment of 11 years in the life of the soon to be deceased General Social Care Council has shown an overwhelmingly female profession in England, a mixed racial background and an average age of 46.

26 June 2012 www.basw.co.uk

HPC launches new proficiency standards for social workers in England

The Health Professions Council (HPC) has published new proficiency standards for social workers in England ahead of assuming regulatory responsibility for the profession from the General Social Care Council (GSCC) on 1 August.

27 June 2012 www.communitycare.co.uk

New minimum standards introduced for social workers

The Health Professions Council (HPC) has published its standards of proficiency for social workers in England, which set out what practitioners should know, understand and be able to do in order to register and practise.

July 2012

6 July 2012 www.hqip.org.uk

Health Professions Council publishes standards of proficiency for social workers in England.

On 26 June 2012, the Health Professions Council (HPC) published its standards of proficiency for social worker in England.

10 July 2012 www.communitycare.co.uk

Your guide to continuing professional development (CPD)

Confused about the changes to CPD requirements for social workers in England, which come into effect later this year? Read Community Care's eight-point guide.

10 July 2012 www.communitycare.co.uk

CPD activities: what you could include in your profile

The Health Professions Council requires social workers to undertake a wide range of continuing professional development (CPD) activities. Here are some examples of what this could entail.

27 July 2012 www.maturetimes.co.uk

Social workers to face tougher regulations

Join our live webTV show to find out how the change will affect you.

31 July 2012 Children and Young People Now (Web)

Daily roundup: Separating families, race and youth unemployment, and the last day at the GSCC

A £14m boost for separation support, young people sought to advise on reducing unemployment and the General Social Care Council closes its doors, all in the news today.

31 July 2012 www.maturetimes.co.uk

Transfer of social worker registration from the GSCC to the HCPC

On 1 August 2012 (Wednesday) the regulation of social workers in England moves from the General Social Care Council (GSCC) to the renamed Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC).

July / August 2012 Professional Social Work (BASW)

HPC produces temporary plan as it confirms axe for student registration

The Health Professions Council (HPC) has responded to concerns about its abolition of student registration by launching a new 'suitability scheme' to oversee education providers in the role they will be expected to play as arbiters of trainee social workers' fitness to practise.

July / August 2012 Professional Social Work (BASW)

New proficiency standards published for social workers in England

The Health Professions Council (HPC) has published new proficiency standards for social workers in England ahead of assuming regulatory responsibility for the profession from the General Social Care Council (GSCC) on 1 August.

August 2012

1 August 2012 www.guardian.co.uk

Curtain closes on the General Social Care Council

A review of the history and achievements of the GSCC, as social work regulation transfers to the Health Professions Council.

1 August 2012 www.guardian.co.uk

HPC on social workers regulation: We consider every case differently

As the Health Professions Council takes over regulation of social workers, how will it differ from the General Social Care Council?

2 August 2012 The Social Work Blog

New cross-border arrangements for UK social workers

Social work is devolved in the UK, meaning there are different rules and requirements for social workers and students in each country.

2 August 2012 www.communitycare.co.uk

Public opinion of social workers has improved, finds survey

The majority of people think social workers do a good and challenging job, but there are still gaps in their understanding of the role.

30 August 2012 www.communitycare.co.uk

Confusion remains over changes to social work CPD

At the beginning of August, swathes of social workers and students in England downloaded our free guides to registering with the Health and Care Professions Council and how to undertake continuing professional development (CPD) in line with the HCPC's standards.

September 2012

1 September 2012 Professional Social Work (BASW)

Early issues with the HCPC

Like many colleagues, I have recently received my registration and introduction letter from the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC), and read it in conjunction with your feature on registration.

1 September 2012 Professional Social Work (BASW)

BASW 'optimistic' as HCPC takes over regulation in England

BASW is 'optimistic' about the future of social worker registration following the 1 August handover of the regulation of social workers in England from the General Social Care Council to the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC), but will continue to campaign for registration to be extended to student social workers, and for the right of social workers to stand up to employers against unethical practice.

October 2012

1 October 2012 Professional Social Work (BASW)

A focus on development

Welcome to the 2013 edition of Compass, the annual guide to social work and social care.

2 October 2012 Compass Jobs Fair 2013

New regulators for social work

Marc Seale welcomes the addition of social workers to the HCPC Register

8 October 2012 www.communitycare.co.uk

Should employers reimburse social workers' fees?

Unison wrote to employers in England in May urging them to reimburse social workers for their registration fees – or at least pay the difference between the General Social Care Council's fees (£30 per year) and the Health and Care Professions Council's fees (£76 per year).

guardian

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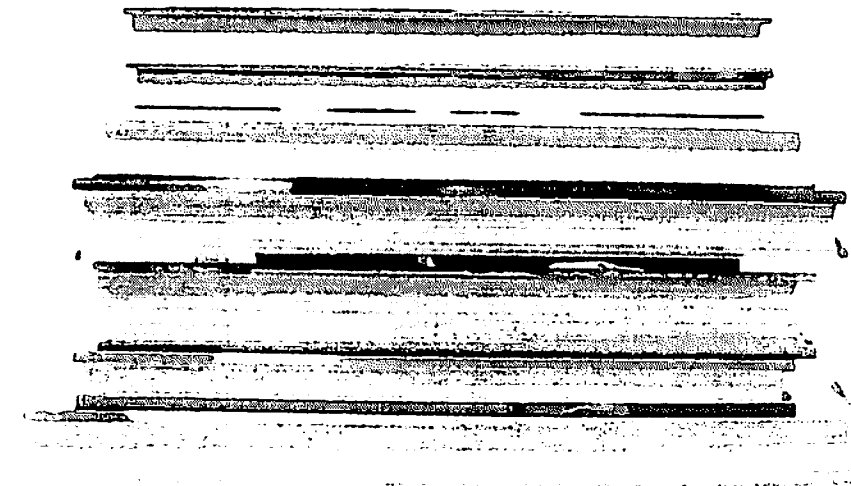
social care network
Insight for social workers and social care professionals

Professional development for social workers – why bother?

Hilary Tompsett explains how professional development will be affected by the impending closure of the General Social Care Council

Hilary Tompsett
Guardian Professional, Tuesday 6 March 2012 09.02 GMT

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The new CPD framework will offer a hybrid of work based learning including joint working, case discussions and reading. Photography: Lauren Burke/Lauren Nicole

Many social workers, with the imminent demise of the General Social Care Council (GSCC) and its responsibility for the current post qualifying (PQ) framework, will be looking with trepidation at the future and wondering what is going to happen about professional development.

When the framework was first introduced in the 1990s and revised in 2007, social workers were mixed in their response – some welcomed it as a means to equality with other professions, while others asked why do I need to do anything else after qualification? Now with the establishment of consolidation (formerly PQ1) and newly qualified (NQSW) programmes for social workers starting out on their careers, social workers should be asking "why should social workers not have a formal professional development framework?"

There will be one – though it will be different from before, offering a scheme that responds to changing financial times, employer pressures managing workload demands on their social workers, and social workers struggling to find time and/or opportunities to complete their PQ awards. The new continuing professional development (CPD) framework will offer a hybrid of work based learning, opportunities for academic awards and a recognition that learning can take place in a number of ways, including action learning sets, joint working, case discussions and reading.

We now find ourselves in a new situation - GSCC will be transferring social work regulation to the Health Professions Council after July 2012, and re-registration will become obligatory after two (rather than three) years, based on outcomes and a portfolio of reflection on and evidence of learning, rather than on inputs and defined numbers of hours/days.

The professional capabilities framework, developed by the Social Work Reform Board, and now under the custodianship of the College of Social Work, has established a professional framework that will be relevant throughout a social worker's professional career.

An assessed and supported year in employment, being introduced from September 2012, should provide in the longer term (replacing the NQSW scheme) a development opportunity for all new social workers whether in adult or children's services, in local authorities or the private, voluntary or independent sector.

Some social workers may however feel gloomy about how will they be able to prioritise their development needs without obvious external drivers, such as allocated funding, a tightly defined framework, professional regulatory requirements, and may be having to look at personal drivers.

So why should we bother? Whose responsibility is it?

Employers know that organisations that support social workers have the best staff retention rates. The employers standards and supervision framework (now hosted by the Local Government Association) promote supervision, appraisal and personal

development plans and are expected to be part of inspection frameworks for agencies employing social workers.

Universities played a key role in developing flexible PQ programmes designed for social workers in childcare, adults and mental health; it is imperative they continue to offer these until new opportunities are ready, work in partnership with employers and provide strong research underpinning practice relevant academic programmes in the future.

There will be a future role too for the College of Social Work as it promotes excellence in social work and plans to endorse professional development opportunities.

And what about professional social workers themselves? As registered social workers, we should support the notion of developing our specialist skills, knowledge, expertise and confidence in the interests of good practice for service users and carers, but we should also stand up for our profession, asserting the importance of acquiring and contributing to new knowledge and seeking out ways to develop theory and evidence-informed practice.

So CPD is the responsibility of all of us involved in social work, if we want to improve social workers' capabilities, personal confidence and direction for practice and our careers.

• Hilary Tompsett is a professor in the school of social work, Kingston University and St George's University of London, and vice-chair of the General Social Care Council

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Social Work Day 2012: Social workers' anxiety over assessment focus

Social workers fear that the ascendancy of care management is preventing them utilising their wider expertise for adults in need

Sally Gillen

guardian.co.uk, Tuesday 13 March 2012 16.30 GMT

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Helping people to plan what services they need, so they can get the most out of their lives, is a vital part of social work. Photograph: Alamy

Meeting for the last time a young woman he had worked with for two years, social worker Steve Moore asked her to give a score for her life before they met and after. She looked at her wheelchair. "Four out of 10 then," she said. "Three out of 10 now."

"You could look at that as two years wasted," says Moore, who works for a council in the West Midlands. But a little probing had revealed a more complicated picture. "She was saying her physical condition – she had multiple sclerosis and a back injury and had come to use her wheelchair more – had deteriorated. But her general wellbeing, which is where I helped, she rated as seven out of 10. It was four at the beginning.

"As social workers, we get alongside people and we build autonomy," he adds. "It's very complex and it takes a lot of interpersonal skill."

Creeping anxiety

As the profession prepares to celebrate World Social Work Day next Tuesday, many UK social workers in adults' services share a creeping anxiety about the future for the kind of role that Moore describes. They fear that their professional skills are increasingly redundant, their function often reduced to assessing people for care packages. Once, they were able to advocate for users of services when they were in difficulties with benefits or housing, says Ruth Cartwright, England manager at the British Association of Social Workers (BASW). Now, those tasks are often passed to voluntary agencies.

"The emphasis is increasingly on speed and quantity of work, not quality, and there's no time to build a working relationship with the service user," she adds. "Listening does not always get a look-in now."

The dominance of care management in adult social work is reflected in the rising number of social workers renamed "care manager", a job title all the more galling for those who find they share it with growing numbers of staff without a social work qualification. BASW is concerned that the battle to raise professional standards, and the public standing of social work, by requiring social workers to be registered in order to practise is being undermined by the slew of new titles, including "social care assessor" and "care navigator".

By law, anyone working as a social worker must be registered by the social work regulator, which in England at present is the General Social Care Council (GSCC). But those known as care managers, for example, are not under the same obligation. In July, the social work register will transfer from the GSCC to the Health Professions Council and annual registration fees will rise from £30 to £76, which BASW fears may discourage those without a social work job title from registering.

The issue is particularly acute in adults' services, where social work is less well defined partly because, unlike children's services, it does not exist within a clear legislative framework. According to Owen Davies, public affairs adviser at the new College of Social Work (CSW), spending cuts and misconceived ideas about how to implement personalisation are making for a toxic mix in the adults' sector, leading to suggestions that social workers are an "optional extra".

In Hertfordshire, the county council is cutting 23 full-time social work posts of 110 in adult social care, claiming the success of its reablement service means it needs fewer of them. Initial assessment of care needs is being outsourced to contractor Serco, to which 12 social workers are being transferred. The council says: "The same experienced staff

will continue undertaking initial assessments as they do now, and qualified Hertfordshire council staff will continue to sign off these assessments."

Such schemes, alongside the drive to allow service users more choice and control over their care through personal budgets, are supported by many social workers. But some councils, under pressure to cut spending, are said to be using personalisation as a way to reduce social work posts.

Davies says: "If we are going to have a tidal wave of people needing care, then we can't write social workers out of the picture. They have the skills and knowledge to intervene and protect people, but also to make sure they get the most out of their lives by helping them make decisions."

Another consequence of reducing the number of social workers is that their expertise in assessing and managing risk is lost. Davies fears this could lead to more scandals like Winterbourne View, the former private residential hospital near Bristol where people with learning disabilities were last year found to have been left at the mercy of abusive staff by councils and NHS agencies that placed them there.

What adds to this danger is the complexity of many cases, often lying beneath the surface. Moore says: "In some local authorities, managers and consultants endlessly try to break down tasks into what is simple and what is complex, the complex bits for qualified people to do and the simple stuff for unqualified staff. But you can't neatly separate the two.

"Any person-centred work with an adult who needs social care support to maintain or regain a reasonable quality of life may become complex at any time."

David Brayne, who was a social worker in an adult social care team at Somerset county council for more than 25 years before retiring last year, agrees with this. "In social work we deal with presenting problems and actual problems, and the presenting one may be just the tip of the iceberg," he says.

Caught by surprise

A social worker who leaves the office to carry out a seemingly straightforward assessment of an older person for domiciliary care may find they are dealing with someone showing signs of dementia, argues Brayne. Even the most experienced social worker can be caught by surprise by what they encounter – as he himself was when an 80-year-old disclosed that they had been sexually abused as a child.

"Unqualified staff can follow a particular format or script laid down by their employer, but they lack the skills to recognise problems, never mind find ways to address them,"

he argues. "Offering a weekly visit by a home help can be useful, but good social work offers so much more."

Frustration at the emphasis on care management over traditional, relationship-based social work contributed to Brayne's decision to leave the profession early. He found he was spending around 70% of his time at his computer and seeing just one or two service users a day, when once it had been five or six.

Many other social workers privately express similar frustrations. But they are fearful of speaking out publicly, says Cartwright, lest they find themselves in front of a disciplinary panel.

Those representing social workers are speaking out, however, to remind government of the vital importance of a qualified professional. In a letter to the care services minister, Paul Burstow, the CSW has called on the government to free social workers from what it calls the "care management straitjacket", recommending that the forthcoming social care white paper creates a role of "principal social worker" in adult social care to mirror developments in children's services. And BASW has been seeking to amend the health and social care bill to stipulate that anyone employed to carry out social work tasks should be qualified and registered as a social worker.

As Cartwright says, social work's problem is that its contribution is often valued only by people who receive its direct help. "Social workers and the knowledge and skills they can bring to bear in difficult situations are often underestimated, but are much appreciated by service users and carers."

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World Social Work Day: Risk of social workers falling off register

20th March 2012

As social workers mark World Social Work Day today, the British Association of Social Workers (BASW) issues a warning about a twin threat to both the profession in England, and to service users.

The dangers come from the fact that social workers who do not have 'social work' in their job title do not have to register as practitioners on the Social Care Register, a problem that will be exacerbated in July when the cost of registration will nearly double.

It is likely that this price hike will see those social workers not legally obliged to register to discontinue their registration, meaning that although they still perform vital social work tasks with vulnerable people, they will no longer be listed and held to account for their standard of practice.

Service users and the wider public will lose the important safeguard of knowing that practitioners are registered and, if their practice is found wanting, can be removed from the register.

Responsibility for maintaining the database, which hosts social workers deemed fit to practise social work in England, moves from the General Social Care Council (GSCC) to the Health Professions Council (HPC), with the cost of registration rising from £30 to £76.

The rise will see hard up social workers without 'social work' in their job title but who currently choose to register voluntarily join the ranks of others who have long since chosen not to register.

Pay freezes and slashed allowances over the past two years have left many social workers struggling financially (64% have higher debt levels than a year ago), so they are far less likely to pay fees they aren't legally obliged to meet.

Commenting on the day BASW is hosts a celebratory parliamentary event in Westminster, The Association expressed concern at the inevitable impact on public protection, as those not on the register will not be subject to the same scrutiny as those legally obliged to stay on the list, because they do have 'social worker' in their job title.

The loss of social work registrants is a growing problem, as increasing numbers of traditionally 'social work' posts no longer use the term 'social worker'. Recent moves integrating social workers into health teams for working with adult service users have fuelled the trend. Increasing numbers of social workers being given broad job titles such as 'Care Manager', 'Project Worker' or 'Adult Reviewing Officer'.

BASW is responding to the threat by urging all social workers to remain on the register to ensure the highest protection for the public, boost public confidence in social workers and retain the integrity of the profession.

BASW is also calling on local authority employers to encourage staff who may have different job titles, yet who are still engaged in social work roles, to remain on the register, and is writing to directors of social services and local councillors to raise the issue.

The Association also plans to enlist the support of third sector employers and the Health Professions Council to make registration a priority.

BASW chief executive Hilton Dawson, says:

“We sympathise with social workers who rightly view the doubling of registration fee as an unhelpful and unnecessary expense in the current financial climate, but we urge all social workers, if you value your profession, to remain on the register. The register is an important safeguard for service users since it makes it difficult for social workers who commit offences to remain in employment, and ultimately boosts public confidence in the profession.

“We are asking local authority councillors in particular to appreciate that registration of those working with vulnerable people is an important element of public safety, and to act accordingly to protect the most vulnerable of their constituents.

“We have previously raised this issue, both in BASW’s Social Work Bill, which we presented to the prime minister, and in amendments at the committee stage of the 2011 Health and Social Care Bill, and we are left wondering why nothing has been done about it.”

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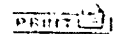
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Employers dropping 'social worker' from job titles are undermining public protection



Written by BASW

Tuesday, 20 March 2012

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BASW's disappointment at HPC's refusal to register social work students

10th May 2012

BASW has expressed disappointment at the conclusion of the Health Professions Council (HPC) that registration of social work students by the same body that regulates qualified practitioners is not necessary to protect the public in the long term.

The HPC decided this week that although it has no immediate plans to scrap the student register when the General Social Care Council (GSCC) closes at the end of July it is not committed to maintaining that register into the future. Instead it is to look into alternative methods for regulating social work students. These are likely to centre on applying similar standards to social work education providers to those it currently places on the training institutions for the other professions it presently regulates. The move, which could see universities being made to carry out criminal conviction checks on social work students and highlight any concerns about a student's character, is to be discussed at a meeting in June.

Having repeatedly raised concerns about any move to discontinue the present registration arrangements, whereby the GSCC maintains a register of qualified and student social workers, BASW again emphasised its serious concerns at any development that could make it harder to ensure that students were fully accountable for their work with the public.

Commenting on the HPC's decision, BASW's chair Fran Fuller said: "We are disappointed that the HPC continues to reject the need for students to be properly regulated in the same way as their qualified counterparts. Currently social work students have to register and adhere to the GSCC codes of conduct, which makes them accountable for their actions from the moment they register as social workers and, to some extent, protects the public when students are on a placement working alongside vulnerable people who need services.

"I am pleased the HPC has not taken any immediate steps to end the registration of students when it assumes responsibility from the GSCC but remain concerned at longer term plans and at this tentative proposal to put more onus on education providers in future.

"Universities do, of course, try to address misconduct issues via their own procedures but all too often they are not able to understand the complexities of social work and social work practice, so there remains a clear role for a regulator.

"Even leaving aside the difficulties of universities policing students on placements, there are other, similarly complicated issues associated with students who are terminated from social work degree programmes – how will it be possible to track these people and ensure they are not able to re-enter social work training? Social work students often work in isolation, alongside service users, which puts them apart from students who belong to other HPC registered professions."

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Register of social work students in England 'unnecessary'

Kirsty McGregor
Thursday 10 May 2012 17:02



The Health Professions Council (HPC) looks set to phase out the register of social work students after it takes over as regulator in England later this year.

The HPC has no immediate plans to scrap the student register when the General Social Care Council (GSCC) closes at the end of July. However, its council members today decided registration of social work students was not necessary to protect the public in the long term.

As a result, the HPC has agreed to look into alternative methods for regulating social work students, including proposals to place more responsibility on education providers.

Council members made the decision today after reviewing responses to its recent consultation on the most effective way of assuring the fitness to practise of students across all of the professions it regulates, including social work.

They will meet again in June to discuss interim measures the HPC could put in place to ensure the public is protected while the system is reformed.

The GSCC currently registers social work students for £10 per year. It argues that students on social work placements often have direct and unsupervised contact with vulnerable service users; registration ensures they understand the standard of practice required of them.

Technically the GSCC's register is voluntary, but higher education institutions cannot access funds for practice placements unless its students are registered.

"Given the sheer weight of sector opinion in favour of continuing to register social work students, we are disappointed that the HPC council has decided not to maintain the student register in the long term," said Penny Thompson, chief executive of the GSCC.

"This is a clear departure from the current system of student regulation that is in place across the UK.

"However, we are somewhat reassured that the HPC council recognises the unique situation that student social workers find themselves in whilst on practice placements and that they will look again at the requirements placed on social work education providers in England."

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Users will be at risk if social work students are not registered, says GSCC

Social workers want compulsory registration of students

What you should know about the CPD switchover



By [Kirsty McGregor](#) on May 23, 2012 10:57 AM | [No Comments](#)



When the register of social workers in England transfers to the Health Professions Council (HPC) on 1 August, changes will be made to how your continuing professional development (CPD) is monitored and assessed. Here is a quick summary of what I learned about the new approach to CPD at [Community Care Live](#) last week and at the [HPC's information event for social workers](#) yesterday:

- Two and a half per cent of CPD profiles will be audited by the HPC every two years. The sample is randomly selected, so just because your profile is audited one year, doesn't mean it won't be audited again two years later. Newly qualified social workers will not be included in the sample.
- You will not be asked to submit CPD evidence when the register transfers on 1 August. The first audit for social workers will take place in 2014.
- Unlike the GSCC, the HPC does not require you to undertake a prescribed number of hours or days of post-registration training and learning (PRTL). Instead, the focus is on outcomes. You will have to demonstrate how your CPD has improved your practice and benefited service users.
- As a result, the HPC is quite flexible about what could count as CPD. It could be formal training, attending conferences, mentoring, peer supervision, reading an article on [communitycare.co.uk](#) or [Community Care Inform](#) (shameless plug) or doing some internet research. There is a list of suggested activities in

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Why social work students do not need to register with professional regulator

From August, social work students in England will no longer need to be registered. The chair of the regulator explains why

Dr Anna van der Gaag
Guardian Professional, Friday 25 May 2012 13.50 BST



Practice learning co-ordinator Cathy Lloyd with some of her first year BA social work students at Ruskin College, Oxford. Photograph: Sam Frost

The Health Professions Council (HPC) is a statutory regulator of more than 200,000 professionals from 15 professions - including physiotherapists, occupational therapists and practitioner psychologists.

As a regulator, we have a pivotal role to ensure that all students achieve our exacting standards before they complete their studies and join their professional register.

We do this by approving education and training throughout the UK. All training providers must demonstrate that they meet our standards. If they do not, we can, and have, withdrawn approval of programmes.

To assist students in their practical placements, we provide supporting guidance to help them understand what is required of them. Our standards of conduct, performance and ethics describe what we expect of existing professionals and students.

Our standards of education and training make sure students understand the standards of conduct, performance and ethics during their training, with teachers encouraging students to think about what it is to be a professional.

We insist that all training providers quality assure practice placements and monitor and support their students in partnership with placement providers. In a very small number of cases, students are removed from programmes unable to meet these standards.

This well-established process means there has been no need for the HPC to have a register of students for its existing professions.

From 1 August all student placement programmes approved by the General Social Care Council will be provisionally approved by the new Health and Care Professions Council. We will visit all the programmes over a period of time to ensure that our standards of education and training are met.

Education providers will retain overall responsibility for the training they provide, including ensuring high-quality practice placements and dealing effectively with concerns about the professional suitability of applicants and students.

We assume that many providers will already meet these standards. However, we expect that some may find them challenging. We will be working to help providers understand our requirements over the coming months.

Our council recently discussed the outcomes of a public consultation on these issues and, after careful consideration, decided that in the long term, social work students in England would not be registered by the HCPC.

However, during the consultation, employers and other stakeholders expressed concern about some of the current supervision arrangements for social work students on practice placements and, in particular, about social work students' unsupervised contact with vulnerable service users.

It was clear that whatever the stakeholders' views on student registration, they all wanted to achieve the same thing – students who understand the professional responsibilities expected of them and who are fit to practise and equipped to work with service users when they complete their training.

We know from the consultation that the existing registration arrangements are valued by many in the sector and in particular that they reassure employers taking social work students on placement.

But we firmly believe that in the long term, the most effective and proportionate means to provide this reassurance, and to ensure that students benefit from high-quality placements, is through robust quality assurance arrangements for education providers.

This approach moves the onus and financial burden away from individual students and on to the regulator.

A special meeting of the council will be held on 19 June 2012 to consider the interim arrangements that could be established during the transition from the existing arrangements to our new requirements.

Dr Anna van der Gaag is chair of the Health Professions Council.

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Regulating social work students: the different approaches

Monday 11 June 2012 17:02



A wall of opposition met the Health Professions Council's (HPC) recent announcement that it has no plans to register social work students in England in the long term. Many criticised the HPC for its perceived "one size fits all" approach, given that the regulator does not register students in any of the 15 professions it currently oversees. Social work employers, professional bodies and practitioners alike expressed concern about the impact on public safety should the student register cease to exist once the HPC takes over from the General Social Care Council (GSCC) on 1 August.

In its response to the Law Commission's ongoing consultation on the regulation of health and social care professions in England, the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services points out that, through registration, students agree to adhere to the code of practice for social workers, which instils in them a sense of professionalism.

Paula La Cumber, a social work lecturer at South Thames College in London, agrees that registration impacts on how students feel about their role: "It's really important that students have a sense of professionalism and accountability right from the beginning of their training." At the nearby London South Bank University, first year social work student, Anna Mayer, says: "There is some kind of status when you register with the GSCC. It was quite exciting when we filled out our forms and got our registration number. It was like the first step towards being qualified."

The regulatory bodies for social workers in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales have been registering students since 2004. The decision to do so was based on the experience of the Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work, which was responsible for the regulation of social work education before the three care councils took over. "There had been a number of cases where universities had failed to deal adequately with the fitness to practise of students," says Brendan Johnston, chief executive of the Northern Ireland Social Care Council, in his response to the Law Commission. He adds: "Requiring social work students to register with the regulatory body at the beginning of their training gives a very clear message about values and about standards of practice and conduct required."

A number of students have been referred to the devolved care councils for misconduct and some have been removed from the register, thus minimising the risk of them entering another social work course, Johnston argues. Since 2005, the GSCC has found 13 students guilty of misconduct and removed a further 76 from the register, usually because they were no longer on a social work course.

However, the HPC argues that higher education institutions (HEIs) are better placed to monitor the conduct of its students. Writing in the Guardian recently, Anna van der Gaag, chair of the HPC, argued that the onus should be on education providers and, through them, the regulator. "We insist that all training providers quality assure practice placements and monitor and support their students in partnership with placement providers," she wrote.

On the straight and narrow

In countries such as Australia and New Zealand, where regulation of social workers is not as advanced as it is in the UK, there is no student registration. However, although many institutions there are lobbying for formal registration of qualified social workers, there seems little support for changing the arrangements for those in training.

"University programmes are accredited by the professional association," explains Natalie Bolzan, professor of social work at the University of Western Sydney. "To get accreditation, universities guarantee their students have had criminal records checks, that they will abide by the code of ethics, and that, should they breach the code, we could exclude them from the programme. ...Touch wood, I don't think there have been any problems [with the system] whatsoever"

Professor Margaret Alston, head of the department of social work at Monash University, Australia, admits it can be "an arduous task" to monitor students, although, like Bolzan, defends it

as a system that works. Monash is about to place its next round of 270 social work students. "That takes quite a heavy team of people," says Alston.

Listen to Margaret Alston explain the system for monitoring students at Monash University:

Similarly, in New Zealand, the students' competencies are covered by the universities and polytechnics, which are in turn approved by the Social Workers Registration Board. You can apply for provisional registration before qualifying, but students seldom go down that road, says Jan Duke, the registration board's deputy registrar. "I don't necessarily know if being registered is going to keep students on the straight and narrow for the four years of a degree anyway," she says. "I don't know what benefit it would give to protecting the public, over and above what the educational institutions do."

Duke says the board keeps in close contact with the education providers, so they can jointly deal with any issues that arise regarding a student's conduct. She adds: "Educational institutions have an ethical responsibility to ensure that they don't take anyone on to the course who may not meet the standards for registration when they complete it."

Students in New Zealand seem happy enough with the status quo. "I think a type of social work student registration would not make a difference to being a social work student," says Telesia Moale, a student at the University of Canterbury. "The support through university is parallel to that of the social work registration board once we are in social work practice."

Back in England, however, most people in the sector stand firm on the benefits of student registration and many have used the Law Commission's consultation as a platform for expressing those views. The HPC's council has decided that, long term, there will be no student registration, but short term measures have yet to be agreed. Transitional arrangements will be discussed at a public meeting at the HPC in London on 19 June; it seems some people are hoping there is still time to change the regulator's mind.

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Student social workers: Ensuring fitness to practice

hpc 20th June 2012

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Member News

In recent months, we have been examining the most appropriate mechanism for assuring the fitness to practise of students during their education and training, writes Anna van der Gaag, chair of the Health Professions Council.

HPC launches consultation on profession-specific standards of proficiency

We have undertaken this work because the General Social Care Council (GSCC), the current regulator of social workers in England, holds a register of social work students, as do the other Social Work Regulators in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. In contrast, we do not hold a student register. Instead, we assure the fitness to practise of students through our standards of education and training and the approval of education and training programmes.

HPC to regulate non-medical public health specialists

We consulted between November 2011 and March 2012 on whether or not a register for student social workers in England should be held by HPC, and whether or not a student register

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should exist for the 15 professions we currently regulate. We also commissioned an independent literature review.

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It was clear from the literature review that student registers are the exception, rather than the norm in professional regulation, both in the UK and elsewhere. Other mechanisms, such as robust standards for educators and placement supervisors, well executed student fitness to practise processes, and holding students to account through standards and guidance on conduct are more commonly used. The review also highlighted the need to educate students about their responsibilities as professionals in training.

Statement on the council's decision on the interim arrangements for assuring social work students fitness to practise

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In the consultation the majority of those who responded from the social work community thought that registration of social work students should continue. Registration was seen as helpful in providing a 'safety net' which ensured that consistent decisions were made about the suitability and conduct of students. This was often considered useful in providing additional reassurance to employers accepting students on practice placements.

GOC consultation response welcomes Law Commissions review

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However, we also heard concerns from social work employers and other stakeholders about some of the current supervision arrangements for social work students on practice placements and in particular, about social work students' unsupervised contact with vulnerable service users whilst on placement. In contrast, a majority of professions currently regulated by HPC did not think a student register was appropriate, considering that these issues were best managed by education providers in accordance with our standards, assured through our programme approval arrangements.

Student registration statement

It seems clear from the consultation that whatever stakeholders' views on registration, we all want to achieve the same outcome – students who understand the professional responsibilities expected of them and who are fit to practise and equipped to work with service users when they complete their training.

We recently looked at the results of the consultation and the evidence from the review and decided that there should be no new register for the 15 professions we currently regulate. We also agreed that, in the longer term, the most effective and proportionate means of quality assuring the fitness to practise of student social workers in England would be through the HPC existing mechanisms. (To read my Guardian article on this click here)

After the register of social workers in England opens in August 2012 education providers will have to meet our standards of education and training. At this time, all the programmes approved by the GSCC will be treated on a transitional basis as if they were approved by us and we will begin scrutinising those programmes to ensure that our standards are met.

These standards will ensure that social work education providers retain overall responsibility for their programmes, including owning and managing the potential risks associated with the character and conduct of students. For example, education providers are required to have arrangements in place for dealing with concerns about students on placements; and have arrangements in place for managing and monitoring practice placements effectively, including ensuring that students receive appropriate supervision and that there is effective partnership

working with employers. They also ensure that students understand their obligations under our standards of conduct, performance and ethics.

Many education providers are likely to already meet these requirements. However, we know that the Social Work Task Force has previously reported continuing concerns about some social work practice placements, so some providers may well find the new requirements challenging to meet.

In our discussions, we were mindful of the potential impact that not registering social work students and applying our standards might have on social work education providers and employers. The Council therefore decided that it would be preferable to introduce interim arrangements over the next two to three years whilst the approval of programmes takes place.

At our meeting on 19 June 2012, we agreed to implement a new process for dealing with concerns about student fitness to practise - a social work student suitability scheme. The key features of this scheme are:

- There is no HCPC register of all social work students
- There is a mechanism for referral to us where,
 - in exceptional circumstances, an education provider requires an opinion on whether an applicant is of suitable character to be admitted to a programme.
 - a student has been removed from a programme or has withdrawn from a programme following a complaint
 - an education provider has not dealt with a credible complaint appropriately.
- Students who have complaints upheld via the scheme may be placed on a list which would prevent them from being admitted to, or participating in, a social work programme.

The scheme has several benefits. It provides a transitional 'safety net' of a kind that social work stakeholders have suggested is necessary. It will allow educators, employers, colleagues and members of the public, to refer their concerns to the regulator during the transition to HCPC standards. It is proportionate, in that it only affects those students and prospective students who are a cause for concern. It will send a clear message to educators that they are responsible for ensuring that student fitness to practise is managed and quality assured according to HCPC standards.

We have listened to the concerns expressed by social work stakeholders, and we are conscious of the huge changes that are underway in the social work profession. Our aim is to work with the social work community to drive up standards. HPC has a good track record in quality assuring education and training programmes through its standards of education and training and approvals process. Ultimately, these standards will apply across all social work programmes. But this will not happen overnight. The suitability scheme does not compromise the role or purpose of HPC's standards, but does provide a proportionate mechanism to mitigate risk and allow time for change.

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Concerns persist about axing student register as HPC launches temporary measures

20th June 2012

The Health Professions Council (HPC) has responded to significant concerns about its abolition of student registration by launching a new 'suitability scheme' to oversee education providers in the role they will be expected to play as arbiters of trainee social workers' fitness to practise.

The scheme will be introduced from 1 August when the HPC assumes responsibility for registering students from the General Social Care Council, which is being abolished on 31 July.

The HPC's move to establish the transitional scheme follows criticism from BASW about its decision to axe the registration of all student social workers, a move the Association says will undermine public protection by watering down safeguards against poor practice.

Despite the transitional arrangements, BASW's chair Fran Fuller, also a social work course leader at Derby University, said the changes were not sufficient. She pointed to the increasing financial pressures on universities, arguing that most will not be capable of carrying out the level of scrutiny that the GSCC has undertaken since social work regulation was introduced in 2005.

"The complexities of some professional concerns presented by students should be scrutinized by social work professionals or people with an insight into areas such as risk and vulnerability," Ms Fuller said.

"We don't expect ordinary unqualified people to become social workers and protect vulnerable people from harm, which is why we have a professional degree, so why is it acceptable to charge lay people with overseeing often complex scenarios around a student's suitability to practise?"

The transitional scheme, confirmed at an HPC Council meeting on 19 June, will be in place while the HPC scrutinises social work programmes in England against its standards of education and training.

The initiative contains four interim measures, each aimed at addressing concerns about gaps in the regulatory system while universities are developing their capacity to cope with the new requirements on them.

Most notably, the scheme means the HPC Council will maintain a record of students who are prevented from participating in a social work programme in England. Secondly, in exceptional cases, education providers will be able to seek the opinion of HPC on whether an applicant is of suitable character to be admitted to a degree programme.

Thirdly, the HCP can investigate where it considers an education provider has failed to deal with a credible complaint about a social work student, while finally, the regulator will be able to review an education provider's decision to prevent a social work student from being admitted to or participating in a social work programme.

The HPC decision not to register students follows the same approach it takes with the range of health professions it also regulates, such as physiotherapists and chiropodists. Critics of applying the same logic to trainee social workers, however, insist the HPCC is overlooking the fact that social work students undertake placement in the community, sometimes working without a qualified professional.

Ms Fuller said the HPCC's new proposals still did not address this fundamental concern. "The issues of accountability on placement and lone working are unique from other health and social care degrees."

The outgoing regulator, the GSCC, also expressed disappointment at the HPC proposals. Chief executive Penny Thompson said: "We note that the scheme is being introduced on a temporary basis. The only way of ensuring that unsuitable students are prevented from re-entering a social work degree course after having been removed, is to maintain the list of prohibited students permanently."

The HPCC insisted the plan showed it was listening. Commenting on the scheme, Anna van der Gaag, chair of the HPCC, said it indicated a willingness to listen to social worker views: "In developing this scheme, we have taken account of the concerns of the social work community.

"Our core purpose is public protection; we too want to see improvements in the quality of practice placements and in the mechanisms to ensure that students have a clear understanding of what is required of them as students and as future professionals. We are confident that the standards of education and training will deliver this."

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The average social worker in England is 46 and female

26th June 2012

An assessment of 11 years in the life of the soon to be deceased General Social Care Council has shown an overwhelmingly female profession in England, a mixed racial background and an average age of 46.

The GSCC's report, *Regulating social workers (2001-12)*, showed women making up 78% of all social workers on the Social Care Register and 8% trained outside the UK – 75% of these were trained outside the European Economic Area.

The parting shot from the GSCC, which hands over the regulatory reins to the Health Professions Council on 1 August, revealed that it refused registration to 1,177 applicants between 2003 and 30 September 2011. Nineteen social work students were refused registration and ten were granted registration subject to conditions.

In producing the report the GSCC made a number of assertions about the lessons learnt from more than a decade of regulating social workers. It insisted that the role for a regulator is to focus on public protection and eschew any move towards becoming 'a champion' for the profession.

The GSCC also emphasised the importance of joint working with regulators across the UK and repeated its recent assertion that students should remain on the register, which the HPC has confirmed will not be the case from August. The document states: "Registering social work students has been important to protect the public and people who use services. This is because students often have unsupervised access to vulnerable people when on practice placements and it is important for a national regulator to be able to take action against those who are unsuitable."

The GSCC also expressed concern at the age profile of social workers in England. "Due to the age profile of the register it is likely that large numbers of registrants will leave the register in the coming decades as a result of retirement unless there is a corresponding increase in the numbers entering the register", the report stated.

Ruth Cartwright, BASW England manager, suggested there is room for some optimism on the subject, however: "It has long been recognised that social work (and social care) is an aging profession. However, a new element may mitigate this – younger people are coming forward to undertake the social work degree and become social workers in greater numbers than was the case with previous qualifications. BASW staff meet many groups of students and the profile is markedly more youthful than it used to be.

"On the flipside, social work continues to be attractive to mature people who have had some life experience too, so many do start their social work career at an older age than other careers, such as teaching. These folk are perhaps likely to stay in social work for the rest of their working life so are worth investing in. It is clear that employers need to facilitate this particular workforce. So, as well as making provision for those younger social workers who have children, they need to be sure that people are able to care for older parents too."

[BASW - The College of Social Work](#)

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HPC launches new proficiency standards for social workers in England

26th June 2012

The Health Professions Council (HPC) has published new proficiency standards for social workers in England ahead of assuming regulatory responsibility for the profession from the General Social Care Council (GSCC) on 1 August.

Launched as part of the ongoing build up to the handover, the HPC described the Standards of Proficiency as an outline of “what a social worker in England should know, understand and be able to do when they complete their social work training ... They set out clear expectations of a social worker’s knowledge and abilities when they start practising.”

The Standards of Proficiency include a raft of statements setting out the requirements of a registered social worker under 15 headings [see list below].

The standards have been developed in tandem with the new [Professional Capabilities Framework \(PCF\)](#), which describes the capabilities required of social workers at all stages of their career – in effect following on from the Standards of Proficiency.

BASW was represented on the Professional Liaison Group (PLG) that developed the new standards. Commenting on the launch BASW’s Bridget Robb said: “BASW’s Fran McDonnell was a member of the PLG and we do believe that the standards represent the minimum for public safety. That said, we do look forward to the day when these standards will be enhanced through further standards identifying really good social work practice, to be developed by a future UK College of Social Work.”

The 15 overarching standards:

- Be able to practise safely and effectively within their scope of practice
- Be able to practise within the legal and ethical boundaries of their profession
- Be able to maintain fitness to practise
- Be able to practise as an autonomous professional, exercising their own professional judgement
- Be aware of the impact of culture, equality and diversity on practice
- Be able to practise in a non-discriminatory manner
- Be able to maintain confidentiality
- Be able to communicate effectively
- Be able to work appropriately with others
- Be able to maintain records appropriately
- Be able to reflect on and review practice
- Be able to assure the quality of their practice
- Understand the key concepts of the knowledge base relevant to their profession
- Be able to draw on appropriate knowledge and skills to inform practice
- Be able to establish and maintain a safe practice environment

[Download a PDF versions of the Standards of Proficiency for Social Workers in England](#)

New minimum standards introduced for social workers

Kirsty McGregor
Wednesday 27 June 2012 10:45



The Health Professions Council (HPC) has published its standards of proficiency for social workers in England, which set out what practitioners should know, understand and be able to do in order to register and practise.

The standards will be effective from 1 August, when the regulation of social workers transfers from the General Social Care Council (GSCC) to the newly-renamed Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC).

Once on the HCPC's register, social workers will have to meet the standards relevant to their area of practice. They will also have to meet the HCPC's standards of conduct, performance and ethics, which are similar to the GSCC's codes of practice.

"We worked with key stakeholders within the social work profession in England to draft the standards, to ensure that they reflected social work values and ethos," said Anna van der Gaag, chair of the HPC.

"We also held a public consultation to take account of the views of the social work community and spoke to service users and carers during this process."

The standards of proficiency will be subject to on-going review and updates to ensure they continue to develop and change with the social work profession, the HPC said.


They have also been designed to complement the Professional Capabilities Framework, which is overseen by the College of Social Work and sets out the key capabilities expected of social workers as they develop throughout their career.

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Standards of proficiency
for social workers in
England

HEALTH PROFESSIONS COUNCIL PUBLISHES STANDARDS OF PROFICIENCY FOR SOCIAL WORKERS IN ENGLAND

6 July 2012

On 26 June 2012, the Health Professions Council (HPC) published its standards of proficiency for social workers in England. These standards will be effective from 1 August 2012, when the regulation of social workers in England transfers from the General Social Care Council to the newly renamed Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC).

"HQIP was pleased to be able to work with the HCPC as these standards were developed and refined. We are pleased to see that engaging in systematic evaluation, evidence-informed practice and participation in audit procedures have all been recognised as fundamental to assuring the quality of practice" said HQIP Chief Executive Robin Burgess.

[Download the standards of proficiency for social workers at this link >>](#)

[Read a joint statement from the HPC and The College of Social Work here >>](#)

The standards of proficiency set out what a social worker in England should know, understand and be able to do when they complete their social work training so that they can register with the HCPC. They set out clear expectations of a social worker's knowledge and abilities when they start practising.

To find out more about HQIP's involvement and projects in social work and social care settings, please visit the [social care area](#) on the website or email everley@hqip.org.uk for more information.



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Your guide to continuing professional development (CPD)

Confused about the changes to CPD requirements for social workers in England, which come into effect later this year? Read Community Care's eight-point guide.

Social workers will have to record CPD differently (Isopix/Rex Features)

Tristan Donovan

1. Professional development is changing, right?

Yes, it's a result of the Health Professions Council (HPC) taking over the regulation of social workers in England from the General Social Care Council (GSCC) as of 1 August. As part of the change, the GSCC's post-registration training and learning (PRTL) system will be replaced by the HPC's continuing professional development (CPD) approach.

Note: Without wanting to overwhelm you with acronyms, the HPC will be renamed the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) as of 1 August 2012 – but we will continue to refer to it as the HPC until then.

2. What does the switchover from PRTL to CPD mean?

It's not just a change of acronym. At the moment social workers in England must demonstrate they've done at least 90 hours of professional development in order to re-register every three years. The HPC still wants social workers to record their learning activities, but it doesn't require them to complete a fixed number of hours. Instead, the incoming regulator is more interested in how learning activities have improved social workers' skills and helped service users (see below).

3. How will CPD be measured if the HPC doesn't count hours?

The HPC benchmarks CPD against its standards, which you can find out more about here. Registrants must demonstrate that they have kept continuous, up-to-date and accurate CPD records, so cramming in most of the training just before registration won't do. They also need to show a mix of activities that are relevant to their current or future practice and show how these contributed to the quality of their work as, well as how they benefitted service users. Finally, registered social workers must be able to produce written CPD profiles backed up with evidence. Find out more about what HPC expects on its website.

There is no requirement to refer to the Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF) in your CPD profile, but it can help you plan your learning. Look at the different capabilities for your level; consider which you can already demonstrate and which you need to develop. What does your employer expect of you, based on your specialism and level of experience?

4. Will the HPC check every social worker's CPD profile?

The HPC will register every social worker in England on the same date every two years, so it's impractical for it to check every individual CPD profile. Instead, at registration time, 2.5% of social workers will be picked at random and told to submit CPD profiles for auditing. The randomness of the sample means it is possible social workers could go a whole career without doing one, but equally they could end up having to submit one every two years.



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Newly qualified social workers will be excluded from the audit.

5. What counts as CPD?

Anything you can justify as beneficial to your work or service users is acceptable. It could be formal training, attending a conference, reading an article on Community Care Inform, mentoring someone or joining a professional body. Even watching TV could count, as long as it's relevant (i.e. not Homes Under the Hammer). There is a list of suggested activities in appendix one of this guide on the HPC's website, but it is by no means exhaustive. Basically, if you can prove it helped your practice, it counts.

6. What do these CPD profiles look like?

- If audited, you will have to present a written profile, which consists of a summary of your practice history for the last two years, a statement of how you have met standards of CPD and evidence to support that. You should choose roughly four or five activities (the ones you learned the most from) to evidence your statement.

The HPC is still producing social worker sample profiles, but the ones for other professions it regulates give a sense of what's expected. Community Care has also put together a few examples of how different activities could be represented in a CPD profile with the help of the British Association of Social Workers.

7. When will these changes affect me?

The register transfers to the HPC on 1 August, so you should start thinking about your CPD profile then. However, the first audit of CPD profiles, which is due to take place in 2014, will assess CPD activities starting from 1 December 2012. That means there's a grace period of a few months when you won't have to record CPD, although you should still be planning your learning and development. You could theoretically carry some of your current PRTL activities over: for example, you might learn something now that you don't put into place until the end of this year, so it would come under the HPC's time frame.

- The first audit of CPD profiles will take place in the run up to November 2014, when all social workers in England will be expected to re-register with the HPC.

8. Anything else I should know on the training front?

The HPC isn't going to take over the GSCC's job of accrediting post-qualifying (PQ) courses. The GSCC says the College of Social Work might take this work on, but this has yet to be confirmed.

If you have any further questions or comments about CPD

[sourcelink]

<http://www.communitycare.co.uk/Articles/2012/07/10/118353/your-guide-to-continuing-professional-development-cpd.html>
[sourcelink]

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CPD activities: what you could include in your profile

The Health Professions Council requires social workers to undertake a wide range of continuing professional development (CPD) activities. Here are some examples of what this could entail.

Credit: Jeff Blackler/Rex Features

Tristan Donovan

When putting together a continuing professional development or CPD profile for the Health Professions Council (HPC), you need to give examples of how your learning has improved your work; typically around four or five examples, depending on what you are trying to demonstrate. Each of these examples should explain what the learning activity was, how it improves your current or future practice and how it helps service users.

- The British Association of Social Workers is currently working with the HPC to produce a set of sample CPD profiles for social workers. In the meantime, here are a few examples offering a flavour of what could be included:

Example 1: Formal training

The Mental Health Act 2007 requires all approved mental health practitioners (AMHPs) to complete 18 hours of refresher training a year. If an AMHP attended a university refresher course that included an update on legal changes and case law, this could be included as an example of CPD. In their CPD profile, they could explain how this classroom training made them aware of recent developments in the law that affects their work, thereby improving their practice. They could then explain, for example, how that knowledge informed a decision they made during a mental health assessment of a service user.

Example 2: Supervision

- Everyday activities such as supervision can count too. For example, a social worker might be having difficulty communicating with an elderly service user and ask their manager for advice. The manager suggests a different approach to engaging the service user, which works. This scenario could be added to the social worker's CPD profile as evidence of how they learned a new way to approach a problem and made progress with that service user as a result.

Example 3: Online chats

Not all learning has to connect directly to the workplace. Let's say a social worker, after watching the BBC's Protecting Our Children documentaries earlier this year, went onto Community Care's forum, CareSpace, and discussed with others the issue of home visits where service users behave in a threatening way. If those discussions led to the social worker learning about a new approach to handling such situations, they could include it in their CPD profile as an example of professional development.

[sourcelink]

<http://www.communitycare.co.uk/Articles/2012/07/10/118352/cpd-activities-what-you-could-include-in-your-profile.html>
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Social workers to face tougher regulations

Join our live webTV show to find out how to change will affect you

Show date: 1st August

Show time: 2:45pm

From the 1st August all social workers in England will come under new regulation and if you use a social worker these changes will affect you too.

 The changes will mean social workers will now be under the umbrella of the Health and Care Professions Council (formerly the Health Professions Council), which will bring them into line with national standards that other health and care professionals such as occupational therapists and psychologists adhere to.

It's a move which is hoped will raise standards in the profession and cut down on poor social work practice.

But what exactly will this mean for you? How will it improve the care that you get now? And what will it mean if you have concerns about the standard of care you or someone you know is receiving?

If you have questions about the new regulations then log on to our live webTV show where Marc Seale (Chief Executive of HCPC) and Joanna Nicolas an Independent Social Worker will be on hand to answer all your questions and dispel any worries you may have.

Join us live online at <http://www.studiotalk.tv/show/social-workers-to-face-tougher-regulations> on 1st August at 2:45pm

Click here to submit questions before, or during the show:

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Daily roundup: Separating families, race and youth unemployment, and the last day at the GSCC

A £14m boost for separation support, young people sought to advise on reducing unemployment and the General Social Care Council closes its doors, all in the news today.

Voluntary and community sector organisations are being invited to bid for a slice of £14m to provide support for separating families, from the Department of Work and Pensions. The money will go towards helping parents maintain a "collaborative relationship" after separation, in the best interests of children. Organisations offering everything from legal advice to marriage counselling are encouraged to apply.

Young people are being sought to join a youth panel that will advise business leaders on reducing unemployment levels for black, Asian and minority ethnic young people in the UK, amid concerns they are more likely to be out of work. Race for Opportunity, a campaign run by Business in the Community, is looking for 16- to 24-year-olds living in London and the South East to sit on the panel.

The General Social Care Council (GSCC) will close today, following the government's decision to scrap a number of arms-length bodies. From tomorrow (1 August) the Health Professions Council will take over its remit as regulator of the social work profession in England. To reflect this new remit, the body will change its name to the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC).

Ofsted has said that children in Walsall are "at potential risk of harm". Inspectors rated safeguarding in the area as inadequate, with social worker assessments and performance management coming in for the most severe criticism. Meanwhile, the London Borough of Wandsworth has been told it is doing a good job in the same area of work. The overall effectiveness of safeguarding services in Wandsworth was judged as good by Ofsted, with outstanding capacity for improvement.

Meanwhile, the BBC reports that Welsh Inspectors have recommended that education services in Anglesey should be put into special measures. A report by the Welsh education watchdog Estyn criticised standards, low school attendance, planning and the quality of leadership, rating services as "unsatisfactory". The council has been given 50 days to draw up an action plan.

Finally, children's charity Barnardo's is urging schools to do more to tackle the root causes of bad behaviour. The charity is concerned by exclusion statistics released last week showing that children with special educational needs are nine times more likely to be excluded. They say children with problems at home may be "acting out" rather than "acting up".

[source link]

<http://www.cypnow.co.uk/cyp/news/1074141/daily-roundup-separating-families-race-youth-unemployment-day-gscc>

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Transfer of Social Worker registration from the GSCC to the HCPC

Tuesday, 31 July 2012

On 1 August 2012 (Wednesday) the regulation of social workers in England moves from the Gene Social Care Council (GSCC) to the renamed Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC).

From this date onwards the HCPC will regulate social workers against both its standard codes of conduct and ethics and against its standards of proficiency for social work. This is a change on the remit of the GSCC, which regulated conduct alone.

TCSW supports the new addition of proficiency standards monitoring, which is in line with The College's Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF), a tool designed to support social workers throughout each stage of their career to enable them to gain professional capabilities above the threshold standards set by the HCPC.

The College also supports HCPC's plan to audit social workers from September 2014 to ensure they are meeting their standards of proficiency to practise and we will be working with social workers across the profession to provide them with help to do this.

Speaking of how these developments are important as additions to the social work reform agenda, TCSW Professor Co-Chair Corinne May-Chahal said:

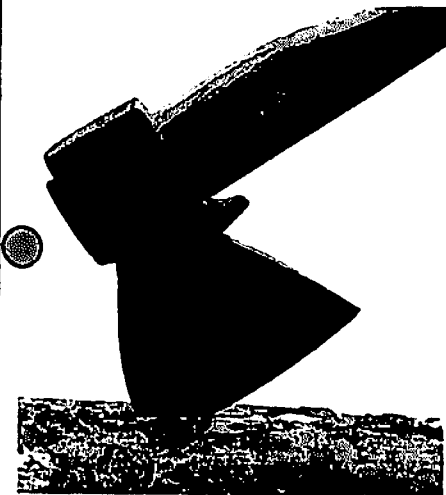
"Many of the measures called for by the Social Work Reform Board are already in place to enable social workers to advance to high professional standards. The regulation changes being undertaken by the HCPC are fully in line with this.

"A lot of good work has already been done to improve social work practice in line with the Reform Board recommendations. The HCPC's monitoring of baseline proficiency standards, as an addition to the body of work that is already underway to ensure the public can have confidence in social work in England, is welcomed.

"The College supports social workers and their employers by ensuring they have the tools in place not only to meet their proficiency standards, but to develop beyond them to maximise their practice through continuing and professional development to advanced practice levels.

"We look forward to working with the HCPC to ensure that both social worker standards and the continuing professional development of practitioners continue to be supported."

HPC produces temporary plan as it confirms axe for student registration



The Health Professions Council (HPC) has responded to concerns about its abolition of student registration by launching a 'suitability scheme' to oversee education providers in the role they will be expected to play as arbiters of trainee social workers' fitness to practise.

The scheme will be introduced from 1 August when the HPC assumes responsibility for registering students from the General Social Care Council, which is being abolished on 31 July.

The HPC's move to establish the transitional scheme follows criticism from BASW about its decision to axe the registration of all student social workers, a move the Association says will undermine public protection by watering down safeguards against poor practice.

The transitional scheme, confirmed at an HPC Council meeting on 19 June, will be in place while the HPC scrutinises social work programmes in England against its standards of education and training. The initiative contains four interim measures, each aimed at addressing concerns about gaps in the regulatory system while universities are developing their capacity to cope with the new requirements on them.

Most notably, the scheme means the HPC Council will maintain a record of students who are prevented from participating in a social work programme in England. Secondly, in exceptional cases, education providers will be able to seek the opinion of HPC on whether an applicant is of

suitable character to be admitted to a degree programme. Thirdly, the HPC can investigate where it considers an education provider has failed to deal with a credible complaint about a social work student, while finally, the regulator will be able to review an education provider's decision to prevent a social work student from being admitted to or participating in a social work programme.

The HPC decision not to register students follows the same approach it takes with the range of health professions it also regulates but critics insist the HPC is overlooking the fact that social work students undertake placements in the community, sometimes working alone.

BASW's chair Fran Fuller, also a social work course leader at Derby University said the HPC's new proposals still did not address this fundamental concern. "The issues of accountability on placement and lone working are unique from other health care degrees."

Pointing to rising financial pressures on universities, Ms Fuller said that most will not be capable of carrying out the level of scrutiny needed to ensure public safety.

New proficiency standards published for social workers in England

The Health Professions Council (HPC) has published new proficiency standards for social workers in England ahead of assuming regulatory responsibility for the profession from the General Social Care Council (GSCC) on 1 August. Launched as part of the build up to the handover, the HPC described the Standards of Proficiency as an outline of "what a social worker should know, understand and be able to do when they complete their social work training ... They set out clear expectations of a social worker's knowledge and abilities when they start practising."

The Standards of Proficiency include a raft of statements setting out the requirements of a social worker under 15 headings (see right). The standards have been developed in tandem with the new Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF), which describes the capabilities required of social

workers at all stages of their career.

BASW was represented on the Professional Liaison Group (PLG) that developed the new standards. BASW's Bridget Robb said: "The standards represent the minimum for public

safety but we look forward to the day when these will be enhanced through further standards identifying really good social work practice, to be developed by a future UK College of Social Work."

The 15 headings

- Be able to practise safely and effectively within their scope of practice
- Be able to practise within the legal and ethical boundaries of their profession
- Be able to maintain fitness to practise
- Be able to practise as an autonomous professional, exercising their own professional judgement
- Be aware of the impact of culture, equality and diversity on practice
- Be able to maintain confidentiality

- Be able to practise in a non-discriminatory manner
- Be able to communicate effectively
- Be able to work appropriately with others
- Be able to maintain records appropriately
- Be able to reflect on and review practice
- Be able to assure the quality of their practice
- Understand the key concepts of the knowledge base relevant to their profession
- Be able to draw on appropriate knowledge and skills to inform practice
- Be able to establish and maintain a safe practice environment

Client: HPC
Source: Guardian.co.uk (Web)
Date: 01 August 2012
Page: N/A
Reach: 1420168
Value: 27403

Curtain closes on the General Social Care Council

A review of the history and achievements of the GSCC, as social work regulation transfers to the Health Professions Council. The demise of the General Social Care Council (GSCC) a few months prior to its 11th birthday has not come as a great shock – the terminal condition of the regulator was clear two years ago in the report from the arm's length body review – but it is a time for a minute's silence.

I am part of the family left behind; from 2002-10 I was a council member, and vice chair for the final 18 months of my tenure. There is a personal sadness in seeing the GSCC slip quietly away, but that experience also gives me some insight to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the organisation.

The GSCC has taken the opportunity of the long goodbye to undertake some important reflective practice of its own. A series of learning reports have been produced to ensure that the organisation's learning is not lost. This is an invaluable legacy that the HCPC among others will do well to respect and draw on.

It is a surprise to remember that before the GSCC came into being there was no regulation of the social work profession. The opening of a register of social workers; the upgrading of the accreditation requirements of social workers to degree level; the introduction of a code of practice and the establishment of conduct proceedings to respond to people in breach of the code, are all major landmarks.

The central purpose of all this endeavour was always to raise standards and increase public protection. The fact that such a small proportion of people on the social care register are referred because of concerns about their conduct (1.1% in the last year), and only 8% of referrals lead to a conduct hearing (0.3% over the past eight years are found to have committed misconduct), is reassuring but not grounds for complacency.

Indeed, the GSCC rightly recognised the significance of inappropriate relationships which were identified in around 20% of misconduct cases and issued guidance on professional boundaries which can be especially difficult in the "grey areas" of practice.

Involving people who use services in the development of the GSCC is another important part of the legacy. The GSCC undertook innovative work in involving people who use services and their carers in numerous aspects of its work – from developing the codes of practice, to inspecting social work degree courses and developing the post-qualifying framework.

The impact of such activity was evident "both on the culture of the organisation as well as how social workers have been trained and regulated." The development of common principles for participation agreed by the GSCC and the Joint Participation Steering Group that it established should be embedded in the practice of any organisation that works with people who use social care services.

Recognising the importance of the contribution made by service users by paying them for their input was also a significant symbolic step. The stumbling block often created by the benefits system which could mean loss of benefit entitlement for people paid for their input was the focus of considerable work by the GSCC and other social care organisations. The eventual change in legislation to allow DWP to disregard reimbursement of expenses is a vital step forward.

The GSCC's unfinished business concerns the regulation of the wider social care workforce – the care workers and personal assistants that have day-to-day contact with people in their own homes. The government decided



Client: HPC
Source: Guardian.co.uk (Web)
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three years ago not to take this agenda forward in England (although social care workforce regulation is progressing elsewhere in the UK).

Certainly the logistics of registering this workforce would be considerable, and questions of proportionality of response have been raised as objections. Balancing choice and control against public protection would require a flexible and responsive model of regulation and one that fits the changed social care landscape and the role of people using direct payments to employ their own care staff, but the need for some model of regulation remains.

The last decade has seen some significant progress and the emergence of both strong regulation and a separate body to represent the voice of the profession in the College of Social Work is an important distinction. The GSCC can take comfort that it leaves public protection and high standards of social work practice firmly established in social care. This is a precious inheritance and its value should endure.

This article is published by Guardian Professional. Join the social care network to receive regular emails and exclusive offers.

[sourcelink]

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/social-care-network/2012/aug/01/general-social-care-council-curtain-closes>

[/sourcelink]

[Journalistname]Melanie Henwood[/Journalistname]

Client: HPC
Source: Guardian.co.uk (Web)
Date: 01 August 2012
Page: N/A
Reach: 1420168
Value: 27403

HPC on social workers regulation: We consider every case differently

As the Health Professions Council takes over regulation of social workers, how will it differ from the General Social Care Council? New research released by Opinion Matters shows that nearly half of sampled providers do not check that their social worker is registered. Almost a quarter did not know social workers needed to be registered to practice.

These statistics are not surprising, but provide an interesting picture for us as the new statutory regulator of social workers. As, today, social workers in England will be now be regulated by the Health and Care Professions Council instead of the GSCC, which closed yesterday.

Our role is now to hold a public register of social care professionals who are fit to practise and we actively encourage service users and others to check that their professional is registered.

We believe that social workers in England play an important role in our society, so what does this regulatory change mean for social workers, service users and employers of social workers in England?

From today, social workers in England will have to meet a wider range of standards that we set for them, just as we set standards for other health and care professionals such as occupational therapists and psychologists.

They are designed to ensure public trust and confidence in the professions, and we will continue to work with the social work community to continue to drive up standards.

A key change for social workers is that our legislation gives us stronger and more widespread powers if we need to take action against a social worker who fails to adhere to HCPC standards.

The GSCC's legislation meant that they considered complaints against social workers in England using a conduct model – focusing on whether registrants' behaviour were a breach of the code.

We operate a fitness to practise model instead. We consider whether someone's ability to practise safely and effectively is impaired because of misconduct, a lack of competence, or their health.

The key difference is that our model enables us to consider concerns which arise about a social worker's competence, and whether a lack of competence means that their fitness to practise is impaired.

We also have a wider range of sanctions, including suspensions and conditions of practice orders. As well as this we have powers to demand information from employers and others if needed for a hearing – something that was not available under GSCC. It means that process are not held up because people may not be co-operating.

Our system is not designed to simply inflict punishment. Our main focus is on public protection. We know that sometimes professionals make mistakes that are unlikely to be repeated. This may mean that the person's overall fitness to practise is unlikely to be impaired.

We consider every case individually. However, a professional's fitness to practise is likely to be impaired if the evidence shows that they:

- Were dishonest, committed fraud or abused someone's trust



Client: HPC
Source: Guardian.co.uk (Web)
Date: 01 August 2012
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- Exploited a vulnerable person
- Failed to respect service users' rights to make choices about their own care
- Have health problems which they have not dealt with, and which may affect the safety of service users
- Hid mistakes or tried to block our investigation
- Had an improper relationship with a service user
- Carried out reckless or deliberately harmful acts
- Seriously or persistently failed to meet standards
- Were involved in sexual misconduct or indecency
- Have a substance abuse or misuse problem
- Have been violent or displayed threatening behaviour

People sometimes make mistakes or have a one-off instance of unprofessional conduct or behaviour. Our processes do not mean that we will pursue every isolated or minor mistake. However, if a professional is found to fall below our standards, we will take action.

Dr Anna van der Gaag is chair of the Health Professions Council.

This article is published by Guardian Professional. Join the social care network to receive regular emails and exclusive offers.

[sourcelink]

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/social-care-network/2012/aug/01/health-professions-council-social-workers-regulation>

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Client: HPC
Source: The Social Work Blog (Blog)
Date: 02 August 2012
Page: N/A
Reach: 3215
Value: 86



Social work is devolved in the UK, meaning there are different rules and requirements for social workers and students in each country. Over the past few months, I've heard many social workers ask how the transfer of regulation from the General Social Care Council to the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) would affect their ability to work in different parts of the UK.

Well, the HCPC has now agreed a memorandum of understanding with the Care Council for Wales, the Northern Ireland Social Care Council and the Scottish Social Services Council, setting out how this will work. For example, if you're registered and working in Scotland and pop down to England to work on a temporary basis, you don't need to register with the HCPC. But if you're working in England for two days every month, you do. It all seems fairly straightforward, but, as ever, if you have any questions or concerns feel free to comment below.

 Picture credit: Justin Kase zrinez/Alamy

Tweet

 Categories:

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* workforce

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Client: HPC
Source: Communitycare.co.uk (Web)
Date: 02 August 2012
Page: N/A
Reach: 1496
Value: 90



Public opinion of social workers has improved, finds survey

The majority of people think social workers do a good and challenging job, but there are still gaps in their understanding of the role.

Social work is portrayed negatively by the media (Ray Tang/Rex Features)

Kirsty McGregor

Four out of five members of the public believe social workers do a good job in their community, according to research carried out to mark the changes in England's regulation system.

● A similar proportion said they recognised how difficult a job social work is and two-thirds said social workers were portrayed negatively by the media.

The online survey of 1,683 people was carried out by market research company Opinion Matters and released to coincide with the transfer of responsibility for the social care register in to the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) yesterday.

According to the survey, almost a quarter of the public did not know social workers have to be registered in order to practise.

Marc Seale, chief executive of the HCPC, said: "Anyone using the services of a social worker can check with us to see if their social worker is registered.

"If then they are not happy with the service they receive, whether that's the level of professional skills, or the individual's behaviour, they can take it up with us and we will investigate further."

[sourcelink]

<http://www.communitycare.co.uk/Articles/2012/08/02/118423/public-opinion-of-social-workers-has-improved-finds-survey>

● [/sourcelink]

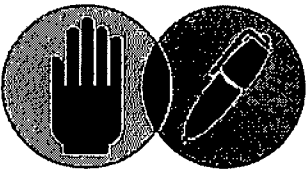
Social workers in England must renew their HCPC registration by **30 November 2012**



Confusion remains over changes to social work CPD



By [Kirsty McGregor](#) on August 30, 2012 3:14 PM | [No Comments](#)



At the beginning of August, swathes of social workers and students in England downloaded our [free guides to registering with the Health and Care Professions Council \(HCPC\) and how to undertake continuing professional development \(CPD\)](#) in line with the HCPC's standards. In fact, the numbers are still creeping up, showing there is still a lot of anxiety and confusion out there.

This is backed up by a [snap poll by Sanctuary Personnel](#), one of the sector's recruitment agencies, which found half of the 100 social workers sampled did not feel properly informed about how the HCPC transfer and new CPD standards could affect them. Only a third were fully aware of what activities might count towards their CPD. Interestingly, it sounds like many social workers (albeit out of a relatively small sample) have had to educate themselves about the changes; whereas I assumed employers would spread the word.

When the Social Work Reform Board developed a new set of [standards for social work employers](#), they included the requirements "to provide opportunities for continuing professional development" and "ensure social workers can maintain their professional registration". It would be worrying indeed if some employers weren't actively briefing their social work teams on the changes.

Tweet 0 133

Other articles you might be interested in

- Registration and regulation of social workers: all you need ...
- What you should know about the CPD switchover
- Online Q&A: how the HCPC transfer will affect you

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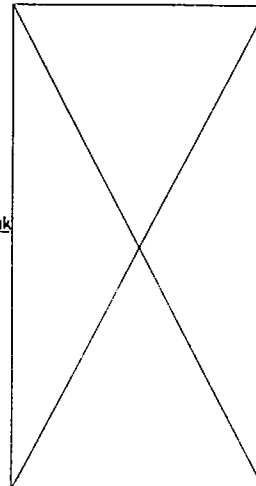
Latest comments from CareSpace

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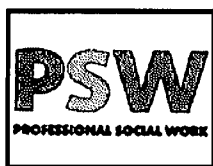
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- [Jamie Middleton's blog](#)
- [The Masked AMHP](#)
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Early issues with the HCPC

01/09/2012

Like many colleagues, I have recently received my registration and introduction letter from the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC), and read it in conjunction with your feature on registration [*Registration in England*, PSW July/August 2012].

I had already written to the HCPC, asking various questions to which I have not yet had an adequate reply. One of these relates to the erroneous claim -- repeated in the HCPC-written article -- that social workers will have four months of free registration from 1 August. Actually, for anyone like me who happens to have renewed their registration with the General Social Care Council (GSCC) any time this calendar year, it means a double payment for the period between renewal with the old GSCC and 1 December 2012. I also do not see how a 253% increase in fee, over the GSCC's rate, is justified by the fact that there is no government subsidy.

I would encourage all new registrants to ask for any outstanding months of GSCC fee to be carried over towards the new fee. The HCPC article also seems to proclaim the tax-deductible nature of the new fee as though this is something new. Professional body fees have always been tax-deductible, the old GSCC fee included.

Chris Hull, Independent social worker

Professional Social Work

01/09/2012

Profession(s): Social Work, Social workers

Search Media:

View Media by category

Client: HCPC
Source: Professional Social Work (Main)
Date: 01 September 2012
Page: 6
Reach: 13000
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Value: 593.6

news and views

News, developments, comment and your correspondence

BASW "optimistic" as HCPC takes over regulation in England

BASW is "optimistic" about the future of social worker registration following the 1 August handover of the regulation of social workers in England from the General Social Care Council to the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC), but will continue to campaign for registration to be extended to student social workers, and for the right of social workers to stand up to employers against unethical practice.

Following the regulatory change, social workers in England joined 15 other health and care professions overseen by the HCPC, including psychologists, occupational therapists and paramedics.

Commenting on the change, BASW chief executive Hilton Dawson said: "I am optimistic about this shift to the HCPC; it is an

opportunity for more efficient management, and as the HCPC also regulates other professionals, we hope to see more consistency than we've had in the past.

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"We frequently advocate on behalf of members who are struggling with employers who don't share their commitment to good social work principles, and we hope the HCPC will

support social workers facing such ethical dilemmas.

"We will continue to press the HCPC to extend registration to student social workers. Social work is a very important profession, with a crucial influence on people's lives, particularly at very vulnerable times, and the public must have every confidence that workers have been properly screened."

Client: HCPC
Source: Professional Social Work (Main)
Date: 01 October 2012
Page: 107
Reach: 13000
Size: 341cm2
Value: 1265.11

A focus on development



Kellie Doubtfire, Publisher,
COMPASS

Welcome to the 2013 edition of COMPASS, the annual guide to social work and social care.

This issue sees a focus on training and workforce development. Individual social workers and social care workers are key to our work at COMPASS. Direct contact through our events gives us access to over 4,000 workers in the sector, allowing us an insight into specific opinion and the effects of current organisational austerity measures and restructuring. COMPASS addresses the issues that affect the profession and we have included updates from the Department of Health, Skills for Care, ADASS, ADCS and BASW.

Fundamental changes

We welcome comment for the first time from the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) as the new regulatory body for social workers. With the fundamental changes to your CPD requirements, which are covered in detail, we ensure that you are completely up-to-date with the transition from the GSCC. If you have any questions for the HCPC they will be attending the COMPASS events to answer your questions.

Career development opportunities

One of the main issues this year has been job security; however, there are excellent employers in the sector who are taking your professional development seriously. Birmingham City Council know that some of their services have not been good enough but are actively recruiting to build teams that can contribute to its "ambitious and revolutionary service". Pages 25 to 36 provide details of the most pro-active employers. Job updates from these employers can also be found on our website.

Ethics and the new technology

Social media has made its mark on the world of social work and social care. Social networking has created challenges and opportunities and we look at the moral and ethical issues for the sector as well as the role of social media when job searching and in supporting CPD. There are also contributions from some of the leading social work and social care training companies, addressing topics



Client: HCPC
Source: Professional Social Work (Main)
Date: 01 October 2012
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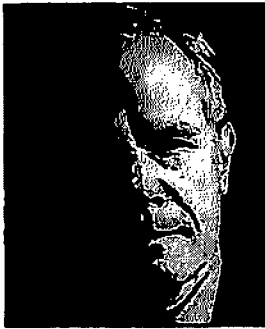
such as professional identity, dealing with workplace pressure and branching out as an independent social worker.

A new event for the sector

The first Social Work Show is on 15th October in Manchester so please register and come along. We will also be delivering the COMPASS Jobs Fairs in London and Birmingham - now in their 13th year - incorporating the conference *Sharing Excellence in Social Work and Social Care Practice*. To participate in any of these events please pre-register at www.compassjobsfair.com and join the 4,000 people in the sector who attend our events each year to update their knowledge and professional development, and check their future prospects. ■

If there are any issues or topics you would like us to include in the next edition of COMPASS or at our events please email me at kellie@compassjobsfair.com

New regulators for social work



Marc Seale,
Chief Executive
and Registrar,
HCPC

Marc Seale welcomes the addition of Social Workers to the HCPC Register

Social workers in England play an important role in our society and we welcome them to the HCPC Register. We worked with stakeholders from the social work community in drafting our standards and to ensure a smooth transition. I would like to thank all those involved in

the transfer and look forward to working with the social work community in the future.

The Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC), formerly the Health Professions Council, is an independent UK-wide health and care regulator. It was set up to protect the public and does this by setting standards for training, professional skills and behaviour for all of the professions it regulates. All of the professions we register have at least one professional title that is protected by law. This means, for example, that anyone using the titles 'occupational therapist', 'physiotherapist' or 'social worker' must be registered with the HCPC. It is a criminal offence for someone to claim that they are registered with the HCPC when they are not, or to use a protected title that they are not entitled to use. HCPC will prosecute people who commit these crimes.

Setting effective standards is an important part of our role in protecting the public and a key way in which we regulate professions as once on our Register all individuals are held accountable to these.

Maintaining the standards

The HCPC's standards of conduct, performance and ethics are ethical standards and describe the behaviour expected of individuals on the HCPC Register. This includes, for example, behaving with honesty and integrity, keeping high standards of personal conduct and acting in the best interests of service users. These standards apply to both current and prospective

registrants and have applied to social workers in England since they transferred to the HCPC Register.

HCPC standards of proficiency

The standards of proficiency are competency standards and play a central role in how an individual becomes and remains registered with the HCPC by explaining the knowledge and skills expected of them. The standards set out what is necessary for safe and effective practice, detailing what a social worker must know, understand and be able to do when they start practising for the first time.

The standards of proficiency cover specific areas of what a social worker in England must know, including:

- being able to practise safely and effectively within their scope of practice
- being able to practise within the legal and ethical boundaries of their profession
- being able to maintain fitness to practise
- be able to practise as an autonomous professional, exercising their own professional judgement
- being aware of the impact of culture, equality and diversity on practice

Standards of Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

Social workers in England must meet HCPC requirements for continuing professional development (CPD). Every two years, the HCPC audits 2.5% of each profession to check that the registrants meet the CPD standards. Audits are coordinated with registration renewals, where registrants are asked to sign the professional declaration that says their knowledge and skills are up to date. The first audits for social workers in England will take place from September 2014.

Standards of education and training

The HCPC approve programmes for the professions it regulates within the UK which lead to eligibility to apply to its Register. This means someone who has successfully completed one of these approved programmes is eligible to apply to the HCPC register.

As part of the approval process HCPC visit education providers to ensure its standards of education and training are being met. ☒

For more info visit: www.hcpc-uk.org

The previous regulator General Social Care Council (GSCC) closed on 31 July 2012. All social workers on the GSCC register automatically transferred to the HCPC register on 1 August 2012.

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Client: HCPC
Source: Communitycare.co.uk (Web)
Date: 08 October 2012
Page: N/A
Reach: 1496
Value: 90



Should employers reimburse social workers' fees?

Unison wrote to employers in England in May urging them to reimburse social workers for their registration fees - or at least pay the difference between the General Social Care Council's fees (£30 per year) and the Health and Care Professions Council's fees (£76 per year). Yet our poll last week suggests the majority (81%) of social workers are so far covering the cost themselves.

It's no surprise, then, that there has been so much anger about the hike in fees in England. Some people argue that individuals should pay their own registration fees, as it is part and parcel of being a professional. But most are struggling to understand why the government would choose to effectively withdraw its subsidisation of social worker registration fees at a time when local authority staff are entering their third year of a pay freeze.

What do people think about this? Should social workers pay their own fees?

Picture credit: OJO Images/Rex Features

Categories:

Conduct ,

unions ,

Tags:

general social care council ,

health and care professions council ,

1 Comment

Kirsty McGregor | October 8, 2012 12:11 PM | Reply

I've just had a look at the Nursing and Midwifery Council: nurses, whose average salaries are roughly on a par with social workers*, currently pay £76 to register - but the NMC has proposed increasing the annual fee to £120 from the start of next year, according to the Nursing Times.

*In 2010, the mean gross hourly pay for nurses was £16.68 and for social workers was £16.49 (Source: Royal College of Nursing)

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<http://www.communitycare.co.uk/blogs/social-work-blog/2012/10/our-poll-last-week-asked.html>

[/sourcelink]

Appendix 2 – Selection of media coverage, articles and advertisements on social work renewal

September 2012

Association of Directors of Adult Social Services journal – article placed

Taking social work regulation forward

At midnight on 31 July 2012 the General Social Care Council (GSCC), who had been the regulator of social workers in England since 2001, was abolished and its register of 88,000 social workers was transferred to the renamed Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC).

October 2012

Local Government Association, First magazine – article placed

Upholding standards in social work

The regulation and registration of social worker in England passed from the now abolished General Social Care Council (GSCC) to The Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) on 1 August 2012.

3 October 2012 www.basw.co.uk

HCPC launches video as concerns grow over slow start to re-registration process

The Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) has followed up its warning that social workers in England who do not re-register before 30 November will be unable to practise using the title 'social worker' by issuing a video outlining how to renew swiftly.

4 October 2012 Children and Young People Now

Daily round up

A video for social workers in England, giving information on registration renewal and continuing professional development has been produced by the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC).

22 October 2012 www.communitycare.co.uk

Concern as 80% of social workers have yet to renew registration

The Health and Care Professions Council has stepped up its campaign to encourage social workers in England to renew their registration ahead of the November deadline.

Professional Social Work Now (BASW) - A4 advertisement

Social workers in England must renew their HCPC registration now

Local Government Chronicle – A4 advertisement

Social workers in your local authority must renew their HCPC registration now

Association of Directors of Adult Social Services journal (September)

Taking social work regulation forward

At midnight on 31 July 2012 the General Social Care Council (GSCC), who had been the regulator of social workers in England since 2001, was abolished and its register of 88,000 social workers was transferred to the renamed Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC). Our new name (we were previously the Health Professions Council) better describes the 300,000 professionals from the 16 professions working in the health, psychological and social work fields that we now regulate.

The decision to close the GSCC was announced by government in February 2011 when the Command Paper 'Enabling Excellence: Autonomy and Accountability for Healthcare Workers, Social Workers and Social Care Workers' was published. To complete the transfer on time required considerable planning and hard work by everyone involved across the two organisations. Our past experience of taking on the regulation of hearing aid dispensers, following the abolition of the Hearing Aid Council, as well as operating department practitioners and practitioner psychologists joining our Register, was put to good use.

Since the announcement of the transfer my organisation has committed to engaging with the social work profession. Our Chair, Anna van der Gaag, joined the Social Work Reform Board and my colleagues have been meeting and engaging with employers, charities and other stakeholders through a range of activities. We have just completed a series of social-work-specific events for educators, employers and social workers throughout England. This has been an excellent opportunity for us to listen and learn about the social work profession.

In order to build on the success of the initial transfer we now need social workers and their employers to ensure that social workers in England renew their HCPC registration by 30 November 2012. If they fail to do so their registration will lapse and they will not be able to practise using the protected title 'social worker'.

Unlike the previous regulator, the HCPC renews the registration of each profession it regulates once every two years. This will make it significantly more straightforward for employers to check whether a professional is registered. We also provide a multiple registrant search in the employer section of our website where HR professionals and managers can 'cut and paste' up to one hundred individual registration numbers onto a web page for an instant check on registration status.

As part of the renewal process we are also asking social workers to declare that they will meet our standards on an on-going basis. These include the standards of conduct, performance and ethics (which replace the GSCC's Codes of Practise). These multi-profession standards describe the behaviours we expect every professional registered with us to adhere to. There are also the HCPC's standards of proficiency for social workers in England which are the threshold standards for safe and effective practice. All newly qualified social workers should meet all of these standards. However,

experienced social workers are only required to meet the standards relevant to their scope of practise. This flexibility allows us to recognise that a professional's scope of practise changes and develops throughout their career.

The third set of standards which social workers in England must meet is our standards for continuing professional development (CPD). These standards represent a shift away from the approach of the GSCC's system of post registration training and learning (PRTL). The key to our philosophy around CPD is the focus on the outcomes of learning rather than inputs. This means that we do not set a minimum number of hours that social workers will need to spend undertaking CPD; rather their focus will be on the outcomes of their learning activities and the impact on their practise and service users. We hope that, like our existing professions, social workers will embrace the challenge of seeking out opportunities for learning and continuous improvement. Social workers must still maintain a record of their learning supported by evidence and we will begin randomly auditing social workers CPD in September 2014. I would ask for your support for social workers making this transition and also for those audited in the future. I hope that you will agree that our focus on the improvement in quality of practice and the impact of learning on service users is a positive step forward in social work regulation.

Looking to the future

Now that the work relating to the initial transfer has been completed, the HCPC is addressing the challenging issues around models of regulation for the adult social care workforce and social care workers in England, highlighted in the government's Command Paper. We have started to explore a range of options in collaboration with other agencies to establish an efficient and effective regulatory regime. These include an analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of voluntary and statutory regulation of managers of care homes. We have also met with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) for explorative discussions on how, as regulators of systems and professionals, we can improve our cooperation.

We are also investigating alternative proposals for regulating adult social care workers in England, including keeping a 'negative register'. This is a new regulatory approach used in parts of Australia and elsewhere with unregistered health and social care workers. It operates by listing those who fail to meet specified standards rather than those who do, thereby addressing instances of poor practice in the workforce in a more expeditious way. Such a system has the advantages of lower costs and simplicity compared to the traditional UK model of statutory regulation, but it will require legislation. However, a considerable amount of work remains to be done. Our initial proposal was presented to the Council of the HCPC on Tuesday 18 September 2012 and we will now begin the process of taking the work forward. We are committed to working with stakeholders across health and social care and intend to put proposals to the Department of Health.

I look forward to our continuing work with the whole sector on these exciting and challenging developments.

Marc Seale
Chief Executive and Registrar of the Health and Care Professions Council

Local Government Association – First Magazine (October)

Upholding standards in social work

The regulation and registration of social workers in England passed from the now abolished General Social Care Council (GSCC) to The Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) on 1 August 2012. This means that concerns about a social worker's practise must now be referred to the HCPC who operate a fitness to practise process to ensure that the public are protected and standards upheld.

Every social worker in England has now been sent copies of the HCPC standards and invited to renew their registration. They have until 18.00 on 30 November 2012 to renew either online or by completing a paper renewal form. Those who fail to do so will be removed from the Register on 1 December 2012 and therefore unable to practise. This could have serious implications on service provision and we are therefore urging colleagues across local authorities to help us to ensure that social workers renew as soon as possible.

This change brings social work regulation in line with other health and care professions including occupational therapists who are also HCPC registered. It will help to clearly delineate the role of regulator and professional body as the HCPC is responsible for setting threshold standards for safe and effective practise to ensure public protection, whilst professional bodies like the British Association of Social Workers and The College of Social Work and can speak out on behalf of the profession and drive practise forward.

For more information on the HCPC please see www.hcpc-uk.org or call 0845 300 4472

Marc Seale
Chief Executive and Registrar

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HCPC launches video as concerns grow over slow start to re-registration process

03/10/2012

The Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) has followed up its warning that social workers in England who do not re-register before 30 November will be unable to practise using the title 'social worker' by issuing a video outlining how to renew swiftly.

The video features an interview with HCPC chief executive Marc Seale, outlining how to use the online renewals system, the costs involved, the requirements and why meeting the cut off point is important.

The video follows HCPC's revelation last month that, as of 18 September, just 10% of social work registrants had renewed their registration since the window opened.

The HCPC took over regulation from the General Social Care Council on 1 August and sent online activation and authentication codes to all 88,063 social workers in England at the end of that month. Registrants have to pay the £76 annual fee by the deadline, either by setting up a direct debit for £38 every six months or a single two year payment of £152.

Following the slow start to re-registration, the HCPC cautioned social workers about the risks of not renewing. A spokesperson said: "The ramifications of not renewing before the deadline of 30 November are costly and time consuming. You will no longer be able to work in your job as a 'social worker', which means your employer may be forced to alter your job title and function, with possible implications on your salary. For example, until you are readmitted to the Register, you may have to work as an 'assistant social worker'."

The HCPC said late readmission "may incur an additional fee of £191", though this would include the first year's registration.

[Includes link to video on HCPC site]

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Daily roundup

04/10/2012

A video for social workers in England, giving information on registration renewal and continuing professional development has been produced by [the Health & Care Professions Council \(HCPC\)](#). Social workers must renew their HCPC registration by 30 November, with one-third (17,500) having done so to date. The video features an interview with HCPC chief executive Marc Seale who talks about the online renewals system, renewal fees and getting started on HCPC continuing professional development.



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Children and Young People Now

04/10/2012

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Concern as 80% of social workers have yet to renew registration

The Health and Care Professions Council has stepped up its campaign to encourage social workers in England to renew their registration ahead of the November deadline.



The regulator wants social workers to renew online as soon as possible

Kirsty McGregor
Monday 22 October 2012 15:03

Almost 80% of social workers in England have yet to renew their registration with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC), the regulator has revealed.

The HCPC said it was "concerned" that 68,000 social workers have still not renewed their registration, although they have another month in which to do so.

"We encourage all our registrants to renew before the deadline to prevent the lengthy re-admittance process which follows lapsing off the register," said Marc Seale, chief executive of the HCPC.

"The consequences of social workers lapsing off the register are detrimental and considerable to the registrant, employer and service user and ultimately result in a risk to public safety."

The closing date for renewals is 6pm on 30 November.

Video: Find out about the renewals process



Did you know? Social work registration and regulation has changed. Find out how Community Care can help you meet the new CPD requirements by reading our free guide.

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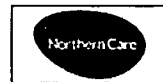
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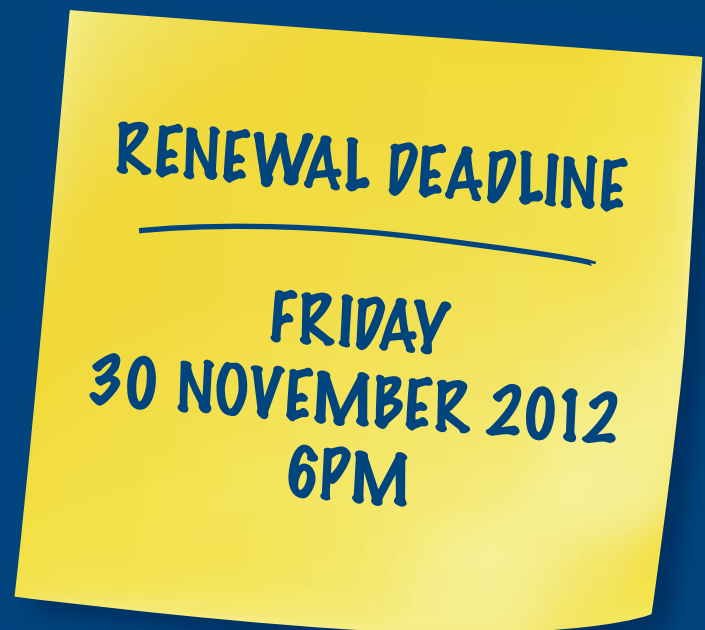
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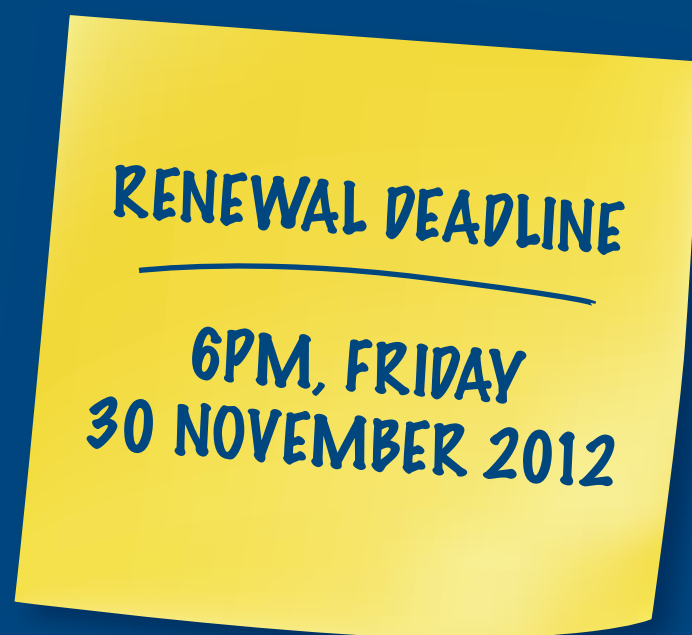
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