



**Communications Committee**

**Minutes of the meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2002**

**From Secretary to Committee**

**MINUTES** of the first meeting of the Health Professions Council's Communications Committee held on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2002 at Park House, 184 Kennington Park Road, London SW11 4BU.

**Present:**

Ms. A Foster (Chairman)  
Mrs. S. Chaudry  
Mrs. C. McGartland  
Ms. J Stark

**In attendance:**

Mr. M. Seale (Registrar/Chief Executive)  
Mr. C. Middleton (Director of Communications/Secretary to the Committee)  
Miss. E. Price (Events Manager)  
Ms. D. Broadhurst (Harvard Health)  
Ms. Z. Hogg (Harvard Health)  
Ms. S. Sutton (Harvard Health)  
Ms. A. Dawson (Good Relations)  
Ms. Catherine Meaden (Opinion Leader Research) – Part  
Ms. Diane Beddoes (Opinion Leader Research) - Part

ITEM 1        **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Miss. M. MacKellar

ITEM 2        **MINUTES**

The notes of the meeting held on March 6<sup>th</sup> 2002 were confirmed as a correct, record.

ITEM 3        **MATTERS ARISING**

It was noted that media training had now finished. Harvard Health would draw up a final list of those people that had attended. No further sessions have been booked.

Marc Seale reported on the visit to the Welsh Language board. It was confirmed we would work with them in the future to produce welsh language information. A Welsh speaker is on stand-by to co-host the consultation events in Wales.

The matter of producing all our materials in other languages was raised. Mr. Middleton said that this would be considered and that HPC would do everything

that was reasonable to do so given budget constraints. Mrs. Chaudry suggested a line at the foot of all documents offering them in different languages may be enough.

It was asked how often the Q&A would be updated given comments from some Council members about the wording in the document produced for the launch. It was stated that perhaps another 2 or 3 documents may be produced over the course of the next year. One would be pre-consultation, one-post and the other at the re-launch in April 2003.

It was agreed that a lobbying strategy should be part of the overall communications strategy. It was agreed that Mr. Middleton would meet with Good Relations to discuss this further.

#### ITEM 4      **POST MORTEM OF APRIL 17<sup>TH</sup> LAUNCH EVENT**

It was generally agreed by the Committee that the launch event went well and that congratulations should be passed on to all of those involved in its organisation. Noreen Bray received praise for handling of the Q&A session and it was reported by Marc Seale that the Minister seemed to be happy after the event.

It was mentioned that registration at the event should be re-visited as there were one or two problems and we could work on that to make it smoother in future.

Media coverage will be made available through Harvard Health for the next Council meeting which Jackie Stark will present. At this stage we knew that 13 journalists attended the event and Norma Brook did 4 radio interviews on the day along with a syndicated radio interview which was picked up by 15 stations UK wide.

The council was given notice by Marc Seale of an article to appear in a future edition of Therapy Weekly which could pan the previous administration of CPSM but be praise worthy of HPC. It was debated whether to try and media manage this but agreed in the end to allow the journalist to write it as they see it. Marc Seale would then write a letter to the editor if required.

The Communications Committee will write to everyone involved in the event to thank them for their work. Chris Middleton is to forward a list of those involved to Ann Foster.

Chris Middleton asked the Committees view on paying for advertorial coverage in publications as he had been asked by two different publications to do just this. It was agreed HPC would not pay for any advertorial coverage.

ITEM 5      **POST LAUNCH COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY**

Marc Seale said that the post-launch communication strategy should concentrate on the consultation process and its launch but that the key messages from the launch should be included.

Regular contact with consumers will need to be part of this strategy and also how people are to be consulted on a regular basis outside of the professional committees. It was also agreed that the consultation document should contain some proposals for ongoing consumer representation. Marc Seale said that this would be covered by Anna Bradley, Director of the National Consumer Council, in her forthcoming presentation to the Council. It was also suggested that this subject be raised at the next meeting of the consultation steering group.

A revised version of the consultation strategy document will be put before the May committee meeting.

ITEM 6      **CONSULTATION PROCESS UPDATE**

Chris Middleton presented two examples of the consultation document. One detailed in an A-Z format, and the other a summary document for distribution to all registrants. It was generally agreed that the format was good.

More detailed documents will be made available when the information has been gathered by our consultants.

It was mentioned by Ann Foster that house style text may be best on the front of the document. Images should also be sourced that reflected the professions and people whether that be in an abstract form or otherwise.

Eleanor Price reported that 19 dates have been provisionally booked across the UK for consultation events. Professional meetings would take place in the morning with the public meetings in the evening. It was agreed that Universities would not be used as venues as hotels would be less daunting.

In addition to the list outlined, it was suggested that the following organisations are contacted to advertise the meeting amongst the public:

- Council for Voluntary Services
- Race Equality Council
- Community Health Councils
- Citizens Advice Bureau
- Consumers Association
- College of Health

The format of the events is now likely to follow that of the launch i.e. once succinct presentation followed by and questions and answer session.

At least three Council members it was suggested should be present at each event and Chris Middleton will liaise with Noreen Bray re. her availability to attend events as chair person.

ITEM 7      **PLAIN ENGLISH**

It was agreed that a simple definition of the professions regulated by the HPC was needed for future materials. The previous definitions had been pulled from the patient leaflet as they were overly complex and consequently had to be pulled from the leaflet as they were unlikely to be understood by the general public.

The Communications Committee agreed to recommend to the Council that the following processes be put in place:

- The existing definitions of the professions will be revisited
- Copy will be forwarded to the Plain English Society for comments
- Overall signing off on copy will be given by the Communications Committee

ITEM 8      **AOCB**

Catherine Meaden and Diane Beddoes of Opinion Leader Research gave a presentation of findings from market research carried out among registrants, which concluded that although members are generally satisfied more communication is needed, with particular emphasis on the role of HPC.

Harvard Health will produce a press release for the professions media to convey the market research results to them and inform them of HPC's more proactive role.

It was confirmed that all HPC business cards have the HPC telephone number on the back. It was suggested that any telephone calls for Council members will be passed on via Jane Tuxford.

Dates of the next meetings were confirmed as:

Monday 27<sup>th</sup> May 1100-1330  
Monday 24<sup>th</sup> June 1100-1330  
Monday 5<sup>th</sup> August 1100-1330  
Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> October 1430-1700  
Monday 18<sup>th</sup> November 1100-1330

It was suggested by Marc Seale that at least one of these meetings be held away from Park House. The committee agreed to consider this.

Jackie Stark agreed to introduce the agenda item on the Communications Committee at the next Council Meeting on 14 May, as Ann Foster would not be able to attend.