

Council, 6 February 2014

Policy and Standards Report

Executive summary and recommendations

Introduction

The report sets out the main activities of the Policy and Standards Department since the last meeting of Council. It includes statistical information and highlights key work undertaken.

Decision

The Council is requested to discuss the report.

Background information

None

Resource implications

The resources for the Department are set out in the annual workplan and budget 2013-14.

Financial implications

None

Appendices

Policy and Standards Report

Policy and Standards Department – Council meeting, 6 February 2014

The following provides an update about some of the work of the department.

Registration fees change

- At its meeting in December 2013, the Council considered the outcomes of the public consultation on the HCPC's registration fees. The Council agreed to increase the different fee types – the registration renewal fee will rise by £4 to £80.
- The amendment Rules necessary to make this change have now been delivered to the Privy Council. Subject to these Rules being laid and coming into force, the new registration fees will become effective from 1 April 2014. Existing registrants would pay the new renewal fee at the point at which their profession goes into renewal after this date.

Standards of conduct, performance and ethics (SCPE) review

- The SCPE is currently under review. A number of activities to gather the feedback of stakeholders about the existing standards have taken place over the last 18 months. The following pieces of work have more recently concluded. The reports will be included as papers to note on the agenda at the Council's March 2014 meeting.
 - Shaping our Lives, a service user-led organisation in social care, has carried out focus groups with social care service users and their carers. They also sought the input of an organisation led by people with learning disabilities to particularly focus on the accessibility of the standards.
 - Connect have carried out focus groups with people with acquired communication disorders as a result of strokes, and their carers.
 - A survey has been conducted of panel chairs, case managers, and other fitness to practise employees.
- A stakeholder workshop will take place in March 2014. It is also planned to run a workshop with registrants at the Llandridnod Wells Meet the HCPC event in March 2014.
- A working group, known as a Professional Liaison Group (PLG), will be convened in 2014-2015 to put together draft revised standards for consultation. This will consist of Council members as well as external stakeholders, including service users and carers. The PLG workplan will be brought to the Council's meeting in March 2014.

Professional indemnity

- The Government is introducing legislation to implement a European Directive which makes it compulsory for health professionals to have in place a professional indemnity arrangement as a condition of their registration. This requirement will extend to all of the professions regulated by the HCPC, with the exception of social workers in England who fall outside of the scope of the European Directive.
- We were previously advised that the necessary legislation was planned to be published in November 2013 and effective in February 2014. However, at the time of writing, we understand that the legislation has not been published and we do not have a revised timetable to report.
- We do not yet have a clear timetable for when the DH will be able to support the changes to the regulators' Rules necessary to allow them to implement the requirement. We intend to introduce a self-declaration at application and renewal, but this will only be possible once we have a change to the Rules.
- The requirement will be for affected registrants to have in place a professional indemnity arrangement. Most registrants will already meet this via their employment or because they work independently and have already made arrangements. So, very importantly, the requirement will **not** mean that all registrants need **insurance**.
- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) are available in the registrants section of the website.

Standards of proficiency review

- The standards of proficiency for 15 of the professions (not social workers in England) are the subject of a staggered review.
- The review process involves: mapping the existing standards against the new framework of generic standards previously agreed by the Council; seeking the views of the professional body or bodies for the profession on those standards; consulting on a proposed set of standards; and publishing a final set of standards having had regard to those views.
- We have now published standards for nine professions. The following describes our progress on the remainder.
 - The outcomes of the public consultation on the standards for operating department practitioners are due to be considered by the Education and Training Committee and the Council in March 2014.
 - The standards for hearing aid dispensers are currently subject to public consultation.

- The consultation on standards for paramedics recently closed. The consultation analysis is due to be considered by the Education and Training Committee and the Council at their meetings in June and July 2014.
- The Education and Training and the Council will be invited to agree to consult on proposed standards for biomedical scientists and clinical scientists at their meetings in March 2014.
- Proposals for changes to the standards for practitioner psychologists are being reviewed.

PSA performance review

- Each year the Professional Standards Authority for Health and Social Care (PSA) carries out a performance review of the HCPC. The Department is responsible for co-ordinating the HCPC's response.
- Our submission for this year's performance review was made in early December 2013. At the time of writing we anticipated receiving follow-up questions from the PSA as result of our submission and those of the other regulators in late January 2014. The PSA's final report is normally published in July each year and the outcomes discussed by the Council.

Department resourcing

The Department currently consists of the Director of Policy and Standards, two Policy Officers and the PA to the Director of Policy and Standards and the Director of Communications.

Interviews for a replacement Policy Manager position are due to take place in early February 2014.