

Education and Training Committee – 26 March 2008

Pre-registration education and training for Paramedics

Executive summary and recommendations

This is a follow up paper to the papers about Pre-registration education and training for Paramedics considered at the September 2006 and June 2007 meetings of the Education and Training Committee.

Introduction

In June 2007 the Education and Training Committee was asked to note:

- a) That the Executive is in the process of arranging visits to the Wales Ambulance Service, the South Central Ambulance Service and the East of England Ambulance Service to consider the issues raised during the 2006 Annual Monitoring round.

It was agreed at this Education and Training Committee:

- b) That all remaining 13 NHS Ambulance Trusts offering IHCD approved awards be visited by the HPC over the next 12 months, unless they provide written confirmation to the Education and Training Committee that their IHCD programme will cease to enrol students after a specified (to be agreed) date.

Following this meeting, the Executive agreed that the most appropriate date would be the 1 September 2008.

All Ambulance Trusts were written to in September 2007 to determine their plans for the IHCD Paramedic award. If they planned to continue enrolling students after 1 September 2008, they were informed that they would need to be visited. From this correspondence the Education – Approvals and Monitoring department have been able to determine that fourteen Ambulance Trusts require a visit. These visits are in the process of being organised and a list of Trusts and visit dates can be found in Appendix 1.

Please note that on 1 October 2007 Staffordshire Ambulance Service NHS Trust completed its merger with West Midlands Ambulance NHS Trust resulting in 15 Ambulance Trusts across the United Kingdom.

West Midlands Ambulance Service NHS Trust have confirmed that they will continue enrolling students onto the IHCD Paramedic award after 1 September 2008, however, visit dates are yet to be confirmed. A number of factors have led

to this delay, including the merger detailed above; confusion on the original Visit Request Form; and delays within the Trust in determining future plans.

South Central Ambulance NHS Trust has provided written confirmation that the last date of enrolment onto their IHCD Paramedic award was 11 February 2008. A copy of this email can be found in Appendix 2.

List of approved programmes

The IHCD Paramedic award is an approved programme. The list of approved programmes on the website is currently annotated as follows:

‘In addition, HPC approves the Institute of Health Care Development (IHCD) Paramedic training award.’

As the Ambulance Trust is not identified as the education provider the list of approved programmes can not indicate when a Trust has stopped running the IHCD Paramedic award.

Nor does it reflect that considerable variation in the management and delivery of the award can occur between Trusts, which was one of the main reasons why the visits have been organised to the Ambulance Trusts rather than the IHCD.

The Education – Approvals and Monitoring Department will therefore amend its records, including the list of approved programmes on the website, to show the Ambulance Trust as the education provider and the IHCD as the validating body. This will allow the department to maintain an up to date and accurate list of education providers offering the IHCD Paramedic award.

Withdrawal of approval

In September 2007 the Education and Training Committee considered a paper entitled ‘Withdrawal of approval from historic programmes’. The process contained in this report, particularly in the section ‘Withdrawing ongoing approval from programmes in the future’ will be applied to those Ambulance Trusts who cease to run their IHCD Paramedic award.

Currently the only Ambulance Trust who will be required to undergo this process before 1 September 2008 is South Central Ambulance Service NHS Trust.

New programmes

Any Ambulance Trust, who undergoes the withdrawal of approval process and wishes to restart their IHCD Paramedic award, will be required to follow HPC’s approval process.

Any new organisations wishing to start running the IHCD Paramedic award will be required to follow HPC’s approval process.

Decision

The Education and Training Committee is asked to agree:

- That the departmental records, including the list of approved programmes on the website, are amended to show the Ambulance Trust as the education provider and the IHCD as the validating body.
- That the Education – Approvals and Monitoring department contact West Midlands Ambulance Service NHS Trust to clarify that if dates are not agreed within two weeks, then the withdrawal of approval process will be commenced.
- That South Central Ambulance Service NHS Trust does not require a visit and that once the last cohort of students completes the IHCD Paramedic award, the withdrawal of approval process can be instigated.

Background information

IHCD

The Institute of Health Care Development (IHCD) provides the awarding body services for six ambulance awards, one of which is the IHCD Paramedic award.

IHCD publishes the curriculum for the ambulance awards and monitors and upholds the rules and regulations surrounding their operation. The curriculum and rules and regulations provide the overriding structure for the Ambulance Trusts in how to run the IHCD Paramedic award. However Trusts can offer additional learning opportunities or set additional rules and regulations and because of this, the length of an IHCD Paramedic award varies.

Organisations wishing to run an IHCD ambulance award must apply for accreditation through IHCD's approvals process. Accreditation is specific to the award and at the moment only the Ambulance Trusts are accredited to run the Paramedic award.

It was originally planned to stop the IHCD ambulance awards in March 2008 and move the training of Paramedics into the Higher Education sector. However, the IHCD, Ambulance Trusts and the Department of Health have been in discussions to extend this date. In October 2007 the IHCD published an article in Ambulance Today outlining the plans for the IHCD ambulance awards; a copy of which can be found in Appendix 3.

Ambulance Trusts

On 1 July 2006, the existing twenty-nine Ambulance Trusts in England were merged into thirteen new Ambulance Trusts. With the exception of London and the Isle of Wight, the remaining 11 Trusts underwent a major reorganisation which affected both the current and proposed education and training in each Trust.

The Trusts in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland were unaffected by this merger. In total this meant there were sixteen Ambulance Trusts across the United Kingdom.

On 1 October 2007 Staffordshire Ambulance Service NHS Trust completed its merger with West Midlands Ambulance NHS Trust resulting in fifteen Ambulance Trusts across the United Kingdom.

From 1 April 2008, the Department of Health will introduce new Call Connect response times. Currently the measurement of response times starts when the location, telephone number and chief complaint are received. From April, Trusts will be measured from the time the call is connected to the ambulance control room.

Plans for meeting the new response times include increasing the number of Paramedics within the Trusts. As the majority of Trusts are still developing higher education programmes, the IHCD Paramedic award offers Trusts a way of meeting this workforce demand until they can fully transfer to higher education.

HPC

When HPC was established, a decision was made to honour the approval of pre-registration routes already approved by the Council for Professions Supplementary to Medicine (CPSM). This included the IHCD Paramedic award.

In February 2004, the Education and Training Committee agreed that the HPC should visit all IHCD Paramedic training centres once the QAA subject benchmark statements had been published. The QAA subject benchmark statements for Paramedics were published in 2004.

Due to uncertainty about when the IHCD Paramedic award would stop, the HPC delayed visiting these programmes.

The Ambulance Trusts were subject to annual monitoring in 2005 / 2006 and during this process it was identified that major changes had been made to three of the IHCD Paramedic awards offered by the Ambulance Trusts. In addition significant variation between the Trusts was identified. While the IHCD Paramedic award provides an overriding structure governing the curriculum, assessment and quality assurance process, there is variation in the management and delivery of the programmes delivered by Ambulance Trusts.

The Annual Monitoring process was further complicated by the merger of the Ambulance Trusts which occurred in July 2006.

In September 2006, the Education and Training Committee agreed:

- The Executive should contact the three training centres which had been identified by the annual monitoring assessment process as requiring an approvals visit, to seek clarification of the programmes' future and to arrange visits as appropriate in light of that information; and
- The Executive should contact all other training centres to gather information about their programmes' future and approvals visits should be arranged as appropriate in the light of that information.

From this contact it was clear the Ambulance Trusts would continue to run the IHCD Paramedic award until the transition to higher education was complete. Detailed information from Ambulance Trusts was submitted to the June 2007 Education and Training Committee.

Resource implications

Of the fourteen visits required, 11 appear in the 2007 – 2008 visit schedule, while two appear in the 2008 – 2009 visit schedule. One visit is due to be scheduled shortly.

Financial implications

All the visits appear in the 2008 – 2009 budget.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Visits to Ambulance Trusts

Appendix 2 – Written confirmation from South Central Ambulance Service NHS Trust

Appendix 3 – Article from Ambulance Today, October 2007 entitled 'beyond March 2008 ...'

Date of paper

13 March 2008

Appendix 1 – Visits to Ambulance Trusts

Ambulance Trust	Dates of visit	Reason for visit
West Midlands Ambulance Service NHS Trust	To be confirmed	Continuing to run
Welsh Ambulance Service NHS Trust	11 and 12 March 2008	Annual Monitoring
East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust	26 and 27 March 2008	Annual Monitoring
Yorkshire Ambulance Service NHS Trust	7 and 8 May 2008	Continuing to run
South Western Ambulance Service NHS Trust	13 and 14 May 2008	Continuing to run
Northern Ireland Ambulance Service NHS Trust	28 and 29 May 2008	Continuing to run
Isle of Wight NHS PCT	5 and 6 June 2008	Continuing to run
Great Western Ambulance Service NHS Trust	10 and 11 June 2008	Continuing to run
North West Ambulance Service NHS Trust	18 and 19 June 2008	Continuing to run
East Midlands Ambulance Service NHS Trust	10 and 11 July 2008	Continuing to run
North East Ambulance Service NHS Trust	15 and 16 July 2008	Continuing to run
South East Coast Ambulance Service NHS Trust	29 and 30 July 2008	Continuing to run
Scottish Ambulance Service NHS Trust	10 and 11 September 2008	Continuing to run
London Ambulance Service NHS Trust	16 and 17 September 2008	Continuing to run

NB Staffordshire Ambulance Service NHS Trust was merged with West Midlands Ambulance Service NHS Trust on 1 October 2007



"Ian Teague \Highcroft")

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11/03/2008 19:30

To <Tracey.Samuel-Smith@hpc-uk.org>

cc "Fizz Thompson \Highcroft")

June Roberts

\Highcroft")

bcc

Subject Information

Hi Tracey

I am writing to confirm some details of the IHCD Paramedic Courses to be run in South Central Ambulance Service NHS Trust (SCAS).

The last courses are scheduled as follows

1. Oxford / Buckinghamshire commenced 7 January 2008 due completion date 7 March 2008.
2. Hampshire Division commenced 11 February 2008 due completion date 11 April 2008.
3. Berkshire Division commenced 11 February 2008 due completion date 11 April 2008.

Once the students have completed the above Education Centre Teaching the students need to attend the four week Clinical Hospital placements.

The dates for the completion of these placements usually are started within three months however SCAS like many other Ambulance Trust is struggling to place students in the Hospital environment. I would suggest the last date of graduation would be the end of July but hope the HPC will be able to accommodate any minor extensions if problems should arise.

I hope this information is helpful but if you require any more details please get in contact at the following number/address.

Best wishes

Ian

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beyond March 2008 . . .

yes IHCD will still be around

IHCD's Business Development Manager, Alan Howson

In response to being asked this question almost daily for the past 3 months, Alan Howson, the IHCD Awards Manager, outlines what IHCD and Edexcel will be doing beyond March 2008. You heard it here first, straight from the manager's mouth - unedited.

How time flies. 16 years ago I joined the then NHSTA with a project brief to complete the conversion of the Ambulance Technician and Paramedic awards to NVQ's - the future of ambulance training was to be national vocational qualifications.

As I soon discovered, all but a few of the then 53 Chief Ambulance Officers were opposed to NVQ's for Paramedics - they saw the future of Paramedic training with Higher Education rather than being consigned to artisan status (their words not mine).

16 years on and with professional status achieved (through the IHCD awards) some progress has been made in the transition to an academic footing for Paramedic education, but not sufficient to achieve the March 2008 target set by the Ambulance Service Association at their Future of Education conference held on 24th May 2005.

As a consequence, I can confirm that the IHCD awards will continue beyond March 2008, most likely to March 2013; you heard it here first (for the detail see below).

There will be some who will be aghast at this and others who will be thankful. My observation is that unusual circumstances have combined during the build up to 2008; the goal remains the same so if you're aghast get over it the best you can.

So what were the circumstances ?

A number of factors have been at play, the most salient ones from our perspective and not in any particular order:

- **the merging of English Ambulance Services** - 33 into 11 is fairly easy on a calculator, merging organisations is not. Trust appointments took a long time to sort out and this together with getting to grips with their new geography slowed decision making almost to a standstill. This also coincided with the next factor.
- **the financial situation in the NHS during 2006/7** - 1 in 3 trusts reported deficits. Recruitment and training was suspended and posts left unfilled.
- **Agenda for Change** - resolving the varying terms and conditions in the newly merged Services and establishing new workforce structures took time.
- **Changes in service delivery** - more Emergency Care Practitioners left Paramedic vacancies to be filled. Higher Education could not meet the demands in the short term.
- **Capacity of Higher Education** - the lead time for Diploma Paramedics is much greater than the IHCD system. He does not have an endless supply of funding nor does it deliver the same courses between Institutions; several Spartacus's thrive in different parts of the same Service.
- **Call Connect** (April 2008) - will create a short term need for more Paramedics.

So more of the same ?

Not as far as Edexcel or the Ambulance Service Association is concerned; it's not simply a case of extending the current IHCD Paramedic award to March 2103 and hoping for the best. The intention will be, working with Ambulance Services, to develop bridges and routes through the BTEC awards framework routes for existing staff and mature students who wish to progress to Paramedic education but perhaps aren't in a position to study on a full-time basis.

Summary of IHCD awards going forward

Award	Last registration	Activity during the contract
Ambulance Care Assistant	March 2008	To be replaced by BTEC level 2 Ambulance Care Assistance
Driving 1	TBC Likely to be 03/09	To be converted into BTEC level 2 award from April 2008.
Driving 2	As above.	To be converted into BTEC level 3 award.
Technician	TBC Likely to be 03/10	To be converted into BTEC Units/award for use in or towards Diplomas/Foundation Degrees.
Paramedic	TBC Likely to be 03/13	As above.
Tutor	TBC Likely to be 03/09	BTEC awards available covering the Instructional Methods and Tutor Qualifying courses, accredited by QCA * and compliant with the Lifelong Learning requirements.
Driving Instructor	Under discussion.	Consideration required on Driving Standards Agency requirements for instructing/assessing 'blue-light' competences.

The First Person on Scene awards (FPOS awards) are owned by Edexcel and will continue to be offered through the IHCD brand.

Edexcel has a vast range of qualifications on offer and will be working with Ambulance Services to identify qualifications that could be used by other staff groups for example Control Staff.

National Qualifications Frameworks

BTEC qualifications are recognised by the Qualifications Curriculum Authority (QCA) and can provide credit towards other qualifications - the recognition is down to individual Universities. There are unfortunately 2 qualification frameworks that exist - one under the aegis of the Qualifications Curriculum Authority, which covers schools and Further Education, and the other managed by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education; the two don't always twain - it's very much down to the University and its processes for recognition.

QCA framework	LEVEL	QAA (Higher Education)
	8	D (Doctorate)
	7	M (Masters)
	6	D (Degree)
	5	I (Diploma/Foundation Degree)
IHCD Paramedic *	4	C (Certificate)
IHCD Technician *	3	
BTEC ACA Award	2	
	1	
	Entry	

* these are estimated equivalent levels as the awards are not formally accredited by QCA

In the BTEC framework, different awards are available depending on the number of guided learning hours :

- Award (up to 120 hours)
- Certificate (up to 200 hours)
- Diploma (up to 300 hours)

It is possible to have a BTEC level 3 Diploma in Ambulance Emergency Care.

The transition to BTEC

As part of the transition, Edexcel has run a series of BTEC accreditation workshops for Ambulance Services. All but one UK Ambulance Service has attended these events which have been



designed to inform Ambulance Services on the BTEC qualifications framework and the requirements for accreditation.

BTEC awards are very different to the IHCD awards in many respects, most notably :

- the Units of achievement are expressed in guiding learning hours where a range of student directed activities counts (eg, pre-reading, research, direct teaching, work experience)
- Centres are required to design their own assessment tools which are approved by Edexcel

Choice will also play its part. Ambulance Services are not bound to use BTEC awards. We believe there is much to be gained from maintaining a national approach in certain areas, for example Driving. **Fact:** only the Ambulance Service has a national system of driver training, for operational and instructional staff.

The easiest way to access BTEC awards for Ambulance Services will be to develop new relationships with Further Education. Indications are that Services are realising that Higher Education is not in itself the sole solution to the development of their staff. To what extent Services need to maintain some sort of training capacity remains to be seen. Perhaps fewer training staff but with a more strategic/quality assurance role.

Will IHCD continue ?

For a business to survive it must have products/services that customers are willing to buy and, as a minimum, provide these cost effectively - certainly not at a loss. It must adapt to the circumstances it finds itself in, either by developing new products; finding new markets or a mixture of both.

IHCD has been reasonably successful at developing new products

and finding new markets. Its reliance on NHS Ambulance Services as the sole source of income has been greatly reduced over the last 5 years. This will continue.

When I was appointed to my role as Awards Manager (Project Manager back then) the organisation was called the NHS Training Authority. Several years on I've been through more job titles than I care to recall, working for several differently named organisations (including two NHSD's) but essentially still providing services customers want.

It does seem natural however that many of the products offered through the IHCD brand migrate to the BTEC brand. This will take time and we may lose some customers along the way; equally I have no doubt we will attract new customers. I don't look upon it as the end of IHCD but more of finding the most appropriate way of delivering services.

Brands are peculiar things. I never realised Wispa bars had been discontinued and can't wait for them to return as promised by Cadburys.

If a decision is made to end the IHCD brand we will let this be known in good time. Should that day come then I would hope we would celebrate the contribution it has made to the development of ambulance staff over a very many years. In the meantime we have a lot of work to do, and yes, IHCD will still be here beyond March 2008.

Links

QCA: www.qca.org.uk

QAA: www.qaa.ac.uk

BTEC Teaching awards: www.edexcel.org.uk



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