

Education and Training Committee, 9 June 2011

Service user involvement research - update

Executive summary and recommendations

Introduction

At its meeting on 10 March 2011, the Committee agreed to commission research to look at service user involvement in the design and delivery of education and training programmes. The research consists of a literature review and research with existing HPC approved education providers.

The Executive has developed a research brief based on the Committee's discussion at the last meeting. This has now been sent out to those identified as potentially interested in this area, including academic researchers and organisations. The brief has also been distributed widely via the Council of Deans of Health and other research groups and networks. This should hopefully ensure that a number of proposals are received. The research brief is attached for information.

The Committee will note the timescales for the work. The feasibility of reporting the outcomes to the Committee in 17 November 2011 has been reviewed by the Executive. The Executive have concluded that this would not reasonably allow sufficient time after the appointment of the researcher for the work to be completed, particularly the research with education providers.

The deadline for the completed research has been revised to 20 January 2012. The Education and Training Committee will be invited to discuss a copy of the final research report and a paper from the Executive discussing the potential options at the following meeting of the Committee on 8 March 2012.

Decision

This paper is note; no decision is required.

Background information

Please see above.

Resource implications

None as a result of this paper. As previously notified in relation to the research.

Financial implications

None as a result of this paper. As previously notified in relation to the research.

Appendices

- Invitation for research proposals: Service user involvement in the design and delivery of education and training programmes leading to registration with the Health Professions Council (HPC)

Date of paper

27 May 2011

INVITATION FOR RESEARCH PROPOSALS

Service user¹ involvement in the design and delivery of education and training programmes leading to registration with the Health Professions Council (HPC)

1. Project brief

- 1.1 This project is about exploring the involvement of service users in the design and delivery of pre-registration education and training programmes approved by the Health Professions Council (HPC). The overall purpose is to assist the HPC in reaching conclusions about whether service user involvement might be more explicitly required as part of the HPC's standards of education and training (SETs) and supporting guidance.
- 1.2 The research aims are as follows.
- To gain improved understanding of the nature and extent of service user involvement in the design and delivery of approved education and training programmes which lead to registration with the HPC.
 - To identify, analyse and evaluate the different types of involvement activities undertaken by approved education providers.
 - To situate the above within the relevant literature on service user involvement (in particular, within education and the regulation of education).
- 1.3 The project will have three primary components.
- A literature review.
 - Research with HPC approved programme providers.
 - A critical analysis and evaluation of the information gathered above, considering how this relates to the HPC's regulatory context, including any conclusions and recommendations.

¹ Please see paragraph 5.3 for the definition of 'service user' to be adopted in this research.

2. About the HPC

- 2.1 The Health Professions Council is an independent professional regulator set up to protect the public. We currently register the members of 15 different professions. To do this, we set and maintain standards which cover education and training, behaviour, professional skills and health, approve and monitor UK educational programmes which lead to registration, maintain a register of people that successfully pass those programmes, and take action if a registrant's fitness to practise falls below our standards.
- 2.2 We have been in existence since April 2002 and now regulate 15 professions (c. 215,000 registrants), including, for example, dietitians, clinical scientists, practitioner psychologists and orthoptists.
- 2.3 The number of professions that we regulate will increase in the coming years. In July 2012 we will become responsible for the regulation of approximately 85,000 social workers in England. In addition, the HPC is to become responsible for registering practitioners who dispense unlicensed herbal medicines and might begin voluntarily registering adult social care workers in the future.
- 2.4 We have an annual income of approximately £15m of which £5.6m is spent on the operations of the fitness to practise function. The HPC is funded entirely from fees payable by the professionals it regulates.

3. Our role in quality assurance of education and training programmes

- 3.1 We currently approve 631 programmes delivered by 125 education providers. Although most programmes are delivered or validated by a Higher Education Institution (HEI), we also approve programmes delivered by ambulance training centres and by professional bodies. Programmes are approved against our standards of education and training which apply to programmes across all the professions that we register. These standards are focused on outputs and outcomes and cover such areas as admissions; curricula; programme management and resources; and assessment.
- 3.2 We assess programmes against the standards of education and training at approval visits. The assessment is carried out by 'visitors', registrants in each of the professions we regulate, who make recommendations about approval to our Education and Training Committee. This may include recommending that certain conditions should be set before approval is granted. We grant open-ended approval subject to ongoing checks to ensure that our standards continue to be met through the 'Annual Monitoring' and 'Major Change' processes.
- 3.3 A programme that successfully meets the standards of education and training will allow a student by completion to meet the standards of proficiency, the threshold standards for safe and effective practice in each profession. If a student successfully completes an approved programme they are eligible to apply for registration, subject to health and character checks and payment of the registration fee.

4. Service user involvement

- 4.1 The topic of service user involvement in the HPC's approval of education and training programmes has been under active consideration for a number of years.
- 4.2 In 2008/2009 we consulted on revised standards of education and training and supporting guidance and as part of that consultation sought the views of education providers and visitors in this area. As a result, we amended the standards of education and training guidance to more specifically encourage and support service user involvement. The changes were made in relation to standards relating to admissions (SET 2), programme management and resources (SET 3), curriculum (SET 4) and assessment (SET 6). In the consultation, education providers were generally supportive of enhancing the SETs to better encourage service user involvement but wanted to ensure that any additional requirements were meaningful and avoided over prescription about the degree or nature of involvement.
- 4.3 The operational processes – approval, annual monitoring and major change (described in paragraph 3.2) - were also reviewed to ensure publications included the encouragement of service user involvement. Changes included adding to the list of possible evidence that could be submitted to include information gathered through service user involvement activities. However, there are not currently any specific standards or guidance that compels service user involvement.
- 4.4 More recently, we have been considering whether there is a case for amending the standards of education and training and/or the supporting guidance to explicitly require service user involvement in the design and/or delivery of programmes for an education and training programme to be approved by the HPC. There have been a number of drivers behind this including the following.
- The HPC's continuing commitment to involving service users in its work.
 - The existing practices of (some) HPC regulated education providers in developing ways to involve service users in programmes and an observed trend towards service user involvement in professional education more generally.
 - The requirements of the Council for Healthcare Regulatory Excellence (CHRE) which oversees the HPC and 8 other professional regulators in the professional regulatory field. As part of their annual performance review of the regulators they expect to see evidence of 'patient involvement' in the design and delivery of education and training programmes.

- The regulation of social workers in England by the HPC from July 2012. Service user involvement is a particular focus for the social work field with expectations that service users are involved in all aspects of a programme (including selection, teaching, assessment, design and quality assurance), with centrally allocated funding supporting this activity.

4.5 To date much of our discussion has concerned whether there is a clear and robust rationale for further regulatory intervention in this area and has included discussion about:

- the existing service user involvement activities of HPC education providers;
- the wide range of potential service users across the professions regulated by the HPC;
- the (potential) benefits of service user involvement for all concerned, including whether it is possible to draw conclusions about the value of service user involvement for public protection; and
- the need for any regulatory requirement(s) to be meaningful rather than tokenistic.

4.6 The paper 'Service user involvement in the design and delivery of education and training programmes' (HPC Education and Training Committee, 10 March 2011) provides further information about this area (please see section eight of this paper).

5. Scope of proposed research

- 5.1 This section outlines the anticipated scope of the proposed research.
- 5.2 The focus on the research is on the current activities undertaken by education providers to involve service users in the design and delivery of approved programmes. **Design** includes activities related to the development, monitoring and evaluation of programmes which might include service user attendance at approval and validation events, service user forums, and mechanisms to gather service user feedback. **Delivery** includes activities such as the selection of students, teaching and assessment. (The HPC is separately considering the issue of lay involvement on visit panels as part of its own quality assurance arrangements and this is outside of the scope of the research.)
- 5.3 The service users of the professions we regulate will vary enormously. For the purpose of this research our focus is on the activities of education providers to involve those who typically use or are affected by the services of registrants once they qualify from programmes and become registered (e.g. patients, clients, carers, organisational clients, colleagues etc).
- 5.4 We expect that the literature review will have two components.

Service user involvement and regulation

- 5.5 The main focus of the research, including the primary data collection, is on the regulation of education. However, we expect that the literature review will also enable the research to be grounded within an overview of the available literature on service user involvement. We expect that this will include (but is not necessarily limited to) the following.
- Service user involvement in regulatory processes.
 - The different 'levels', 'layers' and 'types' of service user involvement.²
 - 'Best practice' overall in putting into action effective service user involvement.

Service user involvement and education

- 5.6 We expect that primarily the literature review will look at any published analysis or research which provides an evaluation of the benefits and usefulness of service user involvement in education. Although we anticipate that most literature is likely to concern involvement in health or social care education (or in education more generally), we would be particularly interested in any literature which specifically pertains to the professions regulated by the HPC and/or to the regulation or external quality assurance of education.

² For example, the ladder of participation:
'www.serviceuserinvolvement.co.uk/whatisit_ladderOfP.asp

- 5.7 As the HPC will be assuming responsibility for the regulation of social workers in England from July 2012, we expect the literature review to include any relevant material derived from service user involvement in social work education and regulation and in social care.
- 5.8 We anticipate that the research with education providers will include qualitative and quantitative data collection. We would be particularly interested in:
- the frequency and types of activities undertaken by education providers (e.g. are activities more frequently about delivery rather than design?);
 - examples of particularly 'good' or 'notable' practice (i.e. in order to provide illustrative examples / vignettes);
 - the drivers and rationale for existing involvement activities;
 - the (perceived) benefits of involvement activity;
 - any data on the impact of user involvement that has been collected;
 - the (potential) limitations of or barriers to involvement; and
 - any trends within or between professions or different models of education delivery.
- 5.9 The HPC will discuss and agree with the successful research team the approach to undertaking this part of the research, including the sampling approach adopted. The HPC will work with the appointed research team to facilitate the research with education providers (e.g. by providing contact information).
- 5.10 As the overall purpose of the research is to assist the HPC in reaching conclusions about whether service user involvement should be more explicitly required as part of the HPC's standards of education and training and supporting guidance, we would anticipate that the critical analysis and evaluation undertaken by the successful researcher(s), including any identified conclusions or recommendations, is likely to include (but is not limited to) the following.
- Whether there is evidence that might indicate that regulatory involvement in promoting involvement of service users would better support or add to the existing work taking place by education providers.
 - Whether there is evidence that might assist the HPC in weighing the relative merits of further encouraging service user involvement in the design and delivery of education and training programmes, versus compelling that activity.

- The potential impact of any future compulsory standard, and the potential 'terms' of such a requirement, given the extent and nature of existing approaches to involvement.

6. Next steps and anticipated timescale

- 6.1 Proposals for this work should be submitted in writing to the Director of Policy and Standards (see contact details overleaf) by no later than **1 July 2011** and should include the following:
- Details of how the research would be conducted including methodology. (This should include proposals around the sampling methodology that might be used in undertaking research with education providers.)
 - An outline timescale (in light of the overall deadline).
 - Details of the experience of the researchers(s) including CVs.
 - A breakdown of costs.
- 6.2 The overall deadline for delivery of the project would be **20 January 2012** with a draft report available for comment prior to this date (by a deadline to be determined with the successful researcher).³
- 6.3 We anticipate a budget of up to **c.£25,000** for the research (inclusive of all costs).

³ Please note, in the event that the number of proposals received delays the process of appointing a research team, this date would be revised accordingly with the agreement of the appointed researcher / research team.

7. Contact details

For more information please contact:

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8. References

Approval of education and training programmes

Health Professions Council (2009), Annual monitoring: Supplementary information for education providers

Health Professions Council (2009), Approval process: Supplementary information for education providers

Health Professions Council (2009), Major change: Supplementary information for education providers

Health Professions Council (2009), Standards of education and training

Health Professions Council (2009), Standards of education and training guidance

The above documents are available to download from the following link:

<http://www.hpc-uk.org/education/downloads/>

Health Professions Council (2009), Standards of education and training and guidance – Responses to our consultation

<http://www.hpc-uk.org/aboutus/consultations/closed/index.asp?id=70>

Service user involvement in education (including social work education)

Council for Healthcare Regulatory Excellence (2010), CHRE performance review report 2009/2010

<http://www.chre.org.uk/satellite/311/>

General Social Care Council and Social Care Institute for Excellence (2004), Living and learning together – conference report

<http://www.gsccl.org.uk>

General Social Care Council (2005), Working towards full participation

<http://www.gsccl.org.uk/page/130/Social+work+degree+documents.html>

Health Professions Council (2011), Service user involvement in the design and delivery of education and training programmes (Education and Training Committee, 10 March 2011)

<http://www.hpc-uk.org/aboutus/committees/archive/index.asp?id=547> (click on enclosure 7)

Joint Health and Social Care Regulators' Patient and Public Involvement Group (2008), A PPI Good Practice Handbook for UK Health Care Regulators (Second edition, Oct 2008)

<http://www.hpc-uk.org/aboutus/stakeholders/ppihandbook/>

Social Care Institute for Excellence (2009), Building user and carer involvement in social work education

<http://www.scie.org.uk/publications/ataqlance/ataqlance19.asp>