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## Education and Training Committee – 9 June 2011

### Transfer of regulatory functions from General Social Care Council – approval and monitoring processes

#### Executive Summary and Recommendations

##### **Introduction**

At the Committee meeting on 11 March 2011, it was agreed that the Executive would update the Committee on the intentions and progress of the transfer of the regulatory functions related to the approval and monitoring of programmes.

The attached document provides some background into social work education in England and details the Education Department's anticipated areas of work ahead of the regulatory transfer. The figures quoted in the attached document are derived from the General Social Care Council's Report on Social Work Education in England 2010 data pack.

##### **Decision**

The Committee is asked to note this paper.

##### **Background information**

In July 2010, the government published the 'Liberating the NHS: Report of the arms-length bodies review' report. This report outlined the government's intentions to abolish the General Social Care Council (GSCC) in England and transfer its regulatory function to the HPC. The Health and Social Care Bill which sets out the detail of the transfer was published in January 2011. Currently, there is an anticipated transfer date of July 2012.

Transfer of social workers' register (England) draft communications  
Workplan – Communications Committee, 17 February 2011

##### **Resource implications**

The immediate resources implications are captured in the Education Department work plan 2011-2012. The longer term resources implications will be captured in the five year plan and future department work plans.

##### **Financial implications**

The financial implications related to the transfer are captured in the major project budget for 2011-2012. The longer term financial implications will be captured in future departmental budgets.

##### **Appendices**

Transfer of regulatory functions from GSCC – approval and monitoring processes

##### **Date of paper**

26 May 2011

## Transfer of regulatory functions from GSCC – approval and monitoring processes

### **Brief overview of social work education in England**

The GSCC currently sets the minimum requirements that individuals must meet in order to access their register, including the 'recognised qualifications' that an individual must hold. The social work degree was introduced as the 'recognised qualification' in 2003. Prior to this, the 'recognised qualification' was the Diploma in Social Work (Dip SW).

The GSCC currently approve approximately 280 pre-registration training programmes for social workers, delivered across approximately 80 education providers in England. Approximately 60% of these pre-registration programmes are at undergraduate level (mainly Bachelor with honours degrees) and 40% at postgraduate level (postgraduate diplomas and masters). There is an approximate 70%: 30% split between full-time and part-time delivery. Approximately 25% of these programmes are designed for individuals already working in the social care and focus on work based learning. The remaining 75% are designed on the more traditional campus based learning model with individuals studying full-time. On average, 6000 students have enrolled on social work pre-registration training programmes each year for the last five years. Between 2003-2008, approximately 80% students successfully passed their pre-registration training programmes, with approximately 18% withdrawing and 2% failing their studies.

The GSCC also currently approve approximately 30 programmes for Approved Mental Health Professionals (AMHPs), delivered across approximately 25 education providers in England. All of these approved AMHP programmes are at postgraduate level (postgraduate diplomas and masters). The GSCC currently approve these programmes as part of their wider post-registration, continuing professional development framework, known as the 'post-qualifying (or PQ) framework'. Their PQ framework includes approximately 320 programmes and covers five specialist areas of practice.

The GSCC currently approve programmes using the following standards - National Occupational Standards for social work, the Quality Assurance Agency's benchmark statement for social work degrees, GSCC codes of practice and the Department of Health requirements for social work training. The GSCC's quality assurance systems include an initial accreditation visit and regular monitoring. Their regular monitoring is risk based, with different interventions proportionate to the risk assessment.

## **The transfer project**

Below is a list of the key tasks which are planned to facilitate the successful transfer of the education regulatory functions from the GSCC to the HPC. The list is not exhaustive, and subject to the legislative process (both in terms of content and timing). It is anticipated that many of the tasks will continue after the register transfers.

- Ongoing liaison with GSCC (including regular meetings with education and project management representatives)
- Ongoing liaison with relevant social work and education stakeholders (including the Social Work Reform Board – Education Working Group, Office for Independent Adjudicator, Quality Assurance Agency, Joint Social work Unit, Higher Education Academy, College of Social Work, social work education providers and the Care Councils in Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland)
- Plan and receive data from the GSCC around approved pre-registration programmes for social workers (current and historic)
- Plan and receive data from the GSCC around approved programmes for AMHPs (current and historic)
- Plan and receive data from the GSCC around the approval and monitoring processes for approved pre-registration and AMHP programmes.
- Plan and receive data from the GSCC around the education providers' complaints process for approved pre-registration and AMHP programmes.
- Publish lists of approved programmes for social workers (current and historic)
- Publish lists of approved programmes for AMHPs (current and historic)
- Agree and communicate the process for confirming ongoing approval for pre-registration training programmes and AMHP programmes (i.e. pending quality assurance decisions at the point of transfer and future visit schedule)
- Agree and communicate the process for facilitating those who have trained in Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland to access our Register (current and historic training)
- Contribute to GSCC mailings and newsletters to social work education providers
- Contribute to GSCC and social work led forums and presentations
- Produce dedicated webpages for social work education providers (including FAQs)
- Produce articles in Education Update on the transfer of social work regulation for existing and new education providers
- Plan and hold seminars for social work education providers
- Produce directed mailings for social work education providers (including dissemination of existing publications)
- Upgrade and input data into information systems (including Net regulate, education database, website and reporting and filing systems)
- Plan and run internal employee training
- Recruit and train visitors (approximately 30)
- Publish and circulate updated standards of education and training documents
- Publish and circulate standards of proficiency for social workers