hcpc **health & care professions council**

Partner Re-appointment renewal evaluation report

A. Introduction

Fitness to practise panel members and chairs undergo the self-assessment process to renew their agreement. All new agreements are for four years.   The HCPC Practice Committee Rules specify that panel member and chair agreements can only be held for a maximum of eight years. Therefore, they will submit a self-assessment once in their service.

The process works by the Partner completing a self-assessment of how they continue to meet the role competences. The competences that they are required to demonstrate are laid out in five sections and each competency has a range of behavioural performance indicators attached to them. Partners are asked to provide a statement which lays out how they continue to meet the competences with examples from their HCPC work or elsewhere.

The competences in the self-assessment differ from those in the appraisal and role briefs. The self-assessment competencies were devised from a document published by the Judicial Studies Board setting out the competences required for those who sit on tribunal type hearings.

Once submitted, self-assessment submissions are assessed by a member of the Partners department, Fitness to Practise department and a Council member.

Once complete, scores are compiled into rank order by profession and renewals are offered in order of highest score and the number of Partners required for each profession. On occasions, there will be fewer posts offered than submissions received in order to support future workforce planning. Agreement end dates are staggered to take into account the eight year rule for Panel Members and Chairs.

The Partners Team have evaluated the effectiveness of the self-assessment process.

B. Research Methodology

Three sets of structured interviews took place. All participants were interviewed by the Partner Manager.

i.   Internal interviews with x employees from the HCPC Fitness to Practise department and a Council member
ii.   Interviews with partners

i.   Internal interviews

Structured interviews have been conducted with employees from the Fitness to Practise and a Council member who have all reviewed self-assessment submissions

in 2012 or earlier. Participants were asked 10 structured questions. The questions asked were:

1. With reference to the current self-assessment process, what do you think of the length of the self-assessment document?
2. Are the competences assessed are an accurate reflection of the competences required of a Panel Member or Chair? Why?
3. How many assessors should score each submission? Why?
4. Is the process fair to individuals? Why?
5. FTP only: Do you think the results of the 2012 exercise correctly identified those that should be renewed and those that didn't?
6. Do you think the self-assessment process is fair across all professions? Why?
7. What part of the process are you most critical about? Why?
8. Is self-assessment is a suitable method to judge the competency of panel members at renewal? Why?
9. What other ways do you think we could fairly assess suitability for a second term?
10. Once the reviewed appraisal documentation is rolled out, do you think there will still be a need for self-assessments at renewal?
11. If no, how would you determine the suitability of panel members who have not undergone appraisal due to not being offered or accepted sufficient work?
12. Is there anything else you wish to add?

ii   Interviews with Partners

12% of Partners who submitted self-assessments for the 2012/13 renewal period were invited to take part. They were randomly selected and 4 were interviewed via telephone (10%). The following questions were asked:

1. With reference to the current self-assessment process, what do you think of the length of the self-assessment document?
2. How long did it take to complete?
3. Are the competences assessed are an accurate reflection of the competences required of a Panel Member or Chair?
4. Do you understand where the current competences came from?
5. Is the guidance to Partners clear?
6. Do you think the process is fair?
7. Are there any parts of the process that you are critical of? Why?
8. Is self-assessment is a suitable method to judge the competency of panel members at renewal? Why?
9. What other ways do you think we could fairly assess suitability for a second term?
10. Is there anything else you wish to add?

C. **Analysis of responses**

Internal (x 3 FTP employees and 1 Council member)

Question Number	Question	Responses
1	With reference to the current self-assessment process, what do you think of the length of the self-assessment document?	All respondents stated that they thought the length of the document was acceptable. 2 respondents acknowledged that the document may seem lengthy to those completing it as we usually receive a variety of length responses from 1-2 sentences per competency to 1-2 paragraphs or longer. 1 respondent suggested that to deal with the issue around length, a change to the structure of the questions might be appropriate; to give examples of what kind of evidence we are looking for.
2	Are the competences assessed an accurate reflection of the competences required of a Panel Member or Chair?	1 respondent stated the competences need to be made more relevant to the role of a HCPC panel member/chair, in order to make the questions easier to answer/evidence and use practical examples. 2 respondents stated that the current level is acceptable but that examples are needed to set expectations of what is required. 2 respondents stated that broad competences should be broken down and questions reworded to make them more relevant to the role
3	How many assessors should score each submission? Why?	1 respondent stated that for a pass, 1 assessor is sufficient but in the event somebody did not 'pass' it would need a second look. 3 respondents stated that the

		present number of 2-3 assessors is sensible. However, currently one 'type' of assessor, for example Fitness to Practise' may have two people assessing submissions ie. The Head of Adjudication and Hearings Manager assess 50% each. All 3 respondents acknowledged that we should avoid splitting batches in future to ensure consistency and fairness.
4	Is the process fair to individuals? Why?	1 respondent stated that Partners may think that being marked on paper based doc is unfair but recognised that it is difficult to carry out observation. The paper based exercise is the most practical (only practical) way to assess as observation from one day isn't enough, with SA, they can draw on multiple hearings/experiences. 3 respondents stated yes, as it's a standard process and not hugely long or labour intensive. They can prepare themselves for it. Same q's for everybody and its analysed in the same way. For the level required, people should be able to complete the documents. However, equality/diversity considerations should be made where appropriate.
5	FTP only: Do you think the results of the 2012 exercise correctly identified those partners that should be renewed and those that didn't?	1 respondent stated, yes on the information that we asked for on the forms but the questions weren't good enough to fully test the competences. 1 respondent stated, yes, broadly – some people were successful, due to it being a SA process and they had experience so knew what we would be looking for and were able to positively emphasise that. Balance of evidence and how we look at the statements – might have probed some if we had interviewed

		them but it's a balance of time v cost v effort. Some could be labelled as behavioural issues but such issues do impact on competencies. 1 respondent felt the process correctly identified those that should be offered a renewal but acknowledged Partners don't always take the process seriously. An additional step was suggested by 1 respondent where we would ask people who were borderline to comment on any known issues that had arisen recently to show that they had acknowledged the issue and taken steps to resolve it/ prevent a re-occurrence. However, another respondent deemed an additional ad hoc 'reporting' system, which may include issues reported from HCPC employees or other Partners, inappropriate to feed into the renewals exercise as all submissions need to be scored on the same criteria to ensure fairness and ad-hoc issues should be dealt with via the Partner Complaints Procedure.
6	Do you think the self-assessment process is fair across all professions? Why?	1 respondent acknowledged that it's hard for small professions who haven't sat on hearings so much but they can use other examples. 1 respondent stated, yes as the forms are standard, there is support and guidance and nothing is profession specific.
7	What part of the process are you most critical about? Why?	2 respondents stated splitting of the batches as identified in question 4.

8	Is self-assessment is a suitable method to judge the competency of panel members at renewal? Why?	1 respondent stated that SA is limited as its one person's view of their own work. Peer is better but we already do that for appraisal and we know people are hesitant to be honest. We have to rely on SA. 3 respondents stated that SA was the most appropriate system based on time and cost. Other methods such as interviews would be overly costly and time consuming for potentially the same result.
9	What other ways do you think we could fairly assess suitability for a second term?	As above. 1 respondent stated that Observations/ interviews may be appropriate if we picked out issues for certain people.
10	Once the reviewed appraisal documentation is rolled out, do you think there will still be a need for self-assessments at renewal?	2 respondents stated the process is still needed as we wouldn't be able to fairly assess those who have not sat and therefore not taken part in the appraisal system. 1 respondent stated they thought the appraisal data could be relied on.
11	If no, how would you determine the suitability of panel members who have not undergone appraisal due to not being offered or accepted sufficient work?	1 respondent suggested SA only for those who do not have an appraisal result.

Partners

Question Number	Question	Responses
1	With reference to the current self-assessment process, what do you think of the length of the self-assessment document?	All respondents found the length acceptable for the role. 2 commented that completion was challenging but acknowledged this was probably appropriate for the role.
2	How long did it take to complete?	3 respondents stated that their response took 1-5 hours. 1 respondent estimated a total of 6-7 hours.
3	Are the competences assessed are an accurate reflection of the competences required of a Panel Member or Chair?	All respondents thought that the competences were appropriate. 3 out of 4 didn't think that there was anything missing. 1 respondent stated they could see the relevance but they thought that the questions would be more situational based to make the process more 'live'. 1 respondent didn't recall anything about questioning style but did recall that this featured quite heavily in the refresher training. 1 respondent stated that there was overlap between the questions but it was later identified that they were referring to the appraisal document.
4	Do you understand where the current competences came from?	3 out of 4 answered 'no' they could not recall 1 respondent remembered from the appointment process that they were generic competences required for public appointments.

5	Is the guidance to Partners clear?	All respondents thought the guidance was clear. 2 respondents stated that examples of what we are looking for from a submission would have been helpful. 1 respondent stated that HCPC communications are always good and this particular guidance is well written and uses appropriate language.
6	Do you think the process is fair?	All respondents thought it was a fair process. 2 respondents stated that a 'marking scheme' would be a good addition.
7	Are there any parts of the process that you are critical of?	None of the respondents had any major criticisms. 1 respondent commented that feedback on submissions would be helpful and asked if support would be offered to those 'just making the grade'. 2 respondents questioned how facilitators are satisfied that delegates at training 'understand the content and discussion.
8	Is self-assessment a suitable method to judge the competency of panel members at renewal? Why?	All respondents think that self-assessment is suitable within the constraints of time and money. 1 stated that it is not intrusive which is good. .
9	What other ways do you think we could fairly assess suitability for a second term?	Other methods stated were around interviews or peer assessment. 1 respondent stated that post panel feedback would be valuable as would peer assessment.

10.	Is there anything else you wish to add?	1 respondent asked for clarification on how the appraisal process feeds in and how we deal with ad hoc performance issues. 1 respondent commented that a more timely notification of the outcome would be an improvement.

D. **Partner Performance Management**

In order to place the self-assessment process into context, it is important to have an understanding of where it fits into the wider scope of Partner performance management.

i. Refresher training

All Partners are required to undergo refresher training at least every two years. Refresher training is designed to be interactive and addresses reoccurring performance and conduct issues among Partners. The Executive regularly reviews the training material to address common issues and areas of practice.

ii. Peer and self-appraisal

Self-assessment at renewal is only one of a number of methods of performance management for Partners. Partners who have undertaken more than two separate pieces of work within a two year period undergo self and peer appraisal, where feedback is provided and arrangements are made to deal with any areas of underperformance. This may include additional training or a 1:1 meeting. The appraisal system has recently been evaluated and reviewed. An updated process with an emphasis on clear competences will shortly be rolled out.

iii. Partner Complaints Procedure

The Partner Complaints Procedure is a mechanism whereby the Executive can investigate issues and/or more serious complaints about individuals that may arise. HCPC employees and other Partners can raise a concern via the procedure and the Partner Manager will in collaboration with a Manager from the appropriate department will decide the outcome and way forward under the informal component. This would usually include a meeting with the Partner. Should an agreement be unable to be reached, a complaint will be escalated to the formal component of the procedure which requires tha an outcome is decided by an HCPC Director. The vast majority of issues are dealt with via the informal process.

The self-assessment renewal process adds to the Partner performance management processes but is not stand alone is assessing their continued competency.

E. **Conclusion**

The results have shown that overall the process remains fit for purpose.

There is however a disparity between the competences used at each stage of assessment in a Partner service span. However, there is already work underway to harmonise the competences used for recruitment and each stage of performance management.

The research has identified a need to keep the self-assessment process in place both as a method of CPD for the Partner role and also to be able to objectively assess the continued competency of a Panel Member or Chair.

It was found that Partners may find it difficult to be able to identify relevant examples as the competences are very broad and so 'behavioural' type questions linked to the competences will be developed to assist completion, as well as examples of what we are looking for in a response.

The discussions around the future use of self-assessment vs other methods of reappointment found that whilst self-assessment requires a significant amount of resource, it is an exercise that is time limited. The use of interviews of performance observation was explored but both were deemed too costly and time intensive. Observation is already used successfully for appraisal and the self-assessment process compliments appraisal as part of the wider performance management strategy.

Discussions also occurred around whether performance issues picked up from other processes should be considered. Whilst other processes should be followed where appropriate and dealt with accordingly, it would be unfair to use 'soft' data as a means of determining suitability for a second term. If a Partner's conduct is in question then that should be deal with via the Partner Complaints Procedure. The self-assessment process is a test of competency not conduct.

F. **Future use**

Self-assessment will continue to be the primary form of assessment for the renewal of agreements. The Partners Team will now work on the competences with Fitness to Practise to refine them to the role of the Panel Member and Chair and will link these competencies to the role brief and appraisal documents which are also under review.