

PROFESSIONAL LIAISON GROUPS

Introduction

1. The Council, where it considers that doing so would assist it to perform its functions in respect of a particular project, may establish a Professional Liaison Group (**PLG**).
2. The purpose of a PLG is to draw on the expertise of Council members and others to consider one or more specified topics in detail, and to perform a specified task or set of tasks within a timeframe set by the Council.

Establishing a PLG

3. In respect of any project where establishing a PLG may be appropriate and beneficial, the Director of Policy and Standards must submit a report to the Council setting out:
 - 3.1 a clear and concise rationale as to why it would be appropriate and beneficial to establish a PLG;
 - 3.2 the proposed terms of reference of the PLG (which must be sufficiently precise to enable the Council to agree the PLG's remit);
 - 3.3 the activities which it is proposed the PLG will undertake, including a detailed timetable that sets a date for the conclusion of those activities and a date by which the PLG will report its findings to the Council;
 - 3.4 the knowledge and skills required for membership of the PLG and its proposed composition, including whether external members should be appointed (and, if so, identifying potential members or organisations who should be invited to nominate such members); and
 - 3.5 a proposed budget for the PLG.

PLG Membership

4. If the Council agrees to establish a PLG, Council members who wish to be appointed to the PLG must be given an opportunity to submit a statement (of not more than 200 words) which sets out how their knowledge and skills meet those agreed for the PLG by the Council.
5. A PLG will be chaired by a member of the Council and Council members who wish to be considered for appointment as the PLG Chair must provide an additional statement (also of not more than 200 words) setting out their suitability for that role.

6. Unless the Council determines otherwise, statements submitted by Council members in accordance with paragraphs 4 or 5 will be considered by the Chair of Council, who will then recommend to the Council which members should be appointed to the PLG.
7. If the Council agrees that external members are to be appointed to a PLG, potential members identified in accordance with paragraph 3.4 may be invited to be PLG members or, in the case of organisations, to nominate such members.
8. If the number of potential external PLG members exceeds the number of places available, candidates may be asked to provide a statement similar to that submitted by Council members in accordance with paragraph 4.
9. Unless the Council determines otherwise, any statements submitted in accordance with paragraph 8 will be considered by a Panel comprised of the Chair of the Council, the PLG Chair and the Director of Policy and Standards, who will then recommend to the Council which potential members should be appointed to the PLG.
10. As appointments to a PLG are made based upon an individual's knowledge and skills, members cannot delegate their role to others. However, an external PLG member who is appointed to represent an organisation and who is unable to attend a particular meeting may, with the consent of the PLG Chair, send a delegate to that meeting. Consent must be sought at least seven days in advance of the meeting and the PLG Chair's decision as to whether a delegate may attend shall be final and binding.

Conduct of PLG business

11. The Council's expectation is that, normally, PLG meetings will be held in public and that the papers for such meetings will be made available on the HCPC website.
12. PLGs are not committees of the Council and may regulate their own proceedings. However, in doing so, PLG Chairs are expected to have regard to the HCPC Standing Orders for Committees and, in particular, to take account of the criteria set out in Standing Order 5 (access to meetings) in considering any proposal to hold all or part of a meeting in private.
13. Only PLG members are entitled to speak at PLG meetings. Members of the public may only address the meeting at the prior invitation of the Chair. If any person disrupts the proceedings, the Chair may order that the person be removed from the meeting or that the part of the room which is open to the public be cleared.
14. Members of the public who wish to attend PLG meetings must sit in the public gallery. They should aim to arrive before the meeting begins and remain until the meetings ends to avoid disturbing the proceedings.

15. Unless the Council determines otherwise, the quorum for any meeting of a PLG is half of the total membership of the PLG plus one. If, during a meeting a quorum ceases to exist, the Chair must dissolve the meeting and any remaining business will be adjourned to the next meeting of the PLG.
16. Minutes will be taken at all PLG meetings and will be confirmed and signed by the Chair at the next meeting of the PLG. The minutes of a PLG's final meeting will be sent to members electronically for confirmation before being signed by the Chair. All PLG minutes will be submitted to the Council.

PLG Costs

17. PLGs must operate within the budget agreed by the Council when the PLG was established.
18. Council members participating in the work of a PLG will be entitled to claim attendance allowances and expenses in accordance with the HCPC expenses policy for Council members.
19. Other PLG members will be entitled to have their reasonable expenses reimbursed in accordance with that expenses policy but will not be eligible to receive an attendance allowance.
20. In order to support the involvement of service users and carers, PLG members who are participating in an individual capacity or on behalf of an organisation representing service users or carers may, at the discretion of the Chair, be eligible to receive an attendance allowance equal to that paid to Council members.

Reporting to the Council

21. In addition to receiving the minutes of all PLG meetings, the Council must be informed of any deviation from the PLG's agreed activities, timetable or budget and provided with such progress reports on the work of a PLG as the Council considers appropriate.

17th September 2013