
Council

Public minutes of the 68th meeting of the Health Professions Council held as follows:-

Date: Thursday 12 May 2011

Time: 10.30am

Venue: The Council Chamber, Health Professions Council, Park House, 184 Kennington Park Road, London SE11 4BU

Present:

Anna van der Gaag (Chair)
Malcolm Cross
John Donaghy
Julia Drown
John Harper (for items 19-28)
Richard Kennett
Jeff Lucas
Morag MacKellar
Penelope Renwick
Keith Ross
Deep Sagar
Annie Turner
Joy Tweed
Diane Waller
Neil Willis

In attendance

Gary Butler, Director of Finance
Liz Craig, PA to the Director of Education
Guy Gaskins, Director of IT
Abigail Gorringe, Director of Education
Michael Guthrie, Director of Policy and Standards
Louise Hart, Secretary to Council
Teresa Haskins, Director of HR
Kelly Johnson, Director of Fitness to Practise
Jacqueline Ladds, Director of Communications
Benjamin Potter, Education Officer

Steve Rayner, Secretary to Committees
Greg Ross-Sampson, Director of Operations
Marc Seale, Chief Executive and Registrar

Item 1.11/70 Chair's welcome and introduction

1.1 The Chair welcomed all members to the meeting.

Item 2.11/71 Apologies for absence

2.1 Apologies for absence were received from Mary Clark-Glass, Sheila Drayton, Arun Midha and Eileen Thornton.

Item 3.11/72 Approval of agenda

3.1 The Council approved the agenda.

Item 4.11/73 Declaration of Members' Interests

4.1 There were no interests declared.

Item 5.11/74 Minutes of the Council meeting of 31 March 2011 (report ref:-HPC52/11)

5.1 It was agreed that the minutes of the 68th meeting of the Health Professions Council be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

5.2 In response to a question, the Chair confirmed that, in accordance with the Council's procedures regarding minute taking, input on Council papers provided by absent Council members who had submitted comments outside the meeting could not be written into the formal record.

Item 6.11/75 Matters arising (report ref:-HPC53/11)

6.1 The Council noted the action list as agreed at the last meeting.

Item 7.11/76 Chair's report (report ref:-HPC54/11)

7.1 The Council received a paper from the Chair.

7.2 During the course of discussion, the following points were made:-

- That the Chair and Chief Executive continued to hold their annual meetings with professional bodies;
- That the meeting held with CHRE on 6 April was an opportunity to discuss the establishment of voluntary registers. There was agreement about the importance of the two organisations working together;
- In response to a question relating to the meeting with UK Public Health Register (UKPHR), the Council noted that UKPHR was established in 2003 to promote public confidence in specialist public health practice in the UK through independent regulation. The Register is particularly for those public health specialists who have no other regulatory body. One of UKPHR's main aims is to develop common competencies applicable across their registrants who come from a wide range of backgrounds and disciplines;
- That on 5 April, the Chair had met with Gerald Bednall-Armstrong (ETC member) and Patricia Le Rolland, who is contributing to the Modernising Scientific Careers Initiative, to provide Patricia with an overview of HPC's standards and processes.

7.3 The Council noted the report.

Item 8.11/77 Chief Executive's report (report ref:-HPC55/11)

8.1 The Council received a paper from the Chief Executive.

8.2 During the course of discussion, the following points were made:-

- That the announcement of the "pause" in the Health and Social Care Bill had given the Executive the opportunity to extend the project plan;
- That whilst the Public Bill Committee had agreed to the proposed name change, the new name could not be confirmed until the legislation had been passed;
- That whilst we were not holding specific "Meet the HPC" events for Social Workers at this time, the joint communications plan developed with the GSCC includes holding joint events such as listening events with the GSCC and HPC holding employer-focussed events closer to the time of transfer;
- That the variation in the Chief Executive's budget was attributable to a provision made to cover legal costs;

- Concern was expressed that staff turnover was currently running at nearly 20% per annum and since no senior employees appeared to be leaving, this must mean a higher percentage of turnover amongst junior members of staff. However, it was noted that there was an error in the formula within the table and so actual turnover was in fact 11%. The Council noted the turnover of staff is slightly below the national average. Exit interviews are offered to all employees leaving the organisation, the results of which were periodically considered by the Finance and Resources Committee. The next paper would be considered at the July meeting;
- That the reason for the high level of cheque/credit card write-off was as a result of a bug in the system which, when discovered, meant that write offs from previous years needed to be carried out;
- That it was normal practice for a software code that is owned by a contractor but used by HPC to be placed in Escrow, to prevent any potential issues should a vendor of the application fail commercially;
- That the online renewals outage did not give rise to any complaints from registrants;
- That Freedom of Information requests were dealt with by HPC employees and therefore the only costs incurred were on occasions when legal advice was required.

8.3 The Council noted the report.

Strategy and Policy

Item 9.11/78 Revalidation research reports (report ref:-HPC56/11)

- 9.1 The Council received a paper for discussion/approval from the Executive.
- 9.2 The Council noted that as part of the programme of research looking at revalidation, the HPC had commissioned Durham University to undertake two projects using monies from the Department of Health grant for work undertaken on revalidation.
- 9.3 The Council noted that the first project was a qualitative study to explore student and educator perceptions of what constitutes professional and unprofessional behaviour. The study involved focus groups and interviews with staff from education providers and students

in three professions. The final report of this study: 'Final report for Study 1 – Perceptions of Professionalism' was appended to the paper.

- 9.4 The Council noted that the second project was a quantitative study to develop an approach to assessing professionalism, using tools such as the 'Conscientiousness' Index (a tool for collecting discrete measures of professionalism). The study involved collecting data using these tools relating to students on two programmes and 'tracking' students after graduation. The report for this study 'Progress report for Study 2 – development of quantitative approaches to professionalism' was appended to the paper. The project would continue for a further four years with yearly progress reports.
- 9.5 The Council then received a presentation from Bryan Burford of the University of Durham on the research. During the course of the presentation, Bryan set out the methodology behind study one and the key findings and conclusions. With regard to study two, Bryan outlined the development of the conscientiousness index and the questionnaire together with the next steps.
- 9.6 Council were then given the opportunity to ask questions before noting the report.

Item 10.11/79 Voluntary registration of students (report ref:- HPC57/11)

- 10.1 The Council received a paper for discussion/approval from the Executive.
- 10.2 The Council noted that, at its meeting on 31 March 2011, it had considered the voluntary registration of students. The Council noted that the current paper proposed that HPC should commence a process which would enable a decision to be made about the voluntary registration of students. The proposed approach would have four stages:
- Undertaking a preliminary impact assessment;
 - Public consultation to seek the views of stakeholders to inform the final assessment;
 - Finalisation of the impact assessment in light of the responses received to the consultation; and
 - A final decision having regard to the impact assessment.
- 10.3 The Council noted that student registration would be considered holistically, i.e. for all professions regulated by the HPC.

10.4 During the course of discussion, the following points were made:-

- That it was important to ensure proportionality when considering whether student registration was appropriate;
- That evidence was required in order to make an informed decision about the value of student registration;
- That alternative mechanisms existed that might have the potential to be as effective as student registration;
- That in considering whether the HPC should adopt registration for student social workers, consideration would need to be given to whether this was necessary across the regulated professions;
- That it was essential to approach this with an open mind and await the results of the impact assessment.

10.5 The Council agreed the approach to making a decision about the voluntary registration of students as outlined in the paper. In particular:

- (i) to undertake a preliminary impact assessment looking at the voluntary registration of students;
- (ii) to have regard to the impact assessment guidance published by the Department for Business Innovation and Skills and any other guidance that may be relevant in undertaking the assessment;
- (iii) to consult on that preliminary impact assessment;
- (iv) to finalise the impact assessment in light of the responses to the consultation; and
- (v) to make a final decision about the ongoing approach in this area, having regard to that impact assessment.

10.6 The Council agreed the timetable outlined in section five of the paper.

Item 11.11/80 Annual department workplans (report ref:- HPC58/11)

11.1 The Council received a paper for discussion/approval from the Executive.

11.2 The Council noted that the workplans had been circulated as part of the Council papers. The workplans had been considered by the relevant committees and recommended to Council for approval, in accordance with the terms of reference of each committee.

11.3 The Council approved the department workplans.

Item 12.11/81 Transfer of regulatory functions from General Social Care Council (report ref:- HPC59/11)

12.1 In accordance with the decision of Council to be kept informed of ongoing work relating to the transfer of regulatory functions from the GSCC to the HPC, a verbal update was provided.

12.2 During the course of discussion, the following points were made:-

- As a result of the “pause” in the legislative timetable of the Health and Social Care Bill, the project plan had been updated accordingly;
- In response to a question, the Council noted that agreement had been reached that only those staff who spend the majority of their time carrying out key regulatory functions would be transferred across and the pooling of those staff was likely to take place between July and August 2012;
- That existing registrants would not pay the cost of transferring the social workers register to HPC and there was a Memorandum of Understanding in place with the Department of Health (DH) to cover the financial aspect of this project;
- In response to a question, the Council noted that currently the registration fee charged by the GSCC was relatively low owing to the government subsidy. When the social workers transfer to HPC, they will be expected to pay the same as existing registrants i.e. £76 although consideration may be given to reducing this figure for all professions in future years;
- In response to a further question, the Council noted that the HPC and the DH had been charged with exploring the feasibility of establishing a voluntary register of adult social care workers by 2012. The Health and Social Care Bill specifies a number of broad groups which fall within the category of 'social care workers';
- The Council noted that HPC had created business systems which could accommodate further growth;
- That the Social Work Reform Board’s career working group had been looking at the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment for newly-qualified social workers. Recommendations from the Social Work Reform Board were

expected in due course and a paper on the issue would be presented to the Council at an appropriate point;

- That the Munro report on child protection had been published on 10 May. The report outlined a number of recommendations and reforms, notably it emphasised the need to reflect on why systems fail. The Council noted that HPC were referred to on page 117, with reference to the development of CPD within Social Work;
- The Council noted that there would be a joint meeting of the HPC and GSCC following the next meeting of Council in July.

12.3 The Council noted the update.

Item 13.11/82 New Employee Policy: Social media policy (report ref:- HPC60/11)

- 13.1 The Council received a paper for discussion/approval from the Executive.
- 13.2 The Council noted that the draft Social Media Policy was an entirely new employee policy, designed to clarify the HPC's expectations of employees in the appropriate use of social media tools. It had been developed to support the implementation of the HPC's Social Media Strategy, which aimed to promote the HPC's work by engaging with users of a wide range of social media tools. The policy had been drafted with input from the HR, IT and Communications Departments, and had been recommended for approval by Council at the meeting of the Finance and Resources Committee held on 17 March 2011.
- 13.3 In response to a query relating to the IT policy (appendix two), Council noted that when drafted, it was legally scrutinised, hence the reason for some of the wording contained within the policy. However, this policy would be reviewed next year.
- 13.4 The Council noted that there were no plans to develop the policy for registrants' use, although an article on the issue of social media had been included in a recent edition of HPC In Focus.
- 13.5 The Council approved the new social media policy.

Item 14.11/83 Draft HPC annual report (report ref:- HPC61/11)

- 14.1 The Council received a paper for discussion/approval from the Executive.

14.2 The Council noted that the paper included the text for the front section of the Health Professions Council 2010-2011 annual report. The draft annual report and accounts would be considered by the Finance and Resources Committee on 21 June 2011, the Audit Committee on 23 June 2011 and the Council on 7 July 2011. The accounts were being audited by the National Audit Office in May.

14.3 The Council agreed:

- (i) to approve the following document, subject to minor editorial amendments;
- (ii) that the Audit Committee and the Finance and Resources Committee would be jointly responsible for reviewing the annual report and accounts and for agreeing any amendments.

**Item 15.11/84 Minutes of the Audit Committee held on 16 March 2011
(report ref:- HPC62/11)**

15.1 The Council received a paper for discussion/approval from the Executive.

15.2 The Council approved the recommendations therein.

**Item 16.11/85 Minutes of the Finance and Resources Committee held on
17 March 2011 (report ref:- HPC63/11)**

16.1 The Council received a paper for discussion/approval from the Executive.

16.2 The Council approved the recommendations therein.

The Council noted the following papers:

Item 17.11/86 Voluntary registration (report ref:- HPC64/11)

17.1 The Council received a paper to note from the Executive.

17.2 The Council noted that work in this area was ongoing and the Executive were in the process of meeting with CHRE and the Care Councils in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, following the decision of Council at its last meeting to learn about best practise from those Care Councils that were already undertaking the process.

17.3 The Council noted the report.

Item 18.11/87 Psychotherapists and Counsellors Professional Liaison Group (report ref:- HPC65/11)

- 18.1 The Council received a paper to note from the Executive relating to the Psychotherapists and Counsellors Professional Liaison Group.
- 18.2 The Chair wished to place on record her thanks to Diane Waller for her commitment, enthusiasm and dedication in chairing the PLG. In addition, she wished to thank the members of the PLG for their contribution to the group.
- 18.3 The Council noted the following:-
- That the Psychotherapists and Counsellors PLG was HPC's longest running PLG, meeting 9 times in total;
 - That the paper formally concluded the work of the PLG and included a brief outline of the conclusions reached by the Council after the public consultation held in the summer of 2009 and the recommendations subsequently reached by the PLG in their most recent meetings;
 - That it would be normal practise for the PLG to make recommendations to Council and for those recommendations to be discussed by the Council and final conclusions reached. However, given the changes to the external environment and the recent correspondence with Anne Milton, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Public Health, considered at the last meeting of Council, Council were not invited to reach any conclusions in relation to the PLG's work.
- 18.4 The Council noted the paper.

Item 19.11/88 Any other business

Neil Willis

- 19.1 The Council noted that this was the last meeting of Council for Neil Willis since he had decided to retire from Council with effect from 30 June 2011. Thanks were given for his commitment and contribution to the organisation, starting in 2000 when Neil was elected to the Medical Laboratory Technicians Board of the Council for Professions Supplementary to Medicine before being a member of the shadow HPC between 2001 and 2002 and a member of Council between 2002 and 2005 and 2007 to date.
- 19.2 Neil was given the opportunity to respond.

Item 20.11/89 Date and time of next meeting

20.1 The next meeting of the Council would be held at 10:30am on Thursday 7 July 2011 (followed by joint meeting with the General Social Care Council).

Item 21.11/90 Resolution

The Council agreed to adopt the following resolution:-

“The Council hereby resolves that the remainder of the meeting shall be held in private, because the matters being discussed relate to the following;

- (i) information relating to a registrant, former registrant or application for registration;
- (ii) information relating to an employee or office holder, former employee or applicant for any post or office;
- (iii) the terms of, or expenditure under, a tender or contract for the purchase or supply of goods or services or the acquisition or disposal of property;
- (iv) negotiations or consultation concerning labour relations between the Council and its employees;
- (v) any issue relating to legal proceedings which are being contemplated or instituted by or against the Council;
- (vi) action being taken to prevent or detect crime to prosecute offenders;
- (vii) the source of information given to the Council in confidence; or
- (viii) any other matter which, in the opinion of the Chair, is confidential or the public disclosure of which would prejudice the effective discharge of the Council’s functions.

Item	Reason for Exclusion
22	ii, iii, iv, v, viii
23	ii, iii, iv, v, viii
24	lii
25	lv
26	lv
27	iii, iv

Summary of those matters considered whilst the public were excluded

Item 22.11/91 Minutes of the Private part of the Council meeting held on 31 March 2011 (report ref:-HPC66/11)

22.1 The Council considered and approved the minutes of the private part of the Council meeting held on 31 March 2011.

Item 23.11/92 Matters arising

23.1 The Council noted that there were no matters arising from the private part of the Council minutes of 31 March 2011.

Item 24.11/93 Office accommodation (report ref:-HPC67/11)

- 24.1 The Council received a paper for discussion/approval from the Executive.
- 24.2 The Council agreed that the Chair of the HPC Finance and Resources Committee should participate with the Chief Executive in the negotiations to agree terms of leases for office accommodation.

Item 25.11/94 Transfer of regulatory functions from General Social Care Council to HPC (report ref:-HPC68/11)

25.1 The Council received a verbal update from the Chief Executive relating to the transfer of the regulatory functions from the General Social Care Council to HPC.

Item 26.11/95 Minutes of the private part of the Finance and Resources Committee held on 16 March 2011 (report ref:- HPC69/11)

26.1 The Council considered the minutes of the private part of the Finance and Resources Committee held on 16 March 2011 and agreed the recommendations therein.

Item 27.11/96 Minutes of the private part of the Audit Committee held on 17 March 2011 (report ref:- HPC70/11)

27.1 The Council considered the minutes of the private part of the Audit Committee held on 17 March 2011 and agreed the recommendations therein.

Item 28.11/97 Any other business for consideration in private

28.1 There were no items for consideration in private.

Chair:

Date: