

Council, 22 March 2016

Communications Strategy and Department Work Plan 2016-2017

Executive summary and recommendations

Introduction

The Communications Strategy, which was approved by Council in March 2015, and the Communications Department Work Plan for the period 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017 are attached.

Section 4 (page 2) of the Work Plan provides a brief summary of the work delivered in 2015-16 and the main projects to be delivered in 2016-17.

Decision

The Council is invited to discuss and note the attached documents.

Background information

None

Resource implications

The resourcing of the Department is set out in the attached work plan.

Financial implications

The financial implications of the planned work are accounted for in the Communications budget for 2016-17.

Appendices

See paper.

Date of paper

March 2016

Health and Care Professions Council

Communications Workplan 2016–17

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 This document is a high level summary of the Communication Department's main areas of work in 2016–17. It sets out how we will actively support the core work of the Council and the principles and priorities set out in the Strategic Intent 2016–20. It is underpinned by more tactical documents and a forward planner. These set out specific outcomes and timelines and are used by the Department to support planning.

2 Resource

- 2.1 There are 14 people within the Department, split into six functions. These include events, internal communications, media and PR, publishing, stakeholders and web and digital.
- 2.2 The Department will continue to use the full range of communication channels and tactics to achieve the work set out in this plan. This includes UK-wide talks, HCPC events, the HCPC website, digital activity, media work, social media, publications, our presence at specific conferences and stakeholder and parliamentary liaison.

3 About this document

- 3.1 This document is divided into several sections.
- Section 4 provides a summary of activities undertaken in 2015–16 and those proposed for 2016-17
 - Section 5 summarises key issues and messages for 2016–17
 - Section 6 to 8 highlights the Department's proposed activities for 2016-17, divided into: an overview of the communication projects and activities; communications plans and expertise to departments; and ongoing communications work
 - Section 9 looks to possible work in 2017–18
 - Section 10 looks at the risks owned by the Department

4 Summary

- 4.1 The following provides a highlight of key work undertaken by the Department in 2015–16.
- Communicating the revised Standards of conduct, performance and ethics (SCPE), specifically supporting the public consultation to ensure as wide a reach as possible and then the implementation of a comprehensive plan to disseminate the revised SCPE. This included an all registrant mailing, targeted stakeholder mailings, a film, an event (which was live streamed) to mark the publication, a social media campaign, several tweetchats, a range of blog pieces and articles in journals, an event to brief the media, an HCPC In Focus special and workshops which focus on the SCPE at employer and Meet the HCPC events.
 - Communicating the revised Health, disability and becoming a health and care professional guidance. This included targeted stakeholder mailings, the production of a film, new web pages and a media plan.
 - Extending our reach to registrants by mailing HCPC In Focus to all registrants who have indicated they are happy to receive online communications from us
 - Continued development of myHCPC app.
 - Communicating the change of telephone numbers from 0845 to 0300.

- Dissemination of the final social work education reports including press release, media briefing, audio-cast and blog piece.
- Delivery of key internal communication activities including: plans for specific projects such as Information Security and the Registration processes and systems transformation; the production of the first line manager briefing; and the production of the first Partner newsletter.
- Delivery of specific media and PR campaigns for professional audiences including promoting HCPC registration and tax relief on registration fees.

4.2 In 2016-17, the following are key activities and projects for the Department

- Implementation of public facing information campaigns including Be Sure and raising awareness of chiropody and podiatry protected titles.
- Implementation of communications plans to disseminate Policy projects and work including: annotation of qualifications in podiatric surgery; revised guidance on conduct and ethics for students; new guidance on social media use and reporting and escalating concerns; revised Standards of proficiency for social workers in England; and revised guidance on confidentiality.
- With the HR Department, the all employee survey and subsequent action plan as well as continued work on supporting line managers' communications skills.
- Continuing the communications work to raise awareness of the revised Standards of conduct, performance and ethics. This will include publishing a service user guide explaining the Standards.
- Developing a programme of engagement and information provision for service user and patient facing organisations.
- A renewed programme of work to engage employers across all professions.
- Initiating the major project to review the website.
- Completing the new intranet project.
- Working with the Education Department to refresh key guidance documents and continue to build awareness of education processes.
- Working with the Registrations Department to provide information on registration renewal, CPD audit processes and UK and international applications processes.
- Appropriate stakeholder engagement on any developments in relation to government policy on professional regulation (as outlined in the Policy and Standards Workplan).
- Continued stakeholder engagement across the UK through talks and presentations, attendance at specific conferences and targeted stakeholder mailings and e-news.
- Delivery of a programme of events designed to communicate our processes to registrants, education providers, employers and stakeholders across the UK.
- Working with Secretariat to highlight the work of Council and support the recruitment of two new Council members.
- Development of an information and engagement plan for students on HCPC-approved courses.

5 **Summary of priorities, issues and messages for 2016–17**

- 5.1 This section outlines some of the general communication themes and issues for the HCPC over the year.

- **Registrants** – As in previous years, it will be particularly important to continue to communicate our CPD standards and audit requirements to registrants, as well as registration renewals for all professional groups. However, we will focus some of our work on UK and international application processes as well as reviewing our information provision for recurring issues and questions asked by registrants. We will also continue the communications work for the revised SCPE, the student guidance for the SCPE and the dissemination of the Standards of proficiency for social workers in England, as well as policy guidance on various issues including social media use, reporting and escalating concerns and confidentiality. In addition to this, we will continue our work on promoting HCPC registration and tax relief on registration fees. A further focus this year will be an information and engagement plan for students on HCPC-approved courses.
- **Key stakeholders** – We have a broad range of stakeholder groups and messages for each will vary. However, in the main, our communications work will focus on raising awareness and understanding of our regulatory processes and standards, as well as our core purpose of public protection. A particular emphasis this year will be developing a renewed programme of work to engage employers across all professions and extending our reach to stakeholders across the UK through talks and presentations, as well as attendance at specific conferences and targeted stakeholder mailings and e-news. We will also continue the information and engagement strategies based on the polling undertaken in 2014.
- **Members of the public, service users and carers** – There continues to be a need to raise awareness with this group. However, our work will continue to be targeted to make the most effective use of our available resource. This includes our waiting room distribution campaign and the google adword programme. As with previous years, our focus will be to raise awareness of the Register, in particular emphasising the importance of checking that a professional is registered and, on the rare occasion when things do go wrong, how people can raise a concern. A particular focus this year includes specific work on signposting, the Be Sure campaign, a protected title campaign (chiropractic and podiatry) and developing a programme of engagement and information provision for service user organisations.
- **Employees** – As with previous years, we will continue to ensure that employees are up to date and aware of the work of the Council as well as informed of organisational and departmental activities. We will continue the implementation of the internal communications strategy, develop plans for organisational projects and continue to develop channels, for example line manager briefings, newsletter and employee meetings. A particular focus this year will be the development of a new intranet.

6 Delivering communications projects and activities

6.1 This section outlines the Department's main activities in 2016-17 which are focused on delivering communications activities. Some of these activities are additional to the work set out in sections seven and eight.

- **Events** will organise fourteen Meet the HCPC events in seven locations. There will be four Employer Events (two of which will be webcasts) and up to four Education Seminars. In addition to this, the team will seek to develop ideas for new events which

engage our stakeholders and continue to provide support for employee events and stakeholder events. This includes two events with the Policy Department: a research event and an event which focuses on the revision of the student guidance on conduct and ethics.

- **Internal communications** will focus on the implementation of the internal communications strategy as well as the development of plans for organisational projects that require internal communications expertise, the development of channels (eg employee events, newsletter and line manager briefings) and the delivery of specific pieces of work in partnership with HR, including the all employee survey. In addition to this, we will publish monthly editions of Park Life, organise six all employee meetings, the all-employee awayday and four 'Lunch and Learn' events.
- **Media and PR** will continue to manage media and PR activities across the organisation. The team will also implement specific pieces of work designed to raise awareness of our public protection role and regulatory processes with public and professional audiences. These include: signposting; the Be Sure campaign; a chiropody and podiatry protection of title campaign; continuing the tax relief on registration fees; promoting HCPC registration and revised SCPE work; developing online advertising through google adwords; dissemination of public information materials through four waiting room and independent pharmacy distributions; and extending our reach through social media and articles in professional and consumer media. The team will also develop specific plans for departments and professions to further extend our reach to all audiences.
- **Publishing** will continue to work across the organisation to support the publication of a range of documents, many of which are outlined in section 7 as well as on-going work highlighted in section 8. In addition to this, the team will publish six editions of HCPC In Focus, evaluating content and format based on statistics gathered through Dotmailer software; continue the review and subsequent implementation of the organisation's visual identity (including use of logos and house style); and the development of e-books for certain publications. The team will also scope and produce a new publication which will act as a review of the HCPC.
- **Stakeholders** will continue to implement the action plan for the 2014 stakeholder polling, using this information to implement appropriate engagement strategies. Specific emphasis will be placed on employer engagement as well as a programme of engagement and information provision to service user organisations and strategies for policy related work including the dissemination of the Standards of proficiency for social workers in England and policy guidance including social media use, student guidance on conduct and ethics and reporting and escalating concerns. Four country stakeholder engagement, through face to face meetings, talks and presentations, targeted stakeholder mailings and having a presence at relevant conferences, will also be key. Many of these activities will be set out in the new Stakeholder strategy and workplan developed by the team.
- **Web and digital** will continue to ensure that the accessibility and content of our digital channels (web, film, apps and intranet) is relevant and up to date. Any larger scale web developments will be agreed with departments and managed through one

deployment in the year. We will also undertake two key projects: the first is the website development and the second is moving the intranet from Lotus to Sharepoint.

7 Providing expertise to HCPC departments

7.1 This section sets out our work with other departments providing specialist expertise and adding value to the work they are undertaking. This is not an exhaustive list, but it is intended to provide an overview of our main areas of collaboration.

- **Education** – This includes ongoing work to raise awareness and understanding of education processes through our media and PR channels, as well as the publication of the Annual Report, four editions of Education Update and up to four education provider seminars. We will also work with the Department to refresh the introduction, major change and annual monitoring guidance across our publishing and digital platforms, the SETs review, information provision on student fitness to practise and a series of films explaining their processes.
- **Fitness to Practise** – This includes on-going work to develop stakeholder understanding of the process and publicise hearings, the production of the FtP annual report and the communications for the independence of adjudication process.
- **Registration** – A continued focus this year will be preparing professions for registration renewal and CPD audits, ensuring they understand our requirements. This year will also see the production of the CPD audit report. We will continue to work with the Department to identify the main reasons why registrants contact the team, developing information provision through social media, web and digital content, as well as on specific pieces of work to improve understanding of the UK and international application processes. This could include changes to web pages, the development of more film content or articles in professional journals.
- **Policy** – There will be a number of areas of collaboration this year. This will include continuing our work to communicate the revised SCPE, providing communications plans for policy related work including annotation of qualifications in podiatric surgery, the review of the SETs, the publication of the revised Standards of proficiency for social workers in England and policy guidance including student guidance on conduct and ethics, reporting and escalating concerns, confidentiality and social media use.
- **Partners** – We will work with the Partner team to raise awareness of their recruitment campaigns. This includes developing a tailored media and PR plan as well as providing advice on adverts and publishing articles in HCPC In Focus. We will continue to work with the team to produce up to four editions of the Partner newsletter.
- **Secretariat** – We will work with the team to raise awareness of the work of the Council and provide support for the recruitment campaign for two new members of Council. This will include developing a tailored communications plan that encompasses media, social media and stakeholders.
- **HR** – We will continue to work with HR on communicating to employees relevant HR policy issues. We will also work with the team to develop proposals for supporting

managers' communications and the next all-employee survey. This will include the survey itself and communicating the main issues and themes that emerge. We will also work with HR to support the implementation of the new HR and Partners system (Core HR) with relevant communications activity.

8 Ongoing communications work

8.1 This section records regular work which is on-going from year to year including:

- monitoring the web inbox and responding to requests for updates to the HCPC's website and intranet;
- writing news stories for HCPC channels, including the web and intranet, publishing blog pieces and updating social media platforms;
- professional body engagement through annual meetings and attendance at profession-specific conferences;
- monitoring parliamentary, media and social media platforms and flagging issues for continued monitoring or response;
- liaising with the media on a day to day basis, particularly in relation to Fitness to Practise hearings;
- publishing press releases and writing articles for professional and consumer media;
- monitoring and responding to publication requests including public information packs, standards and guidance (eg CPD brochures);
- attending a range of profession-specific conferences and undertaking a programme of talks, presentations and visits;
- monitoring stock levels for publications and managing reprints;
- monitoring uptake of the registration logo;
- providing advice on house style and visual identity guidelines; and
- undertaking surveys, capturing statistics and providing reports on activities to Council and the Executive Management Team.

9 Looking to 2017–18

9.1 This section highlights some further objectives beyond the financial year 2016–17:

- Further communications work with service users will continue to be crucial, particularly building on the public information communication work we have done.

- Raising the HCPC's profile in the four nations will continue to be an important focus.
- Continuing to develop our e-communications and web platforms will be key in ensuring we reach all our stakeholders in an efficient and effective manner.
- Responding to any developments in relation to government policy on professional regulation (as outlined in the Policy and Standards Workplan).

10 Risk

10.1 The key risks for the HCPC which relate to the Communications Department are set out in the Risk Register. They are: failure to inform public; loss of support from key stakeholders including professional bodies, employers and government; inability to inform stakeholders following crisis; failure to inform registrants; and publication of material not approved for release.

10.2 The Register sets out the mitigation of these risks and is regularly reviewed by the Executive Management Team and the Audit Committee. Specifically:

- **Public information campaigns, social media, media work and digital activities:** These all help to inform the public and raise our profile with the professions. Likewise, increasing our presence on social media and the maintenance of the website, including the ability to update both remotely, helps to mitigate the risk of not being able to communicate with stakeholders after a crisis.
- **Stakeholder activities:** This indirectly raises our profile with the public, but is particularly important in developing our relationships with key stakeholders. The annual meetings with professional bodies are crucial in understanding their issues and our ability to respond. Joint working with professional bodies on key organisational issues is also important in maintaining relationships and helps mitigate the risk of failing to inform registrants of our requirements. Similarly, our work with employers enables us to develop relationships and ensure that these stakeholders understand our requirements of their employees.
- **Registrant communications:** This is vital to enable registrants to understand their responsibilities and our requirements of them. It includes making the standards freely available across a range of media, information about registration in the registrant facing newsletter, HCPC In Focus, face to face contact through Meet the HCPC events and having a presence at professional conferences and exhibitions.
- **Disaster Recovery Plan:** The HCPC's approach to disaster recovery is an ongoing piece of work, and the disaster recovery plan is regularly reviewed and updated. Through the Executive Management Team, the Director of Communications contributes to its ongoing development, and this provides an important safeguard against the risks posed to the organisation by any disaster occurring.

THE HEALTH AND CARE PROFESSIONS COUNCIL

RISK ASSESSMENT & RISK TREATMENT PLAN Jan 2016

Communications

| Ref | Category | ISMS Risks | Ref # | Description | Risk owner (primary person responsible for assessing and managing the ongoing risk) | Impact before mitigations Jul 2015 | Likelihood before mitigations Jul 2015 | Risk Score = Impact x Likelihood | Mitigation I | Mitigation II | Mitigation III | RISK score after Mitigation Jan 2016 | RISK score after Mitigation Jul 2015 |
|-----|----------------|------------|-------|---|---|------------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|---|---|--|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 3 | Communications | | 3.1 | Failure to inform public Article 3 (13) | Director of Comms | 5 | 1 | 5 | Delivery of communications strategy. | Delivery of aspects of communications workplan, specifically public information campaigns, multi media advertising, distribution of public information materials, and web. | - | Low | Low |
| | Communications | | 3.2 | Loss of support from Key Stake holders including professional bodies, employers or government Links to 1.5 | Director of Comms | 5 | 3 | 15 | Delivery of communications strategy, supporting the HCPC strategy | Delivery of aspects of communications work plan, specifically stakeholder activities | Quality of Operational procedures | Low | Low |
| | Communications | | 3.3 | Inability to inform stakeholders following crisis | Director of Comms | 4 | 1 | 4 | Invoke Business Continuity Plan (BCP) | Up to date Comms BCP available | - | Low | Low |
| | Communications | | 3.4 | Failure to inform Registrants Article 3 (13) | Director of Comms | 5 | 1 | 5 | Delivery of communications strategy | Delivery of aspects of communications workplan, specifically Meet the HCPC events, campaigns, Registrant Newsletter, Professional media and conference attendance . Publications and web. | Quality of Operational procedures | Low | Low |
| | Communications | | 3.5 | Publication of material not approved for release | Director of Comms | 4 | 2 | 8 | Delivery of communications plan | Adherence to ISO9001 processes | Adherence to operational plans, eg forward planner | Low | Low |

Health and Care Professions Council

**Communications Strategy
(updated March 2016)**

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 Good communication is essential for the HCPC to engage effectively with its audiences and to fulfil its primary role of protecting the public. As a regulator of health and care professionals, it is important that we tell the public about our role in protecting their wellbeing, inform and educate our registrants as to the benefits of regulation and what we require of them, and communicate our public protection role to stakeholders.

2 This document

- 2.1 This document is divided into several sections. It sets out the principles and purpose of our communications and shows how the communications work supports Strategic Intent. It also provides a high level view of who we are communicating with, what our core messages are, the channels we will use and how we will measure the effectiveness of our communications activity.

3 Communications principles

- 3.1 The HCPC's vision and values are set out in the Strategic Intent 2016-2020. The communications strategy and workplan will adhere to these principles and will ensure that all our published communication will be

- Accessible
 - Accurate
 - Clear
 - Honest
 - Open and transparent
 - Professional
 - Timely
-
- In accordance with the HCPC's house style and visual identity
 - Meet Plain English guidelines where applicable

4 Communications and Strategic Intent 2016-20

- 4.1 The HCPC's Strategic Intent identifies key external and internal drivers and sets out six strategic objectives. These include good governance; efficient business processes; effective communication; evidence informed regulation; influence the policy agenda; and engagement in the four countries. The Strategic Intent also highlights the work the organisation needs to undertake to meet these objectives.
- 4.2 The communications strategy, which is underpinned by departmental annual workplans, seeks to support the core work of the Council as well as the objectives and priorities set out in the HCPC's Strategic Intent 2016-20.

5 Communications – a statutory responsibility

- 5.1 The overarching purpose of the HCPC's communications work is set out in Article 3 (13) of the Health and Social Work Professions Order (2001) which states
- The Council shall inform and educate registrants, and shall inform the public, about its work

5.2 The main purpose of our communications work is to fulfil this statutory obligation and, drawing directly from the objectives identified in Strategic Intent, we will do this by:

- Engaging with registrants to increase understanding of the benefits of regulation, the work of Council and what is required of them
- Extending engagement with the public through improved access to information about the HCPC
- Increase awareness of HCPC's role in regulation amongst all stakeholder audiences
- Engage with employers, government, educators, professional bodies and other regulators
- Continue to build relationships and increase understanding through meetings with stakeholders in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland
- Continue to participate in UK and international regulatory forums
- Ensure employees are informed and updated on all key organisational activities

6 Core messages

6.1 In all our communication activities we will promote the following core messages:

- The HCPC's primary role is to protect the public.
- We are a multi-professional regulator, regulating over 340,000 professionals including radiographers, physiotherapists, paramedics, biomedical scientists, dietitians, practitioner psychologists, podiatrists, and social workers in England.
- We protect the public by setting national standards of education, conduct and performance for the professionals we regulate, by dealing with complaints and by ensuring that professionals who do not meet our standards are held to account.
- We are a modern, efficient and effective regulator which aims to be at the forefront of professional regulation.
- We actively contribute to the regulation agenda and promote good practice and standards.

6.2 These core messages are not fixed. They can be modified in line with changes in the organisation and its strategic intent as well as being refined for specific projects and activities.

7 Stakeholder audiences

7.1 The HCPC has a complex stakeholder map, but it is important that we communicate efficiently and effectively with stakeholders. Set out below is a summary of the main groups we communicate with. It is not exhaustive and is designed to give an overview of the groups who have a vested interest in what we do.

- Public: including members of the public; patient groups; consumer associations; referrers; and service users and carers
- Registrants: existing registrants; new registrants; and prospective registrants
- Key stakeholders across the four nations: parliamentarians; professional bodies; employers; other regulators; trade unions; higher education institutions; other education providers and education organisations; and other health and social care organisations
- Internal: employees; partners; and Council

8 Communication channels and resources

8.1 The HCPC has a range of channels and tactics for communicating and engaging with stakeholders. These include face to face through meetings, HCPC events, talks and presentations as well as attendance at professional and consumer conferences. Media channels including social media as well as web and digital activities, publications and newsletters and stakeholder liaison. For internal communications, this includes team meetings, all employee meetings, employee newsletter and web channels.

9 Implementing communications

9.1 It should be recognised that whilst the communications strategy is the primary contributor to delivering recognition of the HCPC's public protection role, the consistent high quality delivery of operations and activities is also an essential factor in how the organisation is perceived by its key audiences.

9.2 The Communications Department is responsible for the day to day management of the strategy and its related annual workplan. However, it is the responsibility of everyone in the organisation to communicate effectively and, therefore, the success of the strategy also rests with the Council and Executive.

10 Measurement and evaluation

10.1 The effectiveness of our communications work will be gauged through continuous measurement and evaluation. Qualitative and quantitative methods used will include: feedback from HCPC events; participation and evaluation of exhibitions; attendance and feedback from talks, presentations and conferences; web statistics; surveys; and media coverage. We will also undertake market research and opinion polling to gain a better understanding of perceptions of the HCPC and our processes.

10.2 The HCPC's strategy is to continually improve the organisation, and the information gathered through this measurement will be used to formulate further activities and strategies.