

Council, 19 May 2016

New regulatory body for social work

Executive summary and recommendations

### **Introduction**

The attached paper provides an update about developments following the Government announcement in January 2016 that it intends, in time, to create a new regulatory body for social workers in England.

### **Decision**

This paper is for discussion.

### **Background information**

The Council considered a paper on this topic at its meeting on 10 February 2016 and a verbal update at its meeting on 22 March 2016.

<http://www.hcpc-uk.org/assets/documents/10004EF5Enc06-Newregulatorybodyforsocialwork.pdf>

### **Resource implications**

None as a result of this paper.

### **Financial implications**

None as a result of this paper.

### **Appendices**

Appendix 1: Overview of the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) – submitted as evidence before our appearance before the UK Parliament Education Committee.

Appendix 2: Letter to Education Committee Chair; briefing note for the UK Parliament Education Committee, 25 April 2016.

Appendix 3: Letter to Education Committee Chair; briefing note for the UK Parliament Education Committee, 5 May 2016.

Appendix 4: Communication and engagement with the social work sector from 2010 to 2016.

**Date of paper**

9 May 2016

## **New regulatory body for social work**

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 This paper provides the Council with an update about developments following the Government announcement in January 2016 that it intends, in time, to create a new regulatory body for social workers in England.

### **2. Recent meetings**

- 2.1 The last external meeting on this topic took place on 21 March 2016. Civil servants from both the Department of Health (DH) and Department for Education (DfE) attended a meeting at the HCPC. Presentations were given on the HCPC's regulatory model and the fitness to practise process.
- 2.2 A meeting convened by the DH of HCPC employees and civil servants in both departments to discuss the planned reforms to social work regulation was scheduled for 25 April 2016. However, this meeting was cancelled, with the Department explaining that this was because there was no new information to give at this stage. The next scheduled meeting is on 20 June 2016.
- 2.3 We understand that a business case for the transfer of responsibilities is being developed. We have been asked for data including cost data, for example, the likely costs of establishing a new regulator and fitness to practise data.
- 2.4 There is no other information at this stage about the proposed model for regulating social workers in the future, nor about the likely timescales involved.

### **3. Education Committee**

- 3.1 Marc Seale appeared before the UK Parliament Education Committee's inquiry into children's social work reform on 20 April 2016. A short background briefing was submitted as evidence prior to Marc's appearance (appendix 1).
- 3.2 At its meeting on 22 March 2016, the Council agreed that the Chief Executive and Registrar should write to the Government to clarify a statement made to Community Care to the effect that the Government was aware of social work programmes which are failing service users. No such letter was sent as this was superseded by the invitation to appear before the Committee. During the evidence session Marc raised this issue – that swift action could be taken if there were failing programmes but that this information has to date not been forthcoming.
- 3.3 Some of the questions asked during the evidence session appeared to be based on articles published on the Community Care website in the last eighteen months or so. These concerned the publication of 'Rethinking regulation' by the Professional Standards Authority (PSA) and the Law Commissions' review of the

regulatory bodies' legislation. Unfortunately some of this coverage was perhaps not as clear as it might have been.

- 3.4 We wrote to the Chair of the Committee (and to Suella Fernandes MP who led the questioning on regulation) on 25 April 2016 to clarify the points raised. The letter to the Chair and the enclosed briefing paper is attached at appendix 2. The PSA also wrote to the Committee in similar terms (copying us in) to clarify the content of 'Rethinking regulation'.
- 3.5 Community Care have amended the piece on 'Rethinking regulation' so that the title more accurately reflects the content of the report. Since we wrote to the Committee, Community care have amended a further article to correct inaccuracies.<sup>1</sup>
- 3.6 Following the evidence session, the Chair of the Committee wrote to those who appeared to ask for any comments on the future of the professional body for social work. We wrote to the Chair of the Committee, enclosing a further briefing note on 5 May 2016. We took the opportunity at the same time to highlight the key messages on the regulation of social workers in England that we did not have the opportunity to discuss with the Committee owing to limited time (appendix 3).
- 3.7 We understand that the Committee plans to publish the final report of its inquiry in June 2016.

#### **4. Queen's speech 2016**

- 4.1 The House of Commons Library has recently published a briefing paper which outlines the issues and bills which may appear in the Queen's speech due to take place on 18 May 2016.<sup>2</sup>
- 4.2 The paper outlines bills which are in progress including those carried over from the 2015-16 session and those which appeared in the last Queen's speech that have yet to be progressed. It also includes potential subjects of future legislation based on ministerial announcements. Legislation on social work or regulatory reform is not included in the list of speculated future legislation.
- 4.3 A verbal update about the content of the Queen's speech will be provided at the Council meeting on 19 May 2016.

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<sup>1</sup> Community Care (February 2015). Government regulation stance fails to address human rights concerns, says union.

<http://www.communitycare.co.uk/2015/02/05/government-enough-protect-social-workers-human-rights/>

<sup>2</sup> House of Commons library (April 2016). Queen's speech 2016. Briefing paper number 7567.

<http://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-7567/CBP-7567.pdf>

## 5. Future scenarios

- 5.1 There is at this time a lack of any further information about how the Government's stated policy is likely to be progressed. There are perhaps three likely scenarios over the medium term.<sup>3</sup>

### **There is no further announcement on how / when Government policy will be progressed**

- The Executive will continue to meet with both Departments and respond to requests for information and data.
- We will maintain our performance as the regulator of social workers in England until such time as a new regulator is introduced.

### **The regulation of social workers / social work reform is included in the Queen's speech but no legislation is forthcoming**

- The Executive will continue to meet with both Departments and respond to requests for information and data.
- The Executive will establish a project team using the major projects methodology to begin to plan the work necessary to transfer the regulation of social workers to a new regulator. This will include a communications plan.
- We will maintain our performance as the regulator of social workers in England until such time as a new regulator is introduced.

### **The regulation of social workers / social work reform is included in the Queen's speech and legislation is forthcoming**

- The Executive will continue to meet with both Departments and the proposed new regulator once established in shadow, to ensure a smooth transition.
- The Executive will establish a project team using the major projects methodology to plan and deliver the work necessary to transfer the regulation of social workers to a new regulator. This will include a communications plan.
- Information about timescales will allow the Executive to fully assess the impact of the transfer of the regulation of social workers to a new regulator on the rest of the organisation. The Council will be kept well informed and invited to make any decisions required as necessary.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> In evidence to the Education Committee on 4 May 2016, Edward Timpson MP, Minister of State for Children and Families, said that primary legislation would be required to establish a new regulator.

<sup>4</sup> An initial assessment of the likely impact was included in the Council paper of February 2016.

- We will maintain our performance as the regulator of social workers in England until such time as a new regulator is introduced.

## **6. Communication and engagement with the social work sector**

- 6.1 In discussion at Council meetings, the Council has emphasised the importance of continued communication and engagement with the social work sector. The Executive has produced a short paper which describes the programme of work that has taken place, and continues to take place, with the social work sector (appendix 4).

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## Overview of the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC)

### 1 Introduction

- 1.1 The HCPC is a multi-profession UK statutory regulator of over 340,000 health and care professionals from 16 professions. The regulation of social workers in the UK is a devolved responsibility. The HCPC regulates social workers in England, elsewhere they are regulated by the Northern Ireland Social Care Council, the Scottish Social Services Council and the Care Council for Wales.

### 2 Responsibilities of the HCPC

- 2.1 The HCPC registers professionals who meet its standards. To do this it sets four sets of standards and operates associated processes.

- **Standards of education and training:** Across all professions, the HCPC approves just over 1,000 education and training programmes in the UK which lead to eligibility to apply to join the HCPC Register. Programmes must demonstrate that they meet the standards of education and training.
- **Standards of proficiency and standards of conduct, performance and ethics:** Generic and profession-specific standards of proficiency set out the knowledge and skills required in each of the professions. All registrants must also meet standards of conduct, performance and ethics. The HCPC also sets standards for post-registration training in areas such as prescribing of medicines and for approved mental health professionals (AMHPs).
- **Continuing professional development:** Professionals must demonstrate they are keeping their knowledge and skills up-to-date. The HCPC audits each profession by sampling at random 2.5% of those invited to renew their registration every 2 years.
- **Fitness to practise:** If concerns are identified about a professional these can be investigated using the fitness to practise process. Each year the HCPC receives complaints about less than one per cent of the Register.

### 3 Costs

- 3.1 The HCPC is funded by the professionals it regulates. As a regulator with over 340,000 individuals on its Register, it benefits from economies of scale. The annual fee is £90 and is the lowest of all the regulators overseen by the Professional Standards Authority (PSA).

### 4 Governance

- 4.1 The HCPC was originally established as the Council for Professions Supplementary to Medicine (CPSM) in 1960. It is independent of Government and has a Council of six professional and six lay members. It has modern legislation and flexible systems and

derives its powers from the Health and Social Work Professions Order 2001 (as amended). It met all of the PSA's standards for good regulation in their most recent performance review.

## **The HCPC and the regulation of social workers**

### **5 Historic context**

5.1 The General Social Care Council (GSCC) was an arms-length body established in 2000 to regulate social workers in England. Its standards could be either set by the Minister or delegated to the Council. It opened its register in 2004. Following a report by the Council for Healthcare Regulatory Excellence (now the PSA) in 2008, the GSCC was abolished in 2012. Its regulatory responsibilities were transferred to the Health Professions Council, which at that point changed its name to the Health and Care Professions Council. The cost of the transfer was around £17.9m.<sup>1</sup> At the time, government estimated that if the GSCC had continued, funded by registrants rather than government, annual fees would have been between £235 and £274.<sup>2</sup>

### **6 Social work education in England – Review of the approval process 2012–15**

6.1 In January 2016, the HCPC published a review of social work education following the transfer of regulatory responsibilities from the GSCC.<sup>3</sup>

- 96% of social work programmes required changes before being approved.
- Conditions related to: policies, processes and procedures; documentation; assessment regulations; curriculum and assessment; and resources.
- Of the 250 programmes that transferred from the GSCC, 66 have closed.
- In 2012 46% of programmes were postgraduate, this has risen to 56% in 2015.
- Over the last 3 years, approximately 15,000 UK-trained social workers have joined the Register.
- The first group of students that completed an HCPC-approved programme began joining the Register in the summer of 2015.

### **7 Consultation on revised standards of proficiency for social workers in England**

7.1 Following a range of external engagement activities, from 1 April 2016 to 24 June 2016 the HCPC is conducting a public consultation on proposed amendments to the standards of proficiency for social workers in England.

7.2 Feedback from this early engagement with the sector suggests that the standards continue to be fit for purpose. The HCPC is proposing a number of minor changes and the draft revised standards will be considered by the Council in September 2016.

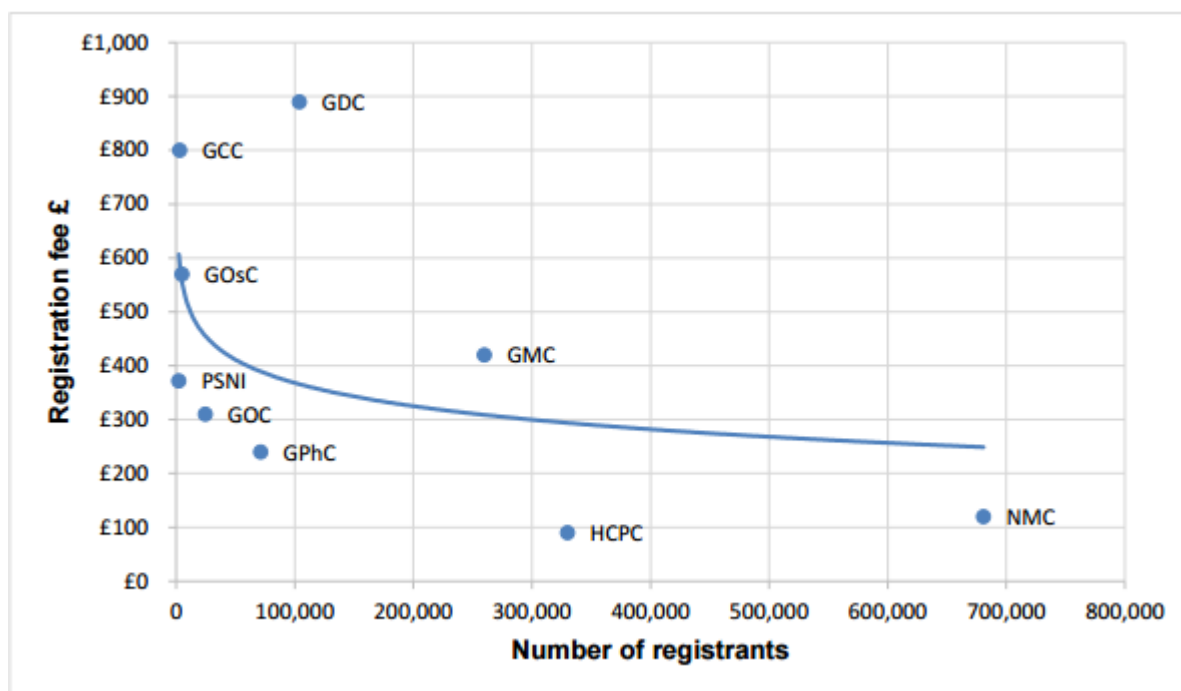
### **8 Fitness to practise**

8.1 Across all professions, the majority of concerns relate to conduct rather than competence. Social workers in England have the most concerns raised about them. In 2014–15 they represented 27% of the Register, but accounted for 57% of fitness to practise concerns. The HCPC has recently commissioned research to explore why. Possible reasons may include the nature of social work including contact with people who are vulnerable or distressed and the highly pressurised decisions social workers are asked to make; the context of social work practice including well documented challenges with lack of resources and high cases loads; and the ongoing professionalisation of the profession.



## Further information, links and references

### Professional regulators: annual renewal fees and registrant numbers



### Professional regulators: annual renewal fees and size of registers

Annual renewal fee	Regulator	Number of registrants
£890 (dentists)	General Dental Council	105,699
£800	General Chiropractic Council	3,034
£570 (year 3, practising)	General Osteopathic Council	4,970
£425 (registration with a licence to practice)	General Medical Council	266,959
£372 (currently under review – correct as of 2014–15)	Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland	2,237
£320	General Optical Council	20,762
£250 (pharmacists)	General Pharmaceutical Council	72,985
£120	Nursing and Midwifery Council	686,782
£90	Health and Care Professions Council	341,745

Registrant numbers from PSA performance review report 2014-15, except HCPC which is correct as of 1 April 2016.

### Links

- Council paper on proposed amendments to the standards of proficiency for social workers in England - [www.hcpc-uk.org/assets/documents/10004F69Enc01-ConsultationonrevisedStandardsofProficiencyforSWinEngland.pdf](http://www.hcpc-uk.org/assets/documents/10004F69Enc01-ConsultationonrevisedStandardsofProficiencyforSWinEngland.pdf)
- HCPC Standards - [www.hcpc-uk.org/aboutregistration/standards/](http://www.hcpc-uk.org/aboutregistration/standards/)

### References

- 1 [www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2016-03-10/30718/](http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2016-03-10/30718/)
- 2 [www.parliament.uk/documents/impact-assessments/IA11-038.pdf](http://www.parliament.uk/documents/impact-assessments/IA11-038.pdf) - section E73-E89
- 3 [www.hcpc-uk.org/publications/reports/index.asp?id=1140](http://www.hcpc-uk.org/publications/reports/index.asp?id=1140)

Neil Carmichael MP  
Chair of the Education Committee  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

Chair: Elaine Buckley  
Chief Executive and Registrar: Marc Seale

25 April 2016

*Dear Mr. Carmichael,*

**Education Committee – Children’s social work reform inquiry**

Thank you for inviting me to appear before the Committee on 20 April 2016.

During the session, some specific points were raised about the regulation of social workers in England. I thought it would be helpful to contact you to provide further clarification on these areas.

I hope the enclosed briefing note is helpful. I have also written directly to Suella Fernandes MP who led the questions on regulation at the meeting, enclosing the briefing note.

Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance to the Committee.

*Yours sincerely*  
*Marc Seale*

**Marc Seale**  
Chief Executive and Registrar

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25 April 2016

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## Briefing note for UK Parliament Education Committee

### 1. Introduction

1.1 We have produced this briefing note to provide clarification on some of the points raised during the evidence session on 20 April 2016.

### 2. The Professional Standards Authority's (PSA's) assessment of the HCPC's performance

2.1 The PSA undertakes a review of the performance of each of the regulators it oversees every year. In its 2014-15 performance review the PSA found that we had met all of its standards for good regulation.<sup>1</sup> The 2015-16 performance review is currently ongoing.

2.2 Some of the questions raised during the evidence session appeared to be based on an article published on the Community Care website in August 2015.<sup>2</sup> The article was about the publication of 'Rethinking regulation' by the PSA.<sup>3</sup> This report looked at the system of regulating health and care professions in place through the nine regulators the PSA oversees. It did not make any comment on the individual performance of any of the regulators, including the HCPC, but made a number of conclusions about how the system of regulation might be improved overall. We understand that this report is informing the Government's thinking on the potential for future legislation to reform the work of the regulators, with a consultation planned from autumn 2016.

2.3 We note that since the evidence session Community Care has amended the title of the article so that it more accurately reflects the content of 'Rethinking regulation'. The article now notes that the PSA's report refers to the overarching regulatory approach to all health and social care professionals and not solely to the regulation of social workers.

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<sup>1</sup> Professional Standards Authority (2015). Performance review report 2014/15.

<http://www.professionalstandards.org.uk/docs/default-source/publications/performance-reviews/performance-review-report-2014-2015.pdf?sfvrsn=10>

<sup>2</sup> 'Damning report finds social work regulation unfit for purpose', now 'Approach to regulating social care and health professionals becoming 'unfit for purpose' (August 2015)

<http://www.communitycare.co.uk/2015/08/18/damning-report-finds-social-work-regulation-fit-purpose/>

<sup>3</sup> Professional Standards Authority (2015). Rethinking regulation.

<http://www.professionalstandards.org.uk/docs/default-source/publications/thought-paper/rethinking-regulation-2015.pdf?sfvrsn=6>

### 3. Law Commissions' review of regulatory body legislation

- 3.1 During the evidence session, reference was made to the UK Law Commissions related to compliance with human rights legislation. We believe this was drawn from coverage in Community Care in December 2014 and February 2015.<sup>4</sup>
- 3.2 The Law Commissions of England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland were asked by the Department of Health to review the legislation of the nine regulators of health and care professions overseen by the PSA. Their final report was published in March 2014. The Law Commissions noted some concern from stakeholders that the regulators were 'increasingly interfering in matters of private and moral conduct which have no impact on public safety'.<sup>5</sup> In its response, the Government said: 'The objective of public protection is not served through regulatory bodies becoming involved in issues not requiring fitness to practise action.'<sup>6</sup>
- 3.3 The Law Commissions' work was about reforming the legislation of all nine health and care professional regulators. It did not raise any specific concerns about the HCPC's performance in this area; nor were any such concerns raised by the Government. Unfortunately the Community Care article of February 2015 was not as clear as it might have been on these points.
- 3.4 For the avoidance of any doubt, we are compliant with human rights legislation. We always consider the cases referred to us about the conduct and competence of social workers carefully to determine whether they fall within our remit and, if so, whether we need to take any action to protect the public. We may sometimes consider matters which occur outside of a social worker's professional life but which nonetheless raise concerns about their fitness to practise. Each case is always considered on an individual basis and we only take action where necessary to protect members of the public and to maintain public confidence.

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<sup>4</sup> 'HCPC under attack over claimed breaches of social workers human rights' (December 2014) <http://www.communitycare.co.uk/2014/12/09/hcpc-attack-claimed-breaches-social-workers-human-rights/>

'Government recommendations do not go far enough to protect social workers' human rights' (February 2015) <http://www.communitycare.co.uk/2015/02/05/government-enough-protect-social-workers-human-rights/>

<sup>5</sup> Law Commission, Northern Ireland Law Commission, Scottish Law Commission (2014). Regulation of Health Care Professionals Regulation of Social Care Professionals in England. Paragraph 1.22. [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/300018/Cm\\_8839\\_Law\\_Comm\\_web\\_part\\_accessible.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/300018/Cm_8839_Law_Comm_web_part_accessible.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> Department of Health (2015). The Government's response to Law Commission report 345, Scottish Law Commission report 237 and Northern Ireland Law Commission report 18 (2014) Cm 8839 SG/2014/26. Paragraph 5.17. [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/399020/Response\\_Cm\\_8995.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/399020/Response_Cm_8995.pdf)

Neil Carmichael MP  
Chair of the Education Select Committee  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

Chair: Elaine Buckley  
Chief Executive and Registrar: Marc Seale

5 May 2016

*Dear Mr Carmichael,*

**Education Select Committee – Children’s social work reform inquiry**

During the oral evidence session on Wednesday 20 April 2016, you invited the witnesses to write to the Committee with thoughts on a professional body for social workers.

I attach a briefing note setting out our views on a professional body for social workers. I have also provided some other information on the regulation of social workers that was not covered during the evidence session owing to lack of time.

I hope the attached note is helpful. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance to the Committee.

*Marc Seale*

**Marc Seale**  
Chief Executive and Registrar

## **Briefing note for UK Parliament Education Committee**

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) has drafted this briefing note to respond to the Chair of the Committee's request for witnesses to provide supplementary views on the role of the professional body in social work in England.
- 1.2 We have also taken this opportunity to provide further information on the regulation of social workers that was not covered during the evidence session.

### **2. Role of the professional body in social work**

- 2.1 A strong and vibrant professional body is essential to support and develop all professions. It is vital that such a body is built up from the grassroots of the profession, something that we see in the other professional bodies that we engage with. The College of Paramedics is a good example of a professional body that has grown from a small base into one that has real influence within the profession.
- 2.2 Professional bodies perform an important role in representing the profession. Their role includes supporting registrants in their workplaces and producing guidance on professional issues such as assisting with continuing professional development. An established professional body will provide support to students who should be able to join as members when they start their education and training.
- 2.3 Importantly this role should not be confused with the role of the regulator, which is to protect the public by ensuring that standards are being met. As a regulator we see our relationship with the professional body as separate, but complementary.
- 2.4 In our view, the British Association of Social Workers (BASW) should be given targeted support to continue to grow into its role as the voice of the profession. BASW has undoubtedly made progress since it took on many of the functions following the closure of The College of Social Work. For example, in the size of its membership base which continues to grow.
- 2.5 We engage with BASW on our professional standards and it is important that we continue to do so. Working closely with professional bodies helps increase awareness of issues around fitness to practise and the standards we set. As a regulator it helps us communicate our role in public protection, but also enables the professions we regulate to build upon our standards and improve the entire profession.

### **3. New regulatory body**

- 3.1 One of the key issues facing the social work profession is the disruption and uncertainty that comes with frequent changes in the sector. This undermines morale in the profession and could subsequently halt the continuing development of the professional body. The

creation of new regulatory body would further compound these issues. Our system of regulation is suitably flexible and we could easily accommodate some of the specific proposals – such as assessment and accreditation of children's social workers – if asked to do so by key stakeholders.

- 3.2 We are also of the view that regulating social workers within our multi-profession system of regulation has a number of benefits, one being that this is consistent with the policy aspiration of greater integration between health and care.
- 3.3 As a multi-profession regulator, with over 340,000 registrants, the HCPC benefits from significant economies of scale. At £90, our fee is the lowest of all the regulators overseen by the Professional Standards Authority. The General Social Care Council needed approximately £25million in government funding to deliver its functions and, at the time of its abolition, the government estimated an increase in fees paid by social workers to at least £235 for it to become self-financing.

#### **4. Post qualification specialisation**

- 4.1 Our modern legislation and flexible regulatory model allows us to accommodate post qualification specialisation. We already approve a small number of post-registration qualifications, for example in prescribing. We set standards for programmes; approve those programmes; and then annotate or mark the Register when someone has successfully completed a programme. This model could easily be used to manage the assessment and accreditation system for children's social workers.

#### **5. Quality of social work education**

- 5.1 Our education approval process is rigorous, ensuring that students experience a range of practise settings and that employers are involved in the process. It means that students completing social work programmes have the knowledge and skills to practise safely and effectively.
- 5.2 The first students completing HCPC-approved programmes entered the workforce in summer 2015, so it is too early to fully assess the impact the new arrangements have had. However, from our experience to date, we have seen no evidence that newly qualified social workers are not fit to practise.
- 5.3 As a regulator, we have powers to deal with concerns raised about any HCPC-approved programme – for example, if there are concerns about the competence of newly qualified social workers. Our powers allow us to undertake further visits and require changes, or, where necessary, remove a programme's ongoing approval. To date, this has not been triggered.
- 5.4 We continue to monitor the provision and quality of practice placements for programmes. We plan to consult on changes to our standards of education and training from September 2016. The proposed changes will include strengthening and clarifying our requirements for practice placements.



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## **Appendix 4: Communication and engagement with the social work sector from 2010 to 2016**

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 This paper highlights the work we have done to engage with the social work profession before and after they joined the HCPC Register in August 2012. It is intended to provide an overview of activities and is not an exhaustive list. It focusses on activities that are specific to the social work profession but should be seen in the context of the wide range of external communication activities which are intended to reach stakeholders relevant to the sixteen professional groups we regulate.

### **2 Chief Executive and Chair meetings**

- 2.1 Between 2010 and 2016 the Chief Executive or Chair of Council have met with a range of social work stakeholders.
- 2.2 This has included key individuals within the sector, for example Dame Moira Gibb, Chair of the Social Work Reform Board and Professor Eileen Munro (Department for Education) as well as Isabelle Trowler, Chief Social Worker for Children Families, Lyn Romeo, Chief Social Worker for Adults and the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Children and Families
- 2.3 At the same time, meetings have also been held with professional networks and associations and public sector bodies in social care. These have included the British Association of Social Workers (BASW), Chairs and Chief Executives of the Social Care Councils in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, The College of Social Work (TCSW), National Skills Academy for Social Care, Skills for Care, Social Care Institute of Excellence and the Social Work Forum.
- 2.4 In 2010, the Chair of Council joined the Social Work Reform Board and attended its meetings until it was disbanded in September 2013.

### **3 Communication and engagement with social workers and the sector around the time of transfer**

- 3.1 We engaged with the social work profession in a number ways both before and after becoming the statutory regulator of social workers in England.

- **Face-to-face stakeholder meetings**

In 2011 and 2012, we held face-to-face meetings with a range of external stakeholders. These included professional organisations and networks, employers, and charities / third sector providers, and national public bodies. These included After Adoption, the Association of Directors of Adult Social



Services, the Association of Directors of Children's Services, Barnardo's, BASW, Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service, the Local Government Association, NSPCC, the Recruitment and Employment Confederation and Unison.

The aim was to 1) learn more about the sector and identify any concerns that we could address in our communication activities; 2) introduce the Council and our regulatory processes; 3) identify ways of working together; and 4) ensure that the transfer was as smooth as possible.

We also held meetings with social work leads at the Department of Health, Department for Education, Skills for Care and the Children's Workforce Development Council to discuss the Social Work Reform Board recommendations for the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment.

- **Events, talks and presentations**

From September 2011 to March 2012 we worked with the GSCC to deliver more than 50 transfer workshops across 37 different employers across England. In 2012, we delivered our own series of sixteen social work specific events for employers and individual social workers in Birmingham, Bristol, Leeds, Liverpool, London, Manchester, Newcastle and Plymouth.

- **Conferences and exhibitions**

In 2011 and 2012 we had stands or speaking slots at a number of social work-specific conferences where we presented on our standards and processes. These included Children and Families Live, Community Care Live, Compass (in 2012 we attended in Birmingham, London and Manchester), National Children and Adult Services Exhibition and Conference, and the UK Standing Conference of Stakeholders in Social Work Education and Training.

- **Working with education providers**

We worked with colleagues in the education team at the General Social Care Council to facilitate joint seminars for education providers across England to discuss the regulatory change and the establishment of The College of Social Work. We also sat on the Social Work Reform Board Education Working Group to provide clarity of the regulatory system from July 2012 onwards and for us to better understand challenges in the area of admissions for social work education providers.

We sat on TCSW's Learning and Development Reference Group which included representatives from education providers, sector skills councils and broader social work education interest groups. We also held regular meetings with TCSW education lead to discuss joint approval visits, approval and monitoring processes, and the development of HCPC standards and the Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF).

We delivered dedicated education seminars for social work education providers (2012-2015) to provide information and support in preparation for their first approval visits.

- **Professional Liaison Group**

When we first drafted the standards for proficiency for social workers in England prior to the opening of the register, we formed a professional liaison group which was made up of key social work stakeholders. We also held a public consultation on the proposed standards.

#### **4 Registration renewal in 2014**

- 4.1 When social workers renewed their registration in 2014 we delivered a comprehensive communications plan to ensure they understood the registration renewal and CPD audit processes.
- 4.2 This included joint events and training sessions with BASW and Nagalro (Professional Association for Children's Guardians, Family Court Advisors and Independent Social Workers) as well as one-off renewal and CPD presentations across England.
- 4.3 We undertook a series of online activities including tweetchats and online discussions with Sanctuary Social Care and TCSW. We also hosted two webcasts and produced a series of nine YouTube films.
- 4.4 We also worked with TCSW to develop a series of 'Toolkits' and with social work media to secure coverage as well as paid for advertising in Professional Social Work, the Local Government Chronicle and on Community Care.

#### **5 Ongoing communication and engagement**

- 5.1 We engage with social workers across all of our communication channels as part of our ongoing communication work, including online (website, webcasts, social media, mobile apps), in print (standards, guidance and reports) and face-to-face (Meet the HCPC Events, and at exhibitions and conferences). We also hold designated events for employers, to which we invite those employing or managing the work of social workers.
- 5.2 We continue to attend and present at relevant exhibitions and conferences. For example, the Stakeholder Communications Manager spoke at Community Care Live in 2015, and will do so again in May 2016.
- 5.3 We meet regularly with the Department of Health and the Department of Education at a range of levels across the organisation, including at Chief Executive and Chair level and in the Education and Policy and Standards Departments.

- 5.4 We also engage with the Chief Social Workers for Adults and Children and Families, for example in our recent scoping work when revising the standards of proficiency for social workers in England.
- 5.5 We continue to have annual meetings with BASW at Chief Executive and Chair level (the last two were 25 November 2015 and 2 September 2014) and we did the same with TCSW. BASW also continue to attend our regular Fitness to Practise Forum Meetings, where concerns and queries around the fitness to practise process can be raised. We also attended BASW's professional summit 'The Future of Social Work Education and Professional Development' in January 2014.
- 5.6 We have established a memorandum of understanding with the regulators of social workers in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales and meet annually with these bodies.
- 5.7 The Stakeholder Communications Manager sat on the Working Group, led by the Local Government Association, which revised the Standards for employers of social workers in England (2014-15).
- 5.8 We continue to be represented on the ADASS Workforce Development Forum, a working group of directors of adult social services, Government, the Principal Social Worker for Adults, and various sector bodies to discuss, share and implement workforce development initiatives and best practice.
- 5.9 We meet quarterly with Heads and Directors from the other three social work councils in the UK to discuss matters of education policy and to share information. We also hold ad-hoc meetings with policy leads from the social work units at the Department of Health and Department for Education, to discuss social work funding and upcoming / ongoing government initiatives.
- 5.10 As part of our review of the standards of proficiency for social workers in England, we have engaged extensively with the profession. This has included surveys with education providers and practice placement educators; meetings with stakeholders including the Department of Health and Department for Education and frontline social work managers; and a workshop attended by educators, professional bodies, newly qualified social workers, social work managers and practice educators.