

**Agenda Item 12 (ii)**

**Enclosure 11**

**Health and Care Professions Council  
20 March 2019**

**Standards of proficiency review**

**For approval**

**From Katherine Timms, Head of Policy and  
Standards**

Council, 20 March 2019

Review of the standards of proficiency

Executive summary and recommendations

### **Introduction**

We are due to review the standards of proficiency (SOPs) for the professions we regulate in 2019-20.

The SOPs set out the professional standards that we consider necessary for the safe and effective practice of each of the professions we regulate. Each set of standards is unique to each of our 16 registered professions, and sets out clear expectations of our registrants' knowledge and abilities when they start practising.

We periodically review all of our standards to ensure that they remain up to date and fit for purpose. The SOPs are reviewed cyclically and were last re-published five years ago between 2013 and 2017 (depending on the profession) so they are now due to be reviewed again.

For this review cycle we are proposing to alter the process slightly from previous years so that the professions are reviewed at the same time, rather than on a rolling basis. We also propose to remove Professional Liaison Groups from the process, and to seek feedback on the standards from stakeholders through stakeholder engagement. We hope that this will make the process more efficient and ensure consistency across the standards.

We propose that this review of the SOPs be carried out between 2019-2020 and anticipate that the whole process will take just over a year. A paper providing the background, context and proposed process and indicative timeline for a review of the SOPs is attached for the Council's discussion and approval.

### **Decision**

Council is invited to discuss and approve the attached proposal regarding the SOPs periodic review

### **Background information**

A paper on the proposed standards of proficiency review has been attached at Appendix A.

### **Resource implications**

The resource implications to be factored in to Policy and Standards work plan for 2019 / 20.

### **Financial implications**

The financial implications to be factored in to Policy and Standards work plan for 2019 / 20.

### **Appendices**

Appendix A: Paper on the proposed standards of proficiency review

### **Date of paper**

8 March 2019

---

## **Review of the standards of proficiency**

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The HCPC standards of proficiency (SOPs) set out the professional standards that we consider necessary for the safe and effective practice of each of the professions we regulate. All registrants must meet our standards of proficiency in order to become registered, and remain on the Register. When a professional applies for or renews their registration, or if concerns are raised about their competence while they are registered with us, we use the standards of proficiency in checking whether they have the necessary knowledge and skills to be able to practise their profession safely and effectively.
- 1.2 Each set of standards is unique to each of our 16 registered professions, and sets out clear expectations of our registrants' knowledge and abilities when they start practising. The standards of proficiency are divided into generic standards (which apply to all the professions) and standards specific to each of the professions regulated (which appear beneath the generic standards). The purpose of the generic standards is to recognise commonality across all the professions that we regulate. The purpose of the profession-specific standards is to set out additional standards for each profession relevant to the generic standard.
- 1.3 We periodically review all of our standards to ensure they remain up to date and fit for purpose. The SOPs are reviewed cyclically and were last re-published five years ago between 2013 and 2017, depending on the profession, so they are now due to be reviewed again. This paper provides the background and context for a review of the SOPs, and also proposes the scope, process and timeline.

### **2. Background to the review**

- 2.1 As well as conducting ongoing reviews, we also review our standards periodically in detail to ensure that they:
  - remain fit for purpose;
  - are well understood by our stakeholders including registrants, service users and carers, education providers and the public; and
  - take account of change, including changes in practice, legislation, technology, guidelines and wider society.

2.2 For previous SOPs reviews we have grouped the professions we regulate into small groups of three or four professions, and then reviewed each group in rolling staggered stages which comprise:

- planning and preparation;
- stakeholder engagement;
- Professional Liaison Groups (PLGs);
- public consultation;
- consultation review; and
- publication of the new revised standards.

### **3. The proposed review**

3.1 As with other standards reviews, the review of the SOPs will be an opportunity to make sure that the standards remain clear and accessible.

3.2 During the last review cycle the SOPs were restructured to make most of the standards profession-specific (rather than generic across all professions), so we are not proposing any substantial changes to the structure in this review. We intend that this review cycle will focus mostly on ensuring that the profession-specific standards themselves remain up to date, so we do not anticipate significant changes to the SOPs during this review. For this reason we are proposing to take a slightly different approach to the format of this review cycle.

### **4. Review process**

4.1 We propose that this review be carried out in three stages as set out below (subject to Council's approval). An indicative timeline is attached at Appendix 1, but it is possible that these dates may change as the review progresses. We anticipate that the whole process will take just over a year to complete.

4.2 Similarly to previous reviews we propose that the standards be grouped into small profession groups of three or four professions.

4.3 For this review we are proposing to remove Professional Liaison Groups (PLGs) from the process and to seek feedback on the standards from stakeholders through stakeholder engagement. This engagement would be sufficiently robust enough to ensure that we deliver future SOPs which are fit for purpose, and would include face-to-face engagement with professional bodies and employers. In the event that any concerns are raised during stakeholder engagement that would suggest that PLGs are necessary, we would inform Council and revisit the need for PLGs.

- 4.4 We hope that taking this approach will enable the process to be more efficient and ensure consistency across the standards.

### **Stage 1: Stakeholder engagement**

- 4.5 The first stage of the review will comprise activities aimed at gathering views from a number of stakeholder groups. We will contact external stakeholders including education providers, professional bodies, employers, service users and carers to obtain their views on the current SOPs and any aspects of the standards which may require re-examination. This will be a predominantly paper-based review, with the flexibility to include face to face engagement to explore any important issues or themes in further detail if necessary. We anticipate that this will take approximately three months. We anticipate starting stakeholder engagement in late spring/early summer 2019 (Q1/Q2).
- 4.6 We will conduct stakeholder engagement for all professions concurrently.
- 4.7 Using the feedback we collect we will revise the standards, if necessary, to produce new draft standards.

### **Stage 2: Public consultation**

- 4.8 The second stage of the review will be a public consultation on all the proposed revised SOPs. This will be an opportunity to seek views across a broader range of stakeholders including those not specifically targeted during the earlier stage.
- 4.9 We will draft consultation questions that invite stakeholders to consider whether any changes we propose are appropriate. In addition to any changes we suggest, there may be other areas that stakeholders may feel need to be reflected in the standards. The proposed consultation documents will be presented to Council for approval.
- 4.10 We propose running a separate consultation for each group of professions (totally four consultations) and publishing them on a staggered, rolling basis.
- 4.11 An analysis of the responses received during the public consultation, as well as any final amendments to the revised standards, will be presented to ETC and Council for approval.

### **Stage 3: Publication**

- 4.12 Subject to Council's approval, we will finalise the new standards and publish them online. We will then work with education providers to gradually phase-in the new standards.

## Appendix 1: Indicative Timetable

Planning and preparation	<b>Q4/Q1 2019</b>
Stage 1: Stakeholder engagement	<b>Q1/Q2 2019</b>
Revise draft standards on the basis of stakeholder feedback	<b>Q3 2019</b>
Stage 2: Public consultation	<b>Q4/Q1 2020</b>
Consultation analysis	<b>Q1 2020</b>
Revise draft standards on the basis of consultation feedback	<b>Q1 2020</b>
Stage 3: Publication	<b>Q2/Q3 2020</b>