
Education and Training Committee - 13 September 2012

Criteria and allocation of Visitor Partners to Approved Mental Health Professional (AMHP) approval and monitoring work

Executive summary and recommendations

Introduction

AMHPs exercise functions under the Mental Health Act 1983 (as amended by the Mental Health Act 2007). Those functions relate to decisions made about individuals with mental health disorders, including the decision to apply for compulsory admission to hospital. Before the amendment by the Mental Health Act 2007 these functions were performed by the role of Approved Social Workers (ASW).

Social workers, mental health and learning disabilities nurses, occupational therapists and practitioner psychologists registered with their respective regulator can train to become AMHPs.

The link between successfully completing AMHP programmes and performing the functions of an AMHP is not absolute. In addition to completing the programmes, an individual has to be approved by a Local Services Authority (LSSA), before they can act as an AMHP.

Under the Health and Social Care Act (2012), we have taken on the responsibility for approving AMHP programmes in England when the regulation of social workers in England transferred from the GSCC to ourselves.

Transitional arrangements under the Health and Social Care Act 2012 provided for AMHP programmes which were approved by the GSCC immediately prior to the transfer to be treated as approved by the HCPC from the transfer date (until such time as that approval is varied or revoked by us). Consequently, those programmes have continuing but transitional approval by operation of the law.

AMHP programmes will be visited by us over two academic years. Given the recent GSCC inspection visits, the visits will take place in 2013-14 and 2014-15.

This paper sets out the criteria required of visitors for the approval and monitoring activities for AMHP programmes and seeks approval for the allocation of visitors for AMHP programmes.

Allocation of visitors for AMHP programmes

Part IV of the Health and Social Work Professions Order 2001 (the Order) sets out the role of the visitor in making recommendations on education programmes on the behalf of the Education and Training Committee as part of the approval process. In this Part of the Order, there are specific requirements for the allocation of visitors to particular visits which must be adhered to. Over and above the requirements set out in the Order, there are additional good practice measures in place to ensure that visitors are well placed to make good recommendations to the Education and Training Committee on all approval and monitoring work that is undertaken.

Article 16(6) states that –

“Visitors shall be selected with due regard to the profession with which the education and training they are to report on is concerned and at least one of the visitors shall be registered in that part of the register which relates to that profession; but that does not apply to AMHP courses.”

Whilst article 16(6) states that AMHP visitors do not have to be from the relevant profession, in order to ensure that visiting panels and visitor pairings for monitoring work have the required expertise to make appropriate recommendations, it would appear appropriate to follow this approach.

The Committee is asked to agree that the following criteria are adopted for the approval and monitoring of AMHP programmes. That the programmes should be assessed:

- By a visitor panel, which includes at least one visitor who is from a profession which is entitled to undertake AMHP training (social workers, mental health and learning disabilities nurses, occupational therapists and practitioner psychologists registered with their respective regulator) and who has current or past experience of working as an AMHP or ASW.
- If required, a second visitor can be allocated from the professions entitled to undertake AMHP training who has experience of working in an educational setting.

Decision

The Committee is asked to agree the text of the framework of considerations for the allocation of visitors to AMHP approval and monitoring work provided as appendix one to this paper.

Background information

The Committee last considered papers on AMHP programmes at its meeting on 12 June 2012. The papers can be found here: <http://www.hpc-uk.org/aboutus/committees/archive/index.asp?id=616> (enclosures 6, 7, 11)

Resource implications

Resources have been accounted for in 2012-13 Education Department work plan and budget, and will be taken forward into future work plans and budget.

Financial implications

Finance resources have been accounted for in 2012-13 Education Department work plan and budget, and will be taken forward into future work plans and budget.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – considerations for AMHP visitor allocation to approval and monitoring work

Date of paper

13 September 2012

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Always or normally	Consideration
Always	<p>At least one AMHP visitor recruited on the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • who is from a profession who is entitled to undertake AMHP training; and • who has current or past experience of working in ASW / AMHP role.
Normally	<p>At least one AMHP visitor recruited on the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • who is from a profession who is entitled to undertake AMHP training; and • who has current or past experience of working in ASW / AMHP role. <p>If needed, the second visitor can come from the following background:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • from a profession who is entitled to undertake AMHP training but without ASW / AMHP experience or training; and • with experience of working in an educational setting.