
Education and Training Committee, 6 June 2013

Standards of conduct, performance and ethics review - progress report

Executive summary and recommendations

Introduction

We periodically review all our standards to ensure they remain fit for purpose and up-to-date. This paper explains the work the Policy and Standards Department is currently undertaking to review of the standards of conduct, performance and ethics. As well as the background to the review, it also outlines the ongoing review process with key dates for each part of the review.

Decision

This paper is to note, no decision is required.

Background information

Paper for Council, Standards of conduct, performance and ethics review – workplan, 5 July 2012, at www.hcpc-uk.org/assets/documents/10003B13enc05-standardsofconductperformanceandethicsreview.pdf

Resource implications

The resource assumptions for the review of the standards are detailed in the Policy and Standards workplan for 2013-14, and will continue to be covered in workplans for future years.

Financial implications

The financial assumptions of the review of the standards form part of the assumptions for the Policy and Standards budget for 2013/2014, and will continue to be reflected in the department budget for the next two years.

Appendices

None

Date of paper

24 May 2013

Standards of conduct, performance and ethics review – progress update

Education and Training Committee 6 June 2013

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The standards of conduct, performance and ethics are the high-level ethical standards the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) sets for all our registrants. These set out in broad terms the conduct we expect of those on our Register, with a focus on providing guidance to registrants based on our expectations of their behaviour.
- 1.2 We periodically review all our standards to ensure they remain fit for purpose and up-to-date. The Policy and Standards Department started the process of reviewing the standards of conduct, performance and ethics in mid 2012, and this paper sets out a summary of progress so far, along with the background to the review, the planned review process and suggested key dates for the next stages.

2 About the review

- 2.1 We aim to review our standards approximately every five years. We last reviewed the standards of conduct, performance and ethics from 2006-2008. The current standards came into effect on 1 July 2008. In March 2012, the Council agreed to amend our publications including standards, guidance and other documents where changes were necessary to reflect the registration of social workers in England from August 2012 and the organisation's name change to the 'Health and Care Professions Council'. In line with this, the standards of conduct performance and ethics were republished in July 2012 with minor revisions to the foreword and introduction, and some minor changes to the standards themselves, to update the terminology used.
- 2.2 The Council approved a proposed workplan for the review of the standards in July 2012. The review is being delivered in three phases – research, a professional liaison group, and finally a public consultation. We expect to publish the final revised standards in January 2016.

Phase one: Research 2012-2013

- 2.3 In this periodic review we are focused on carrying out a more thorough review of the purpose and usability of the standards. This includes a combination of internally delivered and externally commissioned research activities to seek the views of key stakeholders on the content and accessibility of the existing standards. More details about specific projects, and progress so far is summarised in section four of this paper.

Phase two: Professional Liaison Group (PLG) 2014

- 2.4 After the restructure of the Council, a Professional Liaison Group (PLG) will be convened to comprise of Council members, professional bodies, service user representatives and other relevant stakeholders. The outcomes of the research activities will be reported to the PLG which will help put together a revised draft of the standards for consultation. A PLG workplan including terms of reference and the composition of the membership will be produced for Council consideration and approval in December 2013.

Phase three: Consultation 2015

- 2.5 A public consultation will be held on the revised proposed standards. We will look at ways to specifically target service user groups again at this stage of the process.

3. Research progress

- 3.1 We have commissioned two external research projects on the standards, and are carrying out a number of internal research activities exploring various aspects of the standards, what they say, how they are understood, and how they could be made more useable and accessible.

Externally commissioned research

- 3.2 Our particular focus for the external research on the standards has been about engaging with service users and the professions we regulate. We are also particularly interested in the views of professions that have joined the register since the last review of the standards—practitioner psychologists, hearing aid dispensers, and social workers in England. Some of the defining questions we are considering as part of this work are:

- Are registrants aware of the standards and do they understand them?
- Do the standards reflect professional practice and the expectations service users have of registered professionals?
- Where possible, are the standards applicable across all the professions we regulate?
- Are the standards accessible to a range of audiences?
- Given the growth in range of professions on our register, are there further principles which need to be included in the standards?

- 3.3 We commissioned the market research organisation ‘The Focus Group’ to carry out research with registrants and service users across the four countries. The final report of the results of this research has been provided for the committee’s discussion today.

- 3.4 We have also commissioned the service user-led organisation Shaping Our Lives to carry out a small scale piece of focus group / interview work with social care service users and their carers. Shaping Our Lives is expected to

conclude their work by December 2013, and will be seeking the views of service users and carers on how the standards can be improved.

- 3.5 We are currently exploring the possibility of collaborative research with another organisation which is focussed on service users with communication difficulties.

Internal research

- 3.6 Our internal research focus so far has been on collaborative work with external organisations in targeted events to seek the views of specific stakeholder groups including service users and employers. The feedback gathered from these events has been enormously useful and there are many themes which are common across the different research activities to date. Specific work we have carried out so far includes:

- A workshop with service users and carers with experience of cancer care at the Macmillan Cancer Voices conference in October 2012. A day-long joint workshop with Macmillan and service users and carers was also held in February 2013.
- In February and April 2013, we ran workshops on the standards with hearing impaired service users at conferences organised by the charity 'Hearing Link'.
- Workshops were held on the standards at the HCPC employer events in Glasgow and York in March 2013.

- 3.7 The remainder of the internal research—which will be carried out during the latter half of 2013—will include work on how the standards are used by the HCPC, for example, we will seek the views of fitness to practise panel chairs.

4 Indicative workplan and dates

- 4.1 The Policy and Standards Department are working to the following workplan, to allow sufficient time for research, and the consideration of the Professional Liaison Group prior to public consultation. The overall timetable for this review has changed since the Council's initial approval of the workplan, in part as the anticipated Council restructure delays the earliest possible start date for a Professional Liaison Group (PLG). The timings are indicative only, the timescales in the workplan may be subject to change in the future.

Time scale	Activity
May 2013	Completion of research carried out by The Focus Group
End September 2012 – December 2013	External and internal research period
December 2013	Completion of research commissioned with Shaping Our Lives

	Completion of all other research activities Professional Liaison Group workplan and terms of reference approved by Council
January-February 2014	Selection of Professional Liaison Group members
January-April 2014	Preparation of papers for consideration by Professional Liaison Group
April– November 2013	Professional Liaison Group to consider findings of research, other relevant information and to draft amendments to the standards for consultation
March 2015	Education and Training Committee – consultation document on revised standards considered by ETC
March 2015	Council Meeting – consideration of recommendations from ETC meeting, approval for public consultation
April to June 2015	Consultation – public consultation on revised standards of conduct, performance and ethics
September 2014	Education and Training Committee and Council meetings – consideration of consultation responses and revised standards for publication
January 2016	New standards of conduct, performance and ethics published and come into force