

Education and Training Committee, 12 September 2013

The use of lay visitors in the approval and monitoring of education and training programmes

Executive summary and recommendations

Introduction

This paper sets out the current position and proposals for further work regarding the use of lay visitors in the approval and monitoring of education and training programmes. The proposals have been drafted with due regard to the introduction of a new service user and carer standard of education and training in the 2014-15 academic year.

Decision

The Committee is invited to discuss the attached paper.

The Committee is invited to agree the following.

- the creation of a new lay visitor role brief, as set out in Appendix 1; and
- the revised visitor role brief in Appendix 2

Background information

- Education and Training Committee paper – 6 June 2013 – [‘Service users and carer as part of visit panels’](#)
- Education and Training Committee paper - 7 March 2013 - [‘Service user and carer visitor pilot’](#)
- Education and Training Committee paper - 8 March 2012 – [‘Lay visitor pilot’](#)

Resource implications

The resource implications of this paper include the following.

- Recruitment and training of service user and carer visitors

Financial implications

The financial implications of this paper include the following.

- Recruitment and training of lay visitors
- Inclusion of lay visitors to all approval visits in the 2014-15 academic year (visitor fee, accommodation, travel and subsistence costs)

The recruitment and training costs have been accounted for in the Partners Department budget for 2013-14 and 2014-15. Additional visitor costs for adding a third visitor to all approval panels will be accounted for in budgeting in the 2014-15 financial year. The Executive anticipate that visitor costs will increase by approximately 30% to include lay visitors on all approval visit panels. An example of costs which are likely to be incurred are included in paragraph 4.4 based on the average number of approval visits conducted for the past three financial years (2010-2013).

Appendices

- Appendix 1 - Role brief and requirements for lay visitors
- Appendix 2 – Role brief and requirements for visitors

Date of paper

28 August 2013

The use of lay visitors in the approval and monitoring of education and training programmes

1 Introduction

- 1.1 At previous meetings the Committee have considered various areas of work related to the development of service user and carer involvement in education and training programmes. This has included consideration about how service user and carer perspectives are taken account of in the approval of education and training programmes. Following two papers on this particular topic (March and June 2013), the Committee decided at its last meeting that lay visitors should be included on approval visit panels from 2014-15 onwards.
- 1.2 This paper sets out the preparatory work to be undertaken by the Executive to enable the use of lay visitors from 2014-15 and plans to review this work after the first year. The preparatory work includes Committee approval of a new lay visitor role brief which will be used for recruitment activities to appoint suitable candidates in autumn 2013.
- 1.3 The paper is split into three sections:
 - Section one provides a summary of the Committee's principles and agreed direction regarding the use of visitors from a lay, service user or carer background (following June's meeting)
 - Section two outlines proposals for the new lay visitor role brief for discussion and approval by the Committee
 - Section three briefly outlines how the Executive plan to implement lay visitors on approval visit panels from 2014-15 and review their involvement after the first year.

2 Background

- 2.1 The Committee's previous discussion on this topic has been informed by a number of factors. This includes the approval of a new standard of education and training (SET) which makes mandatory the requirement that service user and carers are involved in some way across all HCPC approved programmes; regulatory requirements in relation to service user and carer involvement set out by the Professional Standards Authority; the practices of other professional regulators regarding the use of lay visitors; and an on-going discussion regarding HCPC's overall commitment to involving service user and carer

perspectives in its work. These key areas of discussion were outlined in detail in the paper 'Service users and carers as part of visit panels'¹ which was considered at the June meeting. As such, it is not intended that these themes are revisited in great detail to inform the Committee's decisions relating to this paper.

2.2 At its meeting in June, the Committee considered the following questions to frame their approach to service user and carer involvement in the approval and monitoring of education and training programmes:

- Why service user / carer visitors? What value might they bring?
- What should the service user / carer visitor role be?
- What skills and experience should we look for in service user / carer visitors?
- What about representativeness and currency of experience?
- Service users / carers or lay visitors?

2.3 The Committee agreed that service user and carer perspectives should inform the decision making processes for the approval of education and training programmes. In reaching this decision, the Committee were guided by the following points of principle:

- **HCPC's commitment to involvement.** We will be requiring education providers to involve service users and carers in order for their programmes to become or to remain approved (on the basis that we consider this is consistent with public protection). In the same way, these groups should in some way be involved in our own decision making processes;
- **Integrity of the process.** We already have lay involvement in fitness to practice panels and on HCPC Council and Committees. This ensures decisions are made (and seen to be made) in the public interest and not solely in HCPC's interests or in the interests of the profession. This approach should also be applied to decisions made regarding the approval (initial and on-going) of education and training programmes;
- **A broader perspective.** In the same way service user / carers will provide an additional perspective to professional training programmes (through the introduction of the new SET), so too could that same perspective be brought to bear on our own decision making processes, in addition to the perspectives already brought by visitors aligned to a profession or with academic expertise.

¹ [Service users and carers as part of visit panels](#), ETC June 2013

- 2.4 The Committee also discussed the expectations held of the lay visitor role. All visitors are currently recruited on the basis that they have the ability and experience to contribute to the full decision making process (albeit some with more academic or profession specific expertise to draw on depending on the individual). The Committee agreed that these same expectations should be held of lay visitors and they certainly should not be circumscribed to focus on one particular area or SET (such as service user and carer involvement). Lay visitors should instead be encouraged and supported to contribute to decision making on as equal a basis as possible. Of course this would vary based on prior experience, training provided to perform the lay visitor role, and familiarity with applying the SETs over time. In essence, the role brief should ensure appointed individuals could realistically build on existing skills through training and experience as a lay visitor to contribute to broader discussions regarding the SETs as part of an approval panel.
- 2.5 The Committee considered whether lay visitors should be recruited to specifically represent sub sections of service user and carer groups. This was ultimately deemed too burdensome from a recruitment perspective, and importantly, conflicted with the premise that lay visitors should be able to apply their knowledge and experiences more broadly across all professions. As such, the Committee agreed that the competencies required for the lay visitor role should reflect this. Competencies should include the requirement to have excellent communication skills; the ability to make joint decisions; and it would also be desirable for lay visitors to have experience in formal lay, service user/carers roles influencing service delivery and / or education and training programmes; and an understanding of quality assurance in education.
- 2.6 Finally, it was clear from discussions in June that the Committee agreed the term 'lay visitor' be used, rather than the proposal put forward by the Executive of 'service user / carer visitor'. It was felt the term service user / carer visitor was too specific and in conflict with the message that the role should contribute to decision making across the breadth of issues covered by the SETs. It was felt that the term 'lay' was more broadly reflective of the types of individuals who could perform the role, i.e. individuals from a diverse range of backgrounds, with varying degrees of contact with HCPC registrants and professional training programmes, who could bring valuable lay, service user and carer perspectives to bear on our decision making processes.

3 Lay visitor role brief

3.1 Appendix one contains the proposed role brief for the new lay visitor role. The brief is derived from the existing visitor role, however a number of amendments have been made to reflect the discussions and conclusions reached by the Committee in June, as detailed above in section two. Three new essential criteria have been included to ensure the lay perspective is captured:

- Previous experience of using or engaging with the services of health and care professions regulated by the HCPC.
- Has not previously held registration(s) with HCPC or predecessor bodies.
- Does not hold a qualification that would provide eligibility to apply for HCPC registration.

3.2 These additions ensure individuals appointed to the role bring a lay perspective to our decision making processes, as distinct from any profession specific input. Should these essential criteria be agreed, a subsequent amendment to the existing visitor role brief is required (see Appendix 2). This requirement would be that all registrant visitors 'Must hold current registration with HCPC or another relevant professional statutory body (where applicable)'. The Committee should note that registration with 'another relevant professional statutory body would only apply when recruiting approved mental health professional and independent/supplementary prescribing visitors.

3.3 The remaining essential criteria for lay visitors are the same as the existing visitor role brief. It includes the need to demonstrate excellent communication, decision making skills and the ability to consider a wide range of issues to inform such decisions. These are recognised as key skills that any visitor must demonstrate in order to be effective in the role.

3.4 The need to understand quality assurance principles in use in an education or clinical environment, and an understanding of teaching and learning strategies have been removed as essential criteria for lay visitors. Such criteria would set an unnecessarily high threshold for lay visitors, particularly given that the role would always be supported by other visitors who would hold specific education or profession specific expertise. It would also unnecessarily favour those with experience in academic or practice based settings and as a consequence, narrow the field of suitable candidates, particularly those with beneficial experience as lay, service user and carers.

3.5 The following desirable criteria reflect the additional skills and experience deemed most useful to ensure an individual can be effective in the lay visitor role.

- Previous experience of attending large meetings and/or drafting formal reports.
- Previous experience of involvement in a lay, service user or carer capacity with a professional training programme or as part of a national or local forum or group involved with the provision of health and care services.
- Relevant knowledge and understanding of an education, academic or quality assurance environment.

3.6 The desirable criteria reflect the types of knowledge and experience that would be beneficial for individuals to bring to the role. This should ensure all appointed individuals could contribute meaningfully to the role, and with further experience and training, make broader contributions to discussions as part of an approval panel. The desirable criteria will also be useful as a recruitment tool to distinguish those individuals who are well suited to fulfil these expectations.

3.7 An understanding of education and quality assurance environments has been added to this section. This is in keeping with the Committee's intention that the contributions of lay visitors should be encouraged and developed across all the SETs, rather than being specifically focused on service user and carer issues. As this is desirable criteria, the Executive do not believe it would narrow the range of applicants to the role or put the balance in favour of those from an academic background. However, it would be useful in identifying individuals who could, through training and experience, develop a greater understanding of HCPC standards and apply them appropriately.

3.8 In previous papers, the Committee have also considered the role of four existing visitors from a lay background who have been used intermittently now for many years. These visitors hold academic expertise and have been used traditionally where a third opinion on a visit panel is required or where there is no other suitable 'registrant visitor'. The partner service agreements for these visitors' current terms expire in 31 July 2014. With this in mind the most sensible approach moving forward would be to not offer an automatic renewal of their existing agreement; the reasons being due to the introduction of a new lay visitor role with differing competencies to the original visitor role

they were recruited to, as well as the subsequent amendments made which now make the original visitor role 'registrant' focused. Instead, these four visitors would be provided with the opportunity to reapply for another term with respect to the new role lay visitor role brief.

4 Implementation of lay visitors to approval visit panels

4.1 At its' June meeting, the Committee agreed that the delivery of a pilot was not necessary since it was unlikely that the principles underpinning the use of lay visitors would change in light of any pilot outcomes. Instead, the Executive were asked to include lay visitors as a third member of all approval visit panels from the start of the 2014-15 academic year, and conduct a review of the first year of such visits in 2015-16. The purpose of the review will be to help inform future considerations the Executive and the Committee will make about lay visitor involvement. This will include consideration about issues such as:

- frequency of use of lay visitors across all operational processes; and
- the operational implications of a full implementation of lay visitors (including any training needs).

4.2 The introduction of lay visitors in the 2014-15 academic year will most likely be supported by other adjustments to the approval operational process. In particular, the agenda for approval visits will most likely include a mandatory meeting with service users and carers. This would enable lay visitors (and other registrant visitors) to speak directly with service users and carers involved with a programme. We anticipate a paper seeking Committee approval for a mandatory meeting with service users and carers being a requirement of all approval visit agendas will be considered in March 2014. The new SET which makes service user and carer involvement a mandatory requirement will also become effective for all approval visits from the start of 2014-15.

4.3 In keeping with this proposal, the timetable for introducing lay visitors to approval visit panels is detailed in Table 1 below:

Key activities	Time line
Draft and agree revised visitor role brief	September ETC
Recruit lay visitors	January – March 2014
Schedule lay visitors to approval visits	April – May 2014
Train lay visitors	June - July 2014
Visits commence	September 2014 – April 2015
Review of year 1: ETC paper	September or November 2015

4.4 Based on the forecast number of approval visits for 2014-15, we anticipate recruiting approximately 10-15 lay visitors. Plans for subsequent recruitment activities will be made as needed in subsequent years.

- 4.5 The Committee should note the financial implications for the introduction of lay visitors. By adding a third visitor to all approval visits, the Executive anticipate that partner costs for approval visits will increase by approximately 30%. This would affect specific costs incurred including the visitor fee, travel, accommodation and subsistence.
- 4.6 On average, 58 approval visits have been completed each year over the last three academic years (2010-11, 2011-12, 2012-13). The table below illustrates the approximate increase in costs per year if a third lay visitor had been included on all approval visits during this time:

Visitor costs	Approx. increase (£) / year
Fees	19,732
Travel, accommodation and subsistence	19,549
Total	39,281

- 4.7 The increase in partner costs will be accounted for in future budget planning and will be subject to further discussion by the Executive and agreement by Council from 2014-15 financial year onwards.

Role brief and requirements for lay visitors

Context

The Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) is an independent statutory regulator whose main function is to safeguard the health and care of persons using or needing the services of its registrants.

Lay Visitors make up one of a range of “Partners” who provide the expertise the HCPC needs for its decision-making.

The Partner shall provide the services to the HCPC as an independent contractor under the terms of the Partner Agreement.

Purpose of role

- To visit and assess programmes of education and training delivered (or proposing to be delivered) by education providers.
- To assess approved programmes of education and training using established monitoring processes.
- To provide recommendations to the Education and Training Committee regarding the approval/ongoing approval of programmes.

Main Responsibilities

Visitors will give expert advice and contribute to discussions and decision making as directed by the Council or relevant committee.

Specific tasks include:

- Preparing visitor reports from approval visits and monitoring activities which include recommendations for the Education and Training Committee about the approval/ongoing approval of programmes.
- Working collaboratively with other visitors, the HCPC executive, education providers and other relevant stakeholders.
- Visiting education providers who are normally based within the UK.
- Reporting directly to and attending (in exceptional circumstances) meetings of the Education and Training Committee and its subordinate bodies.
- Undertaking any other duties arising from visits as directed by the Education and Training Committee and its subordinate bodies.

Person specification

Skills, knowledge and abilities

Essential

- Previous experience of using or engaging with the services of health and care professions regulated by the HCPC.
- Has not previously held registration(s) with HCPC or predecessor bodies.
- Does not hold a qualification that would provide eligibility to apply for HCPC registration.
- Ability to consider a wide range of issues in order to make informed and sound decisions.
- Ability to explain and justify decisions and promote HCPC interests to all stakeholders concerned.
- Excellent oral and written communication skills and interpersonal skills, including the ability to communicate professionally with a range of stakeholders.
- Commitment to the Seven Principles of Public Life (see Appendix one).

Desirable

- Previous experience of attending large meetings and/or drafting formal reports.
- Previous experience of involvement in a lay, service user or carer capacity with a professional training programme or as part of a national or local forum or group involved with the provision of health and care services.
- Relevant knowledge and understanding of an education, academic or quality assurance environment.

Time commitment

The time commitment is estimated as being in the region of 5 -10 working days each year. This includes preparation, attendance and travel time. The number of submissions and visits will vary from year to year and will also depend upon each profession.

Training

The HCPC is committed to the training of its partners. If your application to become a visitor is successful you will receive full comprehensive training for this partner role.

Fee and expenses

The role attracts a daily fee of £180 per day and a submission fee (by correspondence) of £72.

Travel, accommodation and subsistence expenses are also payable in line with the Partner Expenses Policy.

For further information on the HCPC, please visit www.hcpc-uk.org

Appendix one

The seven principles of public life

Selflessness

Holders of public office should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends.

Integrity

Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might influence them in the performance of their official duties.

Objectivity

In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

Openness

Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

Honesty

Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interests.

Leadership

Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

Role brief and requirements for visitors

Context

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Visitors make up one of a range of “Partners” who provide the expertise the HCPC needs for its decision-making.

The Partner shall provide the services to the HCPC as an independent contractor under the terms of the Partner Agreement.

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Main Responsibilities

Visitors will give expert advice and contribute to discussions and decision making as directed by the Council or relevant committee.

Specific tasks include:

- Preparing visitor reports from approval visits and monitoring activities which include recommendations for the Education and Training Committee about the approval/ongoing approval of programmes.
- Working collaboratively with other visitors, the HCPC executive, education providers and other relevant stakeholders.
- Visiting education providers who are normally based within the UK.
- Attending annual monitoring assessment days.
- Considering annual monitoring submissions, by correspondence.

- Considering major change submissions, by correspondence.
- Considering (when required) complaints made about education providers, by correspondence.
- Reporting directly to and attending (in exceptional circumstances) meetings of the Education and Training Committee and its subordinate bodies.
- Undertaking any other duties arising from visits or monitoring activities as directed by the Education and Training Committee and its subordinate bodies.

Person specification

Skills, knowledge and abilities

Essential

- Must hold current registration with HCPC or another relevant professional statutory regulatory body (where applicable).¹
- Ability to consider a wide range of issues in order to make informed and sound decisions.
- Commitment to the Seven Principles of Public Life (see Appendix one).
- Understanding of the principles of quality assurance in Higher Education or Further Education or in a clinical environment.
- Understanding of teaching, learning and assessment strategies, developed in either an education or clinical environment.
- Ability to explain and justify decisions and promote HCPC interests to all stakeholders concerned.
- Excellent oral and written communication skills and interpersonal skills, including the ability to communicate professionally with a range of stakeholders.

Desirable

- Previous experience as a visitor, reviewer, inspector, moderator or external examiner.
- Previous experience as a programme leader or placement educator, or equivalent.

¹ Registration with 'another relevant statutory body' is only applicable when appointing approved mental health professional and independent/supplementary prescribing visitors.

- Previous experience of attending large meetings and/or drafting formal reports.
- Proven knowledge of the legal and/or policy context affecting delivery and development of professional training in a health care, social care or therapeutic setting.

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The time commitment is estimated as being in the region of 5 -10 working days each year. This includes preparation, attendance and travel time. The number of submissions and visits will vary from year to year and will also depend upon each profession.

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