

Education and Training Committee

Minutes of the 66th meeting of the Education and Training Committee held as follows:

Date: Thursday 4 June 2015

Time: 10.30 am

Venue: The Council Chamber, Health and Care Professions Council, Park House, 184 Kennington Park Road, London SE11 4BU

Members: Joy Tweed (Chair)
Elaine Buckley
Eileen Mullan (from item 7)
Joanna Mussen
Stephen Wordsworth

In attendance:

Nicole Casey, Policy Manager (items 1-17)
Martha Chillingworth, Senior Project Manager (from item 8 to item 17)
Laura Coveney, Policy Officer (items 1-17)
Brendon Edmonds, Head of Educational Development
Edward Foster, Stakeholder Communications Officer (items 1-17)
Abigail Gorringe, Director of Education
Michael Guthrie, Director of Policy and Standards (items 1-17)
Louise Lake, Director of Council and Committee Services
Greg Ross-Sampson, Director of Operations (items 1-17)
Tracey Samuel-Smith, Education Manager (from item 6 to item 17)
Anna van der Gaag, Chair of Council (items 1-17)
Nicola Wood, Council member (items 1-17)

Public Agenda

Item 1 - Chair's welcome and introduction

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed the Committee to the meeting. The Chair welcomed the newest member of the Committee, Sonya Lam, who was unfortunately unable to attend the meeting due to an existing commitment.

Item 2 - Apologies for absence

- 2.1 Apologies for absence were received from Sonya Lam.

Item 3 - Approval of agenda

- 3.1 The Committee approved the agenda. They agreed to discuss item 7 before item 6 in order to give Eileen Mullan (who had not yet arrived) the opportunity to be involved in the discussion on the threshold level of entry to the Register for paramedics which was likely to be an ongoing item for discussion for the Committee.

Item 4 - Declaration of members' interests

- 4.1 Members had no interests to declare in connection with the items on the agenda.

Item 5 – Minutes of the meeting of 14 May 2015 (ETC 14/15)

- 5.1 The Committee considered the minutes of the last meeting of the Education and Training Committee.
- 5.2 The minutes were accepted as a correct record to be signed by the Chair.

Items for discussion/approval

Item 6 – Threshold level for entry to the Register for paramedics (ETC 15/15)

- 6.1 The Committee received a paper from the Executive.
- 6.2 The Committee noted that on 11 September 2014, the Education and Training Committee considered a paper which looked at the threshold level of qualification for entry to the Register for paramedics and consideration was given to whether the level should be changed in due course. The paper had now been updated to give the Committee more up-to-date information about the profile of approved paramedic education and training programmes.

6.3 At the meeting in September, the Committee had agreed that, in principle, there was a persuasive case for changing the level specified but decided that it would not be helpful to make any firm or in principle decisions. The Committee agreed to consider this issue again in light of information about developments in the four countries and the outcomes of the Health Education England project which has been looking at reforming arrangements in England. Health Education England are due to give the Committee a short presentation on the outcomes of their project at the Committee's next meeting in September 2015.

6.4 During discussion, the following points were made:-

- SET 1 is a benchmark, not an absolute and so provides the threshold levels of qualification 'normally' expected to meet the remainder of the standards of education and training, and thus the standards of proficiency;
- It was important to separate the issues around workforce planning and commissioning from SET 1;
- Should we decide to change the level specified under SET 1, it was important to provide reassurance to existing paramedics that they would not be required to retrain;
- The proportion of paramedics joining the Register having completed a BSc broadly reflected the proportion of courses being delivered at that level;
- Concern was expressed that should we decide not to change SET 1, there may be a misalignment with the threshold level of practise which was unsustainable;
- Although SET 1 is a benchmark, it often attracted the largest number of queries from education providers;
- There was limited evidence to suggest that a registrant paramedic who had undertaken a degree course operated at a higher level than a registered paramedic having undertaken a diploma;
- It would not be possible to investigate whether there was a link between fitness to practise cases and education levels since paramedics were bulk-registered when the register was transferred over from the CPSM. It was noted that the majority of the registrants transferred over would have qualified via the work-based route;
- It was important to ensure that any decision made in relation to SET 1 took into account the context in Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland;

- It was important to note that HEE may move to a position where they only fund degree programmes;
- It was important to remember that there is a variety of funding and commissioning arrangements for paramedics across the UK; not all programmes are commissioned and not all students receive bursaries. The ambulance service commission programmes and support students through work based learning routes;
- The profile of pre-registration education and training programmes as it currently stands may make it challenging to agree a change to SET 1 beyond diploma or foundation degree at this stage;
- This was a decision for the Committee to make in due course and Health Education England (HEE) would give a presentation at their next meeting in September. It would then be for the Committee to determine the direction of travel.

6.5 The Committee noted the paper.

Item 7 – Review of the standards of proficiency for social workers in England (ETC 16/15)

7.1 The Committee received a paper from the Executive.

7.2 The Committee noted that we had previously committed to review the Standards once the three year programme of visits to transitionally approved social work programmes had been completed. The paper set out the proposed approach.

7.3 During discussion, the following points were made:-

- At a recent meeting with the Department for Education (DfE), this paper was discussed and had been well received. The DfE wished to be actively involved in the review and also made other suggestions in terms of groups who we might engage with. It was noted that the statements produced by both Chief Social Workers would be mapped and used to inform the review;
- The member of Council who was a registrant social worker had been given the opportunity to comment on the paper;
- It was important to reflect the diversity in terms of employer representation during the review and ensure it did not focus solely on local authorities which is often the case in relation to social work.

7.4 The Committee discussed and agreed the paper.

Item 8 – Review of the Standards of Education and Training – Professional Liaison Group (ETC 17/15)

- 8.1 The Committee received a paper from the Executive.
- 8.2 The Committee noted the proposal to form a new Professional Liaison Group to discuss potential changes to the standards and associated guidance; and a public consultation.
- 8.3 During discussion, the following points were made:-
- The PLG would comprise members which were external to the HCPC which would give assurance as to the independence of the review;
 - It was important to ensure diversity across the membership of the PLG and this may be difficult with just 10 members particularly since three of the group would be Council members;
 - The proposal was that a member of the group would be drawn from ‘employers or commissioners of education and training’ and it should be noted that employers and commissioners would look at the subject matter using a very different lens. In addition, ‘Service-users’ and ‘carers’ would also look at the subject matter using a very different lens and so they too may need to be separately represented;
 - The observation was made that some members of the group may ‘wear more than one hat’ and so could ensure various perspectives are covered;
 - The suggestion was made that we could look to appoint ‘between 10 and 12 members’, a suggestion which was agreed to.
- 8.4 The Committee agreed to recommend to Council the terms of reference, membership and proposed timetable for the PLG, subject to incorporation of the comments under paragraph 8.3.

Item 9 – Rapid appraisal of the HCPC return to practice requirements (ETC 18/15)

- 9.1 The Committee received a paper from the Executive.
- 9.2 The Committee noted the recommendations of Helen Townley, National Director of Policy and Accreditation at the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) who undertook a rapid appraisal of the HCPC’s return to practice (RTP) requirements during a six-week placement with the HCPC.
- 9.3 During discussion, the following points were made:-

- Changes could be made to the communications material in the first instance;
- A more detailed review may be undertaken as part of the registration process review;
- Concern was expressed at the more rigorous requirements imposed on practitioners who have been registered since qualifying but have not practised for two or more years versus those who have never registered but who have not practised for up to five years. It was noted that these requirements were informed by the Health and Social Work Professions Order 2001. They were developed after talking to managers and practitioners and a consultation exercise.

9.4 The Committee agreed:-

- (i) The Executive be requested to make smaller-scale changes to the returners to practice guidance and administrative processes in the short to medium term; and
- (ii) Consideration be given to a full review of the returners to practice requirements once the registrations systems review has concluded and when there will be more useful data available to make a full assessment.

Item 10 – Outcomes of the consultation on revised guidance for disabled people wanting to become health and care professionals (ETC 19/15)

10.1 The Committee received a paper from the Executive.

10.2 The Committee noted the guidance for disabled people interested in training to become health and care professionals had been reviewed. This had been informed by some commissioned research and a subsequent public consultation.

10.3 During discussion, the following points were made:-

- It was positive to see the number of changes made to the document as a result of the consultation and in addition, the high level of response in relation to mental health issues;
- It would not be possible to include further case studies as these were based on interviews carried out as part of the research. However, an additional example has now been added for illustrative purposes;
- The Committee noted the positive response in relation to this piece of work;

- The suggestion was made that the word 'positive' be replaced on page 11, paragraph two of the guidance with the word 'important' so that the sentence read as follows:- 'We consider that disabled people have an **important** contribution to make to the professions we regulate, and....' The Committee concurred with this suggestion.

10.4 The Committee agreed:-

- (i) To recommend to the Council the revised guidance as set out in appendix one (subject to minor editing amendments and formal legal scrutiny); and
- (ii) To recommend to the Council the text of the consultation analysis document (subject to minor editing amendments and formal legal scrutiny).

Item 11 – Consultation on standards for the use of exemptions by orthoptists to sell, supply and administer medicines (ETC 20/15)

11.1 The Committee received a paper from the Executive.

11.2 The Committee noted the proposed legislation to enable orthoptists who are appropriately trained to sell, supply and administer medicines. If these proposals are accepted, we would set standards for the use of exemptions by orthoptists. Draft standards have been issued from key stakeholders including NHS England; the British and Irish Orthoptic Society (BIOS); orthoptist education providers; and other members of the AHP Medicines Project Board.

11.3 It was proposed that a 12-week public consultation should take place between 6 July and 25 September 2015, with the expectation that the necessary legislative amendments will be put in place in early 2016. This would mean that a consultation on the Standards would take place prior to final ministerial agreement of the proposed changes to medicines legislation. The Department of Health's agreement to this approach was pending at the time of the meeting. The Committee noted that the start date of the consultation may be delayed should the Department of Health say that they would prefer we waited until final ministerial agreement had been achieved.

11.4 The Committee approved the consultation paper and draft standards, subject to legal scrutiny and minor editing amendments; and agreed to recommend them to the Council.

Item 12 – The use of visitors in the approval and monitoring of education and training programmes for podiatrists practicing podiatric surgery (ETC 21/15)

12.1 The Committee received a paper from the Executive.

12.2 The Committee noted the proposals for the use of visitors in the approval and monitoring of education and training programmes for podiatrists practising podiatric surgery.

12.3 During discussion, the following points were made:-

- It was noted that qualified orthopaedic surgeons would be required to have a specialisation in foot and ankle surgery and it was agreed to update the essential criteria in the role brief found in appendix one as necessary;
- It was noted that an understanding of the HCPC would be tested at the point of selection;
- Concern was expressed that it may not be possible to attract candidates given the daily rate paid for visitors;
- The Committee emphasised the importance of training in relation to visitors from different backgrounds working together during the visits.

12.4 The Committee agreed:-

- (i) the visitor role brief to assess podiatric surgery programmes in Appendix 1, subject to the amendment detailed under paragraph 12.3, bullet one; and
- (ii) the criteria for the selection of visitors to assess podiatric surgery programmes, set out in Appendix 2.

Item 13 – Potential improvements to the registration process (ETC 22/15)

13.1 The Committee received a paper for discussion from the Executive.

13.2 The Committee noted the two new registrations project in place to improve the registrations process. They are called the Registration Process and System Review Project and the Registration Implementation and Build Project.

13.3 During discussion, the following points were made:-

- The primary purpose of the project was make efficiencies to the processes in order to take non-value added transactions away from registration advisors and redirect the resource more appropriately, for example undertaking greater scrutiny of applications;
- It was not possible to put a financial value on all the potential efficiencies since many were not financial;
- The existing registration system has been in place for 13 years, and whilst there have been software updates, it has not been replaced;

- Whilst we would need to retain a paper-based system (owing to legislative requirements), we would be looking to change the culture to set the expectation that applications and renewals are carried out online;
- 91% practitioner psychologists renewed online so the majority of registrants are already engaging with us digitally;
- A move towards online and digital transactions will increase data security;
- The decision had been taken to maintain the two year renewal cycle since it enabled us to focus communication efforts towards those professions going into renewal and this could not be achieved should we move towards an 'anniversary' system;
- The Committee noted that renewal cycles will be reorganised to leave the Christmas and summer periods free. The reason for this is that the summer generally sees a high number of UK applicants and in relation to Christmas, those renewing over Christmas can be disadvantaged because of the fewer number of working days. Any potential changes to
- the cycle would be assessed to ensure minimum impact on the registrants affected;
- There was a discussion in relation to the value provided by character references provided at the point of application since these are not always verified (unlike education references). The proposal was that this area be reviewed to see if either the requirement could be removed or instead replaced with something more meaningful;
- Caution was expressed in relation to applicants approaching an education provider for a character reference since the education provider only sees a student in a narrow context and the student may have been good academically but this was not the basis for a character reference;
- The suggestion was made that applicants could 'self-declare' in relation to a character reference;
- Concern was expressed at the proposal to amend the fee structure for graduates and there was a strength of feeling to maintain the graduate discount. In response, the Committee noted that this could be reviewed to see if a discount option could be built into the new system.

13.4 The Committee noted the update and further noted that consideration would be given to a further paper in September.

Item 14 – Any other business

14.1 There was no additional business for consideration that day.

Item 15 – Date and time of next meeting

15.1 Thursday 10 September 2015 at 10:30am.

Item 16 – Resolution

The Council agreed the following:

The Council hereby resolves that the remainder of the meeting shall be held in private, because the matters being discussed relate to the following;

Item	Reason for Exclusion
17	g, h

- (a) information relating to a registrant, former registrant or application for registration;
- (b) information relating to an employee or office holder, former employee or applicant for any post or office;
- (c) the terms of, or expenditure under, a tender or contract for the purchase or supply of goods or services or the acquisition or disposal of property;
- (d) negotiations or consultation concerning labour relations between the Council and its employees;
- (e) any issue relating to legal proceedings which are being contemplated or instituted by or against the Council;
- (f) action being taken to prevent or detect crime to prosecute offenders;
- (g) the source of information given to the Council in confidence; or
- (h) any other matter which, in the opinion of the Chair, is confidential or the public disclosure of which would prejudice the effective discharge of the Council's functions.'

Summary of items considered whilst the public were excluded

Item 17 - Education provider concern: London Ambulance Service (ETC 23/15)

17.1 The Committee received a paper from the Executive in relation to an investigation carried out following receipt of a self-referred concern from an education provider.

17.4 The Committee agreed a course of action in relation to the concern.

Item 18 – Any other business in private

18.1 There was no additional business for consideration that day.

Chair Joy Tweed

Date 10.09.2015