

## Finance and Resources Committee 7 September 2011

### Integrating the regulation of social workers in England into the HPC renewal cycle

#### Executive summary and recommendations

#### **Introduction**

The transfer of regulation of social workers from the General Social Care Council (GSCC) to the HPC is dependent on legislation being approved and all timelines are therefore subject to change. The project is being managed by Claire Reed (HPC Project Portfolio Manager) and the project led by Greg Ross-Sampson (Director of Operations) with Marc Seale (Chief Executive and Registrar) responsible for the overall sponsorship of the project.

This paper provides an approach to integrating the social workers profession into the HPC renewal cycle.

#### **Decision**

The Committee is requested to discuss and approve the proposed recommendation by the Executive for integrating the social workers profession into the HPC renewal cycle.

#### **Background information**

All professionals on the Health Professions Council (HPC) Register renew their registration every two years. Registration renewal involves signing a professional declaration and paying for the next two-year registration cycle. This can be done online or by post. Registration renewal is a requirement of registration and is set out in the Health Professions Council (Registration and Fees) Rules Order of Council 2003 (as amended).

In order for the HPC to keep operational costs down and to provide the best service to our registrants, our 15 professions' registration cycles are spread over 24 months as illustrated in Appendix A. This means that only a percentage of the 215,000 registrants need to sign a professional declaration and pay their

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registration renewal fee within any given month. It also means we can concentrate on communicating messages to specific professions in specific months of the year.

### **Approach to integrating social workers into the current renewal cycle**

The Register for social workers is currently due to open on 1 July 2012 and whilst there is a possibility that there may be a delay the Executive think that this will not be significant.

A decision needs to be made as to how we insert the profession into the existing renewal cycle. The Health Professions Council (Registration and Fees) Rules Order of Council 2003 (as amended) will need to be amended to include the renewal cycle for social workers. This would normally involve a public consultation, a decision by the Council and the amended rules being laid before the Privy Council.

The Executive proposes that when the transfer of regulation from the GSCC to the HPC occurs we allow at least two weeks from opening the Register before we invite social workers to renew their registration. This will allow for the quality of the data transferred to the HPC e.g. addresses, postcodes and dates of birth to be checked for accuracy and completion. The duration of the first registration cycle will be 31 months long (two years and an additional seven months) so that we incorporate the profession into a quiet period. This will mean that the registration cycle for social workers will end in March 2015. We have followed a similar procedure in the past when other professions have joined the HPC Register.

The Health Professions Council (Registration and Fees) Rules Order of Council 2003 (as amended) indicate that a registrant will be sent an application form for the renewal of registration not less than 42 days before the end of the registration period. Currently professions are normally given three months in which to renew their registration with a renewal reminder sent, to all those registrants that have not renewed, one month before the end of the registration period. The Executive proposes that social workers have approximately six weeks to renew their registration. This will ensure that the profession will transfer and successfully renew registration as soon as practically possible. The key dates are likely to be as follows:

- The HPC Register opens to social workers in England on 1 July 2012.
- The HPC will invite social workers to renew their registration around 16 July 2012.
- Social workers will have approximately six weeks (or until 31 August 2012) to sign the professional declaration and pay their renewal fee for the first 31 month registration cycle (which will run from 1 September 2012 to 31 March 2015).

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- Social workers who do not pay the appropriate fee by 31 August 2012 and sign their professional declaration will lapse from the Register and may have to follow the readmission process to return to the Register.
- In January 2015, social workers will be invited to renew their registration for the next (two-year) registration cycle from 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2017.
- Subsequent renewal cycles for social workers in England will follow this pattern (1 April 2017 to 31 March 2019, and so on).

When social workers are invited to renew for the 31 month period they will have the option to pay for the full initial 31 month cycle. Alternatively, they will be able to make an initial payment of £44.00, and then four direct debits of £38.00, to allow them to spread the cost of registration.

### **Resource implications**

To be included within the project budget for the transfer of regulatory function from GSCC to HPC.

### **Financial implications**

At least two weeks transition period whilst the data on the new Register is checked which will ensure an efficient registration process.

### **Appendices**

Appendix A – Renewal cycle periods

### **Date of paper**

10 August 2011

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# Appendix A

2003/05/07/09/11/13/15												2004/06/08/10/12/14											
Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
		PYL			OR/PA			BS			RA			AS						ODP			
					PO/SLT/CS								PH		CH/HAD								
					OT									DT									

