

## **The Professional Liaison Group (PLG) for the Standards of Education and Training Review**

**Public minutes of the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Professional Liaison Group for the Standards of Education and Training Review held as follows:-**

**Date:** Friday 11 September 2015

**Time:** 10.30am

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

**Present:** Stephen Wordsworth (PLG Chair)  
Sally Gosling  
Lucy Horder  
Sonya Lam  
Jane Morris  
Lee Quinney  
Pat Saunders  
Tom Shakespeare  
Joy Tweed  
Alan Wainwright  
Lizzie White

**In attendance:**

Claire Amor, Secretary to the Group  
Elaine Buckley, Chair of Council  
Nicole Casey, Acting Director of Policy and Standards  
Marion Christiansen, CORU  
Laura Coveney, Policy Officer  
Abigail Gorringer, Director of Education  
Ben Potter, Education Manager  
Edward Tynan, Policy Officer  
Alex Urquhart, Education Officer

## **Item 1. Welcome and Introductions**

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed members to the first meeting of the Professional Liaison Group (PLG) for the Standards of Education and Training Review.
- 1.2 Members of the PLG were given the opportunity to introduce themselves. It was noted that there was a range of experience within the group.

## **Item 2. Apologies for absence**

- 2.1 Apologies for absence were received from Samantha Baron and Fiona Coutts. The PLG noted that Lee Quinney was in attendance in Samantha Baron's place.

## **Item 3. Approval of agenda**

- 3.1 The PLG approved the agenda.

## **Item 4. Presentation to introduce HCPC and the work of the PLG**

- 4.1 The PLG received a presentation from the Acting Director of Policy and Standards. The presentation covered the following areas:-
  - The role of the HCPC
  - The standards of education and training (SETs)
  - Supporting guidance
  - How the SETs are used
  - Other HCPC standards
  - Role of the PLG
  - Proposed plan for reviewing the SETs and PLG workplan
- 4.2 The PLG noted the content of the presentation.

## **Item 5. Chair overview**

- 5.1 The Chair provided an overview of the aims of the PLG.
- 5.2 The PLG noted that the SETs and supporting guidance should be considered in light of the key principles behind the development and use of the standards. In particular, the SETs should be set at the threshold level, be flexible, be meaningful and reflect existing provision.

- 5.3 The PLG discussed the pace of development within the education of health and care professionals. The PLG agreed that this changing landscape requires the SETs to be flexible so as not to stifle innovation.
- 5.4 The PLG noted that it should also consider the effects of any recommendations on the current processes for approval and monitoring of programmes.

**Item 6. Progress of the review and emerging themes (report ref:- PLG 01/15)**

- 6.1 The PLG received a paper for discussion from the Acting Director of Policy and Standards.
- 6.2 The PLG noted that in September 2014, the Education and Training Committee (ETC) agreed the periodic review of the SETs and accompanying guidance. During the first phase of the review, the Executive has undertaken a range of research and engagement activities.
- 6.3 The PLG noted the following points:-
- the SETs and accompanying guidance were last reviewed and published in 2009. Since that time, the landscape of education providers has changed significantly and the HCPC has taken on regulation of three new professions. Stakeholder feedback indicates that some amendment is needed to ensure the standards remain current and 'future proofed';
  - the review will be carried out in three stages. Research and engagement, PLG and public consultation, which is currently planned for September to November 2016. It is intended that the new standards will be applicable from the 2017-18 academic year;
  - a range of engagement activities have been undertaken, these include stakeholder events and service user and carer workshops. Feedback gathered through these activities has been used to draw out the themes focused on in the PLG papers;
  - an Education Stakeholder Event is planned for October 2015 to update stakeholders on the progress of the review and facilitate further discussions based on the outcome of research,
  - two large-scale pieces of research have been commissioned from external researchers as part of the review. Researchers at Keele University have been commissioned to undertake research into the extent and nature of interprofessional education (IPE) in the education and training programmes approved by the HCPC; and

- a research team at the joint Faculty of Health, Social Care and Education of Kingston University and St George's University of London has been commissioned to examine the role and effectiveness of the SETs in ensuring preparation for practice among newly qualified registrants.
- 6.4 The PLG discussed the applicability of the SETs. It was noted that the SETs are not specific to Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) and need to remain relevant to other education providers. The types of programmes that are approved are diverse and this is reflected in the variety of the commissioning models.
- 6.5 The PLG discussed service user involvement. It was noted that this requirement had been added into the SETs but it was agreed that such involvement could be included in other standards in the SETs, for example admissions.
- 6.6 The PLG agreed that it was important to ensure that employers are involved in the SETs review to ensure that new registrants are fit for the workplace.
- 6.5 The PLG noted the paper.

**Item 7. Theme: Currency of the standards (report ref:- PLG 02/15)**

- 7.1 The PLG received a paper for discussion from the Acting Director of Policy and Standards.
- 7.2 The PLG noted the following points:-
- the HCPC's remit has been expanded to include regulation of three more professions since the SETs were last reviewed. The current government does not favour further regulation, but will consider cases where there is a public safety case;
  - the past several years have seen a marked change in the makeup of approved education and training programmes from almost exclusively HEIs to around 30% non HEIs currently;
  - specific terminology used in the standards, especially SET 6, are commonly understood among HEIs but perhaps less so among other types of programmes;
  - language and terminology needed to be flexible in order to apply to all professions and models, however some terms cannot be changed, 'must' indicates a statutory requirement, whereas 'should' is about guidance and possibilities that education provider could adopt in order to meet a standard; and

- it is not a requirement of the SETs that a programme must lead to an academic award as the legislation is about demonstrating that the standards are met rather than that a qualification is awarded.
- 7.3 The PLG noted that education providers have stated that the process of mapping their programmes to the standards and 'interpreting' is a value adding exercise, and for this reason the PLG agreed it did not want the SETs to become overly simplified, which would lessen engagement with the standards.
- 7.4 The PLG considered that the standards around placements should be strengthened. It was noted that the HCPC does not require 'placements', but rather practical experience. It was agreed that this could potentially be clearer to increase applicability across all education models including apprenticeships. The PLG agreed that the SETs should place greater emphasis on education providers building partnerships with 'placement' providers.
- 7.5 The PLG discussed the ongoing suitability of new registrants for the workplace. It was agreed that whilst requiring longer term monitoring of the employment of students is beyond the scope of the SETs, it would be beneficial to place more emphasis on longevity of fitness to practise in education programmes. This would ensure that students are prepared for the future developments in the professions and well as the 'here and now'.
- 7.6 The PLG considered that a clearer explanation of the differences and interaction between the SOPs and SETS would be beneficial. The other HCPC standards were discussed and it was agreed that the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) standards needed to be linked to the SETs as part of encouraging lifelong learning and the ongoing fitness to practise of students.
- 7.7 The PLG agreed that in future meetings it would review where the SETs link with other HCPC standards and where it would be appropriate to strengthen links. The PLG agreed with the executive recommendations outlined in section 5 of the paper.
- 7.8 The PLG noted the paper.

**Item 8. Theme: Format, language and structure in the standards and supporting guidance (report ref:- PLG 03/15)**

- 8.1 The PLG received a paper for discussion from the Acting Director of Policy and Standards.
- 8.2 The PLG noted the following points:-

- the majority of stakeholders contacted during the first part of the review were generally happy with the structure of the SETs;
- based on stakeholder feedback, it is proposed that SETs 3.8, 3.9 and 3.10 are merged. Possible amendments to SET 5 will be explored in more detail at a future meeting; and
- it is recommended a more standardised format is applied to the guidance and that specific examples should not be used as this may be viewed as a rigid list of requirements, rather than suggestions.

8.3 The PLG noted that feedback from professional bodies has been positive in terms of the SETs facilitating joint working. It was agreed that increased clarity in the SETs around the role of professional bodies would be helpful, whilst keeping in mind that not all professional bodies have a role in the process.

8.5 The PLG agreed that the current separation in the SETs between the taught course content and the placement experience should be looked at with a view to further integrating the placement element throughout the SETs.

8.6 The PLG agreed that considerations for revision as set out in paragraph 6.2 of the report, should include introducing the need for resources to be accessible to all students.

8.7 During discussion the following points were made

- guidance must not be seen as an addition to the SETS as these must be able to stand on their own;
- SETs 4 and 5 could be merged to give the importance of placements more prominence;
- multiple references to safety in SET 5 standards could enable some amalgamation;
- the addition of profession-specific standards in the SETs would result in the SETs being too complicated;
- the glossary could be used more to aid applicability and understanding;
- requirements for interprofessional learning should be stronger;
- it is not possible to require accredited placements due to a lack of availability of these placements;

- the terms proportionate or appropriate was preferred over adequate. It was noted that adequate cannot be defined by the HCPC;
- the terminology 'curriculum' and 'student' were HEI focused and could be reworded;
- with regards to 3.11 and 3.12, the term 'occupational health' may be more appropriate for non HEI models; and
- standard 5.11 is inconsistent in its use of bullet points.

8.8 The PLG noted the paper.

**Item 9. Theme: Link to the standards of conduct, performance and ethics – Findings and initial considerations (report ref:- PLG 04/15)**

9.1 The PLG received a paper for discussion from the Acting Director of Policy and Standards.

9.2 The PLG noted the following points:-

- students on HCPC approved education and training programmes are expected to be taught and to understand the principles of conduct and ethics set out in the SCPE;
- the current version of the SETs includes a requirement to this effect and the SCPE are mentioned explicitly in one individual standard in SET 4;
- the SCPE have recently undergone a periodic review and revised standards are expected to be published in January 2016;
- the HCPC produces guidance on conduct and ethics for students to help students understand the HCPC's expectations in this area;
- during stage one of the review, stakeholders were overwhelmingly in favour of strengthening requirements within the SETs for the teaching and assessment of ethics and other aspects of professional conduct within approved programmes. In particular SET 4.5 was felt to need strengthening;
- service users and carers also felt that students should be expected to follow codes of conduct from the HCPC and that it was the education providers' responsibility to make sure students were aware of these; and

- the Executive agree that the link needs to be strengthened and more concrete recommendations will be brought to the PLG at a later date.

9.3 The PLG discussed strengthening the link between the SETs and SCPE. It was noted that as it is not a legislative requirement, the HCPC is not able to require providers to ensure that students meet the SCPE upon completion of the programme (in the way they are required to ensure students meet the SOPs). The PLG felt that the link was fundamental in light of the Francis Report and the proportion of strike off orders that relate to SCPE issues.

9.4 The PLG agreed that the SCPE should be referred to throughout the SETs. Rather than simply being added on to a programme in a separate module, they should be included in all stages of a programme starting at admissions.

9.5 The PLG noted the report.

**The PLG noted the following items:-**

**Item 10. Standards of education and training (2014 version) (report ref:- PLG 05/15)**

**Item 11. Standards of education and training guidance (2014 version) (report ref:- PLG 06/15)**

**Item 12. Standards of education and training review – PLG terms of reference (report ref:- PLG 07/15)**

**Item 13. Any other business**

13.1 There was no other business.

**Item 14. Dates of subsequent meetings**

14.1 23 November 2015, 19 January 2015 and 15 March 2015. All meetings to start at 10:30 am and to be held at HCPC, Park House, 184 Kennington Park Road, London, SE11 4BU.

**Chair**

**Date**