Education and Training Committee – 16 September 2010

Pilot of lay partners on approval visit panels

Executive summary and recommendations

Introduction
At its meeting on 8 June 2010, the Education and Training Committee directed the Education Department to investigate conducting a pilot of lay partners on approval visit panels. In particular the Committee requested information about:

- the schedule of implementation;
- potential implementation models; and,
- any other major issues to consider.

This paper provides further information on this pilot addressing the areas requested by the Committee.

Decision
The Education and Training Committee is asked to discuss the issues in the paper and agree the recommendations the further work made by the executive.

Background information
1. CHRE performance review for 2009-10
2. CHRE performance review for 2007-08
3. Education and Training Committee 8 June 2010 (item 8)
4. Education and Training Committee 10 March 2010 (item 9)
5. Education and Training Committee 25 March 2009 (item 9)
6. Education and Training Committee 25 September 2009 (item 8)
7. Revised Standards of education and training guidance
8. Approval process - supplementary information for education providers
9. Annual monitoring - supplementary information for education providers
10. Major change - supplementary information for education providers

Resource implications
There may be resource implications from this paper.

The Education Department work plan for 2010-2011 does not currently include any employee time in relation to recruitment of partners beyond the usual activity to ensure appropriate numbers of registrant partners.

Financial implications
There may be financial implications from this paper.

The Education Department work plan for 2010-2011 currently has not increased the budget to accommodate the size of each visiting panel by 1 member.

Appendices
None

Date of paper
16 September 2010

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Content

Overview

At its meeting on 8 June 2010, the Education and Training Committee directed the Education Department to investigate conducting a pilot of lay partners on approval visit panels. In particular the Committee requested information about:

- the schedule of implementation;
- potential implementation models; and,
- any other major issues to consider.

This paper provides further information on this pilot addressing the areas requested by the Committee. The Committee is asked to discuss the paper and agree the further work to be undertaken by the executive.

Pilot to include lay visitors on visit panels

At the June meeting, the Committee discussed initiating a pilot of lay members as part of the work towards meeting the CHRE recommendations for service user involvement in the quality assurance of approved programmes. At its last meeting, the Committee did not reach a clear consensus on the whether or not to proceed with a pilot scheme but did request more information about the implementation of the pilot.

The Committee considered whether the inclusion of a lay partner on visit panels constituted true service user involvement. Furthermore, they discussed whether a lay educationalist was reflective of service users. The Committee agreed the discussion about the pilot should be separated from any further discussion about service user involvement in the approval process. The Committee agreed it was important to make a distinction between these actions and those which are addressing service user involvement in moving forward. Although emergent out of service user discussion, piloting lay member involvement on approval panels brings this activity in line with other parts of the HPC (eg. fitness to practice panels), and also addresses the recommendations previously made by CHRE. The Committee also agreed it was most feasible from a resource perspective to appoint lay partners from the existing pool available to the Education Department.

The Committee may consider the 2009/2010 CHRE report which notes the work already done to consider lay visitor involvement on approval panels, however does not specifically recommend this work should be carried forward.

Schedule of implementation

The Committee agreed the pilot should be conducted in the current financial year (2010-11). Approval visits which have already been scheduled could be included in the pilot. Education providers would need to be contacted and availability of lay partners would need to be explored. However, further investigation has found the availability of lay partners may be problematic. As most dates are now set and given the current pool of lay visitors is 4, the likelihood of visitors being available is low. More lay partners could be recruited, however timescales for recruitment and training would push the roll out date of the pilot to the latter half of the academic year at the earliest. The budget for the 2010-11 financial year has not accounted for an additional visitor on panels. This may also limit the scope of the pilot and exclude the possibility of having 3 member visiting panels.

In light of this information, the Committee may agree the most appropriate rollout for the pilot would be in the 2011-12 academic year.   This would allow further recruitment of lay visitors to be undertaken and training for these visitors conducted, if the current pool was insufficient. Visits which are yet to be scheduled for this period can have the pilot incorporated into the pre-visit process and correspondence with the education provider can be tailored. The impact to the education provider would be minimal; however consent to the pilot would still need to be obtained. It is more likely lay visitors would be available to undertake work for the pilot. The budget for the 2011-12 year is yet to be finalised. Additional resources required to run the pilot can be included accordingly. The scope of the pilot could include a mix of visiting panel models (2 or 3 visitors) with analysis of the effectiveness of each included in any conclusions.

Pilot models

There are three compositions of the visiting panel the Committee may wish to consider for the pilot. The panel could be increased to 3 to include a lay member, the panel could be kept at 2 with a professional member and a lay member, or a mixture of both could be trialled with analysis of the effectiveness of each.

The table below summarises the key considerations in choosing a composition of the visiting panel for the pilot.

Key Considerations	3 visitors	2 visitors	Mixture
Financial	Not allocated in budget for 2010-11. Can be accounted for in future budgets	No additional cost	Not allocated in budget for 2010-11. Can be accounted for in future budgets
Recruitment	May need to recruit further lay visitors	Currently have 4 lay visitors available.	Currently have 4 lay visitors available.

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		May need to recruit more visitors.	May need to recruit more visitors.
Training	May need to train new lay members	May need to train new lay members should further recruitment be required	May need to train new lay members should further recruitment be required
Education Providers	Must seek consent	Must seek consent	Must seek consent.

The models proposed above all have similar impacts to the organisation and to our stakeholders. The Committee should consider the most appropriate pilot model for the visiting panels should be a mixture of 2 and 3 persons. As mentioned previously, this would allow any analysis of the results to consider the impact of 2 and 3 person panels to the process of approval and to the education provider.

Pilot duration
To be effective, the pilot would need to be run over a minimum of 5 approval visits. Results which are useful to analyse against the objectives and criteria of the pilot could be obtained from between 5-10 approval visits. The Committee is asked to agree a number of visits this pilot is to be implemented for.

Pilot objectives
At its meeting in June, the Committee agreed the following objectives for the pilot:

- To assess the effect of lay visitor input into the approval process;
- To assess the ability of lay members to review programmes using HPC standards;
- To assess the impact to education providers of including lay members on visiting panels.

At that same meeting the following criteria to be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the pilot were also agreed:

- The lay visitor makes decisions based on appropriate evidence using HPC standards and procedures;
- The lay visitor provides articulate reasons for decision-making both in dialogue and writing;
- The lay visitor demonstrates a willingness to make decisions based on the available evidence;
- Lay visitor makes decisions that have a proportional impact on the issues at hand.

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- The input of lay visitors to the approval process enhances the transparency of the process and application of HPC standards.
- The value added from the perspective of the range of stakeholders involved (visitors, EPs etc).

Directions for Committee discussion

The Committee is asked to discuss and agree the following actions:

- The Executive to pilot including lay visitors on approval visit panels in 2011-12 academic year;
- The Executive to use a model combing a mixture of visiting panels of 2 or 3 members
- The Executive apply the pilot to a minimum of 5 approval visits and a maximum of 10.
- The Executive to design the pilot in order to address the objectives and assess the criteria set.