

**Unconfirmed****THE HEALTH PROFESSIONS COUNCIL**

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**PROFESSIONAL LIAISON GROUP FOR STANDARDS OF PROFICIENCY**

MINUTES of the first meeting of the Professional Liaison Group for Standards of Proficiency held at **11.00 a.m. on Wednesday 12 October 2005** at Park House, 184 Kennington Park Road, London, SE11 4BU.

**PRESENT:**

Mrs M Clark-Glass (Chairman)  
 Mrs S Drayton (part)  
 Ms M Embleton  
 Dr S Gosling  
 Mrs D Haggerty  
 Mr G Sutehall  
 Mrs A Turner (part)  
 Professor D Waller

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Mr C Bendall, Secretary to Committees (acting Secretary to the Professional Liaison Group)  
 Ms S Butcher, Secretary to the Professional Liaison Group for Standards of Proficiency (part)  
 Ms A Carluccio, MORI (part)  
 Ms K Gross, Mintel Consultancy (part)  
 Ms A Imison, MORI (part)  
 Mr N Jackson, Opinion Leader Research (part)  
 Ms N O'Sullivan, Secretary to the Council (part)  
 Ms R Tripp, Policy Manager

**Item 1.05/01 CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The Chairman welcomed members of the Group to the meeting. Members and employees introduced themselves.

**Item 2.05/02 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

- 2.1 Apologies were received from Mr P Acres, Mrs J Pearce and Miss P Sabine.
- 2.2 The Group noted that the arrival of Mrs Drayton and Mrs Turner had been delayed due to travel problems.

**Item 3.05/03 APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

- 3.1 The Group agreed that the items for information should be taken first, followed by the items for discussion/approval.

**Item 4.05/04 WORKPLAN FOR STANDARDS OF PROFICIENCY PROFESSIONAL LIAISON GROUP**

- 4.1 The Group received a paper for information from the Executive.
- 4.2 The Group noted the workplan which had been agreed by the Council, setting out the Group's mission statement, terms of reference, plan of activities, membership and suggested timetable. The Group noted that the Standards of Proficiency (SoPs) were used in a variety of processes by the HPC, and that stakeholders included visitors, registration assessors, education providers and professional bodies. The Group noted that all of these parties could contribute evidence about the operation of the standards in practice.
- 4.3 The Group noted that it would make its recommendations to the Council, which would issue a consultation document on any proposed changes to the standards. The Group noted that education providers would be among the interested parties included in the consultation.
- 4.4 The Group noted that it did not include patient representation. The Group therefore agreed that the Policy Manager should present a paper to the next meeting about patient input. The group also agreed that the Policy Manager should circulate information to the group regarding the recent research with members of the public on attitudes towards HPC.

**Action: RT**

**Item 5.05/05 EXAMPLES OF OTHER REGULATORY BODIES' STANDARDS OF PROFICIENCY**

- 5.1 The Group received a paper for information from the Executive.
- 5.2 The Group noted the different approaches to Standards of Proficiency prepared by other health regulators. The standards published by the

Nursing and Midwifery Council were incorporated into the quality assurance process for education programmes, whilst the standards published by the General Chiropractic Council appeared to be similar to a code of conduct.

- 5.3 The Group noted that Skills for Health had developed occupational standards and that the QAA had developed benchmark standards, which could be useful to the Group. The Group agreed that the Policy Manager should circulate these documents to members.

**Action: RT**

#### **Item 6.05/06 THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK**

- 6.1 The Group received a paper for information from the Executive.
- 6.2 The Group noted the legal advice that, in setting the standards, the critical factor was that they must be necessary (i.e. absolutely essential) for safe and effective practice. The Group noted that the Standards of Proficiency were threshold standards for admission to the register.
- 6.3 The Group agreed that registered professionals in different situations might only meet part of the standards. For example, someone who had specialised over the course of their career in one area might only meet the standards which related to their specialization. The Group noted that the Policy Manager had done some work on scope of practice as part of the PLG on Health, Disability and Registration and agreed that the relevant document produced should be circulated to members.

**Action: RT**

#### **Item 7.05/07 PROFESSIONAL BODIES' INPUT**

- 7.1 The Group received a paper for discussion/approval from the Executive.
- 7.2 The Group noted that the Policy Manager had written to the chief executives of the professional bodies in August about the HPC's work on further information/advice on Continuing Professional Development. The letter had also made reference to the review of the Standards of Proficiency. In addition, the review had been discussed at an Allied Health Professions Federation Education and Practice Leads meeting in September.
- 7.3 The Group noted that it was proposed that the next step should be an email to professional bodies giving information about the project, and a timeframe for completion of a form requesting comments on the standards.

- 7.4 The Group agreed that the information sent to professional bodies should incorporate the legal advice considered under item 6 (i.e. the standards were set at a threshold level). The Group agreed that the introductory paragraph headed "About the standards" should be amended to read "...the threshold knowledge, values and understanding that are necessary..." The Group agreed that question 3.1 should be amended to read "We would find it helpful if you would give information about how you put together the answers." The Group agreed that the form should request a contact name and that it should invite suggestions for improving the style and clarity of the standards. In addition, it should include a space for additional comments.
- 7.5 The Group agreed that the document attached to the paper should be amended as discussed and that it should be used for involving professional bodies in the review. The Group agreed that professional bodies should be allowed three months to respond.

**Action: RT**

**Item 8.05/08 REGISTRATION ASSESSORS' QUESTIONNAIRE**

- 8.1 The Group received a paper for discussion/approval from the Executive.
- 8.2 The Group noted that its workplan suggested that it should obtain information from registration assessors, who had experience of using the standards to make recommendations on registration.
- 8.3 The Group agreed that the information sent to registration assessors should incorporate the legal advice considered under item 6. The Group agreed that the form should include a statement that any assessors' comments which were made public would be anonymised.
- 8.4 The Group agreed that question 3.1 should be amended to read "Are there any additional profession-specific standards which you think are needed for your profession?"
- 8.6 The Group agreed that the questionnaire should invite suggestions for improving the style and clarity of the standards.
- 8.7 The Group agreed that the questionnaire and covering information attached to the paper should be amended as discussed and should be used to ask registration assessors for information about their experience of assessing applicants against the Standards of Proficiency.

**Action: RT**

**Item 9.05/09 INDEPENDENT RESEARCH - PRESENTATIONS**

- 9.1 The Group received verbal presentations from three market research companies about their proposed approach to research on registrants' opinions on the SoPs.
- 9.2 The presentation from MORI outlined the challenges of the research - the review of the SoPs affected 12 different professions across all four home countries in a variety of work settings and needed to cover profession-specific and generic standards. The proposed approach involved qualitative research using focus groups or mini-workshops. It was proposed that MORI would contact registrants (randomly selected from a directory of healthcare professionals) by telephone and invite them to the research events.
- 9.3 The presentation from Opinion Leader Research outlined the challenges of the research - 12 professions in numerous settings with differing levels of experience and specialisation. The proposed approach involved qualitative research using groups in four geographic locations across the UK. It was proposed that Opinion Leader Research's recruiters would use their networks to contact registrants and invite them to the research events.
- 9.4 The presentation from Mintel Consultancy proposed qualitative research using a two-stage process of telephone interviews. In the first stage, selected registrants would be contacted and sent an outline questionnaire. The second stage would involve a pre-arranged telephone interview with individual registrants.
- 9.5 The Group discussed the proposals from each company. The Group agreed that they were not convinced that phone interviews represented a useful way of getting feedback, and it was likely that a group discussion would produce more useful responses. The Group noted that Opinion Leader Research had substantial experience of working in the health sector and agreed that its proposed approach showed an understanding of the work of the HPC, the context of registrants' work, and the ethics of contacting registrants.
- 9.6 The Group agreed that Opinion Leader Research should be selected to carry out the market research. The Group agreed that the Chairman, one registrant member of the Group and the Policy Manager should meet Mr Jackson to discuss how to proceed.

**Action: Chairman/RT**

Date  
2005-10-12

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Doc Type  
MIN

Title  
SoPs PLG minutes of meeting held  
on 12 October 2005

Status  
Draft  
DD: None

Int. Aud.  
Public  
RD: None

**Item 10.05/10 VISITORS' QUESTIONNAIRE**

- 10.1 The Group received a paper for discussion/approval from the Executive.
- 10.2 The Group noted that the new approvals process had been running for a year and Visitors who had been trained and attended visits were therefore building up experience of assessing programmes' learning outcomes against the SoPs.
- 10.3 The Group noted that its workplan suggested that it should obtain information from Visitors about their experience of using the standards in the pre-registration education environment, as part of the wider information about how the standards were working in practice. The Group agreed that the questionnaire to Visitors should, as far as possible, resemble the questionnaire sent to registration assessors. The Group agreed that this would facilitate collation and analysis of the responses.
- 10.4 The Group agreed that the question at 3.3 should ask Visitors to give a brief summary of their report.
- 10.5 The Group agreed that it would be useful to develop an additional questionnaire to be sent to education providers who had received a visit, asking them if any additions should be made to the standards.
- 10.6 The Group agreed that the questionnaire and covering information attached to the paper should be amended as discussed and used to ask the visitors for information about their experience of using the standards.

**Action: RT**

**Item 11.05/11 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

- 11.1 There was no other business.

**Item 12.05/12 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

- 12.1 The Group agreed that, if sufficient information had been collated by the Policy Manager, the second meeting should be held in the week beginning 12 December. The Group agreed that the Secretary should e-mail members to arrange the date of the next meeting.

**Action: RT/SB**



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