

Professional Liaison Group for the review of the standards of conduct, performance and ethics – 28 July 2014

Thematic review: Inter-professional and team working

Executive summary and recommendations

Introduction

The first stage of the review of the standards of conduct, performance and ethics included a number of research and consultancy activities engaging a range of stakeholders about the standards.

Inter-professional and team working has been identified as a key theme from the research findings given the prevalence of discussion by stakeholders about the way in which professionals work with team members and collaborate with other professions, organisations and sectors.

This paper sets out the background, research findings, our current approach and approaches of other regulators to these topics. The paper also provides a number of considerations for the discussion of the professional liaison group.

Decision

The professional liaison group is invited to discuss the attached paper, with reference to section five of this paper.

Background information

None

Resource implications

None

Financial implications

None

Appendices

None

Date of paper

11 July 2014

Review of the standards of conduct, performance and ethics

Inter-professional and team working

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The findings from the research activities undertaken during the first stage of the review of the standards of conduct, performance and ethics have been synthesised into a number of key themes.
- 1.2 These themes are to be considered by the Professional Liaison Group for the review of the standards of conduct, performance and ethics at its meetings between June and December 2014.
- 1.3 The theme identified in this paper incorporates a number topics in relation to the way in which professionals work with team members and collaborate with other professions, organisations and sectors.
- 1.4 This paper sets out our current approach, research findings and the approaches of other regulators to inter-professional and team working and the principles upon which they are based. The final section of this paper sets out some key points for the professional liaison group to consider as part of its discussion.

2. Current approach

- 2.1 The standards of conduct, performance and ethics outline our expectations that registrants communicate and work appropriately with colleagues. This includes sharing information, knowledge and skills to benefit service users.

'7 You must communicate effectively with service users and other practitioners

'...You must communicate appropriately, cooperate and share your knowledge and expertise with other practitioners, for the benefit of service users.'

- 2.2 The standards also require registrants to acknowledge the role of other professionals in providing care and treatment to service users, and understand when care would be better provided by another practitioner. Our expectations about referring service users to other professionals and accepting referrals from other professionals includes the requirement to discuss the care of service users with colleagues, where appropriate.

'6 You must act in the limits of your knowledge, skills and experience and, if necessary, refer the matter to another practitioner.

‘...If you accept a referral from another practitioner, you must make sure that you fully understand the request. You should only provide the care or service if you believe that this is appropriate. If this is not the case, you must discuss the referral to the practitioner who made the referral and, as appropriate, the service user before you provide any care or services.’

3. Research findings

- 3.1 The research findings identify three areas relating to this theme. This includes principles relating to effective team work, inter-professional or multi-disciplinary working and integration between health and care services.
- 3.2 Commissioned research carried out by The Focus Group highlighted that health and care professionals increasingly work as part of multi-disciplinary care teams, which require effective communication between practitioners of different professions. Registrant and service user participants commenting on this issue considered that the HCPC strengthen requirements for sharing information with colleagues and collaborating appropriately through the introduction of a dedicated standard.
- 3.3 Service users and their carers involved in this research considered effective sharing, collaboration and cooperation between professionals involved in their care as particularly important to ensuring the continuity of their care. A number of service user participants involved in research with Connect and workshops with Hearing Link echoed this view when recounting negative experiences of encountering professionals who were not aware of decisions their colleagues had made, or having to explain their situation and/or condition to every professional involved in their care.
- 3.4 Other service user participants at workshops carried out by Connect and Macmillan considered that working effectively with colleagues who are part of the wider care team, provided more effective person-centred care which treats the whole person, rather than only conditions related to a particular profession.
- 3.5 These comments relate to conclusions by the Shaping Our Lives research team who considered that the standards should reflect the increasing integration between health and social care and enable joint working across sectors. A number of professional body representatives attending events about this review also commented that the standards should emphasise the need for cross-sector working given the changes in health and care systems and the benefits it provides for service users.
- 3.6 Employers commenting on the standards at events in London, York and Glasgow suggested that the standards more explicitly emphasise the principles that govern working with colleagues within and outside their profession. This included respecting the skills and contributions of other colleagues and professions, treating everyone they work with fairly and without discrimination.

4. Other regulatory standards

- 4.1 Other health and care regulators in the UK adopt different approaches to inter-professional and team working in their respective conduct standards. The table below outlines the approach of each of the regulators to this theme.

Regulator	Current approach
General Medical Council (GMC)	Good Medical Practice includes a number of standards around working with colleagues including the need for registrants to respect skills and contributions of other staff, be aware of how their behaviour influences others in the team and provide support for colleagues. Doctors are also required to contribute to the transfer of patients between health and social care providers by sharing relevant information to colleagues within and outside the team. The GMC also stipulates that colleagues are treated fairly without discrimination and that personal views do not impinge on professional relationships.
Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC)	The current Code requires nurses and midwives to work with others to protect the wellbeing of patients which includes sharing information, monitoring the quality of group work and facilitating colleagues to develop their competence. The NMC also sets a number of standards about working effectively as part of team including working collaboratively, recognising the skills and expertise of others, sharing knowledge and treating colleagues fairly without discrimination. The draft revised code now also includes the need to address differences of opinion through discussion and debate, consult and take advice from colleagues and be aware of how their conduct affects the wider team.
General Dental Council (GDC)	One of the nine Standards for the Dental Team focus on working with colleagues in a way that is in the best interests of patients. This includes sub-standards requiring registrants to contribute to good teamwork, treat colleagues fairly and with respect, ensure appropriate support and communicate clearly and effectively.
General Osteopathic Council (GOsC)	The Osteopathic Practice Standards include a number of principles relating to this theme. This includes being honest and open with colleagues, supporting them and cooperating to enhance patient care, and sharing information and good practice through effective hand-over and documented notes. The standards also require any comments made about other professional to be honest, accurate and valid.
General Chiropractic Council (GCC)	One of the GCC's overarching standards focuses on the need to cooperate with colleagues from a registrant's own and other professions. This standard

	<p>includes a number of sub-standards which include principles around the way in which registrants should work with colleagues. This includes respecting the skills and contributions of others, not discriminating or unduly criticising, supporting others to develop and protecting them from harm whenever possible. The standards also require that when working in collaboration with other professionals, that responsibilities are jointly agreed and recorded.</p>
General Optical Council (GOC)	<p>The Code of Practice includes a standard requiring registrants to work with colleagues in the ways that best serve patient interests. No further guidance on this issue is provided in the current code.</p>
General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC)	<p>The Standards of Conduct, Ethics and Performance do not include a dedicated standard to team and inter-professional working, though the standards contain a number of principles on this issue. This includes, working in partnership with other professionals, appropriately sharing information with other health and care professionals involved in care, contributing to the development of colleagues, as well as respecting and communicating professionals in pharmacy and other professions.</p>
Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland (NISCC)	<p>The PSNI's Code of Practice includes requirements to communicate, cooperate and work effectively with colleagues within and outside of a registrant's profession and the need to contribute to the education, training and development of other colleagues.</p>
<p>Care Council for Wales (CCW)</p> <p>Northern Ireland Social Care Council (NISCC)</p> <p>Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC)</p>	<p>The Code of Practice for social workers in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales is currently the same across all three care councils, and was previously in place for social workers in England under the General Social Care Council.</p> <p>This code outlines a number of references throughout the standards to effective team working, inter-professional cooperation and integrated services. This includes, working openly and cooperatively with colleagues and sharing information, not discriminating against colleagues and recognising and respecting the expertise of other professionals, organisations and sectors.</p> <p>The CCW provide guidance on these standards for social workers in Wales. This includes being a positive role model, managing conflicts constructively, being open to new ideas and ways of working, agreeing multi-disciplinary goals where appropriate and actively promoting a learning culture, contributing to the development of other colleagues.</p>

5. PLG considerations

- 5.1 At present the standards of conduct, performance and ethics require registrants to:
- communicate with other professionals effectively;
 - cooperate with other professionals to benefit service users;
 - share knowledge and expertise with other professionals;
 - recognise the skills and experience of other professionals and refer accordingly; and
 - discuss with other professionals, where necessary, before providing care or services.
- 5.2 Several of these principles are provided for in the standards through text heavy paragraphs expanding on one of the 14 overarching standards. Many comments we received about the format of the standards considered that existing principles could be made more prominent through the use of bullet points. If the format of the standards is changed in this way, the visibility of the above principles will be strengthened in the standards, addressing some of the considerations by research participants.
- 5.3 There are a number of principles not included in the standards which were recommended by some research participants and included in the approaches of some other regulators. These include:
- respecting the skills and expertise of other professionals within and outside of own profession;
 - treating colleagues fairly without discrimination; and
 - supporting colleagues appropriately.
- 5.4 When considering revisions to the standards of conduct, performance and ethics it is important to note that the standards are the high-level ethical principles that set out in broad terms the conduct we expect of registrants and provide guidance to registrants about our expectations. They are designed to apply to all registrants and cover a wide number of professions, settings and service users – including independent practitioners and professionals not working in clinical practice. Any approach we take to revising the standards must apply as far as possible across this range.
- 5.5 The PLG may wish to consider the following questions as part of their discussion on this issue:

1. Should the principles currently included in the standards (outlined in 6.1) on this issue be retained?
2. Are any of the principles outlined in 5.3 necessary and appropriate for inclusion?
3. Does the PLG consider any further principles in relation to this issue appropriate for inclusion?