

Health Professions Council – 26 March 2009

Home Country Engagement – update paper

Executive summary and recommendations

**Introduction**

The attached paper sets out the Health Professions Council's (HPC's) approach to home country engagement since the Council reviewed the issue in December 2006. It highlights the increased level of engagement with Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Our approach has led to greatly improved relationships, understanding of the devolved legislatures and the context to which stakeholders operate in. It has also led to greater visibility and understanding of the HPC among key stakeholders in the home countries.

The current approach is working well, but the landscape is constantly changing. It is recommended the Executive continue to review the current level of engagement and that the Council should review progress again in September 2010.

**Decision**

The Council is requested to note the document. No decision is required.

**Background information**

A Home Country Engagement Paper – Council meeting 14 December 2006.

**Resource implications**

None

**Financial implications**

None

**Date of paper**

17 March 2009

# Home Country Engagement – update paper

## **1.0 Introduction**

A home country engagement paper was presented to the Council on 14 December 2006. At this meeting it was decided that the Council should review its position in two years time, when the new Public Affairs Manager had taken the work forward, to reflect on how successful the current approach has been.

This paper details the increased engagement with Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Ten per cent of our registrants reside in Scotland, five per cent in Wales and three per cent in Northern Ireland. The HPC is therefore committed to providing regulation which is consistent across the UK, while relevant to the way in which healthcare is delivered in different countries, systems and contexts.

This commitment is reflected by attendance at over 150 meetings, conferences and events in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. A total of 57 Fitness to Practise hearings have also been held in the home countries since May 2007. It is our statutory duty to hold a hearing in the home country and our Fitness to Practise Department also has a policy for holding hearings outside of London in England.

## **2.0 Links with home country health departments**

Devolution has led to increasing divergence between the different models for the NHS with the devolved administrations often having different priorities. Each of the devolved countries has its own political dynamic and policy communities that point health policy in different strategic directions.

Whilst professional statutory regulation remains a UK-wide issue, it is important for the HPC to be aware of changes to the way that healthcare is being delivered in the different countries, contexts and systems.

### **2.1 Scotland**

When new professions are brought into statutory regulation by the HPC the relevant legislation has to be approved by both Parliament and the Scottish Parliament.

The Executive has developed a close working relationship with the Scottish Health Directorates especially its Regulatory Unit. This involves regular update meetings and providing briefings to the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing, for example on the work we have done to prepare for the regulation of practitioner psychologists.

Links with the Health and Sport Committee in Scotland have also been developed in the lead up to the Health Care and Associated Professions (Miscellaneous Amendments and Practitioner Psychologist) Order 2009 being debated by the Committee. The Executive will provide a briefing in March 2009 to be included in the Committee papers for the debate.

## **2.2 Wales and Northern Ireland**

Similarly, the Executive has developed close links with the Welsh Assembly Government Health Department and the Northern Ireland Department of Health, Social Service and Public Safety. Update meetings are now being held regularly to ensure sharing of information and ongoing communication.

## **3.0 Political monitoring in devolved legislatures**

Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland has its own political dynamic and set of priorities. The Public Affairs Manager closely monitors the political situation in the Scottish Parliament, the National Assembly for Wales and the Northern Ireland Assembly on an ongoing basis.

While we may not have an office in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland it is essential that we are aware of the political situation and issues that may affect us as organisation so that we can respond in a timely and effective manner.

Alerts are set up so that we receive relevant information such as parliamentary questions, committee reports and debates by email. Relevant information is then distributed to the Executive. For example, when Ken Macintosh MSP asked a Scottish Parliamentary Question about whether educational psychologists should be regulated by the HPC in March 2008, the Chief Executive and Public Affairs Manager were then able to arrange a meeting in Edinburgh to answer any questions Ken Macintosh MSP had about this issue and to brief him about the HPC and how we were preparing for regulation of the practitioner psychologists.

## **4.0 Home country political party conferences**

Exhibiting and networking at the various party conferences in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland has proved invaluable. It has provided the HPC with a unique opportunity to meet a range of key stakeholders – members of parliament, professional body contacts, regulators, health organisations and charities – in an informal setting.

Many working relationships have been developed as a result of this initial contact. Below are some examples which show successful engagement following the conferences. We exhibit at the main party conference in each home country as we don't have the staff and resources at this stage to attend all the political party conferences across the home countries.

### **4.1 Scottish National Party annual conference**

- After meeting at the conference in October 2007, Michael Matheson MSP (an occupational therapist previously on the HPC Register), agreed to sponsor our week long exhibition space and reception in the Scottish Parliament. Regular contact, including at the 2008 SNP conference, has led to a greater understanding of how the Health and Sport Committee (of which he is a member) operates.

- The Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing, who was pleased to have us exhibit at the conference and visited our stand, accepted our written invitation to be guest speaker at our parliamentary reception on 18 March 2008.
- Introductions and subsequent meetings were held with Scottish leads from professional bodies following the conferences. For example, with the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy (CSP).
- After initially meeting at the SNP conference in 2007, the Public Affairs Manager and Communications Manager met with the Head of Policy and Campaigns at Help the Aged in Scotland in July 2008. This meeting helped facilitate ways of working together and communicating our 'Be healthwise' campaign to older people and their carers in the lead up to the campaign.

#### **4.2 Welsh Labour Party annual conference**

- Attending and exhibiting at this conference in February 2008 opened up contacts with Welsh leads from professional bodies and subsequently led to meetings and good working relationships. The CSP helped promote and attended the Employer Events in Cardiff in 2008. A joint meeting with three of the professional bodies, the College of Occupational Therapy, Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists and the CSP, also took place in September 2008. The plan is to have annual joint professional body meetings in Wales and extend this to other home countries.
- Welsh versions of the public information leaflet and a Welsh banner were developed for this conference and other events such as the Employer Events in Cardiff.

#### **4.3 Democratic Unionist Party annual conference**

- As the largest party in Northern Ireland, the conference in November 2008 provided a unique opportunity to meet with other health organisations that were also exhibiting, such as the General Medical Council, the Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland (PSNI), the British Medical Association and a range of health organisations and charities. This has facilitated subsequent meetings, for example with the PSNI.

### **5.0 Improved relationships with stakeholders and opportunities for the HPC**

#### **5.1 Employers**

A total of six Employer Events have been held in Edinburgh, Cardiff, Belfast and Glasgow in since November 2007. This has improved relationships with human resource directors and service managers and increased understanding about the role of the HPC across the home countries. Further events are planned in the home countries in late 2009.

## **5.2 Registrants**

### **5.2.1 Listening Events**

Since mid-2007, ten Listening Events have been held for our registrants across five different locations. Locations have included Dumfries, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Enniskillen and Craigavon. Later in 2009 we are planning to hold Listening Events in Wales.

### **5.2.2 Continuing Professional Development (CPD) talks**

The CPD Communications Manager and members of the Policy and Standards Department have delivered at least 25 CPD talks to registrants across Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland since late 2007. Some of these talks have been arranged through contacts at NHS Education for Scotland, the DHSSPS in Northern Ireland and through Listening and Employer Events.

## **5.3 Education providers**

Since October 2007, six Education Seminars have been held for education providers across Edinburgh, Ulster, Cardiff and Glasgow. 19 different approval visits have also taken place in the same period.

## **5.4 Other stakeholders**

The following are some examples of improved stakeholder relationships and opportunities for the HPC following events and meetings, in addition to general awareness raising and presence.

- The HPC continues to have a close working relationship with NHS Education for Scotland, with regular update meetings being held with the Executive. Meeting with various people from across the organisation has resulted in future work together. For example, meeting with the Programme Director for the Allied Health Professions in August 2008 resulted in the Acting Director for Policy and Standards speaking at a NES event on Returners to Practice in Aberdeen in January 2009. Another meeting led to the CPD Communications Manager linking up with the Director of Training for Psychology Services at NES. This has resulted in joint events planned for the end of March 2009 where the CPD Communications Manager will speak to over 100 psychologists working in the NHS in Scotland.
- Meeting with the Convenor from the Allied Health Professions Forum Scotland in July 2008 resulted in Acting Director of Policy and Standards speaking at their Forum in Edinburgh in November 2008.
- Attending the Scottish Complaints Conference in September 2008 as an exhibitor, the Public Affairs Manager saw her contact from Citizens Advice Scotland (CAS). As a result of this contact, HPC public information material was sent to CAS for their information officer training day.

- Ongoing relationships with health regulators - such as the General Medical Council, the Social Care Councils and the Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland – with bases in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, has proved invaluable. For example, they have shared information about the political situation and issues to be aware of, relevant organisations to meet with and conferences, events and groups for the HPC to be involved in.

## **5.5 ‘Steering group’ involvement**

HPC’s Chief Executive is a member of ‘steering groups’ set up by the Scottish Government Health Directorates following the government White Paper Trust, Assurance and Safety – The Regulation of Health Professionals in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (2007). These include the overarching implementation steering group and the extending professional regulation steering group.

The Chief Executive is also a member of the UK regulators / Scottish social care agencies regulators’ liaison group, while the Director of Operations and Public Affairs Manager sit on the Regulation of Healthcare Support Workers four country steering group.

## **6.0 Scotland**

A significant amount of work has been done to build links with key stakeholders and to continue to develop communications with Scotland. Scotland is of particular importance as the statutory regulation of new professions is a devolved matter. The Scottish Parliament and Government will therefore be charged with taking these proposals forward.

Since late 2007 the aim has been to visit Scotland on a regular basis to develop networks and hear about Scottish specific issues, provide updates on the work of the HPC and have a more visible presence with key stakeholders. There has been a total of 34 meetings, conferences and other events where the Public Affairs Manager and members of the Executive has played an active role.

Relationships with many key stakeholders across Scotland, especially within the Health Directorates of the Scottish Government and other key organisations such as NES, the Allied Health Professions Forum Scotland (AHPFS), healthcare regulators and Scottish representatives from professional bodies have significantly improved as a result of this focus.

### **6.1 Scottish Parliament exhibition and reception**

We hosted a week long exhibition in the Scottish Parliament in March 2008 to raise awareness of the HPC’s role in enhancing public protection.

An evening reception was also held with the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing emphasising in her speech ‘our current commitment to UK-wide regulation, sensitive to Scotland’s needs.’ Over 80 key stakeholders attended including many MSPs, members from the Scottish Health Directorates, health organisations, fellow regulators, professional bodies and education providers.

This laid the foundation for relationships and exposed Scottish stakeholders to the work of the HPC and our future priorities.

## **7.0 Northern Ireland scoping visit and ongoing engagement**

HPC's Public Affairs Manager and Director of Policy and Standards visited Northern Ireland for a few days in September 2007 to meet with various stakeholders.

The purpose of the trip was to enhance links with key stakeholders, improve communication channels and find out about any specific Northern Ireland issues. The trip was part of the broader communications objective to influence the regulatory agenda through ongoing dialogue and engagement with key stakeholders.

During this trip, meetings were held with:

- Phelim Quinn, The Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA);
- Martin McLaughlin and others from Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS);
- Alan Walker, General Medical Council Northern Ireland;
- Tom Sullivan, Chartered Society of Physiotherapy, and Allied Health Professions Forum Members in Northern Ireland;
- Raymond Blaney and Brendan Kerr, Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland (PSNI);
- Brendan Johnson, Northern Ireland Social Care Council (NISCC);
- Hugh Mills, Independent Health and Care Providers;
- Paul Meehan, NI Ambulance Services; and
- Damian McAlister, the Royal Hospitals (Part of Belfast Health and Social Care Trust).

Communication has been ongoing with many of these stakeholders since these initial meetings. For example, Alan Walker from the GMC has provided information on political party conferences and locations for the Employer and Listening Events.

While engagement with Northern Ireland has been ongoing through various channels such as Listening Events, Employer Events, Education Seminars and attendance at conferences and events, the Chief Executive and Public Affairs Manager also visited Belfast in February 2009 to meet with:

- Joyce Cairns, DHSSPSNI;
- Brendan Johnson, NISCC; and
- Trevor Patterson and Mark Neale, PSNI.

The reason for this visit was to find out about Northern Ireland's priorities regarding regulation and to provide an update on the work of the HPC.

## **8.0 Wales scoping visit and ongoing engagement**

Michael Guthrie, Acting Director of Policy and Standards, and Nina Blunck, Public Affairs Manager, visited Wales in September and November 2008 to meet with key stakeholders.

While contact with various stakeholders in Wales has been occurring through events such as the Welsh Labour Party conference and Employer Events, it was thought that a visit to meet with many stakeholders would be beneficial to build links and improve communication channels. The Welsh Assembly White Paper event in May 2008 exposed us to many different stakeholders and a subsequent trip was thought to be beneficial.

During these trips, meetings were held with:

- Carol Lamyman-Jones, Board of Community Health Council's Wales;
- Stephen Griffiths, National Leadership and Innovation Agency for Healthcare (NLIAH);
- Gerry Evans, Care Council for Wales;
- Mary Gilbert, Jenny Frost, Jan Smith and Dr Owen Crawley, Welsh Assembly Government;
- Ruth Crowder, College of Occupational Therapy;
- Phillipa Ford, Chartered Society of Physiotherapy;
- Alison Stroud, Royal College of Speech and Language Therapy; and
- Darren Hughes, General Medical Council Wales.

Following these meetings it was decided that regular update meetings should be held with the Welsh Assembly Government and with the various professional bodies.

The meeting with the Board of Community Health Council's Wales resulted in improved communication links via their newsletter, especially around the 'Be healthwise' campaign and distribution of public information material.

## **9.0 The future of home country engagement**

### **9.1 Previous recommendations**

In December 2006 the Council decided that given the size of the HPC it would not establish an additional office outside London.

The Council recommended that the Executive should concentrate on directing resources into regular update meetings and contact with stakeholders in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

### **9.2 Reflecting on the success of the approach and the way forward**

This paper highlights the increased level of engagement with Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland since the previous Council paper on home country engagement.



This approach has led to greatly improved relationships, understanding of the devolved legislatures and the context to which stakeholders operate in. It has also led to greater visibility and understanding of the HPC among key stakeholders in the home countries.

Going forward, the Executive intends to continue to concentrate on ensuring that regulation provides a flexible framework that can be applicable in any home country or in any sector where health professionals can practise safely and effectively. This should be combined with continued ongoing regular engagement across Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The current approach is working well, but the landscape is constantly changing. It is recommended the Executive continue to review the current level of engagement and that the Council should review progress again in September 2010.