

Health Professions Council
Communications Committee 24 October 2007

Public Affairs and Stakeholder Report

Executive summary and recommendations

Introduction

The new Public Affairs Manager has been working on various stakeholder activity plans since her appointment in May 2007. The bulk of work so far has focussed on employers and Parliamentarians as priority stakeholders and the next step will be to provide a co-ordinated approach to working with professional bodies and increasing stakeholder activity in the four home countries.

The first attachment shows our employer activity plan which aims to promote our key messages to employers and to keep them informed and engaged with the HPC. Employer Events and a new section on the website dedicated to people who employ health professionals on our Register are two examples of work in the activity plan.

The second attachment is a stakeholder activity plan for Parliamentarians. This aims to raise awareness of our work amongst Parliamentarians across the four home countries. This will be achieved through various channels such as activity at annual political party conferences, hosting Parliamentary roadshows, and mailing of appropriate briefings and public awareness work.

The third attachment contains information about other stakeholder group activities including work with professional bodies and meetings with stakeholders in Belfast.

Decision

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

Background information

In March 2007 the Communications Director commissioned a public affairs strategy from Bircham Dyson Bell. The Public Affairs Manager joined HPC in May 2007 and has been using this strategy to implement the programme of work and activity plans for various stakeholder groups.

Resource implications

None.

Financial implications

None.

Appendices [Sub-headings in Arial, 12 point, bold]

Stakeholder activity plan – Employers

Stakeholder activity plan – Parliamentarians

Stakeholder activity plan – Other groups

Date of paper

24 October 2007.

Stakeholder activity plan – Employers

Summary

This stakeholder activity plan is designed to help the HPC achieve its communication objective to influence the regulatory agenda through ongoing dialogue and engagement with key stakeholders.

It aims to promote the HPC's key messages to employers and to keep them informed and engaged with the HPC across all activities and on specific issues. It also aims to identify perceptions and views amongst employers and develop a programme of relationship and contact building to improve perceptions, increase understanding of the work of HPC and the role of the employers.

Activity plan for Employers 2007-2008

Main activity	Description	Timescale
Multiple registrant search communication – Ambulance Trusts	Letter sent to all UK Ambulance Trusts HR Directors about multiple registrants search facility on website and offer to meet.	August
Employer section on HPC website	New employer specific section on the website launched. This contains information about the multiple registrants search, managing fitness to practise and when to refer, CPD – links to section on website and dates for renewal, sign up for consultations and link to current consultations, information on the renewals and registration process, relevant publications and sign up to FTP alerts and <i>In Focus</i> .	September
Letter to Personnel at NHS Trusts, BUPA and Local	Letter sent to over 1200 personnel contacts highlighting new employers' section on the website, inviting them to	September

Authorities	forthcoming Employer Events and attendance at NHS Employers congress.	
Publications	<p>‘Information for Employers’ concertina cards (business card size) is a quick reference tool with eight panels which directs employers to important information on the HPC. These cards will be distributed to employers at the NHS Employers Conference and the Employer Events. We will also look at posting these cards to employers.</p> <p>Managing fitness to practise – a guide for employers and registrants was produced by the Policy Department and is designed to give more information about the HPC’s fitness to practise processes. It is available on request and will be available at all employer events and meetings.</p> <p>Referring a health professional to the HPC – a guide for employers is currently being written by the Director of Fitness to Practise. It will give more detailed information about when and how to refer an employee to the HPC.</p> <p>FTP alerts are bi-monthly alerts which list all upcoming FTP cases as well as outcomes of hearings that have taken place and the applied sanctions. Sign up to this alert is by email and will be promoted at all employer events and meetings</p>	<p>September</p> <p>July</p> <p>February</p> <p>Current</p>

	HPC In Focus – the HPC’s bi-monthly newsletter – employers will be encouraged to sign up for the newsletter at all employer events and meetings	Current
Exhibit at NHS Employers Conference	Annual conference for over 1000 senior professionals from the NHS and private sectors with an interest in workforce issues. Representatives from FTP, the CPD Communications Manager and Communications will be available at the HPC stand to meet employers, answer questions and promote HPC, particularly multiple registrant search, CPD, renewals, FTP, alerts and newsletter.	October
Employer Events	To be held in Manchester, Glasgow, Cardiff, Belfast and London. The events aim to promote HPC’s key messages to employers and to keep them informed and engaged with the HPC. The format will be a series of short presentations and an opportunity for employers to meet representatives from HPC. As of 4 October, over 75 people have registered to attend one of the Employer Events.	November 2007 and February 2008
Contact programme	A number of meetings with Ambulance Trusts have already taken place and a presentation given to the Welsh HR Directors Network. Further research is being undertaken and presentations offered to HR Directors Networks along with establishing contacts and setting up meetings.	Ongoing
Articles in employer specific	Rolling programme of articles on HPC issues relevant	From mid September

journals eg NHS Employers Bulletin, AHP Bulletin	to employers, CPD, ftp alerts etc	
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Next steps

The next step is to evaluate this programme of work and develop ideas for the next phase of communication to employers which will take place in 2008-2009. Evaluation methods will include hits to website, attendance and questionnaire at Employer Events, number of visits to the NHS Employers exhibition stand, requests for brochures and number of meetings and presentations.

Stakeholder activity plan – Parliamentarians

Summary

This stakeholder activity plan is designed to help the HPC achieve its communications objective to influence the regulatory agenda through ongoing dialogue with key stakeholders.

It aims to raise awareness amongst Parliamentarians across the four home countries of the HPC's role in protecting the public, and the importance of appropriate and effective regulation of health professionals.

This communications activities plan aims to:

- identify key parliamentarians across the four home countries and develop appropriate channels of communication
- raise awareness of HPC to Parliamentarians through appropriate channels

Activity plan for Parliamentarians 2007-2008

Main activity	Description	Timescale
Labour Party Annual Conference – Bournemouth	<p>Representatives from the HPC attended the conference to research and assess the value of attending in 2008.</p> <p>Research largely centred around the Health Hotel which is a mini-conference at the three main annual political party conferences. It is the collaborative work of 36 organisations with a health policy interest, including the GMC, NMC and the Healthcare Commission, who all work together to host events that encourage debate about the top issues in health. The Health Hotel organised forty two events attracting over 5000 attendees.</p> <p>Our assessment is that there is value is becoming a member of</p>	24-25 September 2007

	the Health Hotel and participating (ie speaking at fringe events, attending the Health Hotel reception) in all three main annual political party conferences in 2008.	
Scottish National Party Annual Conference – Aviemore	<p>Representatives from HPC will attend the conference to research the value of attending home country annual political party conferences in 2008.</p> <p>The HPC will be hosting an exhibition space which means that we will have three days in which to speak face to face with SNP representatives and communicate the work and aims of the HPC.</p>	26-28 October 2007
Mailing to Parliamentarians' constituency offices	Letter outlining public awareness work and a selection of new public facing campaign material, including posters and leaflets, will be sent to all Parliamentarians' constituency offices. The aim is that Parliamentarians will display these public facing materials in their constituency office and/or surgery. Option to order more material.	November 2007
Meetings with Parliamentarians	Representatives from HPC have met with various Parliamentarians to discuss regulation and the White Paper. Further meetings with MPs will be set up, including the new Minister with responsibility for regulation, Ben Bradshaw. NB. The political climate may affect any meetings planned.	Ongoing
HPC briefing paper for Parliamentarians	Key Parliamentarians from across the home countries will be sent a briefing paper introducing them to the HPC, our roles and responsibilities and our perspective on the proposals contained within the White Paper.	November 2007 – depending on political climate.

	<p>Further specific briefings on any Section 60 Orders will also be sent to key political stakeholders as appropriate. NB. The political climate may affect the timing of any briefings.</p>	
<p>Parliamentary roadshow – Scottish Parliament</p>	<p>Representatives from the HPC will host an exhibition space in the Scottish Parliament as part of a Parliamentary roadshow. The aim of this exhibition is to raise awareness amongst Parliamentarians and other key stakeholders in Holyrood of the Health Professions Council's role in protecting the public, and the importance of appropriate and effective regulation of health professionals.</p> <p>We have also submitted a request to host a reception event to link in with the exhibition in the Scottish Parliament. Michael Matheson MSP, who is also a registrant, has kindly agreed to sponsor the exhibition and event.</p> <p>The will be the first of hopefully four Parliamentary roadshows.</p>	<p>18 – 20 March 2008</p>
<p>Parliamentary roadshow – Westminster</p>	<p>The HPC will submit an application to host an exhibition space in the House of Commons in Westminster in Spring 2008. The aim of this is to showcase to Members of Parliament and other key stakeholders in Westminster the HPC's role in protecting the public.</p>	<p>Submit application late November for Spring 2008</p>

Next steps

The next step is to evaluate this programme of work and develop the next phase of communication with Parliamentarians which will take place in 2008-2009. Evaluation methods will include number of visits to the SNP Annual Conference exhibition stand, number of visits to

the exhibition stand in Scottish Parliament, feedback from mailout of campaign material to MPs constituency offices and meetings with Parliamentarians.

Stakeholder activity plan – Other groups

Professional bodies

The HPC has already done a lot of work with professional bodies although it is now the responsibility of the Public Affairs Manager to co-ordinate communications with this important stakeholder group. The Chief Executive sent out a letter to all professional bodies on 30 August regarding the annual meeting with HPC asking them whether they are happy to continue to meet at Park House or whether they would prefer a representative from HPC to attend their board meetings. Many of the professional bodies have responded and HPC representatives will meet with them towards the end of 2007 or at the beginning of 2008.

Next steps

The Public Affairs Manager will be present for all these meetings and will use them as a starting point to assess and determine the most appropriate way forward in establishing a co-ordinated programme of communications activities which will ensure that we are continuing our dialogue with this important stakeholder group and that they are receiving relevant and consistent information about the HPC.

Stakeholders in Home Countries

Northern Ireland

The Public Affairs Manager and Director of Policy and Standards visited Belfast in Northern Ireland to meet with various stakeholders in mid-September. The purpose of the trip was to build links with key stakeholders, improve communication channels and find out about any specific Northern Ireland issues. This trip was part of the broader communications objective to influence the regulatory agenda through ongoing dialogue and engagement with key stakeholders.

The reason that these stakeholder meetings took place in Northern Ireland over other home countries was because the Director of Policy and Standards was asked to give a CPD talk in Belfast. We therefore thought it would be a good opportunity to make the most of the visit and meet with other key stakeholders at the same time. During the same week the Chief Executive was also asked to speak at a Northern

Ireland White Paper Stakeholder Event hosted by the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Services. The Public Affairs Manager and Director of Policy and Standards also attended this event and met with key stakeholders.

Meetings

Organisation	Name	Position
Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety	Martin McLaughlin plus other DHSSPS staff	Dept's Officer for the Allied Health Professions (filling in for Nuala McArdle)
The Royal Hospitals (Part of Belfast Health and Social Care Trust)	Damian McAlister	Co-Director Pay, Partnership and Employment Relations Corporate HR Group
The Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority	Phelim Quinn	Director of Operations and Chief Nurse Advisor
General Medical Council	Alan Walker	Head of Northern Ireland Affairs
Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland	Raymond Blaney <i>Brendan Kerr</i>	Chief Executive Registrar & Head of Professional Services
Northern Ireland Social Care Council	Brendan Johnston	Chief Executive
Independent Health & Care Providers	Hugh Mills	Chief Executive / Director of Development
NI Ambulance Services	Paul Meehan	Clinical Training Manager

Chartered Society of Physiotherapy	Tom Sullivan*	Policy Officer

* Other people that also attended meeting:

- Nigel Wethers, Society of Radiographers, NI Council
- Clare McGartland, AHP Commissioner Western Board
- Bronagh Monaghan, Chartered Society of Podiatry
- Margaret Moorhead, Chartered Society of Podiatry
- Rita Fox, Chair Allied Health Professions Forum
- Michelle Tennyson, AHP Commissioner Eastern Board
- Patricia Blackburn, AHP Commissioner Southern Board
- Alison McCullough, Policy Officer Royal College of Speech & Language Therapists
- *Pauline Mulholland, British Dietetics Association, Northern Ireland Board*
- *Kate Lesslar, Policy Officer, College of Occupational Therapists NI*

Next steps

The next steps are to follow up on any request for addition information and thank each stakeholder for the opportunity to meet. These stakeholders will be added to our consultation list and receive the HPC e-newsletter.

Further stakeholder meetings are being planned in other home countries as part of the communications workplan. This will include a programme of profile raising activities with Parliamentarians and other key stakeholders.