

Communications Committee, Wednesday 21 January 2009

Communication support for organisational activities

Executive summary and recommendations

**Introduction**

The department provides communications support to a range of organisational and operational activities and key projects undertaken by the HPC. These include the fees increase, the online renewals project, opening the register to new professions and registration and renewals. This paper is intended to bring the Committee up to date on the work that is carried out to support these activities

**Decision**

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

**Background information**

**Resource implications**

**Financial implications**

**Appendices**

Example of the communications plan for registrations and renewals

**Date of paper**

## **Introduction**

The department provides communications support to a range of organisational and operational activities and key projects undertaken by the HPC. These include the fees increase, the online renewals project, opening the register to new professions and registration and renewals.

Each project or activity has a communications plan and is managed by one person in the team who is responsible for co-ordinating activities across the team and monitoring progress against the plan. The communications plan sets out aims and objectives, key risks, audiences and the relevant communication channels to be used and is regularly reviewed with the team at team meetings.

This paper is intended to bring the Communications Committee up to date on the work that is carried out to support these activities

## **Online renewals project**

The Web Manager is representing the Communications team on the online renewals project. His involvement is key to ensuring that the new web facility complements HPC's other online facilities and, working with the Publications Manager, that it complies with HPC's visual identity requirements.

He has been involved in regular project workshops which have helped shape the user requirements and functional specifications for the project, as well as looking at navigation, design, usability and accessibility issues.

A full communications plan is being developed which will set out key activities, messages and timescales to ensure that our communications are effective and appropriate when promoting this project to key audiences, including registrants, professional bodies and employers.

## **CPD audits**

A communications plan has been developed by the CPD Communications Manager and this is currently being implemented and monitored. It highlights the planned activities and communications channels to be utilised in order to support this project.

Key achievements to date have included

- The planned programme of talks and workshops is continuing with more than 100 talks delivered to over 7000 registrants across the UK. Several extended tours of the home countries are planned for 2009, including Scotland, South West and North East and Yorkshire.

- CPD Assessor training material was prepared for the Registration Department early in 2008 and the first training was delivered in May to chiropodists / podiatrists and October for operating department practitioners. The programme of CPD Assessor training will resume in May 2009 as other professions are selected for audit.
- Training for the Registration Department on the new CPD systems and audit process was delivered by the CPD Communications Manager on 24 April, 30 July and 27 August.
- The CPD Communications Manager attended all other HPC departmental meetings from May – July 2008 to deliver training on the CPD standards and audit process.
- The CPD Communications Manager composed CPD standard letters with registration department during April 2008 to enable our systems to automatically generate audit letters to registrants selected for audit.

### **Registration Fee Increase**

The HPC consulted on its registration fees in 2008 and the key decisions document was published in October. A communications plan for the registration fee changes has been developed and emphasises the planned communications activities. The plan highlights our key messages, communications aims and objectives, target audience and communications channels to be utilised in order to support this project.

Activity to date has included the issue of press releases at each stage of the consultation as well as a press release issued detailing the key decisions arising from the findings of the consultation. Every release has been sent to all media including professional body journals and has resulted in coverage of the fees increase.

Forthcoming activities will include featuring a news story on our website as well as offering articles to professional body journals for their news sections. In addition to this our Public Affairs Manager will be emailing membership managers of professional bodies highlighting the fees increase as well as other activity detailed in the plan.

### **Renewals**

The communications team has been working closely with the Registration Department to raise awareness of the process and requirements for renewing registration for operating department practitioners.

A communications plan has been written setting out our key objectives and messages and identifying potential risks. Much of the work so far has been undertaken by the Public Affairs Manager and the Communications Manager who have worked hard to achieve maximum coverage for this work. The range of activities has included articles in relevant professional journals, active contact with professional bodies and a series of communications with service managers. This work has contributed to a reduction in the number of odps lapsing from the

Register and it is intended to develop this communications programme for all professions renewing in 2009.

## **New Professions**

Currently, the S60 legislation is passing through Parliament for the Psychologists and it is anticipated that we will open the Register in July 2009. The Hearing Aid Audiologists are likely to follow and it is anticipated that the Register will open for this profession in March 2010.

## **Psychologists**

A communications plan has been written for the Psychologists and this piece of work is currently being managed by the CPD Communications Manager. Much of the work currently undertaken has included ongoing planning meetings and contact with the British Psychological Society, monitoring relevant press coverage, attendance at relevant professional conferences (eg we have booked a stand at the British Psychological Society Annual Congress in April 2009), talks and presentations (eg attending the AGM of the Scottish Division of Educational Psychology, the AGM of the Scottish Branch of the British Psychological Society and a talk to Psychologists at Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust) and public affairs work to ensure that Parliamentarians are adequately briefed on the HPC and its role in regulation

## **Hearing Aid Council**

A project plan which incorporates communications activities has been written for the transfer of the Hearing Aid Council's Register to the HPC. A more detailed communications plan is currently being drafted which will highlight proposed communications to the public of the transfer.

To date, both the CPD Communications Manager and the Chief Executive attended and spoke at the British Society of Hearing Aid Audiologists Annual Conference in 2008 and we are booked to take a stand in 2009. Regular contact and update meetings are taking place between the HPC and the HAC and training of staff at HAC on HPC and CPD standards has been booked for February 2009.

## HPC Communications Planning Template

### **Project/initiative**

Renewals

### **Comms planning lead for initiative?**

Jacqueline

### **Who are the team responsible for project managing this initiative?**

<b>Directorate</b>	Registrations
<b>Directorate key contact</b>	Richard Houghton, Claire Harkin

### **Launch date of initiative** where appropriate

To start one month in advance of the issue of renewal notices (eg renewal notices will be issued to ODPs from 1 September for renewal by 30 November) and then continue with the agreed renewal cycle across 2009 and 2010.

### **Background to the initiative?**

To provide support to the registrations department and a co-ordinated approach to communicating the importance of renewing to registrants and professional bodies.

### **What are the key messages?**

The main messages are

- the importance of renewing early and not leaving it to the last minute
- reminding registrants that they need to remember to self-certify, pay and sign the renewals forms, even if they are paying by direct debit (and the payment has come out of their account)
- in the event they are lapsed from the Register, registrants must remember that it affects not only their livelihood but also patients, colleagues and employers
- it is essential they inform us of any changes in their contact details

### **What are the communication aims and objectives?**

Overall,

- to improve registrants' understanding of renewal requirements
- to ensure more registrants' begin to renew early in the process
- to support the reduction in the number of registrants lapsing
- to ensure registrants inform us of any changes in their contact details

### **Who are the target audiences?**

Registrants, employers and professional bodies

**What communication channels should be utilised to support this project?**

We will utilise a range of communication channels, including (but not limited to)  
Employer: employer events, bulletins, direct mail, posters and conferences  
Professional bodies: face to face meetings, conferences and email to membership managers and joint mailings  
Registrants: via professional bodies (see above), HPC In Focus, articles in professional journals, posters in place of work, conferences/exhibitions  
All: web pages, news items on home page

**Is the HPC working in partnership with any other organisations, external agencies or other regulators or commissions on this initiative?**

Work with professional bodies and employers

**What are the elephant traps/risks associated with this initiative?**

Risk	Level of risk (high, medium, low)
Registration process failing	High
Not reaching sufficient registrants	Medium

**What plans will be put in place to minimise these risks?**

Regular meetings and contact with the Registrations Dept to update on progress  
Utilise full range of communication activities across all audiences

**What is the communication budget for this initiative?**

Nil

**How will the impact of this initiative be evaluated?**

% lapses, % renewing early as compared to last renewal cycle, % of final notices sent

**How will the supporting communications for this initiative be evaluated?**

Number of articles in professional journals, number of meetings with professional bodies, direct mail to employers, email alerts to membership managers

**Approvals schedule**

To be agreed by project lead	
To be agreed by Comms Director	
To be agreed by Head of Registrations	

## Communications activities – Renewals

For ODPs – renewal notices issued 1 September for renewal by 30 November 2008

Main activity	Description	Timescale	Lead	Action
Update renewal poster	Update the poster with renewals for 2009 onwards	August	Ebony	
Contact with membership managers of relevant professional bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Set up initial meeting with Membership Manager and Communications rep to discuss how we can work together eg joint mailings, links to newsletters, journals</li> <li>Continue contact with membership managers through process to inform and keep up to date on progress</li> <li>Consider post wrap up discussion and joint article in professional journal</li> </ul>	From August	Nina	Meeting with
Reminder on home page of HPC website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>News item on home page at start of renewal period</li> <li>Prominent reminder to be created for home page referencing professions renewing during renewal</li> </ul>	By 1 Sept	Tony / Ebony	
Articles in professional journals	Write and place a series of articles (pre, mid and post) in relevant journals, dependant on publication dates.	1 Sept to 30 Nov	Ebony	
Attendance at relevant professional conferences	Ascertain whether there are any profession specific conferences happening during the renewal period and make relevant bookings. Ensure representatives from registrations attend	1 Sept to 30 Nov/ ongoing	Susan	
Articles in HPC In Focus	Reminder articles in relevant editions of In focus, dependant on schedule Consider post registration article highlighting successful work with professional body and reduction in lapsing	1 Sept to 30 Nov/ ongoing	Jonathan /Nina	
Letter to employers/managers	Letter to employers' list and/or managers' list (from professional bodies or Binley's) highlighting importance of renewing - include renewals poster	August onwards	Nina	

	NB cost dependant			
Include renewals section in HPC Employer Events	Ensure representation from registrations department at each employer event as well as section within presentation and panel member	November and February	Jacqueline	
Include renewals information at NHS Employers	Ensure renewals information available at NHS Employers conference and reference in Marc Seale's speech(?)	November	Nina/Susan	
External talks programme, particularly CPD	Ensure CPD and other talks has a slide or information (where applicable) on the renewal process	From 1 Sept/ongoing	Mark	