

Communications Committee 4 November 2010

Developing a social media strategy – the next step in communications

Executive summary and recommendations

Introduction

This paper is intended to provide the Communications Committee with information about how individuals and organisations use social media, why the HPC needs to engage in this medium and sets out the Communication Department's workplan for the use of social media and networking tools by the HPC.

The activities outlined in this paper align with the objectives in the communication strategy which support our statutory obligation to communicate with stakeholders. This obligation is set out in Article 3 (13) in the Health Professions Order 2001: 'the Council shall inform and educate registrants, and shall inform the public about its work'.

Decision

The Committee is invited to discuss the attached document.

Background information

See introduction

Resource implications

Resources have been set out in the departmental workplan and are linked to the department's budget which has been approved by the Finance and Resources Committee.

Financial implications

As above.

Appendices

HPC social media strategy – the next step in communications

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Introduction

This paper is intended to provide information on why the HPC needs to engage in social media and sets out the communications department's workplan for the use of social media and networking tools by the HPC.

The purpose of incorporating the use of social media within our workplan is to

- secure more opportunities to communicate HPC's public protection role to key stakeholder groups, for example, registrants, the public, the media and opinion formers
- use social media to articulate and repeat information about what the organisation is, what it does and its role in regulation as well as correct factually incorrect information in the public domain
- extend our reach with existing and new audiences
- keep pace with the changes in communication preferences and trends within society

The result should be that people better understand the meaning of the HPC and its public protection role.

Background

Social media and social networking is currently the fastest growing segment of the internet with social network sites being the highest traffic category of all websites. There are 34 million users of social media and networking sites in the UK, with individuals spending an average of 6 hours a month on the sites. This development in technology has changed the way in which individuals communicate with each other, particularly for the younger generations and increasingly those over 50.¹

Set out below are some of the main social media and networking sites with information about each:

Facebook currently has more than 250 million active users worldwide. A January 2009 Compete.com study ranked Facebook as the most used social network by worldwide monthly active users. The website is free to users, generating revenue from advertising which includes side banner ads.

Twitter Twitter is a real-time information network powered by people all around the world that lets you share and discover what's happening now. Twitter is a simple tool that helps connect businesses more meaningfully with the right audience at the right time. Businesses and organisations of all shapes and sizes are now able to stay connected to their stakeholders. It

¹ Paul Armstrong, Director of Social Media, Kindred PR

can be used to quickly share information with people, gather real-time information and feedback, and build relationships with stakeholders, partners and the public.

RSS	RSS (Really Simple Syndication) is a format for delivering regularly changing web content. Many news-related sites, web blogs and other online publishers syndicate their content as an RSS feed to whoever wants it –such as <u>blog</u> entries, news headlines, audio, and video – in a standardised format. An RSS document (which is called a "feed", "web feed" or "channel") includes full or summarised text, plus data such as publishing dates and authorship. Web feeds benefit publishers by letting them syndicate content automatically. They benefit readers who want to subscribe to timely updates from favoured sources or websites or to aggregate feeds from many sites into one place. RSS feeds can be read using software called an "RSS reader", "feed reader", or "aggregator", which can be web-based, desktop-based, or mobile-device-based.
LinkedIn	the most professional looking of all the social networking tools, and orientated toward professional networks. Unlike almost all the other sites, LinkedIn allows you to add an image to your profile page. LinkedIn allows members to look for jobs, seeking out experts in a particular area, or to make contact with other professionals through a chain of trusted connections. LinkedIn is probably the site with the least potential for social purposes. The current size of the network is about 2.5 million profiles.

It should be noted that, like other communications tools, social networking sites have certain rules, conventions and practices which users have to navigate to be understood and avoid difficulties. These range from the etiquette of commenting on other people's profiles or an organisation's page to understanding how one does and does not add as a 'friend' or 'like' as an organisation.

Social networking sites also have some potential pitfalls to negotiate, such as the unintended consequences of publicly posting sensitive information, confusion over privacy settings, and unwanted contact with people or groups.

Why HPC needs to develop a social media strategy

The rapid growth of social networking tools that has been observed over the last 12 months by the Communications department is indicative of its integration into the daily work of our stakeholders. For example, recent tweets have included:

- Teaching watchdog goes <http://aggbot.com/docs/link.php?id=9616567&t=co> How about the *Health Professions Council*?
- [rockyrutherford](#): Registering with the **Health Professions Council** so I can still be an OT. A waste of F**G time and have pay money to get F**k all back.
- Senior Biomedical Scientist: We are currently looking for a Senior Biomedical Scientist in Histology to work for.. <http://bit.ly/UEdC1>
- OTnews_and sticking with Wales, e-mail ruth.crowder@cot.co.uk to contribute to the response on the HPC consultation on Welsh <http://bit.ly/9XWIE8>

- SCP_PodiatryUK HPC launches new resources for registrants to promote their HPC registration <http://bit.ly/dfpAX1>

In parallel with this, there has been considerable media coverage of the growth of social networking in professional body journals about its potential positive outcomes and concerns about the way that some of our registrants are engaging with it. Recent reports include;

- Health Service Journal 'PCT's behind the times on Facebook and Twitter'
- Frontline 'The CSP is addressing the issue in its Charting the Future project and there will be a new code of professional values and behaviour'
- Synergy News 'Many members will use social networking regularly and there are several examples of using it as a good method to share ideas and keep up-to-date with friends, share knowledge of industrial relations or discuss professional questions'

We currently do not have a presence on Facebook although someone has set up a 'Health Professions Council' page on this site. We have contacted Facebook about this, but it does pose a risk that the information and comments posted on this site could be perceived to be those of the HPC's² particularly as there are posts on this page where registrants are talking about their registration success and people are posting jobs.

Some journalists only use Twitter³ to source their stories, by not being an active user we are at an immediate disadvantage. A recent report on BBC online⁴ said 'BBC news journalists have been told to use social media as a primary source of information by Peter Horrocks, the Director of BBC Global News. He said it was important for editorial staff to make better use of social media and become more collaborative in producing stories.

Other regulators, professional bodies and organisations are already using social networking sites to communicate with audiences, inform them of current work being carried out by the organisation and to keep them updated about change. For example, the NMC⁵ currently has a Facebook page. It has grown from 2,403 followers in October 2009 to 13,502 in October 2010 and the number is increasing by 200 a day. Other organisations using social media include The Society and College of Radiographers, the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists, London Ambulance Service, Against State Regulation of Counselling and Psychotherapy, NHS – student groups, British Dietetic Association and the Institute of Biomedical Science⁶

Social media can be used as a source of news and increasingly individuals are turning to social media channels to get information directly from organisations. In some instances, we have witnessed individuals turning to the HPC Watchdog blog for information instead of coming to us. There has been on-going debate on this blog - comments have included individual arguments in support of the HPC processes, debate about the HPC

² See appendix 1

³ See appendix 3 for an example of a Twitter page

⁴ <http://www.guardian.co.uk/media/pda/2010/feb/10/bbc-news-social-media>

⁵ See appendix 2

⁶ For a full list, see appendix 4

allegedly being impartial and questions directed to the author on the integrity of the information contained within the posts. An employee of the HPC (who is also a blogger) has also commented on HPC Watchdog about the FtP process, challenging the author for further information about their expectations of a regulator and talking about HPC registration fees being incorrectly labelled as a 'tax' by the author.

Advantages and disadvantages

As previously stated, the key advantage of using social media and networking tools is that it would enable the HPC to expand opportunities for raising awareness amongst students, registrants and the public as well as raise awareness of the HPC's public protection role with other stakeholders. It would also allow HPC to access more individuals who choose to use these channels as well as enabling us to generate traffic back to the HPC website through micro-blogging and creating updates with links.

A further consideration is that, along with other more traditional communications tools, we can use different approaches to reach different groups, for example our Facebook page would be useful as a first point of contact for the general public. Twitter and RSS would allow the HPC to communicate effectively with real-time updates for journalists and would allow us to have a presence on large forums where the risks of misinformation from other sources can be high. Facebook and Twitter will also be helpful to communicate key information to registrants, for example when consultations or guidance is launched or updated information about cpd and registration renewals.

Furthermore, social media and networking sites would allow the HPC to communicate with hard to reach groups and to connect, engage and share information with community groups that are already in existence at no extra cost, which would be hugely beneficial to our public facing work.

Social networking is cost effective and does not require online spend, although it would require an administrator to upload content, monitor other users and reply to users requests and questions. Resource issues are addressed in a later section.

The main disadvantages are that online communities can become 'messy' and we would need management and oversight of our pages to keep online communities in check. It also opens up communication channels, allowing people to voice negative views of the HPC although this could be addressed through a disclaimer on the HPC page (see NMC) and, as is witnessed with the Alliance Against State Regulation, people will voice negative views whether or not HPC is in the frame. A further consideration is that by having an online presence we could be drawn into online debates and run the risk of then being seen to be 'campaigning'. It is therefore extremely important that our approach is clearly one of informing and correcting any incorrect information.

Arguably, the greatest threat to the HPC by not engaging in social media is the potential loss of reputation. As we have already evidenced, stakeholders are engaging in debates and discussions about the HPC. To date, we have been reactive and only monitored social media and networking sites, but by not participating in these online debates we are unable to correct factual inaccuracies about the organisation which poses a risk to the management of our reputation.

Workplan

- 1 To develop and implement a social media policy and guidance which covers both official company communication as well as personal communication by employees** (who make it clear they work for the company in their profile or are identifiable within the company through name etc).

A social media policy is important to mitigate risk for both employer and employee and the current confidentiality agreement that we have in place is probably insufficient. The policy has been drafted and covers employee interactions on social media sites. It is currently with HR for consideration and approval and may result in a few additional lines in the employee handbook to clarify the confidentiality agreement. The guidance, which is separate to the social media policy, has also been drafted and is with HR for consideration and approval. It contains details on social media and blogging and is applicable to social and networking site users only.

Action: Ebony Gayle / HR

- 2 To undertake the following activity: a) continue to monitor the range of social media and networking sites and respond as required (determined on a case by case basis; b) optimise the HPC blog by broadening the content; c) develop a presence on Facebook for information only; d) join Twitter; and e) sets up RSS feeds for journalists.**

Updates will be regular and will focus on what current key messages the HPC wants to get across and how these need to be expressed. To date, the blog has been populated by updates written largely by the Chair of Council in response to external events, such as conferences, PLG meetings and news stories about regulation. This will continue across all the social media tools we will use, but in addition posts will include information about registration renewals, cpd audits as well as consultations, new publications, news items, and Council meetings. Other content could include links to In Focus and other websites.

To maximise opportunities for attracting 'followers' we can promote the presence of the blog, Facebook page, twitter and RSS feeds through the news releases.

We can also attract 'followers' by referencing social media throughout our website and on emails as points of reference for keeping up to date and being able to engage with the HPC.

Action: Ebony Gayle / Amy Morgan / Tony Glazier

- 3 The HPC communications team will monitor progress on the development of HPC's use of social media and networking sites and will consider implementing a further phase. This could include opening the HPC blog and Facebook pages to comment**

Action: Ebony Gayle / Jacqueline Ladds

Resource

Developing our online presence is already part of our programme of work this year – see 2.3 of the annual departmental workplan.

It is important to ensure that momentum is kept over time and that our posts/tweets don't simply drop off after the initial introduction. In the first instance, daily monitoring and updating will continue to be carried out by the Media and PR Manager and the Communications Officer – Media and PR. When necessary, monitoring will also be shared between the Communication Officers (events, publications and stakeholder).

As content and online communities develop there will be a wider impact on the organisation. The Communications department will need the specialist knowledge in each department to help answer specific questions about FtP, Registration, Council papers, FOI, Education & Training. It is difficult to gauge the amount of resource this would take for departments, but in practical terms it would be the time taken for a nominated contact to draft a response to specific questions, if raised. This will be a consideration in any further phases of development and any workload implications will be discussed and agreed with the relevant departments

We will also draw up an approvals process to ensure that online content is only published following departmental and senior management approval.

Timescales

Twitter and Facebook pages can be set up with minimal resource and we will allocate time within the Communications Department to do this. The social media policy and guidance will be approved and implemented before we progress any further.

RSS feeds have been scheduled for the next website quarterly deployment which will take place in November or December. The cost for this work has been allocated within the current web budget.

Amy Morgan, Communications Officer – Media and PR
Ebony Gayle, Media and PR Manager

October 2010

Appendix 1

Health Professions Page which is currently on Facebook

The screenshot shows a Facebook page for the Health Professions Council. The page is viewed in Internet Explorer, with the address bar showing the URL: http://www.facebook.com/pages/create.php#!/pages/Health-Professions-Council/115380335140656?ref=search&sid=4s-3dHP_cb71Tw7bY. The page features a header with the Facebook logo and navigation links (Home, Profile, Account). The main content area includes a description of the Health Professions Council (HPC) and a list of professions regulated by the HPC. The sidebar contains a 'Connect with more friends' section and a 'More Ads' section.

Health Professions Council Like

Info Related posts Wikipedia

Our goal is to make this Community Page the best collection of shared knowledge on this topic. If you have a passion for **Health Professions Council**, sign up and we'll let you know when we're ready for your help. You can also get us started by suggesting the Official Facebook Page.

Description

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopaedia

The Health Professions Council (HPC) is a UK health regulator. It was set up by the UK government through the Health Professions Order 2001. Its stated purpose is to protect the public. It aims to do this by setting and maintaining standards of proficiency and conduct for the professions it regulates. It currently regulates fourteen professions, and if legislation is passed, may regulate other professions in the future. It has been the subject of some controversy since 2007 over its role in the government plan to regulate counselling and psychotherapy as 'health professions' across the UK. Some practitioners are openly opposing HPC as the regulator, and are highly critical of its methods and 'positivist' model, which they believe to be inherently unsuitable for their field. (e.g. House, in Edwards, House, Musgrave, Parker, Postle, Rogers, "Compliance? Ambivalence? Rejection?" WLR, London 2009). An Alliance for Counselling and Psychotherapy (www.allianceforcarp.org) has emerged with support from a number of key figures within the profession.

According to the Health Professions Council website www.hpc-uk.org HPC in its role as protector of the public:

- sets standards for health professionals
- approves courses and education
- keeps a register of health professionals
- takes action when health professionals do not meet its standards, which may include striking them off

Professions regulated by the HPC

- Airta therapists
- Biomedical scientists
- Chiropractors/Podiatrists
- Clinical scientists
- Dietitians
- Occupational therapists
- Operating department practitioners
- Orthoptists
- Paramedics
- Physiotherapists
- Practitioner psychologists (e.g. Clinical psychologists)

Connect with more friends

Share the Facebook experience with more of your friends. Use our simple invitation tools to start connecting.

More Ads

Appendix 2

Nursing and Midwifery Council and General Medical Council on Facebook

The screenshot shows the Facebook page for the Nursing & Midwifery Council. The page header includes the Facebook logo and navigation links for Home, Profile, and Account. The main content area features a post by Julie Moon, who is moving to Australia and asking for advice on maintaining her UK registration. Below her post are three comments from other users: Suphng Limbu, Suphng Limbu, and Paul Hop Fish. The left sidebar contains the council's logo, a 'Suggest to friends' button, and an 'Information' section with contact details for 23 Portland Place, London. The right sidebar has a 'Create an Advert' section with three advertisements: '2010 FIFA World Cup!', 'Banksy T-Shirts & Hoodies', and 'Lekker genieten in de zon'.

This screenshot shows the 'Basic Info' and 'Detailed Info' sections of the Nursing & Midwifery Council Facebook page. The 'Basic Info' section lists the council's location at 23 Portland Place, London, and its contact information. The 'Detailed Info' section provides the council's website URLs. The left sidebar features the council's logo and a 'View Updates' button. The right sidebar contains a 'Create an Advert' section with three advertisements: 'Vliegen Naar Spanje', 'Study in the EU', and 'Kom jij je beloften na?'. The top navigation bar includes links for Home, Profile, Friends, and Inbox.

Facebook | GMC - General Medical Council UK - Windows Internet Explorer provided by the Health Professions Council

http://www.facebook.com/pages/Continuing-professional-development/103819732990506?v=stream&ref=ts#/group.php?gid=167520536838&ref=ts

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

Facebook | GMC - General Medical Council UK

facebook

Search Home Profile Account

General Medical Council

Invite people to join

Information

Category: Business - Employment & Work

Description: If you are having problems registering with the GMC or are looking for information on registering

Privacy type: Open: All content is public.

Admins

- Alex Jones (National Health Service) (creator)

Members

6 of 143 members See All

Batool Mostafa	Edward Pineles	Kamal Abdelbaq

Photos

1 photo See all

Links

Write something...

Attach: Share

Medacs Healthcare Jobs

Medacs Healthcare
www.medacs.com
Medacs Healthcare Group is a leading healthcare staffing company providing recruitment expertise and managed healthcare solutions to both the public and private sectors. A member of Impellam Group PLC, ...

30 April at 06:50 · Comment · Like · Share · Flag

Armando Cuesta Hi, spanish doctor here having problems applying to GMC provisional registration in order to start FP next year. According to GMC, spanish graduate programmes include internships and therefore we are only eligible for Full registration. Thus we cannot apply to Foundation Programme. According to BMA in their website: "Not... See more 20 April at 00:42 · Comment · Like · Flag

Armando Cuesta By the way, odddy enough french colleagues, with identical medical undergraduate programmes, can apply for Provisional registration. They have also 6 years of medical training and rotations just like us. 20 April at 00:44 · Report

Write a comment...

Mohammad Hurunnabi 14 April at 03:49 · Comment · Like · Flag

Mohamed Dabbas THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF THE JORDANIAN ASSOCIATION OF PSYCHIATRISTS
Co-sponsored by WPA
6 to 9 April 2010
Amman, Jordan
Website: http://www.araborganizers.com.jo/ ... See more

Arab Organizers
www.araborganizers.com.jo

Create an Advert

World Cup iPhone App

Got an iPhone? Follow the 2010 World Cup on the go with AP's comprehensive app. Visit the iTunes store today and download it for free. Like

Bekijk voetbal

Vind plekken in Amsterdam om de voetbalwedstrijden in Zuid-Afrika te bekijken. Gebruik Google Maps om plekken in de buurt te vinden. Like

Pull out Your Sword

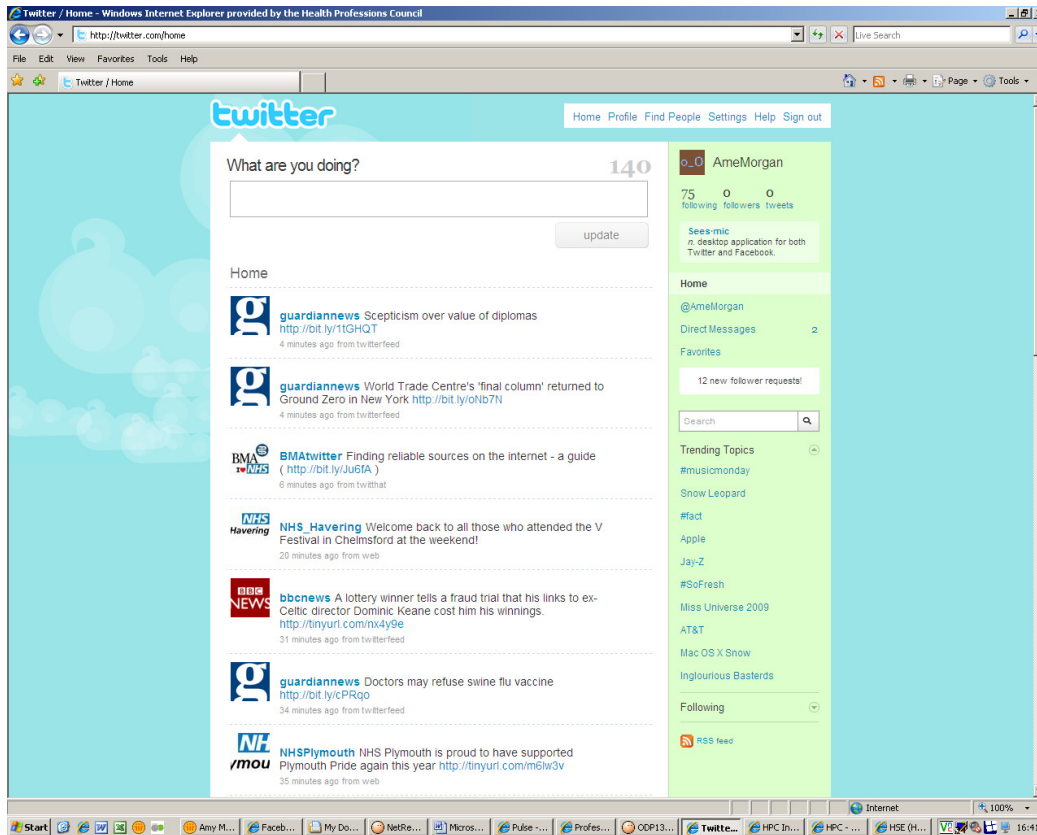
Build a thriving kingdom, amass a powerful army, conquer the world. Play Now! Like

More Ads

Chat (Offline)

Start Mail - Inbox - ... Communications Microsoft Word HPC Watchdo... Twitter / Peop... BBC tells news... Dresses and P... Facebook | ... Internet 100% 15:48

Appendix 3 Twitter



Appendix 4
Other Users of social media

Facebook	Twitter
NMC	NMC
BBC News Health	Prince's foundation for Integrated Health (PFIH)
RCGP	RCGP
CPD for Paramedics and other Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Personnel	BBC News Health
Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain	BBC Health
NHS – student groups	BBC breaking
The NHS are the worst employers ever – page	Guardian news
Westminster pages, student groups	Uk health news
Forum for the Arts in Healthcare	Student paramedics and other student health professions
Against State Regulation of Counselling & Psychotherapy in the UK	NHS
The Society and College of Radiographers	NHS employers
NHS	Hospitals
King's College Radiology Society	Doctors net (referrers campaign)
Institute of Biomedical Science	UkGov
British Dietetic Association	Future health
International Art Therapy Organization [IATO] Group	Art in healthcare
Art as Therapy	Pulse today
Chartered Society of Physiotherapy Congress 2009	Bupa health
Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists	WestminsterCC
Degree level State Registered Paramedics (UK & N.I.)	Radio London
London Ambulance Service	Nursing times
Facebook Paramedics	Health4London
General Medical Council	Patient opinion (NHS)
Health Professions Council	The Health and Safety Executive (HSE)
Continuing professional development	e-politics

And still the list is growing...

Appendix 5

This is an example of good practice when using social media:
HPC's referrers campaign being promoted on NMC facebook page

The image is a screenshot of the Nursing & Midwifery Council (NMC) Facebook page. The page header includes the Facebook logo, a search bar, and the NMC logo with the text "Nursing & Midwifery Council". Below the header, there are navigation tabs for "Wall", "Info", "Quiz", "Newsletter", "Photos", "Events", and "Filters".

The main content area shows a post from "Irish Batuigas Villaceran" asking for help with registration fees. Below this is a promotional post from the NMC with the text: "Nursing & Midwifery Council Hi, you should always look at the NMC website for registration information. Use the following link to find out more: <http://www.nmc-uk.org/Registration/Joining-the-register/> 50 minutes ago · Flag".

The central focus is a post from the NMC titled "Nursing & Midwifery Council" with the sub-heading "Are you referring patients on to unregistered and unregulated professionals?". The text of the post reads: "The Health Professions Council (HPC) has launched a six-month campaign that aims to highlight the vital role that referrers such as practice nurses and GPs play in making patient referrals and ensuring that referrers and their patients are aware of the HPC when referring on to HPC regulated...". The post is dated "22 hours ago" and has "Share" and "Like" options. A comment from "Amy Morgan" says "Amy Morgan and 22 others like this.".

Below this is another post from "Rebecca Mosley" as a 2nd year student, expressing frustration with pressures on mentors and students. The text says: "as a 2nd year student I am frustrated by pressures on mentors and students due to increased pressures on the wards for various reasons including financial, in my experience mentors are very dedicated members of staff but with an increasing workload have less time to mentor a student. Is there not a risk of newly qualif...". The post is dated "Yesterday at 8:31am" and has "See More" and "Flag" options. A comment from "3 people" says "3 people like this.".

The left sidebar contains information about the NMC, including its location (23 Portland Place, London, W1B 1PZ), phone number (020 7333 9333), and hours (Mon - Fri: 8:00 am - 6:00 pm). It also lists "3 Friends Like This" with profile pictures of Maria Sylvester, Amy Morgan, and Laura Morris.

Notes About Me

Jump to Friend or Page

Subscribe

Nursing & Midwifery Council's Notes

Report

Please check or encourage your patients to check that they are seeing a registered health professional. For a full list of the professions, or to check the online register, visit the HPC website.

Share

Amy Morgan and 22 others like this.

Sushi - 70% groupon.nl

Ga een lekker avondje Sushi eten in jouw stad en wij geven je korting. Schrijf je hier in!

Lekker wonen in Amsterdam nieuwbouw.bouwfonds.nl

Prachtige starters appartementen in Amsterdam-Zuidoost. Oppervl. 78 m2, prijs vanaf €159.000 v.o.n. Profiteer nu van €5000 subsidie!

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Jump to Friend or Page

Subscribe

- Nursing & Midwifery Council's Notes

Report

Are you referring patients on to unregistered and unregulated professionals?

by Nursing & Midwifery Council on Tuesday, September 28, 2010 at 11:45am



The Health Professions Council (HPC) has launched a six-month campaign that aims to highlight the vital role that referrers such as practice nurses and GPs play in making patient referrals and ensuring that referrers and their patients are aware of the HPC when referring

on to HPC regulated health professionals.

The HPC is a UK wide multi-profession regulator that regulates the roles not covered by the GMC, NMC and GDC to name a few (a full list of regulators can be found here). They keep a register of allied health professionals who meet its standards for training, professional skills, behaviour and health.

Please check or encourage your patients to check that they are seeing a registered health professional. For a full list of the professions, or to check the online register, visit the HPC website

Share

Amy Morgan and 22 others like this.