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## Communications Committee

**Public minutes of the 30th meeting of the Communications Committee held as follows:-**

**Date:** Thursday 4 November 2010

**Time:** 11:00 am

**Venue:** The Council Chamber, Health Professions Council, Park House, 184 Kennington Park Road, London SE11 4BU

**Present:** Sheila Drayton (Chair)  
Julia Drown  
Arun Midha  
Diane Waller

**In attendance:**

Mr C Bendall, Secretary to the Committee  
Ms S Carini, Events Manager  
Ms E Gayle, Media and Public Relations Manager  
Ms L Dowd, Communications Officer (Stakeholder Communications)  
Mr J Jones, Publishing Manager  
Ms J Ladds, Director of Communications  
Ms A Morgan, Communications Officer (Media and Public Relations)  
Ms S Oliver, PA/Team Administrator  
Mr M Potter, Stakeholder Communications Manager  
Mr S Rayner, Secretary to Committees  
Dr A van der Gaag, Council Chair

### **Item 1.10/29 Apologies for absence**

- 1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Morag MacKellar.
- 1.2 The Chair welcomed three observers to the meeting: Ms Tan Yoke Hwa and Ms Thong Mee Ling from the Ministry of Health, Malaysia and Ms Lisa Watch, Head of Communications at the General Social Care Council.
- 1.3 The Committee noted that Mrs Patricia Blackburn, a member of the Committee, had died on 29 July 2010. The Committee noted that the Chair had sent a letter of condolence on its behalf to Mr Blackburn and had received a reply from him.

### **Item 2.10/30 Approval of agenda**

- 2.1 The Committee approved the agenda, subject to receiving a tabled paper on renaming the HPC under item 14 (any other business).

### **Item 3.10/31 Declarations of members' interests**

- 3.1 Members had no interests to declare in connection with the items on the agenda.

### **Item 4.10/34 Minutes of the Communications Committee meeting of 23 June 2010 (report ref: CC 17/10)**

- 4.1 It was agreed that the minutes of the 29th meeting of the Communications Committee should be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

### **Item 5.10/35 Matters arising (report ref: CC 18/10)**

- 5.1 The Committee received a paper to note from the Executive.
- 5.2 The Committee noted the actions list as agreed at the last meeting.

### **Item 6.10/36 Director of Communications report**

- 6.1 The Committee received a verbal report from the Director of Communications.
- 6.2 The Committee noted that the new structure of the Communications Department was now in place. The Committee noted that, since its last meeting, Ms Dowd had started work as Communications Officer (Stakeholder Communications) and Ms Oliver had started work as PA/Team Administrator for the Policy and Standards Department and PA to the Director of Communications.

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**Item 7.10/37 Communications progress report 2010-11: Second quarter  
(report ref: CC 19/10)**

7.1 The Committee received a paper for discussion/approval from the Executive.

7.2 In discussion, the following activities were highlighted:

- production of several publications, including the Education annual reports for 2008 and 2009 and the Fitness to Practise annual report for 2010.
- development of the HPC website, including enhancements to the information about events and the HPC Check micro site;
- communication about extending regulation, including a rolling programme of articles in psychotherapists and counsellors' professional publications, articles on the ePolitix website and participation in a psychotherapists and counsellors stakeholder event held in Glasgow;
- distribution of public information literature, including distribution of approximately 250000 leaflets to the 6000 largest GP surgeries across the UK. In quarter 1, there had been a 78% pick-up rate for leaflets at GP surgeries;
- promotion of the public information literature, with an average of 130 requests for promotional material per month from registrants;
- ensuring GPs and referrers were informed about HPC, through an online campaign on the Doctors.net.uk website and participation in the Royal College of General Practitioners' conference;
- developing HPC's profile in the four nations and in Europe, through a series of meetings with stakeholders; and
- ensuring Parliamentarians were informed of HPC's work, through participation in the Health Hotel activities at the main party conferences, delegate attendance at political party conferences and advertising in conference brochures.

7.3 The Committee congratulated the Department on the impressive range of work and agreed it was a testament to the enthusiasm and commitment of employees.

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**Item 8.10/38 Developing a social media strategy: The next step in communications (report ref: CC 20/10)**

- 8.1 The Committee received a paper for discussion/approval from the Executive.
- 8.2 The Committee noted that the paper set out how social media sites were the fastest growing part of the internet and had 34 m users in the UK. The paper gave details of sites including Facebook (which enabled users to create personal profiles and join common interest groups); Twitter (which enabled users to send and read short messages from other users); Really Simple Syndication (which gave users timely updates from their favourite websites); and LinkedIn (a professional networking site).
- 8.3 The Committee noted that the Executive believed it was important for HPC to develop a presence on social media sites in order to better interact with stakeholders and to correct any incorrect information which might be published by other users. The Committee noted that journalists often used social media as a source for articles and that many other organisations, including other regulators, already used social media.
- 8.4 The Committee noted that HPC's presence on social media sites would include a suitable disclaimer, stating that unsuitable content would be removed and that HPC did not endorse any advertising on the sites.
- 8.5 The Committee endorsed the social media strategy as set out in the paper and asked the Executive to keep it informed of progress.

**Action: EG/AM (ongoing)**

**Item 9.10/39 HPC events: The next steps in meeting our stakeholders (report ref: CC 21/10)**

- 9.1 The Committee received a paper for discussion/approval from the Executive.
- 9.2 The Committee noted that HPC was involved in many internal and external events, including attendance at professional and public-facing events; professional body conferences; party conferences; and HPC's listening events, employer events and information events.
- 9.3 The Committee noted that the Executive had reviewed the approach to events and had decided to refine its approach, to create more flexibility in the programme and make better use of resources. For example, HPC might attend professional body conferences in the years when the profession was due to renew its registration; employer events might be held in other locations in the future; and the approach to listening events

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would change to allow larger audiences to attend. The Executive had also reviewed other regulators' approach to events.

- 9.4 The Committee noted that interaction with stakeholders at events was one means of assessing and developing awareness of HPC's work. It was suggested that the Executive should consider attending university careers fairs.
- 9.5 The Committee endorsed the approach to events as set out in the paper and asked the Executive to keep it informed of progress.

**Action: SC (ongoing)**

**Item 10.10/40 Transfer of regulatory functions from General Social Care Council (GSCC) to HPC (report ref: CC 22/10)**

- 10.1 The Committee received a paper for discussion/approval from the Executive.
- 10.2 The Committee noted that, in July 2010, the coalition government had announced that the GSCC's regulatory functions were to be transferred to HPC and the GSCC was to be abolished. The Committee noted that the paper set out communications work to date, including work with stakeholders, media coverage and questions asked in Parliament.
- 10.3 The Committee noted that the Director of Communications had met the GSCC's Head of Communications to discuss current and future work. A further meeting would be held on 24 November 2010.
- 10.4 The Committee noted that the Executive had identified 200 MPs and peers with interest in social care issues and had begun drafting a briefing note for parliamentarians.
- 10.5 The Committee noted that HPC would continue to develop its list of stakeholders in social work and suggested that the Executive should include users' organisations.

**Item 11.10/41 Proposed amendments to content of annual report and accounts (report ref: CC 23/10)**

- 11.1 The Committee received a paper for discussion/approval from the Executive.
- 11.2 The Committee noted that, at the Council meeting on 20 May 2010, the Council had felt that the content of the annual report and accounts should be simplified. In particular, it had been suggested that there should be a single introduction from the Chair and Chief Executive; that biographies of Council members should be removed, as these were usually not

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included in other organisations' annual reports and were available on the HPC website; and that attendance tables should be removed, as attendance would be included in Council members' annual performance reviews.

- 11.3 Some members of the Committee asked that the Executive should consider publishing attendance tables on the HPC website, as an alternative to publication in the annual report and accounts.
- 11.4 The Committee agreed to recommend to the Council the following amendments to the content of the annual report and accounts, with effect from the 2010-11 annual report and accounts:
- removing the 'Foreword from the Chair' and 'Introduction from the Chief Executive' and instead including one, jointly authored, introduction;
  - removing the Council and Committee member biographies; and
  - removing the Council and Committee member attendance tables.

**Action: JJ (by 9 December 2010)**

**Item 12.10/42 Internal audit report – Stakeholder communications review (report ref: CC 24/10)**

- 12.1 The Committee received a paper to note from the Executive.
- 12.2 The Committee noted that, as part of the internal audit workplan for 2010-11 agreed by the Audit Committee, PKF (UK) LLP had reviewed HPC's communications with stakeholders. The report had rated the arrangements as sound. The report had been considered and approved by the Audit Committee at its meeting on 23 September 2010.
- 12.3 The Committee noted that a previous internal audit had reviewed HPC's communication with the public.
- 12.4 The Committee noted that the paper.

**Item 13.10/43 Committee membership (report ref: CC 25/10)**

- 13.1 The Committee received a paper to note from the Executive.
- 13.2 The Committee noted that, as reported at item 1, Mrs Blackburn had died on 29 July 2010.
- 13.3 The Committee agreed that, in order to reduce the risk of Committee meetings being inquorate, the Executive should consider either

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appointing a new member to the Committee, or review the number of members required for a quorum.

**Action: CB (by 17 February 2011)**

**Item 14.10/44 Any other business**

- 14.1 The Committee received a tabled paper for discussion from the Executive.
- 14.2 The Committee noted that, on 17 September 2010, the Council had discussed a paper on the re-naming of the HPC. The Council had agreed that the name of the organisation should not promote the name of one profession above all the others. The Council had also noted that, as a multi-professional regulator, there was an imperative to ensure fairness across all professions and achieve some continuity of recognition with the existing name,
- 14.3 The Committee noted that the Council's views had been taken to the meeting of the Social Work Regulation Group on 8 October 2010. The issue of a change of name had also been discussed at a stakeholder meeting of social work representatives at the Department of Education on 15 October 2010.
- 14.4 The Committee noted that, following the discussion, two creative agencies, Infinite Design and 360, had been commissioned to further support this work. Their brief had been to draw on and develop the considerations made by Council and consider the challenges faced by any organisation in undertaking a change of name. Both agencies made recommendations on a continuum ranging from minimum adjustment to complete name change, with advantages and disadvantages for each option.
- 14.5 The Committee noted that the Executive had then commissioned two research agencies, Ipsos MORI and GfK NOP, to test the options for a new name and to gauge understanding of key words with the public and professionals. The agencies had undertaken qualitative and quantitative research by a UK-wide telephone poll of 1000 members of the public; two focus groups with members of the public and registrants; and face-to-face computer assisted polling with 1500 members of the public.
- 14.6 The Committee noted that, based on the findings of the research, it was recommended that HPC should be renamed the Health and Care Professions Council. In addition, it was proposed that there should be an explanatory position statement (a 'strapline') explaining that HPC regulated health, psychological and social work professionals. The statement would reflect the range of professionals to be regulated and would send a clear accompanying message with the revised name.

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- 14.7 The Committee noted that the Oversight Group for the project had been positive about the proposed new name. However, the name would need to be included in the legislation to transfer functions from GSCC to HPC and therefore the decision ultimately lay with Parliament. Some members had concerns that the name and strapline might need to be revised in future, if HPC regulated more professions.

**Item 15.10/45 Date and time of next meeting**

- 15.1 The next meeting of the Committee would be held at 11.00 am on Thursday 17 February 2011.
- 15.2 Subsequent meetings would be held at 11.00 am on:
- Wednesday 22 June 2011  
Thursday 8 November 2011

**Resolution**

The Committee agreed to adopt the following resolution:

‘The Committee hereby resolves that the remainder of the meeting shall be held in private, because the matters being discussed relate to one or more of the following;

- (1) information relating to a registrant, former registrant or applicant for registration;
- (2) information relating to an employee or officer holder, former employee or applicant for any post or office;
- (3) the terms of, or expenditure under, a tender or contract for the purchase or supply of goods or services or the acquisition or disposal of property;
- (4) negotiations or consultation concerning labour relations between the Council and its employees;
- (5) any issue relating to legal proceedings which are being contemplated or instituted by or against the Committee or the Council;
- (6) action being taken to prevent or detect crime or to prosecute offenders;
- (7) the source of information given to the Committee in confidence; or
- (8) any other matter which, in the opinion of the Chair, is confidential or the public disclosure of which would prejudice the effective discharge of the Committee’s or Council’s functions.’

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**Summary of those matters considered whilst the public were excluded**

**Item 16.10/46 Minutes of the private part of the Communications Committee meeting of 23 June 2010 (report ref: CC 26/10)**

The Committee considered and approved the minutes of the private part of the Communications Committee meeting held on 23 June 2010.

**Item 17.10/47 Matters arising (report ref: CC 27/10)**

The Committee noted matters arising from the minutes.

**Chair**  
**Date**

Unconfirmed

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