

Health Professions Council – 27 March 2008

Revised professional liaison group operating manual

Executive summary and recommendations

Introduction

The professional liaison group operating manual was agreed in December 2004. Since that time a number of professional liaison groups have completed their work. Based on their experience of working with the different professional liaison groups the Secretariat and the Policy and Standards Department have carried out a review of the manual. The revised manual is attached. The changes which have been made have been substantive and therefore the document has been rewritten. The original operating manual is attached as appendix 3 to this paper.

Decision

The Council is asked to agree the revised professional liaison group operating manual.

Background information

none

Resource implications

none

Financial implications

none

Appendices

See appendix three – original manual

Date of paper

14 March 2008

Revised Professional Liaison Groups operating manual

Date	Ver.	Dept/Cmte	Doc Type	Title	Status	Int. Aud.
2005-01-14	a	CNL	POL	ProfessionalLiasionGroupmanual	Final DD: None	Internal RD: None

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Draft

Introduction

The Council has decided to allow for the creation of professional liaison groups (PLGs), to consider in detail discrete areas where external expertise, across the Council and Committees, and externally, would be helpful.

Forming professional liaison groups

PLGs will always be formed on a project basis: this means that they will have a specific task or set of tasks to accomplish and a defined lifespan. They will always be set up by either the Council or one of its committees (with the ratification of Council). The Council or the Committee setting up each PLG will act as that PLG's sponsor. The sponsor will be responsible for the work of the PLG.

The following guidelines apply when sponsors set up and establish the terms of reference of a PLG:

Sponsor	Council approval required?	Budget
Council	Not applicable	As agreed by Council
Statutory committee	Yes	As agreed by Council
Non-statutory committee	Yes	As agreed by Council

PLGs must always have:

- A rationale which explains, clearly and concisely, the purpose of the PLG.
- Terms of reference, which are tightly drawn so that it is clear when the PLG is acting outside its remit
- A plan of activities
- A timetable

Membership of professional liaison groups

The membership of the PLG will be decided on the basis of the skills and knowledge needed to complete the task to be undertaken. The skills and knowledge will be set out in the workplan and agreed by the PLG sponsor.

The process for appointing the PLG chair is set out in **appendix 1** of this manual. The Chair will normally be a member of Council.

The process for appointing the members of the PLG is set out in **appendix 2** of this manual.

Conduct of meetings

Meetings of PLGs will generally be held in public. Any decision to hold all or part of a meeting in private will be at the discretion of the Chairman and will be taken in line with HPC's guidance for moving a meeting into private session.

Meeting papers and PLG membership will generally be available on the HPC website.

Professional Liaison Groups will not have formal standing orders however the rules of debate and method for dealing with disorderly behaviour will be those adopted for HPC statutory and non-statutory committees.

PLGs will not have a formal quorum. A decision on whether to continue with a meeting where attendance numbers are low will be at the discretion of the Chairman.

Minutes will be taken at PLG meetings and will be confirmed at the next meeting of the PLG. The minutes of the final meeting of the PLG will be approved by the Chair and circulated to members electronically for confirmation. The Chair will have the final say in the case of a dispute regarding the accuracy of the final minutes.

Minutes of meetings will be included on the agenda of the sponsor committee for discussion/approval.

Costs of professional liaison groups

- Members of Council participating in a PLG will receive an attendance allowance (as appropriate) and expenses.
- Other members of the PLG will have their expenses reimbursed by the Council if required, but will not normally be eligible to receive an attendance allowance. However in exceptional circumstances the PLG chair may agree to pay an attendance allowance to external members, particularly in cases where, without this allowance, the individual would not be able to participate in the PLG.

Disbanding professional liaison groups

PLGs will be disbanded in the following circumstances:

- On the planned end date (this will be the norm)

Before the planned end date

- At the behest of the sponsor
- At the request of the PLG and with the agreement of the sponsor
- At the behest of the Council
- After the planned end date
- At the behest of the sponsor and with the agreement of the Council
- At the behest of the PLG and with the agreement of the sponsor and the Council

Where PLGs are disbanded either before or after the planned end date, this will typically be the result of a change in the project requirements. Of course, if a PLG departs from its terms of reference without the approval of its sponsor, or there are problems which cannot be remedied it can also be disbanded.

Auditing professional liaison groups

Each PLG's sponsor is accountable to Council for ensuring that the PLG keeps to its terms of reference. Where a PLG and its sponsor agree to changes in the terms of reference, they must report their actions to the Council.

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APPENDIX 1

PROCESS FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF THE CHAIR OF A PROFESSIONAL LIAISON GROUP

1. When a PLG is being planned an email is sent out to all Council members informing them that a paper regarding a PLG is to be included on the agenda for a forthcoming meeting of the sponsor committee and informing them that a Chairman of the PLG is required.
2. Interested members are asked to provide a statement of not more than 200 words stating their skills and knowledge to be Chairman of the PLG, by a specified date. The statement is returned to the Policy Department.
3. The President and a member of the Policy team meet as an ad-hoc nomination committee to consider the applications and agree a recommendation to the sponsor committee. A written minute of the meeting is recorded by a member of the Secretariat team.
4. Following the meeting all members who have submitted their names for consideration are informed of the recommendation to the sponsor committee.
5. The proposal to establish the PLG is submitted to the sponsor committee for agreement. This will include a recommendation regarding the proposed chairman.
6. The proposal to establish the PLG and the decision regarding the chairman of the PLG will be ratified by Council.
7. All candidates will be informed of the final decision.

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APPENDIX 2

PROCESS FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS OF A PROFESSIONAL LIAISON GROUP

1. After Council has ratified a decision to set up a PLG an email is sent to all Council members setting out the skills and knowledge agreed for membership of the PLG and asking those interested in becoming members to submit a statement of not more than 200 words stating how they meet the requirements, by a specific date. The statement is returned to the Policy Department.
2. Based on the skills and experience agreed by the sponsor committee and having sought advice as appropriate from the PLG chairman and members of Council the Executive will contact individuals and organisations who may wish to become members of the PLG. Interested members will be asked to submit a supporting statement (as in 1 above).
3. The HPC President, Chairman of the PLG and member of the Policy Team meet as an ad-hoc nomination committee to consider all the nominations against the agreed criteria. A written minute of the meeting is recorded by a member of the Secretariat team.
4. Following the meeting all members who have submitted their names for consideration are informed as to whether their nomination will be submitted to the sponsor committee for ratification.
5. The sponsor committee will consider and ratify the decision of the ad-hoc nomination committee.
6. All candidates are informed of the final decision and the Secretariat is informed of the names and contact details of the PLG members.

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