
Health Professions Council Meeting – Friday 17 September 2010

Renaming the Health Professions Council

Executive summary and recommendations

Introduction

This paper sets out for the Council some possible options for name change and examines the advantages and disadvantages of each option.

Decision

The Council is being asked to consider each of these options and provide guidance to the Executive on the preferred name change option.

Background information

See paper.

Resource implications

Implementation of a change to the HPC's name will result in changes to our visual identity. The impact is dependant on the degree of change and will need to be assessed, but changes to stationery, brochures etc could be undertaken on a rolling basis to ensure the most cost efficient process. Any change will impact on all departments, but the process would be managed by the Communications Department.

Financial implications

As above.

Appendices

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Introduction

The report 'Liberating the NHS: Report of the arms-length bodies' that was published by the Department of Health (DH) on 26 July 2010 stated '..... we intend to abolish the General Social Care Council and move the regulation of social workers to the Health Professions Council which will be renamed to reflect its new remit' (page 22 paragraph 3.38).

At the first meeting of the Social Work Regulation Oversight Group on Friday 3 September the DH confirmed that the new name will be set out in the new Health Bill. There is as yet no confirmation when the Bill will be published but it is widely anticipated that it will be scheduled to be heard in October/November and, therefore, reasonable to assume that it will be published in a matter of weeks.

This paper sets out for the Council some of the possible options for name change and examines the advantages and disadvantages of each option.

Background

When the HPC was established in 2001 the change of name from the Council for Professions Supplementary to Medicine (CPSM) to the Health Professions Council was eminently suitable as it reflected the 12 professions that were then regulated. However, since then as new professions have joined the Register there is a strong argument that the word 'Health' alone does not sit well with some of the new professions, for example practitioner psychologists. The same argument would apply to other professions, for example counsellors and psychotherapists, if the Government decides that they should be statutorily regulated by the HPC. It is, therefore, an opportune time for the Council to consider this issue.

Options

Clearly there are endless options for name change that could be considered for the organisation, but in order to facilitate the Council's discussion the Executive has identified a number of potential options and these are set out below alongside an examination of advantages and disadvantages to each option.

Option 1 Single word alternative

One option would be to use a single word alternative, rather than a combination of words, to describe the nature of the organisation. The choice of word would be constrained by the need to identify a suitable and distinctive word. Recent

examples of this approach are the Post Office who changed their name to Consignia (although it should be noted the name change was a publicity disaster and the change was reverted) and Diageo the food and drinks conglomerate created when Guinness and Grand Metropolitan were merged.

Advantages

- The opportunity to define a neutral identity that is not perceived to specifically belong to either health or social care.

Disadvantages

- The process to identify a suitable name would be costly and time consuming.
- There would need to be long-term investment to re-establish recognition amongst key stakeholder audiences, particularly the public and the professions, which undermines existing communications work.
- We would need a comprehensive change to our visual identity and the associated cost this will incur may be viewed as unnecessary by many of our key stakeholders.
- The resource required to convey the meaning/sense of the word to the general public could be prohibitive.

Option 2 Health and Care Professions Council

A second option would be Health and Care Professions Council (or Care and Health Professions Council).

Advantages

- Affords a strong degree of continuity with our current name and function which would reduce the time and cost of re-establishing name recognition and would minimise visual identity change costs.
- Retaining the word 'Health' reflects the majority of the professions and individual registrants that we currently regulate and will continue to regulate in the future.
- Adding the word 'Care' would reflect the work of some of the professions we currently regulate and some of the additional professions that we may regulate in the future.
- Offers a compromise between those professions and registrants who regard themselves to be in the 'health' arena and those who regard themselves to be in the 'care' arena.
- Affords greater scope and flexibility for the future (for example if government directs us to regulate additional professions).

Disadvantages

- Emphasising 'Health' and 'Care' may alienate those registrants who do not specifically identify with either field, whereas for other registrants 'Health' and 'Healthcare' are synonymous.

Option 3 Health and Social Care Professions Council

A third option would be Health and Social Care Professions Council (or Social Care and Health Professions Council)

Advantages

- Retains some continuity with our current identity by retaining the words 'Health', 'Professions' and 'Council' which might reduce the time and cost of establishing name recognition and would minimise visual identity change costs.
- Retaining the word 'Health' reflects the majority of the professions and individual registrants that we currently regulate and will continue to regulate in the future.
- More accurately describes and acknowledges the social care professions and provides future flexibility should other parts of the social care workforce be brought into regulation.

Disadvantages

- It does not provide sufficient flexibility for future regulation of other professions.
- Has the potential to alienate some of our current professions who will see themselves as working within a 'caring profession' as opposed to a 'social care profession'.
- Social care is too specific a term and it might be interpreted as emphasising one profession above all the other fifteen, for example we would not consider naming ourselves the 'Health and Practitioner Psychologist Council'.
- The title could be perceived to be overly long and significantly different to our current name and would require some further work into the operational impact this might have on visual identity change.
- The name is sufficiently different to our current name and may require long-term investment to re-establish recognition amongst key stakeholder audiences, particularly the public and the professions, which undermines existing communications work.
- There is already a Health and Social Care Professionals Council which regulates a number of the same professions in Ireland, but is a totally separate organisation and this may cause confusion with stakeholders.

Option 4 Health, Social and Care Council

A fourth option is Health, Social and Care Council.

Advantages

- Offers a compromise between those professions and registrants who regard themselves to be in the 'health' arena and those who regard themselves to be in the 'social care' or 'care' arena.

- Affords greater flexibility for the future (for example if government directs us to regulate additional professions).

Disadvantages

- The title could be perceived to be overly long and significantly different to our current name and would require some further work into the operational impact this might have on visual identity change.
- The name is sufficiently different to our current name and may require long-term investment to re-establish recognition amongst key stakeholder audiences, particularly the public and the professions, which undermines existing communications work.

Option 5 Care Professions Council

A fifth option is Care Professions Council.

Advantages

- Retains some continuity with our current name by retaining the words 'Professions' and 'Council'
- It could be argued that the word 'Care' reflects more generally the work of all the professions we currently regulate and the additional professions that we may regulate in the future, all of whom are involved in the 'care' of others, albeit some more directly than others.
- It is a shorter name than some of the other options under discussion.
- Minimises visual identity change costs.

Disadvantages

- The name is sufficiently different to our current name and may require long-term investment to re-establish recognition amongst key stakeholder audiences, particularly the public and the professions, which undermines existing communications work.
- It has some commonality with the Care Quality Commission which may cause confusion with stakeholders.
- Has the potential to alienate some of our registrants who might perceive themselves as working in 'health' or 'social care' and who do not identify with the broad term 'care professions'.

Conclusion

The Council is being asked to consider each of these options and provide guidance to the Executive on the preferred name change option.