

Council meeting, 7 February 2018

Stakeholder market research

Executive summary and recommendations

Introduction

In the past, we have commissioned market research (approximately every two to three years) to explore stakeholder views and perceptions of the organisation. The Policy and Standards workplan for 2017-18 was to work with Communications to develop a brief for tendering in 2018-19. Delivery of this research has been included in the draft corporate plan for 2018-20.

A draft brief for the research is appended. The purpose of the research is to explore with stakeholder groups their understanding and views of the HCPC. The outcomes of the research will support the development and delivery of work plans and strategies including, but not limited to, informing ongoing communication and engagement.

The scope of the proposed research is slightly wider than in recent years, which have largely had a communications focus. Key points to highlight include:

- The research will collect quantitative data from a wide range of stakeholders: registrants; educators; employers; service users, carers and the public; and 'key stakeholders'.
- The research includes qualitative 'depth interviews' with key stakeholders to allow us to explore what we are perceived to do well and what we might improve. Key stakeholders include professional bodies (see paragraph 4.3 of the draft brief).
- The research will assist in benchmarking performance. Some questions will be consistent with previous years and/or will be consistent in future years to allow ongoing monitoring.
- The research will collect some data which are proxy measures of outcomes. For example, we have proposed asking certain groups their level of confidence in the fitness to practise of newly qualified professionals, a measure of what we seek to achieve in our standards and education work.

Decision

This Council is invited to discuss and comment on the attached brief.

Background information

The previous market research study, carried out by IPSOS Mori, is here:

<http://www.hcpc-uk.org/assets/documents/10004A69Enc05-Stakeholderperceptionsandsocialmediaintelligenceresearchreport.pdf>

Resource implications

The commissioning and conduct of the research will be managed by the Policy team, with input from relevant colleagues including the Communications Department.

Financial implications

The research will need to be funded from the 2018-19 budget. A budget of c.£70,000 is anticipated (subject to agreement of the 18-19 budget).

Appendices

Draft research brief

Date of paper

26 January 2018

INVITATION FOR RESEARCH PROPOSALS

Understanding and views of the HCPC

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of the research is to explore with stakeholder groups their understanding and views of the HCPC. The outcomes of the research will support the development and delivery of work plans and strategies including informing ongoing communication and engagement.
- 1.2 This research will build on similar research carried out for the HCPC in previous years. The intention in part is to benchmark stakeholder views and understanding (including capturing proxy measures of outcome) in a way which can be compared to previous research and/or can be monitored in future research.
- 1.3 We anticipate that as core components the research is likely to include (some combination of the following).
 - Online and/or telephone surveys with a range of stakeholder groups.
 - Depth interviews with key stakeholders.
- 1.4 A budget of up to **c.£70,000** is available for this work (depending on the scope of the research). The deadline for proposals is **23 March 2018**.

2. About the HCPC

- 2.1 The Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) is an independent multi-professional regulator set up to protect the public. We register the members of 16 professions. We set and maintain standards which cover education and training, behaviour, professional skills and health; approve and monitor education programmes which lead to registration; maintain a register of people that successfully pass those programmes; and take action if a registrant's fitness to practise falls below our standards.
- 2.2 We were set up in 2002 and now regulate 16 health and care professions (c. 350,000 registrants) including, for example, biomedical scientists, dietitians and operating department practitioners. 15 of these professions are regulated on a UK-wide basis. Social workers are regulated on an England only basis, with separate regulators in the other UK countries.

3. Background to the research

3.1 This section outlines some in-exhaustive background to this research.

Previous market research

3.2 We previously commissioned similar research in 2005, 2007, 2011 and 2015. The focus in the past has largely been on communications, with the outputs of the research influencing the ongoing development of the communications strategy and communications work plans.¹

3.3 The 2015 study was carried out by Ipsos Mori and aimed to assist the HCPC in understanding the following among each of the key audiences:

- awareness and perception of regulation – specifically with regard to the professions that the HCPC regulates;
- awareness of and views towards the HCPC's role and functions;
- how the HCPC currently communicates and engages; and
- how these groups would like to be communicated with in the future.²

3.4 The research included general public and service users; service user, patient and public organisations; and HCPC registrants.

3.5 Other periodic, project-based HCPC market research has explored specific topics such as the expectations of complainants in the fitness to practise process and the views of registrants and stakeholders on the HCPC's Continuing Professional Development (CPD) standards and audits.³ We collect regular data of stakeholders' customer service experience – for example, about their contact with our Registration Department.

3.6 We also periodically commission academic research to assist our decision making – for example, of relevance to the proposed scope of this study is previous research we commissioned which sought to establish how effective our standards of education and training were in preparing newly qualified professionals for practice.⁴

¹ See: <http://www.hcpc-uk.org/mediaandevents/research/>

² Ipsos Mori (2015). HCPC perceptions audit.
<http://www.hcpc-uk.org/assets/documents/10004A69Enc05-Stakeholderperceptionsandsocialmediaintelligenceandresearchreport.pdf>

³ See: <http://www.hcpc-uk.org/publications/research/>

⁴ Chambers, M. *et al* (2017). Preparation for practice: The role of the HCPC's standards of education and training in ensuring that newly qualified professionals are fit to practise
<http://www.hcpc-uk.org/publications/research/index.asp?id=1144>

Understanding the prevalence of complaints about paramedics and social workers

- 3.7 We have recently published research undertaken by the University of Surrey, looking at understanding the fitness to practise cases we receive about paramedics and social workers in England – the professions in which we receive the highest proportions of concerns.⁵
- 3.8 The data collected in the research and the recommendations of the research team have highlighted a number of areas we wish to explore further in this research including the following.
- Understanding of stakeholders of the fitness to practise process, including when to make a referral.
 - Understanding of registrants of key parts of the standards of conduct, performance and ethics including:
 - the requirement to self-refer fitness to practise issues;
 - reporting concerns about safety or well-being of service users; and
 - being open and honest with service users when things go wrong.

⁵ Van der Gaag, A. *et al* (2017). People like us? Understanding complaints about paramedics and social workers.

<http://www.hcpc-uk.org/publications/research/index.asp?id=1144>

4. Scope of proposed research

4.1 This section outlines the scope of the proposed research.

Stakeholder groups

4.2 The research must include the following stakeholder groups.

- Registrants (health and care professionals registered with the HCPC in one of the 16 professions we regulate).
- Educators.
- Employers.
- Key stakeholders.
- Service users, carers and the public.

4.3 The 'key stakeholders' group is an umbrella term for a group of organisational stakeholders with a high interest or stake in the HCPC's work, who are often opinion formers and who in many cases are in a position to give their 'constituency's' views of the HCPC. For example, this would include national organisations such as professional bodies, unions and some public bodies.

4.4 We would facilitate the research wherever possible – for example, by sending out surveys to registrants and employers or by providing contact information.

Quantitative research

4.5 The purpose of this research is in part to gather quantitative data which allows benchmarking of the understanding and views of stakeholders of the HCPC. We anticipate that some questions included in the 2015 study are likely to be included in some form in this research so that relative performance / progress can be tracked.

4.6 The specific stakeholder groups to be targeted in this research are different from that included in the last study – with employers, educators and key stakeholders added.

4.7 We also want to widen the focus of the research by more explicitly gathering data on different stakeholders' assessment of our performance in securing relevant outcomes, for example, employer views on whether they consider newly qualified registrants are adequately prepared for practice. We will want to work with the appointed research team to develop appropriate questions in these areas that might then be used to track relative performance / progress in future studies.

4.8 In addition, we would like to measure how the HCPC is perceived and what it represents for stakeholders. This should include metrics for brand associations and how these align with the HCPC's vision and values.

4.9 Annex A outlines the high level areas that we anticipate will be covered during the research with each stakeholder group. This is, however, only indicative and may require further refinement. These areas will form the basis of the development of questions and topic guides by the research team.

Qualitative research

- 4.10 We anticipate that any survey is likely to be primarily quantitative, with potentially a discrete number of free text questions where this might be valuable.
- 4.11 The research should also include qualitative telephone, online or face-to-face depth interviews with key stakeholders (in addition to collecting quantitative data from this group). This would allow greater opportunity for free comment and probing of the reasons behind responses to questions, with a focus on understanding what the HCPC is considered to do well and what might be improved.

Research governance

- 4.12 We expect the appointed research team to develop a project plan outlining key milestones and to keep this updated for the duration of the research. We expect the appointed research team to provide progress reports on a regular basis.
- 4.13 Sign-off from the HCPC lead will be required at key stages to be agreed with the appointed research team to include the following.
- Sampling strategy for surveys and interviews.
 - The text of the surveys and discussion guides for interviews.
- 4.14 Payment of the research budget will be made in two instalments – 50% on commission and 50% on satisfactory completion of the final report.

Final report

- 4.15 The final report should include a description of the background and objectives of the research, methodology and findings. An Executive summary should be included.
- 4.16 We expect that the final report will include multi-variant analysis (for example, to illustrate, an analysis of the drivers of confidence or lack of confidence amongst registrants).
- 4.17 The research should identify any key themes or issues from the research including any that might merit further exploration. We do not require specific recommendations from the research team as the research findings will be considered in light of the wider context and other activities to determine any actions required.
- 4.18 The research team may be required to present their findings at a Council meeting to be determined (and this should therefore be factored into costings).

5. Next steps and anticipated timescale

5.1 Proposals for this work should be submitted by email to [], by no later than **23 March 2018**.

Email: []

5.2 For queries about the brief, please contact [] in the first instance.

5.3 There is no prescribed format for submitting research proposals. However, they should include the following to be considered for shortlisting.

- A proposal for how the research would be conducted.
- An outline timescale including key milestones.
- Any ethical considerations or approval needed.
- Arrangements for research governance.
- Information about the experience of the organisation to deliver the project.
- The researcher(s) CV(s).
- A breakdown of costs.

5.4 The following are the timescales for this work.

DRAFT - COUNCIL FEBRUARY 2018

Action	Timetable
Invitation for proposals issued	By 12 February 2018
Deadline for proposals	20 March 2018
Shortlisting	By 12 April 2018
Interviews / meetings with shortlisted research team(s) (if required)	By 27 April 2018
Research team appointed	By 4 May 2018
Contract signed and research formally commences	By 18 May 2018
Deadline for final report (with a draft available for comment on a date to be agreed)	28 September 2018

- 5.5 We anticipate a budget of up to **c.£70,000** (depending on the scope of the research). This budget is inclusive of all costs, including VAT (if applicable) and any contribution to overheads (if applicable).

Shortlisting criteria

- 5.6 Our decision to shortlist or appoint will be based on the research brief, and on an overall assessment of how far the proposal has addressed the HCPC's needs. We will particularly assess research proposals as to the extent to which they meet or exceed the following indicative criteria.
- The proposal demonstrates understanding of the role of the HCPC as a regulator.
 - The proposal demonstrates understanding of the research aims.
 - The proposal describes an appropriate methodology which is consistent with the research aims (including being replicable in future exercises).
 - The proposal demonstrates that the research team have proven experience and expertise in undertaking research of a similar nature.
 - The proposal demonstrates a clear commitment and ability to deliver the project on time to an appropriately high standard.
 - The proposal represents value for money.

ANNEX A – Areas of focus by stakeholder group

Registrants	Service users, carers and the public	Employers	Key stakeholders	Educators
Understanding and views of the HCPC – overall				
Understanding of the HCPC’s role	Understanding of professional regulation	Understanding of the HCPC’s role	Understanding of the HCPC’s role	Understanding of the HCPC’s role
Overall confidence in HCPC regulation (including exploration of reasons for being less confident)		Overall confidence in HCPC regulation (including exploration of reasons for being less confident)	Overall confidence in HCPC regulation (including exploration of reasons for being less confident)	Overall confidence in HCPC regulation (including exploration of reasons for being less confident)
			Exploration of what the HCPC does well and what might be improved (qualitative)	
Use of HCPC registered professionals				
	Contact with HCPC registered professionals			
	Satisfaction with HCPC registered professionals			

ANNEX A – Areas of focus by stakeholder group

Registrants	Service users, carers and the public	Employers	Key stakeholders	Educators
Reporting and escalating concerns				
Who would they raise concerns about the safety or wellbeing of service users to	Who would they raise concerns about a HCPC registered professional to			
If they had concerns in the past, did they raise those concerns and to whom	If they had concerns in the past, did they raise those concerns and to whom			
Reasons for not formally raising concerns	Reasons for not formally raising concerns			
Understanding and awareness of HCPC requirement to report concerns (SCPE 7) and to be open and honest when things go wrong (SCPE 8)				
Fitness to practise				
Understanding of the fitness to practise process		Understanding of the fitness to practise process	Understanding of the fitness to practise process	Understanding of the fitness to practise process

ANNEX A – Areas of focus by stakeholder group

Confidence in the fairness of fitness to practise investigations		Confidence in the fairness of fitness to practise investigations	Confidence in the fairness of fitness to practise investigations	
Confidence in the fairness of fitness to practise hearings		Confidence in the fairness of fitness to practise hearings	Confidence in the fairness of fitness to practise hearings	
Understanding of when to self-refer (SCPE 9)		Understanding of when HCPC registrants should self-refer (SCPE 9)		
		Understanding of when to make a fitness to practise referral	Understanding of when to make a fitness to practise referral	

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ANNEX A – Areas of focus by stakeholder group

Registrants	Service users, carers and the public	Employers	Key stakeholders	Educators
Education				
Confidence that newly qualified graduates are prepared for practice (in their profession)		Confidence that newly qualified graduates are prepared for practice	Confidence that newly qualified graduates are prepared for practice	Confidence that newly qualified graduates are prepared for practice
			Confidence in quality assurance of education and training programmes (robust, proportionate, fair)	Confidence quality assurance of education and training programmes (robust, proportionate, fair)
CPD				
Understanding of CPD standards		Understanding of CPD standards	Understanding of CPD standards	Understanding of CPD standards
Confidence in the fairness of the CPD audit process		Confidence in the fairness of the CPD audit process	Confidence in the fairness of the CPD audit process	
Outcomes from complying with the CPD standards and audits (e.g. reflection)		Outcomes from complying with the CPD standards and audits (e.g. reflection)	Outcomes from complying with the CPD standards and audits (e.g. reflection)	

ANNEX A – Areas of focus by stakeholder group

Registration				
Understanding of the registration renewal process		Understanding of the registration renewal process	Understanding of the registration renewal process	
Fairness of the registration processes to those going through them / to you personally (e.g. applications, readmission, renewal)		Fairness of the registration processes to those going through them / to you personally (e.g. applications, readmission, renewal)	Fairness of the registration processes to those going through them / to you personally (e.g. applications, readmission, renewal)	Fairness of the registration processes to those going through them / to you personally (e.g. applications, readmission, renewal)
Use and accessibility of the online register	Use and accessible of the online register	Use and accessibility of the online register	Use and accessibility of the online register	Use and accessibility of the online register

ANNEX A – Areas of focus by stakeholder group

Registrants	Service users, carers and the public	Employers	Key stakeholders	Educators
Communications	Communications	Communications	Communications	Communications
Brand perception and associations		Brand perception and associations	Brand perception and associations	Brand perception and associations
Experience when engaging with HCPC across different channels and usage/behaviour e.g. how and when channels are used	Experience when engaging with HCPC across different channels and usage/behaviour e.g. how and when channels are used	Experience when engaging with HCPC across different channels and usage/behaviour e.g. how and when channels are used	Experience when engaging with HCPC across different channels and usage/behaviour e.g. how and when channels are used	Experience when engaging with HCPC across different channels and usage/behaviour e.g. how and when channels are used
Tone of voice and messaging – how communications are perceived across HCPC channels; preferred style across HCPC channels	Tone of voice and messaging – how communications are perceived across HCPC channels; preferred style across HCPC channels	Tone of voice and messaging – how communications are perceived across HCPC channels; preferred style across HCPC channels	Tone of voice and messaging – how communications are perceived across HCPC channels; preferred style across HCPC channels	Tone of voice and messaging – how communications are perceived across HCPC channels; preferred style across HCPC channels

Note

Please note, this is indicative only.

SCPE: Standards of conduct, performance and ethics (SCPE)