

## Education and Training Committee

### Minutes of the meeting of the Education and Training Committee held in public as follows:

**Date:** Wednesday 12 June 2024

**Time:** 10am

**Venue:** Videoconference (Microsoft Teams)

**Present:** Helen Gough (Chair)  
Rebekah Eglinton  
Penny Joyce  
Katie Thirlaway

**Apologies:** Steven Vaughan

#### **Attendees:**

Francesca Bramley, Governance Manager  
Brendon Edmonds, Head of Regulatory Development and Performance  
Karen Flaherty, Head of Governance  
Rachael Gledhill, Head of Policy and Standards  
Richard Houghton, Head of Registration  
Jamie Hunt, Head of Education  
Geraldine Kinkead-Richards, Council Apprentice  
Andrew Smith, Executive Director of Education, Registration and Regulatory Standards and Deputy Chief Executive

## Public Agenda

### **1 Welcome and introduction**

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed those present to the meeting.
- 1.2 Rebekah Eglinton was attending her first meeting of the Committee.
- 1.3 Geraldine Kinkead-Richards, Council Apprentice, was attending to observe the meeting.

### **2 Apologies for absence**

- 2.1 Apologies for absence were received from Steven Vaughan, who had provided some feedback and questions in advance of the meeting in relation to the items to be considered, which the Chair would share during the meeting.

### **3 Approval of agenda**

- 3.1 The Committee approved the agenda.

### **4 Declaration of members' interests in relation to agenda items**

- 4.1 No interests were declared.

### **5 Minutes of the Education and Training Committee meeting held in public on 6 March 2024**

- 5.1 The Committee approved the minutes as an accurate record of its meeting held in public on 6 March 2024.

### **6 Matters arising**

- 6.1 The Committee noted the matters arising from its previous meeting.

## Performance Reports

### **7 Registration Performance Report**

- 7.1 The Committee received a report from the Head of Registration, which outlined performance for the period from February to April 2024 and service improvements under way.
- 7.2 The Committee noted the good performance across the main registration services and contact centre. The following areas were highlighted:

- the report overview included a summary of changes since the previous report and this would be further refined in future reports to provide greater clarity;
- the implementation of the new registration operating model had commenced in April 2024, consultation meetings had been held with all employees directly affected, all department employees had been briefed and recruitment into the new roles had also commenced;
- a successful recruitment exercise resulted in 62 new partners appointed as International Registration Assessors, bringing the total number to over 200;
- a pilot to establish proof of concept for using artificial intelligence (AI) to respond to email enquiries was progressing well;
- the target for registration appeals concluded within 100 days had not been met;
- median application assessment time for UK applications during the period was between two and three working days, significantly shorter than the service standard of ten working days;
- the number of international applications continued to reduce but was higher than had been assumed in the budget and the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) had therefore approved seven full time equivalent (FTE) additional resource to meet the increased demand;
- the renewal periods for radiographers and physiotherapists had ended during the reporting period and there had been an increase in the renewal rates for each profession compared to the previous renewal periods; and
- the performance targets for responding to enquiries by telephone, email and post had been maintained.

7.3 The Committee discussed the challenges with meeting the target for concluding registration appeals. The Registration department had planned to increase to four registration appeal days per month, however this had not yet been implemented due to a number of late cancellations. Council members' availability to chair the appeal hearings and appellant availability were limiting factors. The requirement for a Council member to chair the panels could not be reconsidered until regulatory reform enabled changes to the current legislation. The increase in the volume of registration appeals had also adversely impacted completion times.

7.4 The number of appeals were noted to be small and therefore small changes resulted in significant changes in the percentages reported.

7.5 In response to a question, the Head of Registration clarified that for those appeals that had been allowed, the HCPC had received additional information following the original decision. Appeals decisions were fed back to the

relevant service manager(s) within the Registration department. A number of new roles had been introduced to support the new operating model, which included quality assurance roles and a training and development role. These new posts would support learning from appeals, quality assurance audits and training programmes incorporating feedback.

**Action:** Future Registration Performance Reports would include an update on the actions being taken to improve registration appeals performance and the impact of these actions.

**Action:** The Committee Chair and the Head of Registration would meet to discuss the issue of Council members' availability to participate in registration appeals panels and the impact this was having on appeal timelines.

- 7.6 The Committee reflected on its intention to review the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for registration to ensure the right outcomes were being measured. It was agreed that this should be deferred to allow time for the new operating model to fully embed.
- 7.7 Approximately 10% of radiographers had applied for readmission to the Register as a result of not renewing registration during the renewal window, however the numbers were noted to be small. There was a streamlined process in place to simplify the readmission process when the deadline had been missed. The Registration department had worked jointly with the Communications department and professional bodies to deliver proactive and targeted communications to registrants to reduce the number of registrants who were unnecessarily removed from the Register.
- 7.8 The Committee discussed the measures of success that would be used to evaluate using AI to respond to email enquiries. The proof of concept would be evaluated through qualitative and quantitative data on timeliness and efficiency to enable statistical comparisons with the Outlook system and surveys would be used to evaluate the experience of registration advisors using the AI product. The evaluation outcome would be used to build a case for future investment into AI within the Registration department and potentially across other areas of the HCPC in line with the organisation-wide regulatory IT systems review that had been discussed at the recent Council meeting.

## **8 Education Performance Report**

- 8.1 The Committee received a report from the Head of Education, which outlined the performance measures across the operational processes in the Education team and current performance against these.
- 8.2 The Committee noted that:
- the percentage of active assessments exceeding the target timeframe had reduced due to a spike in performance review assessment activity for new programmes due to commence in September 2024, acknowledging this was reflected in the number of active cases exceeding the service level timeframe on page five of the report, with a further drop in performance

anticipated in the next reporting period as the higher volume of work continued to progress;

- a planned significant reduction in the number of performance reviews next year in line with the new service model would release capacity for the Education department to broaden their focus and engage regionally and nationally and using data insights and intelligence to target interventions where needed;
- significant engagement activity had been undertaken during the reporting period, including sector engagement on the NHS England Long Term Workforce Plan and apprenticeship assessments insights, pre-consultation work with education providers on the Standards for education and training (SETs) review and a series of well-attended webinars on a range of topics from the Education Annual Report due to run until August 2024; and
- the proposed learner numbers for dietitians, occupational therapists and podiatrists remained low, although all professions had increased or were increasing capacity, with the notable exception of operating department practitioners (ODPs).

8.3 The Committee noted the slight decreasing trend in ODP programme capacity. The numbers were expected to stabilise with no further decrease anticipated, however the NHS England Long Term Workforce Plan included a reduction in ODP numbers before projecting a return to current levels in 2031.

8.4 The Committee reflected on the stakeholder feedback, noting that although the numbers were low, the data indicated a higher level of education provider satisfaction and lower level of partner satisfaction since the new model had been launched. Although the partner satisfaction ratings were only slightly lower, the Committee considered whether this was a cause for concern. Further work was planned to analyse the free text responses from partners and to engage with partners through workshops to listen to their views. The Education department was working closely with the Partners team to link this with the broader review of the partners operating model and this remained on the operational risk register.

## Consultations and Reviews

### **9 Education and Training Committee response to the consultation on fees**

9.1 The Head of Governance introduced a draft response to the consultation on fees, clarifying that the Health Professions Order 2001 required that the Council consulted the Committee about any changes to the HCPC's fees.

9.2 Due to the proximity of the Committee meeting to the fee consultation closing date, all Committee members had previously responded to a questionnaire that had been circulated and the feedback received had been used to draft a response for the Committee's approval.

- 9.3 The proposed response set out that the Committee agrees with the need and rationale for the increase in the fees and acknowledged the need for future increases whilst emphasising the need to continue to improve performance and efficiency. The response also acknowledged the financial pressures for registrants and supported the implementation of mitigation measures through registrants.
- 9.4 The Committee approved the draft response to the consultation on fees.

## Governance

### **10 Education and Training Committee Scheme of delegation**

- 10.1 The Committee reviewed the proposed changes to the scheme of delegation, which had last been updated in 2018. The scheme had been updated to align it with current practice and to provide greater clarity in some areas for the avoidance of doubt. The Head of Education and Head of Registration had provided feedback in advance of the meeting and this had been incorporated into the updated scheme.
- 10.2 The Committee endorsed the proposed changes to the scheme of delegation.

### **11 Resolution to move the meeting to private session**

- 11.1 The Committee resolved that the remainder of the meeting would be held in private, because the matters being discussed related to matters which, in the opinion of the Chair, were confidential or the public disclosure of which would prejudice the effective discharge of the Committee's or Council's functions.
- 11.2 The meeting was briefly adjourned.