

Communications Committee 17 February 2011

Transfer of social workers' register (England) draft communications workplan

Executive summary and recommendations

Introduction

The communications workplan identifies some of the key audiences we need to reach and the communications messages and objectives. It sets out the communications channels we will use and identifies the potential risks and mitigation of these risks.

The plan covers our activities from December 2010 until the transfer has been completed. It is an operational plan and complements the main project plan.

Decision

The Committee is invited to discuss and approve the attached document (subject to any changes agreed at the meeting and any minor editing amendments).

Background information

In July 2010, the Coalition Government published the report 'Liberating the NHS: report of the arms-length bodies which stated that 'the regulation of social workers would be transferred to the HPC which will be renamed to reflect its new remit'.

Since that date, preparatory work has been undertaken to transfer the Register from the General Social Care Council to the HPC. An HPC project group has been formed and a project plan put together, meetings with the GSCC and HPC departments have taken place and the Chair and Chief Executive have undertaken a series of meetings with stakeholders as well as participating in the Social Work Reform Board meetings and attending the Social Work Oversight Regulatory Group.

The Health and Social Care Bill which sets out the detail of the transfer was published in January 2011 and the anticipated transfer date is April 2012.

Resource implications

Resource has been allocated within the departmental workplan.

Financial implications

Resource for communications activities has been identified as part of the project budget.

Appendices

Transfer of social workers' register (England) communications workplan

Date	Ver.	Dept/Cmte	Doc Type	Title	Status	Int. Aud.
2008-02-14	a	COM	PPR	Communications budget headline figures	Final DD: None	Public RD: None

Transfer of Social Workers' Register (England) Communications Workplan

Project/initiative

Transfer of Social Workers' Register (England) from the General Social Care Council to the Health Professions Council

Communications planning lead

Jacqueline Ladds, Director of Communications

HPC team responsible for project managing the transfer

Directorate	Projects/Operations
Key HPC contacts	There is a project group made up of representatives from HPC directorates and the HPC project lead is Greg Ross Sampson, Director of Operations

Timeframe

The Health and Social Care Bill which sets out the detail of the transfer was published in January 2011 and the anticipated transfer date is April 2012. The communications plan covers our activities from December 2010 until the transfer has been completed. It is an operational plan and complements the project's main project plan.

Background

In July 2010, the Coalition Government published the report 'Liberating the NHS: report of the arms-length bodies which stated that 'the regulation of social workers

would be transferred to the HPC which will be renamed to reflect its new remit'.

Since that date, preparatory work has been undertaken to transfer the Register from the General Social Care Council to the HPC. An HPC project group has been formed and a project plan put together, meetings with the GSCC and HPC departments have taken place and the Chair and Chief Executive have undertaken a series of meetings with stakeholders as well as participating in the Social Work Reform Board meetings and attending the Social Work Oversight Regulatory Group.

Target audiences

There are eight main audiences that need to be aware of the transfer. These include:

- 1) service users and the general public
- 2) social workers in England, including registered and prospective
- 3) employers
- 4) professional bodies
- 5) parliamentarians
- 6) key stakeholders including the Social Work Reform Board, regulators in the devolved administrations, Unison and other social work associations
- 7) education related stakeholders
- 8) HPC employees.

A more detailed list can be found in appendix 1 of this workplan.

Communication aims and objectives

- To raise awareness across all audiences that the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) (subject to parliamentary approval) is the new regulator of social workers in England
- To ensure that members of the public, but particularly service users have access to information about the role of the Health and Care Professions Council
- To ensure that social workers are fully informed of the process and receive information about the transfer and registration renewal process.
- To ensure that employers are aware of the new arrangements and understand the HCPC's regulatory functions and processes.
- To begin to develop working relationships with key stakeholders in the profession and ensure they are fully informed of the process and understand the HCPC's regulatory role.

Key messages

The overarching key message is that the HPC will become the new regulator of social workers in England following the closure of the GSCC and will be renamed the Health and Care Professions Council HCPC (subject to parliamentary approval).

In addition, there are some specific messages which will apply to individual audiences. These are set out below.

Service users and the public

- how and what concerns the public can raise with the HCPC
- how to check a social worker is registered

Social workers in England

- the importance of HCPC registration
- informed about the registration renewal process (including online)
- informed about the HCPC's standards
- for prospective registrants, routes to registration
- how the role of the regulator relates to that of a professional body or trade union

Employers

- informed about the HCPC's standards, processes and functions, particularly registration and fitness to practise.
- how to check an employee is registered

Professional bodies and key stakeholders

- how the role of the regulator relates to that of a professional body or trade union
- informed about the HCPC's standards, processes and functions
- informed about the registration renewal process

Parliamentarians

- the HPC's track record in transferring professions to the Register
- the efficiency of a multi-profession regulator

Employees

- informed about key activities and dates

Existing HPC registrants

- the impact the transfer will have to their registration

Key issues

Based on our media monitoring, we have identified a broad range of issues which will require addressing through our messaging and communications activities.

These include

- the perception that HPC works to a health model
- the concern that work undertaken so far to increase the profile and improve professionalism within the social work profession may be lost when the GSCC closes
- the likely increase in registration fees from £30 to £76
- the impact of our fitness to practice process, particularly as the GSCC currently only investigates conduct cases
- the impact on individual registration and what people need to do now and the timescales
- the HPC's position on student registration

We will also need to address the impact that the legislation set out within the Health and Social Care Bill and the February 2011 White Paper may have on the HPC, for example regulation of social care workers and voluntary registers.

Specific responses to these issues will be developed and used, where appropriate, in all our communications activities.

To date, we have uploaded some initial frequently asked questions to the website and will continue to develop these. We are also currently working on our media lines to take.

Communication channels

We will use the full range of communication channels open to us, including print and broadcast media, social media, web, professional conferences and events, talks and presentations, public information materials, newsletter and direct mail.

For service users and the general public, we will develop a public information campaign which will include print and broadcast media and will be launched when the Register opens. We will also use social media channels including Facebook and consumer media where required and update our public information materials to incorporate social workers (England).

For social workers in England, including registered and prospective, we will ensure our web pages are accurate and up to date, we will attend relevant profession specific conferences and events, develop a programme of articles in professional media (print and online), produce standards of proficiency and undertake an

information mailing with the HCPC standards in advance of the Register opening.

For employers, we will undertake an information mailing, ensure access to relevant employer-specific publications and web information, run a series of social work employer specific events in advance of the transfer as well as news and articles in the professional media.

We will actively work with the main professional bodies and key social work stakeholders maintaining contact and ensuring they receive timely information.

We will monitor the passage of legislation through parliament and, where appropriate, provide relevant information to targeted parliamentarians through written briefing, information on e-politix and face to face contact (where required)

For education related stakeholders, the Education Department will lead the communication activities which will include new web pages, information mailings, events and publications.

For HPC employees, we will provide information on the intranet and in all employee meetings as well as department-specific training for registrations and fitness to practice.

Key external stakeholders

The HPC is working closely with the Department of Health and with the General Social Care Council to ensure the smooth transfer of the Register.

The HPC's communication team will work closely with the General Social Care Council's communications department and, so far, we have agreed a statement that sets out our intention to work jointly on specific activities. This will be updated throughout the project and is set out in appendix 3.

Potential risks

Risk	Level of risk (high, medium, low)
The transfer doesn't take place	Low
Service users unaware of transfer	Low
Registrants unaware of transfer	Medium

Plans to minimise these risks

We will monitor the passage of legislation through parliament and ensure that parliamentarians are suitably informed.

We will utilise the full range of communication tools available to the organisation and regularly monitor and review the communications workplan.

We will ensure that registrants and employers as well as key stakeholders are fully aware that the transfer is as a result of the closure of the General Social Care Council.

Our service user and general public information campaign will have clear messages and be monitored and reviewed regularly

Measurement and evaluation

We will use a variety of measures to evaluate the success of the communications work we do. These include

- Stakeholder opinion polling
- Volume and type of calls to the Registration Department
- % registration renewals
- Number and tone of articles in professional journals
- number of conferences, events and speaking engagements attended
- type of questions and queries raised at above
- web monitoring

Communications activities – transfer of social workers’ register (England)

2010-2011

Date	Headline activities	Audience	Lead
December	Create new pages on www.hpc-uk.org, including FAQs and information about the PLG, and ensure the information is relevant and up to date	All audiences	Communications (TG) / Policy (CU)
	Commence series of meetings with relevant stakeholders to introduce them to the HPC and ensure they understand our role in regulation and the details of the transfer		Chief Executive and Chair / Policy (MG) / Communications (MP)
January	14 January HPC PLG meeting		
	19 January Health and Social Care Bill published		
	Develop briefing and provide relevant information to targeted parliamentarians through written briefing, information on e-politix and face to face contact (where required)	Parliamentarians	Communications (MP/LD)
	Issue statement and upload item in media section of the website on publication of Health and Social Care Bill	All audiences	Communications (EG)
	Monitor media and respond where appropriate	All audiences	Communications (EG/AM)
	31 January 2nd reading of Health and Social Care Bill		
February	11 February HPC PLG meeting		
	Monitor Public Bill Committee stage, draft written evidence and submit before 31 March 2011, provide information to targeted parliamentarians where required (eg written briefing, information on e-politix and face to face contact)	Parliamentarians	Communications (MP/LD)
	Research and plan attendance at relevant professional body conferences and exhibitions	Registrants, professional bodies	Communications (SC)

		and employers	
	Research and plan programme of press releases, news items and articles (print and online) in professional media	Registrants, employers and professional bodies	Communications (EG)
	Monitor media and respond where appropriate	All audiences	Communications (EG/AM)
	Publish article in HPC In Focus	Registrants, professional bodies, employers	Communications (JJ)
	Research design agencies, write brief and meet with possible companies for the name change	All audiences	Communications (JJ/JAL)
	Prepare for GSCC's social work conferences in Leeds and London – support production of slides and information	Social workers	Communications (MP/SC/EG)
March	2 March HPC PLG meeting		
	Monitor Public Bill Committee stage, draft written evidence and submit before 31 March 2011, provide information to targeted parliamentarians where required (eg written briefing, information on e-politix and face to face contact)	Parliamentarians	Communications (MP/LD)
	Chief Executive/Chair to attend and present at GSCC's social work conferences in Leeds and London – nb communications to attend plus support production of slides and information	Social workers	Communications (MP/SC/EG)
	Monitor media and respond where appropriate	All audiences	Communications (EG/AM)
	Commission agency to commence work on redrawing logo, application of strapline and reviewing housestyle	All audiences	Communications (JJ/JAL)
April	11 April HPC PLG		
	Continue to monitor passage of Health and Social Care Bill and provide information to targeted parliamentarians where required	Parliamentarians	Communications (MP/LD)

	(eg written briefing, information on e-politix and face to face contact)		
	Monitor media and respond where appropriate	All audiences	Communications (EG/AM)
	Publish article in HPC In Focus	Registrants, professional bodies, employers	Communications (JJ)
May	Monitor passage of Health and Social Care Bill and provide information to targeted parliamentarians where required (eg written briefing, information on e-politix and face to face contact)	Parliamentarians	Communications (MP/LD)
	Monitor media and respond where appropriate	All audiences	Communications (EG/AM)
	Attend Community Care Live conference (possible workshop with GSCC)	Social workers	Communications (MP)
	tbc 3rd reading of Health and Social Care Bill		
June	tbc House of Lords debate on Health and Social Care Bill		
	Monitor passage of Health and Social Care Bill and provide information to targeted parliamentarians where required (eg written briefing, information on e-politix and face to face contact)	Parliamentarians	Communications (MP/LD)
	Monitor media and respond where appropriate	All audiences	Communications (EG/AM)
	Publish article in HPC In Focus	Registrants, professional bodies, employers	Communications (JJ)
July	Monitor passage of Health and Social Care Bill and provide information to targeted parliamentarians before debates in Parliament through written briefing, information on e-politix and	Parliamentarians	Communications (MP/LD)

	face to face contact (where required)		
	Issue press release, update Facebook, issue Twitter message announcing the consultation process for the standards of proficiency	Social workers, professional bodies and key stakeholder organisations	Communications (EG)
	Monitor media and respond where appropriate	All audiences	Communications (EG/AM)
August	Publish article in HPC In Focus	Registrants, professional bodies, employers	Communications (JJ)
September	Monitor passage of Health and Social Care Bill and provide information to targeted parliamentarians where required (eg written briefing, information on e-politix and face to face contact)	Parliamentarians	Communications (MP/LD)
	Undertake preparatory work for public information campaign, including contacting external agencies, agreeing messages and angles, researching deadlines	Service users and public	Communications (EG)
	Issue release, update Facebook, issue twitter message reminding people of the consultation process for the standards of proficiency	Social workers, professional bodies and key stakeholder organisations	Communications (EG)
	Monitor media and respond where appropriate	All audiences	Communications (EG/AM)
October	tbc House of Lords debate on Health and Social Care Bill		
	Monitor passage of Health and Social Care Bill and provide information to targeted parliamentarians where required (eg written briefing, information on e-politix and face to face contact)	Parliamentarians	Communications (MP/LD)
	Continue preparatory work for public information campaign,	Public	Communications

	including agreeing key messages, timelines etc		(EG)
	Monitor media and respond where appropriate	All audiences	Communications (EG/AM)
	Ensure article in HPC In Focus	Registrants, professional bodies, employers	Communications (JJ)
	Begin preparation for a series of events to inform employers	Employers	Communications (MP/SC)
November	tbc Royal Assent granted		
	(tbc) Undertake mailing to employers with information about transfer and invitation to employer events	Employers	Communications (MP) / Policy (CU)
	(tbc) Undertake mailings to stakeholders with information about transfer	Professional bodies and employers	Communications (MP/LD)
	Issue media release, write news story, update Facebook, issue twitter message announcing Royal Assent and timetable	All audiences	Communications (EG/AM)
	Continue preparatory work for public information campaign, including agreeing key messages, timelines etc	Public	Communications (EG)
	Monitor media and respond where appropriate	All audiences	Communications (EG/AM)
December	Continue preparatory work for public information campaign, including agreeing key messages, timelines etc	Public	Communications (EG)
	Monitor media and respond where appropriate	All audiences	Communications (EG/AM)
	Publish article in HPC In Focus	Registrants, professional bodies, employers	Communications (JJ)

2012

January	Special Education and Training Committee to approve Standards of proficiency		
	Continue preparatory work for public information campaign, including agreeing key messages, timelines etc	Public	Communications (EG)
	Monitor media and respond where appropriate	All audiences	Communications (EG/AM)
	Commence publication process for Standards of Proficiency	Registrants	Policy (CU) / Communications (JJ)
	(tbc) Commence series of mailings to education providers to inform them of process and activities – one mailing to include SCPEs, SoPs, SETs	Education providers	Education
	(tbc) Begin preparation for a series of seminars to inform education providers	Education providers	Education
February	HPC Council Meeting (to approve Standards of proficiency)		
	Continue preparatory work for public information campaign, including agreeing key messages, timelines etc	Public	Communications (EG)
	Ensure our public information materials, banners etc are updated and available on day of transfer	All audiences	Communications (JJ)
	Monitor media and respond where appropriate	All audiences	Communications (EG/AM)
	Ensure article in HPC In Focus	Registrants, professional bodies, employers	Communications (JJ)
March	Hold social worker specific events to inform employers about the transfer process, the HPC's regulatory role and processes including registration and ftp	Employers	Communications (MP/SC) / Policy (CU)
	Issue letter from the HPC with general information about the	Social workers	Registrations (CH) /

	transfer and next steps – to include registration logo, public information materials and 3 sets of standards		Communications (MP)
	Upload standards of proficiency to the HPC website	Social workers	Communications (JJ)
	Continue preparatory work for public information campaign, including agreeing key messages, timelines etc	Public	Communications (EG)
	Commence elements of media campaign to raise awareness of the HPC as the new regulator of social workers in England	Public	Communications (EG)
	Monitor media and respond where appropriate	All audiences	Communications (EG/AM)
April	1 April - launch media campaign to raise awareness of the HPC as the new regulator of social workers in England	Public	Communications (EG)
	Publish article in HPC In Focus	Registrants, professional bodies, employers	Communications (JJ)
May	Letter from the HPC providing information about registration renewal process - to include registration logo, public information materials and 3 sets of standards (if not already done)	Registrants	Registrations (CH)
	Monitor media and respond where appropriate	All audiences	Communications (EG/AM)
June	Supporting communications for registration renewal process	Registrants	Communications (MP/EG)
	Publish article in HPC In Focus	Registrants, professional bodies, employers	Communications (JJ)
	Monitor media and respond where appropriate	All audiences	Communications (EG/AM)

July	Supporting communications for registration renewal process	Registrants	Communications (MP/EG)
	Monitor media and respond where appropriate	All audiences	Communications (EG/AM)
August	Supporting communications for registration renewal process	Registrants	Communications (MP/EG)
	Ensure article in HPC In Focus	Registrants, professional bodies, employers	Communications (JJ)
	Monitor media and respond where appropriate	All audiences	Communications (EG/AM)

Ongoing communications activities

	Incorporate information in all employee meetings, HPC Update, intranet and team meetings on a regular basis	Employees	Communications (JAL)
	Ensure relevant website updates and news items on home page	All audiences	Communications (TG/MP) / Policy
	Provide suitable training and information on the transfer for the Registrations Department	Registrations employees	Registrations / Policy (CU)
	Provide suitable training and information on the transfer for the Fitness to Practise Department	Fitness to practise employees	Fitness to Practise
	Attendance (stands) at relevant professional body conferences and exhibitions	Registrants, professional bodies and employers	Communications (SC)
	Press releases/news items programme at relevant stages for industry specific publications and professional body journals	Registrants, employers, professional bodies	Communications (EG)

	Ensure regular contact with professional bodies through annual CEO/Chair meetings and before renewal period starts	Professional bodies	Communications (MP)
	Ensure clear messages about closure of the GSCC (slides and briefing notes) at all HPC events (eg Meet the HPC and employer events, exhibitions/stands, talks and presentations)	Registrants, employers and professional bodies	Communications (SC/MP)
	Provide speakers at relevant professional events and conferences	Registrants, employers and professional bodies	Policy (CU) / Communications (SC)
	Ensure employers are invited to HPC employer events post transfer		Communications (MP)

Appendix 1 – stakeholder audiences

Employers

- Primarily in local authorities
- Independent organisations (residential care homes)
- Charities (NSPCC, Banardos)
- Some also work for the NHS (hospitals, mental health trusts, and community-based settings)

Professional bodies

- British Association of Social Workers (BASW)
- The College of Social Work
- Association of Directors of Children's Services Ltd
- Association of Directors of Adult Social Services
- Social Care Association

Education stakeholders

- Social work recruitment campaign
- Social Work Admissions System/University and College Admissions Service
- Education Development International
- Social Work Education Participation

Professional media

- Community Care
- Society Guardian
- Children and Young People Now
- Local Government Chronicle
- Sourceuk
- Practice

Other key stakeholder groups (eg DoH, Unison)

- Social Work Reform Board
- Health, Education and Social Care Chamber of the First-tier tribunal
- Unison
- Aspect
- Department of Health
- Children's Workforce Development Council
- Care Quality Commission
- Social Care Institute of Excellence
- Skills for Care
- Community Service Volunteers
- The Recruitment and Employment Confederation

Regulators in the devolved administrations

- Care Council for Wales
- Scottish Social Services Council
- Northern Ireland Social Care Council

Parliamentarians

- Health select committee and/or those with an interest in social care

Registrants

Those already registered and potential registrants

Appendix 2 – Statement of intent on joint communications

GSCC/HPC joint external communications strategy December 2010

The GSCC and the HPC have begun to have initial discussions about the development of a joint external communications strategy. The purpose of this strategy will be to ensure that the sector is well informed about the changes to the regulation of the social work profession in the run up to, and during, the transfer.

The strategy will aim to ensure openness and consistency in order to limit confusion and disruption to the sector.

This is in line with each organisation's values of:

From the GSCC's perspective,

- Fairness
- Quality
- Openness
- Efficiency
- Integrity
- Respect

From the HPC's perspective,

- Transparency
- Collaboration
- Responsiveness
- Value for money
- High quality service

The main audiences that the strategy will be targeted at are:

- Social workers
- People who use social work services
- Social work employers
- Higher Education Institutes offering social work courses
- Social work representative bodies and other sector stakeholders

It is also important to acknowledge that whilst the transfer directly impacts on social workers in England only, any communications and stakeholder activity will also focus on the devolved administrations and the importance of collaborative working with the social care regulators and stakeholders in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales.

The GSCC and HPC have discussed that joint activity will commence a number of months' in advance of the transfer date. This is anticipated to be April 2012 although is subject to legislative approval and may, therefore, change. Timescales will be drawn up when there is more certainty about the likely timetable of the Health and Social Care Bill and the transfer date. Until this point, it is important that the GSCC continues to have the main contact with the profession and wider sector so that it can continue to fulfil its statutory duties.

In advance of any joint activity commencing, each organisation is undertaking key communications work. The HPC is monitoring media and parliamentary activity, undertaking introductory meetings with stakeholders and responding to invitations to speak at conferences as well as planning future activities post transfer. The GSCC has recently launched a new website, developed e-communities and social media networks and produced an e-bulletin for social work employers. It is important that this work continues, however, the two organisations have agreed that they will co-ordinate, and share information, on any communications activity around the transfer to minimise the potential for confusion in the sector.

The main activity that has been jointly agreed to date is the GSCC's two conferences for social workers in March 2011 where the HPC has been invited to speak on the panel.

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General Social Care Council

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