

Introduction

Early in the first quarter of 2005 the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) intends to amend the existing legal framework to extend Supplementary Prescribing to Chiropractors, Physiotherapists and Radiographers.

The MHRA and Department of Health England (DH) require the register of regulators of health professions to be annotated so that patients and other health professionals, such as pharmacists, can ascertain if a registrant has a supplementary prescribing qualification.

It is therefore proposed that the Health Professions Council (HPC) publishes Standards of Proficiency and Standards of Education and Training for Supplementary Prescribing. This is so that courses can be approved by the HPC, thus allowing registrants who have successfully completed a course to be issued with appropriate certificates and the HPC register to be amended accordingly.

Supplementary Prescribing

A brief background paper on Supplementary Prescribing, Independent Prescribing and Patient Group Directions (PGD) issued by the DH is attached for reference.

In summary, following a diagnosis by a doctor or a dentist, who is defined as an Independent Prescriber (IP), a Supplementary Prescriber (SP) is able to prescribe most Prescription only Medicines (POMs) as part of a Clinical Management Plan (CMP) agreed with the IP for an individual patient. Currently only over 1,400 nurses and some pharmacists have qualified as supplementary prescribers, although it is proposed to expand this to other professions in the future.

Education and Training

An HPC registrant will have to complete a course to ensure that they have attained the appropriate Standards of Proficiency.

HPC will need to draft two documents:

1. Standards of Education and Training
2. Standards of Proficiency

HPC must then consult on the standards to comply with Article 3 (14) of the Health Professions Order 2001. The HPC consultation will commence after the MHRA and DH publish their consultation document, which is anticipated this month (May). HPC will then complete its consultation within two months.

Curriculum Framework

The DH has established an AHP Supplementary Prescribing Steering Group chaired by the Chief Health Professions Officer. HPC is represented on the steering group by Marc Seale. The current work focuses on taking forward supplementary prescribing for Chiropractors, Physiotherapists and Radiographers. The steering group established a small planning group to draft an Outline Curriculum Framework, and Eileen Thornton is participating in this work.

To date the working assumption of the Planning Group is that the courses will be post graduate courses of about 26 days duration, plus 12 days with a supervising registered medical practitioner. Candidates will have had to complete a minimum period of professional employment after joining the HPC Register, normally at least two years.

Course Approval

It is recommended that the term “Course” is used to differentiate them from “Programmes” whose graduates can apply to join the HPC register.

It is envisaged that Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) and other organisations such as NHS Trusts or Professional Bodies will run the training courses. There has been no accurate estimate of the number of potential course providers. To manage the Course Approval process HPC may consider requiring non-HEI providers to link with HEIs. All the courses would then be approved as part of the proposed process for approval and monitoring which are currently being consulted upon.

HPC Certificates

A decision will need to be made on how to annotate the HPC register and certificate. An example could be the phrase: *Supplementary Prescriber*.

Other Issues

- The proposals do not change the HPC policy that the register indicates modalities of care not skill levels.
- The HPC Standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics do not need to be amended.
- The need for CPD in Supplementary Prescribing will need to be addressed as part of the HPC CPD consultation which is due to take place in the Autumn of 2004.
- HPC will not charge a fee for reissuing certificates to eligible registrants.

Decision

The Council is requested to

1. Note the project
2. Request the Executive to prepare three documents for approval by the Education and Training Committee. They are as follows:
 - (i) Standards of Education and Training
 - (ii) Standards of Proficiency
 - (iii) A consultation document