

**THE HEALTH PROFESSIONS COUNCIL**

Chief Executive and Registrar: Mr Marc Seale

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MINUTES of the twentieth meeting of the Communications Committee held at **11:00am on Tuesday 27 February 2007** at the Brit Oval, Kennington, London, SE11 5SS.

Mr O Altay  
 Mrs M Clark-Glass  
 Ms C Farrell  
 Mrs S Griffiths  
 Mrs D Haggerty  
 Miss M MacKellar  
 Mr P McFadden (Chairman)  
 Mrs A Turner (Vice-Chairman)

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Miss S Butcher, Secretary to Committees  
 Mr T Heiser, Events Manager  
 Mrs J Ladds, Communications Director  
 Miss P Richardson, Publications Manager  
 Mr G Ross-Sampson, Director of Operations  
 Mr M Seale, Chief Executive

**Item 1.07/01 ELECTION OF THE VICE-CHAIRMAN**

- 1.1 The Committee was requested to nominate one of its members as Vice-Chairman of the Communications Committee.
- 1.2 Mrs Farrell nominated herself and Miss MacKellar nominated Mrs Turner.
- 1.3 The Committee noted that a secret ballot would be held in order to vote for their Vice-Chairman. The two nominees first addressed the Committee individually on what attributes and skills they could bring to the role of Vice-Chairman.
- 1.4 Mrs Turner was voted as Vice-Chairman of the Communications Committee. Approval would be sought at Council's March 2007 meeting.

**Item 2.07/02 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION**

- 2.1 The Chairman welcomed Mrs Turner on board as the new Vice-Chairman of the Communications Committee.
- 2.2 The Chairman also welcomed Mr Heiser, who had been recruited as Events Manager, to his first Communications Committee meeting as well as Miss Richardson, Publications Manager.

**Item 3.07/03 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

- 3.1 One apology for absence was received from the following committee member; Mr P Acres.

**Item 4.07/04 APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

- 4.1 The Communications Committee approved the agenda.

**Item 5.07/05 MINUTES OF THE COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE HELD ON FRIDAY 27 OCTOBER 2006**

- 5.1 It was agreed that the minutes of the nineteenth meeting of the Communications Committee meeting be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

**Item 6.07/06 MATTERS ARISING**

- 6.1 Item – 8.9 Matters Arising – Communications Strategy and Workplan
  - 6.1.1 The Committee noted that the draft communications strategy and workplan was on the agenda for discussion at this meeting.
- 6.2 Item – 9.1 Matters Arising – Communications Committee Terms of Reference
  - 6.1.2 The Committee noted that the Communications Committee Terms of Reference had now been incorporated into the Communications Committee Standing Orders.
- 6.3 Item – 12.2 Matters Arising – 24 May 2006 Communications Committee Minutes
  - 6.1.3 The Committee noted that the May 2006 Communications Committee minutes had now been amended due to a matter of inaccuracy regarding the receipt of a report from the Public Patient Involvement meeting held on 5 April 2006.

**Item 7.07/07 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

- 7.1 The Chairman reported that he had attended the HPC Partner's Conference that was held in Glasgow November 2006. He had received a lot of positive feedback regarding the success of the event and commended the Communications team in their assistance with this.
- 7.2 The Chairman reported that he had also met with the Director of Communications to discuss the Communications strategy and workplan.

**Item 8.07/08 DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS REPORT**

- 8.1 The Committee received the Director of Communications report.
- 8.2 The Committee noted that the final Listening Events for 2006 – 2007 held in Aberystwyth and Worcester had been successful. Registrants in remote locations such as Aberystwyth were appreciative of HPC's efforts to provide them with such a forum for communication. The Events Manager was currently arranging the next set of Listening Events that would begin in April 2007.
- 8.3 The Committee noted that following the Government's publication of the White Paper, HPC had received press coverage both in The Daily Telegraph and on BBC News Online. The Chief Executive of the HPC had taken part in 9 radio interviews that were broadcast to 24 radio stations including across the South-West, the Midlands and the Channel Islands.
- 8.4 The Committee noted that the Communications Department was recruiting for the post of Public Affairs Manager; interviews would be held on the 1 March 2007.
- 8.5 The Committee noted that work to progress the audit of the HPC's Patient and Public Involvement (PPI) activities was underway and an update would be provided at the next committee meeting in May 2007.

**Action: JL – by Thursday 24 May 2007**

- 8.6 The Committee discussed the website statistics and noted that the HPC website logged an average of 80,000 visits a month and 2,500 visits on a daily basis. The most popular pages were the homepage and registration sections as well as the downloading of registration packs, the online short guide to continuing professional development (CPD) and the monthly newsletter. The Web Manager was to attend the next Communications

Committee meeting in May to provide a more detailed overview of the website and statistics to date. The Committee agreed that the statistics could provide a direction on future communication initiatives.

**Action: TG – Thursday 24 May 2007**

**Item 9.07/09 DRAFT COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY 2007-2011**

- 9.1 The Communications Committee received a report from the Director of Communications for discussion/approval. The Committee noted that a member had emailed some comments and that these were considered in the discussion.
- 9.2 The Committee discussed the draft communications strategy and noted the clarity of the document in the outlining of HPC's main strategic and operational activities.
- 9.3 The Committee made the following comments:
- Section 1
    - ensure reference to HPC's function as a protector of the public should be reflected in the introduction as it was one of HPC's core functions.
  - Section 2
    - the need to reflect that the White Paper had now been issued
    - that the communications strategy should drive and deliver the strategic and operational activities of the organisation
  - Section 3
    - the Committee agreed that whilst the public required easily accessible information about the HPC they also needed to understand the role that HPC played.
    - internal communications is an important aspect of the strategy and this objective needed to be strengthened
  - Section 4
    - the need to clarify headline messages and ensure consistency across the organisation. To keep terminology simple to be able to reach all audiences and perhaps draw from the terminology used in the Making registers more useable research
    - the importance of reflecting standards, education and cpd within the headline messages in some way and ensuring the message about protecting the public adequately reflects our role

- Section 6
  - Reinforce the meeting of plain english standards where applicable
- 9.4 The Director of Communications reported that the key messages in the strategy needed to be short and succinct but was happy to reflect the Committees' comments in the Strategy.
- 9.5 The Committee agreed to the content of the draft communications strategy 2007-2011 subject to the incorporation of the recommendations detailed above.
- 9.6 The Committee agreed to the recommendation that Council considered the draft communications strategy 2007-2011 for ratification at their next meeting in March 2007.

**Action : JL – Thursday 29 March 2007**

**Item 10.07/10 COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT DRAFT WORK PLAN 2007-08**

- 10.1 The Communications Committee received a paper from the Director of Communications for discussion/approval.
- 10.2 The Committee noted how the workplan set out the communications department's main areas of work for 2007 – 2008, how these activities linked to the communications strategy and outlined potential activities for 2008- 2009.
- 10.3 The Committee discussed the trend in health professionals increasingly working in jobs that did not require a professional title. The Committee agreed that it was the responsibility of the professional bodies to take the lead on this issue.
- 10.4 The Committee noted that the HPC was very active in this area encouraging the public to check that their health professional was registered. The HPC had also promoted the advertise kit for health professionals to use by way of advertising that they were registered. The Committee discussed the workplan, commending its clarity and felt it was well set out, particularly in the way that it linked to the strategy and demonstrated how it would work towards achieving the communications objectives.
- 10.5 The committee recommended that the Communications Department needed to be flexible in the delivery of the workplan in order to respond to the external environment in which the HPC operates.

10.6 The Committee agreed to the contents of the workplan.

**Item 11.07/11 REFRESH OF THE HEALTH PROFESSIONS COUNCIL (HPC)  
VISUAL IDENTITY AND HOUSE STYLE**

11.1 The Communications Committee received a paper from the Publications Manager to note.

11.2 The Committee noted that HPC's visual identity and guidelines were currently being reviewed, refreshed and extended across all print and web applications.

11.3 The Committee noted that an external design agency, HSAG had been appointed, to assist with the undertaking of this work. The Committee also noted that the aim of this project is to improve legibility, ensure a consistent and professional approach and produce literature which was cost effective and followed good practice on equality, accessibility and environmental guidelines. The production of HPC's publications in the refreshed visual identity would be implemented in stages on a need to have basis.

**Item 12.07/12 BETTER INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS**

12.1 The Communications Committee received a paper to note from the Director of Communications.

12.2 The Committee noted that the HPC staff had recently been involved in an audit of the effectiveness of internal communications. Face to face interviews had been conducted by an external consultant with the Executive Management Team and had also held focus groups with a random selection of employees. All employees were also invited to complete an online survey on this matter.

12.3 The results of the audit showed that overall employees were happy with the effectiveness of internal communications via electronic mediums such as the Intranet and Springfield. Team meetings were also identified as an invaluable source of information to employees.

12.4 The Committee discussed the possible benefits of members of Council coming to HPC on an assigned day to have small group discussions with members of interested employees on the strategic direction of the HPC. The Committee noted that the Chief Executive gave a presentation to all new employees every 2-3 months on HPC's strategy Council members would be welcome to attend this. The Committee discussed the logistics of attending such meetings and or team meetings of large departments such as the UK and International Registrations. The Director of

Communications would look into the logistics of these arrangements.

- 12.5 The Committee noted the main findings and recommendations resulting from the audit, that all staff were being consulted on these findings and that a prioritised list of recommendations would be drawn up and incorporated into the communications work plan.

**Action: JL – by Thursday 24 May 2007**

**Item 13.07/13 COMMUNICATIONS DRAFT BUDGET 2007-08 HEADLINE FIGURES**

- 13.1 The Communications Committee received a paper from the Director of Communications to note.
- 13.2 The Committee noted the headline figures for the communications' department draft budget 2007-08.

**Item 14.07/14 JOINT UK HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE REGULATORS PUBLIC PATIENT INVOLVEMENT (PPI) GROUP DEVELOPING WORK PLAN**

- 14.1 The Committee received a paper from the Director of Communications for information.
- 14.2 The Committee noted that the HPC was a member of the Joint UK Health and Social Care Regulators Patient and Public Involvement Group (PPI) which was made up of all the UK health and social care regulators. HPC had been involved with the Group since the beginning of its inception in January 2005. The main aim of the Group was to work together in the promotion of the role of regulators to the public and ensure consistency in approach. A number of projects had been initiated and were detailed in the workplan.

**Item 15.07/15 JOINT UK HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE REGULATORS PUBLIC PATIENT INVOLVEMENT (PPI) GROUP MAKING REGISTERS MORE USEABLE**

- 15.1 The Committee received a paper from the Director of Communications for information.
- 15.2 The Committee noted that during 2006-07, the Chief Executive's Registers Working Group asked the PPI Group to undertake a research project to establish how health and social care registers could be made

more useable and meaningful to the public. The PPI Group set up a Registers Working Group to undertake this work.

- 15.3 The research was undertaken by Opinion Leader Research and a report was produced with recommendations.
- 15.4 The Committee noted that the President had been attending the PPI Group meetings since she was Chairman of the Communications Committee and had been asked to attend in this capacity. Now Dr van der Gaag was President the membership of the PPI Group needed to be reviewed. The President reported that her attendance at these meetings had been a valuable exercise and had ensured that PPI was kept high on the agenda. The President recognised however that there was also expertise from within the Committee which could be effectively utilised at these meetings too. The Committee agreed that the President should continue to represent the HPC in this group with the Director of Communications but to utilise expertise from within the committee when required.

**Item 16.07/16 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

- 16.1 There were no items of any other business.

**Item 17.07/17 DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING**

- 17.1 The next meeting of the Communications Committee would be at 11:00am on Thursday 24 May 2007.