hcpc health & care professions council

Education and Training Committee

Minutes of the 104th meeting of the Education and Training Committee held as follows:

Date: Wednesday 7 September 2022

Time: 10am

Venue: MS Teams

Members: Maureen Drake (Chair)
Helen Gough
Luke Jenkinson
Penny Joyce
Katie Thirlaway

In attendance:
Claire Amor, Head of Governance
Zoe Allan, Governance Officer
John Barwick, Chief Executive
Brendon Edmonds, Head of Education
Rosemary Flowers-Wanjie, Policy Manager
Sara Harris, Policy Manager
Richard Houghton, Head of Registration
Jamie Hunt, Acting Head of Education
Emma Leary, Head of Policy, Standards and Strategic Relationships
Naomi Nicholson, Executive Director of Professional Practice and Insight
Tracey Samuel-Smith, Education Manager
Andrew Smith, Executive Director of Regulation

Public Agenda

Item 1 – Chair's welcome and introduction

1.1 The Chair welcomed those present to the 104th meeting of the Education and Training Committee.

1.2 Apologies for absence were received from member Steven Vaughan.

Item 2 - Approval of agenda

2.1 The Committee approved the agenda.

Item 3 - Declaration of members' interests

3.1 No interests were declared.

Item 4 - Public minutes of the Education and Training Committee meetings of 8 June 2022 (ETC 18/22)

4.1 The Committee approved the public minutes of its meeting of 8 June 2022.

Item 5 – Matters arising (ETC 19/22)

5.1 The Committee noted the matters arising from previous meetings.

Items for discussion/approval

Item 6 - Registration Performance (ETC 20/22)

6.1 The Committee received a report from the Head of Registration and Head of Education (currently supporting international registration) which outlined registration performance for the period between May and July 2022.

6.2 The Committee noted the following points:

- the main area of concern for the Executive was international applications as volumes continued to be high compared to previous years, this was driving high levels of phone calls and emails into the contact centre. The number of paper international applications continued to reduce following the introduction of the online international application process;

- PWC surge support partnership and establishing a ring-fenced international team were beginning to improve performance with the monthly performance median to make a first decision reducing from 93

working days in April 2022 to 40 working days in July 2022; and now back within our service standard of 60 working days since June 2022.

- contact centre improvement activity outlined in the report were having a positive impact on performance through May and June. System implementation issues affected call answer performance during July, however following the resolution of the majority of these system issues, call answer rates in August continued to improve;

- during the period of May to July 2022, 5 registration appeals were concluded. The impact of the postponements caused by the pandemic had been overcome with appeals back to a steady state. The number of upheld appeals remained low providing assurance on the quality of the initial registration decisions;

- the UK application online portal was successfully launched on the 15 June 2022; and

- a dedicated UK applications team was set up in July to manage the summer peak of new graduate applications, positively impacting on performance;

6.3 The Committee were reassured to see that the international registration team would be looking at additional metrics alongside the current 60 working days and asked whether there was an opportunity to include quality metrics. The Executive confirmed that quantitative metrics would be focused on to ensure volumes were managed effectively, quality KPIs would be looked at once this was in place.

6.4 The Committee reflected on the process bottlenecks outlined in the international registration section of the report and asked whether there were application closure policies to address the challenges of progressing incomplete applications that were dependent on applicant responsiveness. The Executive confirmed there were currently no such policies but a soft close status approach was being explored.

6.5 Telephone responsiveness remained a concern for the Committee and improvement plans were sought from the Executive, noting the risks of reputational damage as this was often the first method of contact with HCPC. The Committee were reassured with the benefits seen from the launch of the new cloud-based telephony system and training measures which the Committee were keen to see whether would be reflected in the November update.

6.6 The Committee asked about longer term improvement plans to address telephone responsiveness; the Executive noted that this would require technological system changes via the use of online portals and a strategic look at the wider business and customer service overall.

6.7 The Committee reflected on the resilience and sustainability of the department following PWC's departure and noted the importance of monitoring for any reoccurrence of service issues with the reduced resource.

6.8   The Committee thanked the Executive for the report and noted the positive work and improvements despite performance issues.

Item 7 - Education Performance (ETC 21/22)

7.1   The Committee received a paper from the Acting Head of Education which outlined Education performance, reporting across the operational processes.

7.2   The Committee noted the following points:-

- resourcing challenges had meant some cases had built up over the preivous six months. Ensuring approval cases for programmes due to start in September had been prioritised and so there had been an expected impact on performance measures with 65% of active cases currently within service levels, below the average of 84% seen over the last six months. All September-start programmes were submitted for approval at the August Education and Training Committee Panel, which meant no programme start dates were impacted;

- the quality of decision making had not dropped through this challenging period – first and second line checks had continued to be applied, and quality indicators showed decisions were of a high quality;

- with the team now fully resourced, efforts were being focused on the remaining performance review and focused review cases; and

- as previously discussed with the Committee, the report included a revised set of KPI's for approvals, performance reviews and focused reviews with accompanying rationale.

7.3   The Committee were pleased to see the revised KPIs with more realistic timescales whilst noting caution around setting condition targets which could be seen externally as an incentive to not set conditions. The Committee noted the internal controls and governance oversight which provided assurance and reflected on the opportunity to draw on education providers as advocates of the model to mitigate any external concern. It was agreed to keep the measure under review via regular reporting to the Committee to ensure transparency and quality.

7.4   The Committee welcomed the report and revised KPIs.

Item 8 - Education quality assurance model – year 1 end review (ETC 22/22)

8.1   The Committee received a paper from the Acting Head of Education. The paper presented the Executive's findings from the evaluation of the first year of operation of the education quality assurance model..

8.2   The Committee noted the following points:-

- education providers welcomed the regional approach and named HCPC key contacts;

- HCPC had become a more active partner in the sector, engaging with stakeholders to understand priorities and how these could integrate with HCPC's work;

- governance arrangements were working well for the team and the value added by ETP had been high; and

- key changes and benefits of the model which distinguished it from legacy process surrounded the partnering and risk based approach with providers at institution and programme levels and the use of data and intelligence from a range of sources to understand risk.

8.3   The Committee welcomed the report and positive impact of the model, particularly the use of data in understanding risk, recognising the need to consider provider data points on an ongoing basis and as part of wider evidence sources.

8.4   The Committee asked the Executive about the reduction of burden for providers and stakeholders. The Executive responded that there was burden being felt by providers at the start with portfolio submission preparations but was expected to reduce as providers became familiar with the model and the Executive explained that these questions would be asked again to stakeholders to monitor burden. The Committee noted they were keen to see these expectations and responses reflected through future report iterations.

8.5   The Committee thanked the Acting Head of Education for the report and were reassured with the theme of continuous quality improvement reflected in the model.

Item 9 – Renewal service improvements (ETC 23/22)

9.1   The Committee received a presentation from the Executive Director of Regulation giving an update on renewal service learning and improvements as requested by the Committee following concerns raised by the Chartered Society of Physiotherapists in their last renewal cycle.

9.2   The Committee noted the changes introduced included improved engagement with professional bodies at specific stages of each renewal timelines; all professional bodies now had a HCPC relationship manager; improved information via FAQs, website guidance and improved renewal notices, there had been a good collaborative effort with the Communications team;

9.3   The Committee asked the Executive what the data collected informs and whether the capabilities were there to enable demographic groups to be identified and provided with targeted support. The Executive confirmed that some decisions had been influenced by the data including sending communications via post for some groups and more analysis of the data would be performed to explore further.

9.4 Stakeholder engagement was discussed where the Committee encouraged the Executive to continue to think about including wider audiences (i.e., employer health boards) to maximise reach with employers.

Item 10 - Discussion: Preceptorship updated principles (ETC 24/22)

10.1 The Committee received a presentation from the Policy Manager which provided an update on the development of preceptorship principles. This was a piece of work commissioned by Health Education England (HEE).

10.2 The Committee noted the following points: -

- due to time constraints, a paper with final draft principles would be shared with the Committee via correspondence soon after the meeting, this paper would be for recommendation to Council; and

- since the Committee's last meeting in June, public workshops with HEE had been held as part of the stakeholder consultation activity; feedback following these events had been incorporated into the drafting of the principles and would form the final consultation document.

10.3 The Committee recognised the time constraints of the project and thanked the Policy Manager for progressing the work at pace.

10.4 The Committee discussed the various contexts in which registrants were working and the potential for additional burden. The Executive noted that it was mindful of this potential burden and there was agreement that the focus of the programme was establishing a set of guiding principles to provide support and stakeholder messaging would need to reflect this to manage the issue of burden.

10.5 The Committee discussed the importance of preceptorship programmes needing to reflect the differences in routes to registration and variety of services and settings and noted that mapping against the NMC's principles would be useful to colleagues who already work alongside nurses for example.

10.8 The Committee thanked the Policy Manager for sharing the developing piece of work, noting that the high attendance at the recent HEE workshops reflects the level of interest and importance of the work.

Item 11 – Standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics review (ETC 25/22)

11.1 The Committee received a paper from the Policy Manager which outlined the approach and proposed consultation for reviewing the standards of conduct, performance and ethics (SCPE)..

11.2 The Committee noted the following points: -

- the SCPE (last updated in 2016) formed part of HCPC's regulatory framework and required regular review to ensure they remained relevant to current practice;

- the delivery timeline included pre consultation stakeholder engagement and desk research, these had commenced. The consultation period was proposed to run from mid-October 2022 to mid-January 2023, this period had been selected to manage crowded consultation space, mitigating the risk of low engagement.

- publication of new standards was expected by September 2023, and they would enter into force in September 2024 accounting for implementation with education providers and regulatory processes; and

- there was a proposal for the standards to include an expectation from registrants to practice in a sustainable way in an effort to support such initiatives, themes would be explored via consultation with stakeholders;

11.3 The importance of consultation questions being drafted to elicit meaningful answers was emphasised by the Committee.

11.4 The Committee discussed including sustainability as a standard and how this could realistically be measured and regulated; consultation would explore this discussion, providing a level of assurance.

11.5 The Committee raised concern that the consultation would overlap with other consultations planned and the risk of consultation fatigue needed further thought from the Executive to explore options to combine for example. The Committee recognised the importance of the consultations and the time constraints but asked the executive to discuss and review the consultation timings to enable stakeholders more space to consider what is being asked of them in each consultation.

11.6 The Committee agreed to recommend the paper to Council for approval.

Item 12 – Education and Training Committee workplan (ETC 26/22)

12.1 The Committee noted that the November meeting would include a verbal item for a high-level discussion of business for 2023, this would be an opportunity for the Executive and the Committee to reflect on areas of work to explore in the year ahead.

Item 13 – Any other business

13.   None.

Item 14 - Date and time of next meeting

14.1 Wednesday 9 November 2022 - virtual

Signed …………………..………..

Date …………………..…….