
**Support Staff Specialist Group
Minutes of the meeting, 07 April 2008
50 Eastbourne Terrace, Paddington, London**

Present:

Alison Simpson, Beth Barrett, , Diane Blunden, Vanessa Eggerdon (chair), Helen Fawcett, Jennifer Harris, Val Finlay, Sarah Wright , Karen Nash, Dalgeet Puaar, Gill Risby, Cath Stride, Susan Ward, Barbara Wensworth, Tracey Burrows (sec), Tess Fenn, Jane Pyatt, Deborah Williams

Apologies:

Liz Fidler, Ellen Bidwell, Sally Kemp, Lesley Morgan, Julie Jordan

Welcome to Sarah Wright

Sarah was welcomed to the Group. Sarah represents the Midlands, including Kettering, Leicester and Northampton.

Thank you to Karen Nash

The Group thanked Karen for her support as the secretary. Tracey Burrows is the new secretary.

Notifying Helen Fawcett of attendance

HF requested that emails confirming attendance are sent as it is important to ensure reception are aware of who will be coming and that sufficient tea and coffee can be ordered.

Minutes of meeting held 7 January 2008

The minutes of the last meeting were checked for accuracy.

GR had not circulated information relating to the production training project as she was waiting for it to go onto the City & Guilds website (page 1 paragraph 2).

VE had not yet drafted the timeline (page 3 paragraph 7).

The minutes were then agreed as accurate.

Matters arising

The Main Group had discussed the suggestion by LM that the vice chair automatically moves to chair. HF brought a concern from the main group that this may deter members from wishing to take on the vice chair role. VE confirmed that this was a suggestion only and would not be put into the terms of reference for the group.

Discussion of important issues

Terms of reference for the group

Apart from a few additional comments, all members had agreed on them. VE will arrange for them to be uploaded onto the website.

Pharmacy Technician numbers

VE thanked members for sending in their data. Some work needs to be carried out to clarify how this data will be used. CS agreed to evaluate it. HF stated that in its original form it could only inform us of numbers registered and certificated. The data needs to be compared against:

- National vacancy figures
- Funding models

There is a need to identify whether reduced numbers are going to create workforce issues and to monitor where technicians go once they qualify.

VE stated that this should become another group objective.

BW advised that this work be evaluated in conjunction with workforce issue data being collected by the DoH, also to get in contact with colleges to obtain completion rate information to link in.

HF also suggested that the NHS National Survey might also be useful to consider.

HF advised against comparing funding models against this work as it contains sensitive information for SHAs.

Data to be evaluated against:

- Number of established posts
- Vacancies
- Frozen posts
- Use of locums
- Withdrawals and reasons

Action; VE, HF & CS to review purpose and evaluation against similar data

Part time pre-registration trainee pharmacy technicians

AS asked the Group whether there was any information on part time students and completion rates. CS said she had been looking at whether the courses were being delivered to the appropriate people. BW said that some colleges were offering the course as an 'add-on' to other qualifications.

Janet Flint from RPSGB is looking into possibilities of a separate register for pre-registration trainee pharmacy technicians and at which point they should register. The Clarke Report suggests that they do register. BW stated that the consultation regarding these issues sent out by the RPSGB had resulted in only 11 responses and that the RPSGB were re-looking at it and would send out again. The RPSGB may not be in a position at this time to provide guidance.

AS asked the group if they took on part time pre-registration trainee pharmacy technicians. Most of the group did not. BW advised that it was a risky time to undertake the course on a part time basis bearing in mind regulation/registration issues. BW sends letters to candidates stating that the college cannot be held responsible if they do not meet the RPSGB requirements to register.

DP stated that there is nothing written down stating that the course must be undertaken as a full time employee – would there be a possibility of a dispute? The RPSGB were the only body that could provide support on this.

All agreed that if there is a clear agreement from the outset on the requirements to undertake the course then this should be sufficient. VE also highlighted that the onus for this is on the employer and that they need to be clear what the potential implications could be.

SSG objectives

Regulation – LM not at meeting to feed back

NOS - DP informed the group that there was not much to report on this project – things seemed to have gone quiet. TF said that the new NOS had been sent out for national piloting/testing in April 08. Decisions need to be made whether the 5 new NOS that have been developed would be standalone, used with the existing qualification or as part of a higher level qualification. Timescales for this project were tight and group were concerned that this did not result in the pushing through of NOS that would be out of date in a couple of years.

Funding – TB suggested that we review the data that had been collected on funding from last year to see if any changes had occurred and to get an update on how funding was being accessed and discussion of areas of interest for the group at the next meeting.

DB asked a question from Susan Sanders regarding JIF funding, what experiences other regions had had, and how it was being managed in SHAs.

BB – had arranged a meeting to discuss this

VE – had met with a broker – providing information at present on eligibility

JIF funding focussed at the moment on jobs banded 1 – 4

Need to present a bid to justify the need for funding.

HF – all trusts had been asked to provide information on numbers of trainees and additional support required

VE informed the group that funding for A1 & V1 training can be accessed through JIF soon.

Action: TB to bring spreadsheet with collated information to next meeting

ACT – Nothing to report. Framework agreed and on website.

Action: DB to provide figures at next meeting.

Support & develop higher level qualifications – GR gave an update on the Process Technology qualification. It has now been approved and is now available on the C&G website for registration. It has been widely piloted nationally and colleagues from Wales are potentially interested in testing it too. Available as an interactive on-line workbook with a technical certificate as the knowledge framework. Further work involves looking at a higher skills curriculum. TSET are now involved with other strands of work, including pre and in-process checking. TSET are also compiling a career and competency framework. David Webb has been consulted so that it all fits in with the Professional Development Framework. RPSGB were approached regarding the framework – they advised that Skills for Health are consulted to ensure national agreement and to consider issues around regulation.

BW informed the group that the UK Radiopharmacy Group would not be joining in with this work as they have their own NOS and were only looking to support qualified, registered pharmacy technicians.

Action: GR to circulate paper to group (see attachment)

Support work based facilitation – E&T competency framework coming out next month and will be launched at the UKCPA/GHP Conference on 10 May.

Checking in Technical Services – The framework for Pre & In-process checking has been tested and finalised. The framework for final accuracy checking is being piloted. The framework does not include release of the final item. The framework has been through TSET and QC and Production groups. LF had commented that this group were going to look at the document to endorse it and give feedback.

Action: HF to circulate relevant documents

Correspondence

No correspondence received.

Update from Strategy Group

Discussions had taken place around the website, with key questions being:

- What should go on there
- Should sections be passworded so that the secretary from each group could upload documents

The procedure has been updated and sent to the main group. The main group felt that there was not a need to password protect sections of the website. This group agreed.

No draft documents should be put on to the website.

Action: HF to circulate procedure

Annual Report – nearly finalised. The report will be ready for October 2008.

Staffing establishment and vacancy survey – Susan Sanders had sent out an email to trusts & PCTs to obtain data on establishment vacancy rates. This work will also inform as to whether Pre-registration Trainee Pharmacy Technicians should be added on to the Shortage Occupations List. The Home Office is collecting information on occupational shortages. Band 5 technicians are on this list but not Band 4. Helen Middleton is also carrying out some work on this area.

Main Committee Focus Event – is going ahead in October 08. Will focus on horizon scanning and evaluating what external groups want from us – what is our role and focus?

Action: All members to think about this and come back with thoughts to next meeting

Pharmacy Practice Framework consultation – we need to start thinking about this as the consultation will be out soon. The consultation includes feedback on what a qualified pharmacy technician should be able to do on the first day of being qualified.

BW asked the group for ideas on who to send the consultation out to in order to get a larger response, e.g. registered technicians, multiple pharmacies and APTUK

Edexcel update

Nothing to report.

Dennis Parker is carrying out some research into a distance learning BTEC.

Edexcel are recruiting for EVs. The form filling in is done online at the centre when you visit. You are paid £165 per visit - less tax of course and full expenses. Training is given each year and you are put up for a night, get a days training and get paid £100 for it. New EVs would also be automatically put through their D35 which takes the first year of EV ing. Someone comes with you on your early visits so you are well supported.

Action: BW to circulate information about becoming an EV

C&G update

C&G new electronic EV report goes live in April 08.

APTUK update

Conference on 5-8 June 2008 at St. Andrews, Scotland. Booking form available on the APTUK website. There is now an award for the best poster and a request for abstracts has been sent.

Election of officers and president on the horizon – two people are standing for president and a postal vote will be sent out nearer the time. Other officer posts will be vacant also.

APTUK have been
consultations and digesting the Clarke Enquiry.

Skills for Health

Nothing to report.

RPSGB Support Staff Advisory Group

BW gave a brief outline of discussions taking place:

- NOS project
- Clarke Report
- TSET
- Registration issues in Scotland

Action: BW to send a document outlining key discussion

A.O.B

BW requested whether group members could find out if there were any IVs in their patch that would be interested in carrying out a peripatetic IV role. Sanctions are being given to sites, as they do not have enough IVs. The need is greatest in North West England.

Action: Group members to contact BW with names of IVs in their region that have expressed a desire to work in this capacity on a freelance basis

Date of the next meeting

7 July 2008

Receipt of these minutes prior to the date of the next meeting implies that they are unconfirmed minutes.