

Support Staff Specialist Group
Minutes of the meeting, 19 January 2009
50 Eastbourne Terrace, Paddington, London

1. Present

Vanessa Eggerdon (VE), Deborah Williams (DW), Jane Pyatt (JP), Sarah Wright (SW), Kath Stride (KS), Beth Barratt (BB), Barbara Wensworth (BW), Tess Fenn (TF), Tracey Burrows (TB), Gill Risby (GR), Dalgeet Puaar (DP), Julie Jordan (JJ)

2. Apologies

Helen Fawcett, Diane Blunden, Jennifer Harris, Sally Kemp, Lesley Morgan, Val Findlay

3. Minutes of meeting held 06 October 2008

Minutes agreed as confirmed

4. Matters arising

Nothing to report

5. Discussion of important issues/sharing practice

New qualifications for Pharmacy Support Staff BW

BW & TF attended a meeting run by Skills for Health. Discussions took place regarding how the new qualification will look when it moves into the Qualifications and Credit Framework. City & Guilds (C&G) and Edexcel expressed an interest in working together to develop the new qualifications. Skills for Health want this work complete by July 2009; however, this may be too tight a deadline. The plan of action on this entails conducting a mapping exercise in March 09. Following this, the awarding bodies will train writers to write the qualifications, which will then go to the reference groups for consultation. If anyone has an interest in being a writer for the new qualification then let BW know for Edexcel and TF know for C&G. They are looking for experts in all pharmacy sectors to participate. The awarding bodies do pay writers for their time, and this fee will be negotiated.

TF fed back from the Strategy Group. There was a debate about the structure of the qualification and what should be included, as the qualification needs to apply to all sectors. It was agreed at the meeting that there was not a true representation of all sectors and therefore another date of 12 Feb 2009 has been set to sign off and agree the structure of the qualification. Janet Flint has sent an email to the Support Staff Advisory Group members for comments. At present, the structure of the new National Occupational Standards for Level 3 has 14 mandatory 'units' and one optional. There is potential with this structure for a Pre-registration Trainee Pharmacy Technician (PTPT) to complete the qualification by only working in dispensary and stores. The new qualifications should be ready to roll out in September 2010.

HF asked for clarification regarding the new assessment strategy and the co-ordinating assessor role. Members of the Qualifications Sub Group said they would re-read and double check the clarity of this optional requirement.

Action: Contact TF or BW if interested in becoming a writer and disseminate to other interested staff.

Chair and Deputy Chair of Support Staff Specialist Group

Only two nominations for chair had been received. Both of these nominations were for VE to continue in this role. VE and GR will remain in their positions and work closely together.

Advantages and disadvantages of apprenticeships BB

BB informed the group that they were being encouraged in their region to use apprenticeship funding for their support staff training. BB asked the group for feedback on how apprenticeships work as they were undecided on whether to take them on. GR said that they had considered it, however, there were questions about the increased administrative workload that apprenticeships present in relation to drawing down the funding and completing the 18 week record. There was also funding that could be drawn down for assessors but GR was unclear as to how this was accessed. GR said that they use the framework but do not do the key skills as the basics were covered at college. Some members acknowledged that some students are struggling with calculations, this included pre-registration trainee pharmacists. BW suggested that they access previous pre-registration test papers and that the Pharmaceutical Press had a useful book on calculations. Another useful tool is medslarning,

<http://www.medslearning.leeds.ac.uk/pages/resources/resources.html>

Hospitals unable to support Aseptics Unit 9 BB

BB informed the group that a large trust has just pulled out of supporting this unit. The group acknowledged that this is a national problem, as most trusts cannot cover the full range required in this unit. Some regions are out-sourcing their aseptic products and it was difficult to send students for training. There was some discussion around whether this unit reflects current practice. This will need to be discussed by the groups involved in creating the new qualification. If the range was more flexible, then there may be more of an uptake of students undertaking this unit.

Feedback from NHS TSET GR

GR had emailed a paper from TSET that outlined their role and projects that they were involved in. This paper had also been sent to Transcom. TSET are now meeting twice a year. The website is due to be re-launched imminently. GR explained that she represents the NHS Pharmacy Education & Development Support Staff Group at the TSET meetings; this will involve feeding back any important information to or from the group.

A technical specialist CLF framework has been developed which encompasses pharmacy assistant level to senior pharmacist. TSET are also ready to test 4 aseptic modules. The principles are ready to release and are free. All modules will be available by Summer 2009. Please see the paper for more detailed information.

Action: The group agreed that GR will provide a synopsis of TSET matters and would send to TB to distribute to members.

6. SSG objectives

VE fed back that the focus group in October 08 had been very productive. Trevor Beswick and Susan Sanders have prepared a follow up paper outlining the committee's objectives – these now need checking and allocation of a member to take the lead on a specific objective and ensure the objective is SMART. The objectives will be signed off at April's morning meeting. There are four key objectives. Members are invited to put themselves forward as a lead for specific objectives.

Action: VE to send out objectives with a deadline for members to express an interest in taking a lead

Registration

The RPSGB have sent out a consultation. Everyone needs to contribute to this. Responses can be made on-line. The RPSGB are preparing for a rollout in April 2009.

National Projects/consultations

DP suggested that responding to consultations should be a regular agenda item so that we can be proactive in identifying what we should respond to within the deadline set. The group agreed that this would be useful. There are two consultations out presently, The Future of the Healthcare Science Workforce (deadline for responses Friday 13 February) and Creating a New Professional Regulator for Pharmacy (deadline for responses Friday 27 February).

DP agreed to co-ordinate and collate comments from members. BW agreed to check for any other consultations from the RPSGB.

Action: Members to send comments to DP

Funding

TB informed the group that she had still not received information from all members regarding their funding arrangements for PTPTs and Pharmacy Assistants.

Action: TB will contact individuals to obtain this information

Accreditation in final accuracy checking (DB/KS)

KS said data collection was on going needed to get in contact with DB to comment on progress at this point.

Support and develop higher level qualifications (GR)

GR has carried out some work to map opportunities for pharmacy technician progression through the banding. The group agreed that the mapping exercise was interesting and it would be useful to see how this progression fits nationally. Non-accredited courses could also be shown on the mapping. DP informed the group that London Pharmacy Education & Training (LPE&T) also had a Technician Self Development Programme. TF asked the group whether anyone would be willing to share information on how underpinning knowledge for Unit 12 (Facilitate Learning through Demonstration and Instruction).

Action: Members to feedback to GR any additions to the mapping

Support work based facilitation (VE)

Maria Christou has been looking at all of the frameworks and evaluating uptake and progress.

VE asked for feedback from the group on their experiences of using eportfolios. DP said that LPE&T had just started using them for the Assessor and Internal Verifier qualifications with a view to rolling out for the pharmacy services qualifications later on in the year. DP would feedback on how well the system was working when they had more experience of using it. BW said that the university had just started using them. DP said that other technology is required to make eportfolios work efficiently, such as digital voice recorders and scanners.

Checking in technical services (SK)

TSET are still discussing how to use the new framework. It is not as clear-cut as the Accredited Checking Technician Framework. It is useful to use as a benchmark. Local areas will implement as they see it.

Training numbers (VE)

VE would like the data on this to mirror what is collated for the Pre-registration Trainee Pharmacist (PTP) data.

Action: VE to request up to date numbers based on intakes. VE will adapt the PTP exit questionnaire and send out for comments and thoughts on how it can be utilised.

7. Correspondence

No correspondence received

8. Update from Strategy Group

The Group asked for information on eportfolios (see agenda item 6). The annual report is due out on the website soon. Peter Noyce, professional adviser to Prolog had delivered a presentation on CPD, Pharmacy and re-validation. As of July 2009, CPD will become mandatory. Some pilots are being carried out and 35 independent reviewers have been recruited. The RPSGB will be sending out more explicit CPD standards and will start calling in records. In the future, the General Pharmaceutical Council will have the duty of setting standards for CPD, e.g. amount and type. It is unlikely that there will be a non-practising register.

Action: VE to circulate Peter Noyce's powerpoint presentation.

9. Pharmacy Practice Framework Consultation

This consultation is being approved by the Support Staff Advisory Group before it is disseminated.

10. Edexcel update

BW said that writers for the new qualifications are required (see agenda item 5). Edexcel are also piloting a new EV system called CRA. This involves a once yearly visit by occupational expert EVs to assessment centres. Prior to this another EV will go to the centre to review management systems. They will complete a report and send this to the occupational expert EV. If a centre has less than five candidates, a postal audit will be conducted. Potential problems with this system are inconsistencies in EV perceptions of centre performance. It also could potentially affect trainee verifiers being able to meet the requirements of being involved in an EV visit.

11. City & Guilds update

TF said that writers for the new qualifications are required (see agenda item 5)

12. APTUK update

TF encouraged members to complete the survey asking for thoughts on the future of APTUK as the new professional body for pharmacy support staff.

This will inform discussions about the future role of APTUK and how they will support the profession.

13. Skills for Health

Covered in agenda item 5.

14. RPSGB Support Staff Advisory Group (SSAG)

Work is being done to update the technical certificate. This work will then be subsumed into the new qualifications project.

Wendy Harris, Deputy Registrar is co-ordinating national workshops on what direction the education strategy for pharmacists should take. Janet Flint is keen to run some more workshops aimed at pharmacy technicians.

15. Any other business

Date of next meeting: **Monday 27 April 2009**

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