Council meeting 17 November 2010

Public business

Performance Monitoring

Purpose
To report on performance across the Registration function and to update the Council on progress being made towards developing the report to include performance on fitness to practise, with inspection visits.

Recommendations

The Council is asked:

i. to comment on performance across Registration; and

ii. to note progress towards developing the report to include fitness to practise matters, with inspection visits.

1.0 Introduction/Issues

1.1. At its meeting in October, the Council considered a proposed format for performance reporting across regulatory services’ delivery.

1.2. It was agreed that, initially, monitoring would concentrate on four essential areas:
   - fitness to practise;
   - renewal of registrations;
   - new entries to the register;
   - financial statements (reported to Council in October 2010, not included in this report).

1.3. As the Council is well aware, the IT systems inherited from the RPSGB do not facilitate effective performance reporting. Some of the registration data collected for the report are generated manually, rather than automatically
Performance Monitoring

11.10/C/06

1.4. The data surrounding renewals of registration are accurate, since this is all web- or telephone-based. Although the report shows the position reached at the end of October, as at 8 November, the number of Pharmacists who had renewed their registration had risen to 23340 (52.9%), Pharmacy Technicians had risen to 4572 (50.1%) and premises to 1722 (43.3%).

1.5. On a straight-line target, we would expect by now to have achieved a renewal rate of 60%. However, we anticipate that many registrants will choose to renew at the last minute, and that despite the extensive communication programme, other registrants may not have realised yet that they need to renew their registration by 30 November 2010.

1.6. To address this, those registrants who have not yet renewed have been sent an email, followed up by a letter, to remind them to renew registration. We have also advertised the need to renew, and the deadline, in the professional media.

1.7. Unfortunately, while straightforward renewal of individual registration by debit or credit card (the deadline for setting up a direct debit has passed) requires no manual input by staff, if registrants need to change their details (e.g. address) they must email the office who then need to update the database before renewal can proceed. We do not have accurate data on the volume of such requests, but they have utilised a great deal of staff effort. Since 27 September 2010, when renewal notices were issued, the Registration Team email inbox has received 6000 emails (around 1000 per week). Many of these relate to change of details, while others requested changes from the quarterly to annual direct debit payment. Each such request has to be processed manually. Similarly, although there are no accurate data on the volume of telephone calls received by the Registration teams, we know that this is very high, with calls ranging from registrants seeking reassurance that they have read the 'how to' guide correctly, through to those seeking advice on what ought to be declared as fitness to practise matters.

1.8. Given the limits of our telephone technology, members of staff have not been able to deal as effectively as we would wish with the volume and variety of calls. We are urgently exploring the introduction of modern call-centre handling telephony technology to support improvements in customer service. We are also exploring how quickly we can enhance our IT systems to deliver...
improvements, for example, permitting Registrants to change their address
details on-line.

**Applications for first registration as Pharmacy technicians**

1.9. In the run-up to 27 September, the RPSGB received an unprecedented level of
applications for registration as pharmacy technicians resulting in 3262
remaining outstanding on 24 September. This volume was wholly unexpected
and appears to have arisen out of some confusion about the cost of applying for
registration to the RPSGB versus the GPhC. The process is completely
manual and although additional members of staff have been recruited, the team
is struggling to cope with the volume.

1.10. This has been made worse by the fact that significant numbers of applicants
are now calling the office to ascertain when their application will be processed.
This diverts attention away from the processing work itself. We have sought to
alleviate this by placing messages on our website to indicate the likely service
standard of around three months. We have also written to the Association of
Pharmacy Technicians UK (APTUK) to explain the problems and have invited
them to a meeting to discuss the issues and proposed strategies for dealing
with this. The issue has been compounded by the fact that, of around 900
applications processed to date, 40% require further information and are
therefore ‘pending’ until the information is received.

1.11. We are exploring, urgently, whether any part(s) of the process can be
automated quickly, to assist with the volume of applications anticipated in the
early part of 2011; and whether the process can be streamlined without
impacting adversely on standards and public safety.

**Pre-registration**

1.12. In future reports, we will also develop a section to report on pre-registration
performance, which will provide helpful data on the likely future make-up of the
pharmacy profession and the extent to which that translates into actual
registrations.

**Fitness to practise**

1.13. Unfortunately, for the reasons set out in the Fitness to Practise update report
elsewhere on the agenda, it has not yet been possible to produce wholly
reliable data from which to report performance in FtP matter and in inspection
visits. As described in that report, we are close to resolving that issue in the
short term and fully expect to be able to report on progress against key criteria
at the next meeting.
1.14. The FtP report will also include performance data on numbers of CPD records called in for review and the outcomes of reviews, which is an important component of the Council’s proactive approach to fitness to practise.

2.0 Equality and diversity implications

2.1. The Council needs to have a full understanding of the make-up of its Register and applicants for registration, by gender, age, ethnicity etc. From this, the Council will want to monitor whether any group is disproportionately represented in, for example, refusal to register and if appropriate, any underlying reasons for this. However, the priority area of focus in this first phase of work is the Council’s core regulatory work with a direct public safety and professional standards impact.

3.0 Communications implications

3.1. As we continue in a period of high volume activity surrounding first registration and renewal of registration, we need to ensure that we communicate effectively with our stakeholders about how we plan to deal with those challenges within limited resources.

3.2. We plan to meet with the Association of Pharmacy Technicians UK (APTUK) to share our proposed approach with them and to seek their support to help us prepare for the unknown volume of applications we expect to receive between January and June 2011.

4.0 Resource implications

4.1. The pressures on Registration teams are likely to grow in the run-up to 30 November 2010. These are being monitored on a daily basis to ensure that areas most under pressure are effectively resourced.

5.0 Risk implications

5.1. There are risks to the delivery of pharmacy services and therefore patient and public safety if insufficient Registrants fail to renew their registration by 30 November, leading to community pharmacies needing to close until individuals have been restored to the Register.

5.2. The GPhC could suffer reputational risks if it fails to process applications for registration from Pharmacy Technicians in line with their needs; and/or fails to communicate effectively how it intends to manage the volume of applications.
5.3. Failure to monitor performance could pose a risk to the reputation of the GPhC, if as a result unacceptable delays occur in the Council discharging its regulatory responsibilities.

5.4. Although the legacy management information systems do not meet the reporting needs of the organisation at all levels, the measures being taken to address this, set out in the Fitness to Practise update report, should serve to mitigate those risks.

5.5. The prevalence of paper-based systems in some key areas carries inherent risks around data security. These are managed to the extent possible by ensuring that files are locked securely at the end of each day.

**Recommendations**

The Council is asked:

i. to comment on performance across Registration; and  
ii. to note progress towards developing the report to include fitness to practise matters, with inspection visits.

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*08 November 2010*
Appendix 1

Performance Monitoring

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**Performance Monitoring:- Registration**

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>2010</th>
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</tbody>
</table>

**2. Register**

- New Pharmacists: 166
- New Pharmacy Technicians: 1
- New Premises: 76

Total Premises: 13465

**3. Pharmacy Technician applications**

- Applications not yet processed (from RPSGB): 3262
- New GPhC applications received: 2680
- New GPhC applications rec'd: 10