

UKHCA Conference

28.09.2010 – 2.30pm

Wellington Park Hotel

Introduction

- Had hoped to be able to make some clear statements today about way forward.
- To some extent we have been overtaken by events;
 - Economic crisis & cuts in public expenditure to reduce the deficit.
 - The election of coalition government.
 - The abolition of the GSCC and the transfer of its functions to HPC.
- Lack of absolute clarity about the way ahead, therefore I will focus on;
 - some issues I think we need to address
 - what I think the way forward will be.

History of Regulation of the Social Care Workforce

- Proposal to establish the Care Councils in the late 1990s was based on;
 - recognition of the importance of social care
 - recognition of the growth there would be in social care demand
 - recognition of the need to protect vulnerable people
 - recognition of the key role of the social care worker and the need to raise the status and training of the workforce
 - recognition of social care as a skilled activity
- Proposal to establish a Social Care Council in each country.
- The significance of devolution – the need for each country to have the freedom to address issues in its own context.
- Each of the countries was clear that it wished to regulate the broader social care workforce – not just social workers.

N Ireland

- Very clear commitment from the start that we would register the entire social care workforce, including domiciliary care.
- Also accepted that there would be a gradual programme for rolling out regulation.

- Recognition of the domiciliary workforce as a priority – people looking after vulnerable individuals in their own homes without any physical supervision presented high risk

Versus

- The difficulties posed in registering such a diverse workforce;
 - Low pay
 - Largely part time
 - High turnover
 - Low levels of training and qualification
 - Low status etc.
- Eventually led to consultation on a roll out programme by DHSSPS towards the end of last year.

DHSSPS Proposals

Timetable

GROUP	DUE DATE
Managers in various previously registered sectors	July 2010
Managers of Domiciliary Care Services	July 2011
Care Workers – Residential Care	
Care Workers – Day Care etc.	July 2013
Domiciliary Care Workers	

Associated Issues

- Final dates for receipt of application to ensure everyone can be registered by due date.
- 'Grace' period for new registrants.
- Enforcement – 3 options:
 1. Responsibility rests with social care worker
 2. Responsibility rests with employer
 3. Responsibility rests with both

Responses

- Generally favourable and supportive
 - Majority of respondents, including UKHCA, confirmed continued support for registration.
 - Some concern about potential financial and recruitment issues.
 - Some concerns about potential for duplication with ISA.

Where we are with it

- My understanding is that the department and Minister are considering the issue and that a decision should be made in the near future – I had hoped by today, but there's a lot going on.
- We need to be clear not to read things into the delay in responding.
 - There is a lot going on.
 - There is a major debate about the extent to which health & social care expenditure should be protected from cuts.
 - The regulation of social care workers needs to be seen against these priorities.

Key Issues

1. *Financial Situation*

- Roll out of regulation costs money – you have to invest before you get income from fees.
- Issue of the extent to which registration should be self-funding.

2. *Levels of Fees*

- Should social care workers pay more?
- Comparability:
 - Dental Nurses - £96 p.a
 - Security Personnel (bouncers) - £360 for 3 years
- What would the impact be?

Proportionality

- We have always been clear of the need to introduce regulation in a way that does not cause disruption to the sector.
- Key considerations:
 - No duplications with ISA.
 - ISA deals with criminal issues which bar people from the workforce.
 - Registration deals with a broader set of professional issues.
 - Different thresholds – there will not be duplication – ISA will take care of the criminal record part.
 - Easy to register.
 - We need to ensure it is a straightforward & proportionate procedure.
 - We need to ensure people can pay ?? – by instalments?
 - Length of registration.
 - 5 years, rather than 3.

- Re-registration should be straightforward.
- Hopefully can be done on time.
- CPD/PRTL.
 - Needs to be proportionate.
- Dealing with conduct issues.
 - Need to be able to co-ordinate better with employers' disciplinary procedures.
- Need to allow for disposal by officers.
- Need to allow for conditions and agreements.
 - 'Undertakings'.
- Needs to avoid unnecessary bureaucracy.
- HOWEVER, needs to be human rights compliant.

Moving Agenda

Some important developments in terms of policy:

England

- Decision GSCC would not register home care workers (November 2009).
- Transfer of functions from GSCC to HPC and abolition of GSCC.
- Clear statement from HPC that the regulation of the broader social care workforce is not on the agenda at the moment.

Wales

- Pressing ahead with regulation.
- Welsh Assembly Commission reviewing registration and quality improvement in Wales.

Scotland

- Pressing ahead with regulation.

Impact on N Ireland

- Implications of GSCC decision required consideration.
- Minister spoke at NISCC conference last week and said:

“As many of you will be aware in England the coalition government has decided to transfer the functions of the General Social Care Council to the Health Professions Council. My officials and I are carefully considering the implications for N Ireland of this decision.

But I want to make 2 things absolutely clear. Policy for NI will be determined in NI. And secondly, as far as I'm concerned, we are determined to retain the NISCC as the regulatory body for the social care workforce in Northern Ireland."

- I believe there is a clear commitment in N Ireland to press ahead with the regulation of the broader social care workforce. I sense that comes from the Minister and from the highest levels in the Department.
- I believe we will proceed with the programme to roll out regulation, but I suspect the timescales might change.

Implications for the Home Care Sector

- Need to take a strategic view.
- The demography in N Ireland means that there is going to be a major increase in the demand for home care services.
- We need to see this as a tremendous opportunity.
 - This represents a real growth market and should not be seen as a drag on the economy.
 - If this were another sector it would be viewed differently.
 - However, we need to be aware that this growth in demand is happening at a time when public finance is under pressure.
- Even setting aside the current problems associated with the budget deficit, there will be ongoing structural issues about the growing number of older people who will require to be supported by a smaller proportionate number of the working population.
- The challenge which comes from that means that we will require a very highly skilled workforce that can deliver an effective, high quality service that meets the real needs of people in the community.
- It's in the interests of all of us that we can recruit and retain a highly skilled workforce.
- How do we do that?
 - Registration
 - Training

Where does that leave us?

- I expect that there will be a decision in the near future that will;
 - confirm the introduction of compulsory registration
 - will set out a revised timetable for take on
 - will require us to ensure that our processes and costs are proportionate, realistic and cost effective.

- Most, if not all, Domiciliary Care Managers are already registered with the Council. We have overall more than 13,500 of the workforce already on our register.

What we need to do

- I'm not sure about the timing of the roll out of registration to home care workers.
- Once the policy decision is answered, I think we, as a Council, need to meet with Home Care Providers to discuss the options open to us.

And Finally

Finally, we really need to be very clear on where we stand on the issue of regulating home care workers. This is the phase of regulation that is going to be most challenging. As we go into it, we need to be clear about where we are going, we need to be clear about the pace of change and we need to be clear about whether we have the unambiguous support of employers to help us work through the challenges which we will face.