

30 March 2009

## **Health Professions Council response to the Green Paper on the European Workforce for Health**

The Health Professions Council (HPC) welcomes the opportunity to respond to this consultation.

The HPC is a statutory UK wide regulator of healthcare professionals governed by the Health Professions Order 2001. We regulate the members of 13 healthcare professions. We maintain a register of health professionals, set standards for entry to our register, approve education and training programmes for registration and deal with concerns where a health professional may not be fit to practise. Our main role is to protect the health and wellbeing of those who use or need to use our registrants' services.

We support the aim of the Green Paper on the European Workforce for Health to start a wide-ranging debate on the common challenges for the healthcare workforce across Europe.

We believe that:

- all competent authorities should have processes in place to allow those who have left the health workforce to 'return to practice'. These must ensure that those returning to practise are safe and effective to practise after a period of updating their skills and knowledge.
- education and training programmes should be designed to take account of the needs of service users with disabilities to ensure they receive the same service quality as non-disabled service users. This should apply to those receiving education and training as well as those receiving services from a health professional.
- health professionals should be required to carry out continuous professional development (CPD).
- cross-border agreements on education and training based on best practice should be encouraged and supported.
- all competent authorities should exchange information reactively and proactively about the professional competence of health professionals that may affect patient safety.
- legal clarity is required about regulatory responsibility for the use of new technologies when the provision of service crosses borders.

We hope that you find these comments useful. Should you wish to discuss any of our comments then please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely,

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