

SOCIAL WORKERS REGISTRATION BOARD

Notes of the 1st Meeting of the Taskforce on Review of Code of Practice

Date: 15 February 2017
Time: 9:15 a.m.
Venue: GH317, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University
Present: Mr. WONG Ka-ming (Acting Convenor)
Dr. CHENG Yuk-tin, Carl (co-opted member)
Dr. LAM Chiu-wan (co-opted member)
Dr. LEUNG Chuen-suen
Mr. LUN Chi-wai
Secretary: Mr. LEE Wing-po, Eric, Registrar and
Ms. FAN Lai-yee, Veronica, Assistant Registrar

Dr. LEUNG led the discussion of the meeting before Mr. Wong arrived.

1. Dr. Leung welcomed and thanked the co-opted members to join the Taskforce. Dr. Leung briefed the co-opted members about the background of the review exercise of the Code of Practice (COP) and the scope of work of Taskforce in the coming two years.

Discussion on work plan of reviewing the COP

2. The work plan of reviewing the COP was discussed and it was noted that the Taskforce would be mainly involved in the drafting the proposed amendments and conducting the initial consultation exercise.

(Mr. WONG joined the meeting at this juncture and he took over to chair the meeting.)

Work plan

3. Members put forth the following suggestions on the work plan:
 - (a) Complaint cases received by the Board, including cases being dismissed or referred by the 2 Board members, would form the basis for this review exercise as COP is the important reference to the 2 Board Members and the Disciplinary Committee during their decision making process.
 - (b) RSWs should be involved at an earlier stage and the collection of views could be in different formats for example focus group, online consultation.
 - (c) Whether to set up a review framework at the consultation stage could be further discussed.
 - (d) Newly emerged phenomenon or social problems e.g. youth problems in multimedia world or LGBT might be included in the discussion.
4. The Registrar briefed the meeting that according to the SWRO, the Board might approve

and issue codes of practice (工作指引) to provide practical guidance (in Chinese 實務指引) regarding the professional conduct of RSWs (including related ethical considerations). The codes were published and took effect after the Gazette was noticed. The Board or a disciplinary committee might have recourse to any relevant provisions of the COP to determine whether the RSW has committed an offence. It was noted that the Guideline on COP which was first issued in 2010 to help RSWs implement and observe the standards laid down in the COP through better understanding of the provisions and their interpretations has adopted the Chinese title also as “實務指引”.

Scope of revision

5. Members were invited to discuss the scope of revision and they had the following observations and suggestions:
 - (a) The section of “interpretation” was not included in the COP and some important terms for example “clients”, “social justice”, “administrative duties”, “professional responsibilities” were not clearly defined.
 - (b) It was necessary to refine and to synchronize the wordings in the documents.
 - (c) It was confusing that professional aspiration and professional conduct were put in the same sections in the COP and the Guidelines on COP. Professional aspiration e.g. ethical standards, social justice, professional development should not used to determine whether RSWs had committed any professional misconduct. It was suggested moving those of professional aspiration under the “Preamble” of the document.
 - (d) It was suggested to either combine the COP and the Guidelines of COP in one when both look similar in terms of layout design or context, or different layout design should be used for two separate though related documents.
 - (e) The scope of review should be manageable as there was less than two years left for working on the review exercise. It was suggested that the review would start with reviewing the “Preamble”, to define important terms, to identify professional practice which was likely to be committed by RSWs in daily operations.

Next action

6. The Taskforce agreed that the Board office would prepare the statistics on complaint cases in the past 4 years for their information. The DC decisions with personal data being deleted would be tabled at the next meeting for further discussion. Mr. Lun and Dr. Leung, being as “2 Board Members” for a year, agreed to share their experience of screening complaint cases at the meeting to be held on 1 March 2017. The Taskforce would then work out the work schedule. *(Post meeting notes: the Board office circulated the statistics to the Taskforce on 20 February 2017. (Business information deleted)*

Date of next meeting

7. Members agreed to the following meeting schedule:
 - (a) 22 March 2017 at 9:15am at SWRB's office
 - (b) 11 April 2017 at 9:15am at the Hong Kong Polytechnic University
 - (c) 25 May 2017 at 9:15am at the Hong Kong Polytechnic University
8. There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:30 pm.

6 March 2017