**FACT SHEET 1**

New Regulators for Social Work

Social workers in England play an important role in our society and Mark Seale, Chief Executive and Registrar of HCPC in a recent article in the Compass Annual Guide welcomes them to the HCPC Register.

HCPC worked with stakeholders from the social work community in drafting the standards and to ensure there was a smooth transition from GSCC. In the article he thanks all involved in the transfer and looks forward to working with the social work community in the future.

The Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC), formerly the Health and Care professions Council is an independent UK-wide health and care regulator. It was set up to protect the public and does this by setting standards for training, professional skills and behaviour for all of the professions it regulates. All of the professions which it registers have at least one professional title that is protected by law. This means for example that anyone using the titles ‘occupational therapist’, ‘physiotherapist’ or ‘social worker’ must be registered with the HCPC. It is a criminal offence for someone to claim that they are registered with the HCPC when they are not or to use a protected title that they are not entitled to use. HCPC will prosecute people who commit these crimes.

**Maintaining the standards**

Setting effective standards of conduct, performance and ethics are ethical standards and describe the behaviour expected of individuals on the HCPC Register. This includes for example, behaving with honesty and integrity, keeping high standards of personal conduct and acting in the best interests of service users. These standards apply to both current and prospective registrants and have applied to social workers in England since they transferred to the HCPC Register.

**HCPC standards of proficiency**

The standards of proficiency are competency standards and play a central role in how an individual becomes and remains registered with the HCPC by explaining the knowledge and skills expected of them. The standards set out what is necessary for safe and effective practise, detailing what a social worker must know, understand and be able to do when they start practising for the first time.

The standards of proficiency cover specific areas of what a social worker in England must know including:

* Being able to practise safely and effectively within their scope and practise
* Being able to practise within the legal and ethical boundaries of the profession
* Being able to maintain fitness to practise
* Being able to practise as an autonomous professional, exercising their own professional judgement
* Being aware of the impact of culture, equality and diversity on practise

**Standards of Continuing Professional Development CPD**

Social workers in England must meet HCPC requirements for continuing professional development (CPD). Every two years the HCPC audits 25% of each profession to check that the registrants meet the CPD standards. Audits are co-ordinated with registration renewals, where registrants are asked to sign the professional declaration that says their knowledge and skills are up to date. The first audits for social workers in England will take place from September 2014. To find out exactly what is required please log onto the HCPC website.

**Standards of education and training**

The HCPC approve programmes for the professions it regulates within the UK which lead to eligibility to apply to its Register. This means someone who has successfully completed one of these approved programmes is eligible to apply to the HCPC register.

As part of the approval process HCPC visit education providers to ensure its standards of education and training are being met.

For more information please visit: www.hcpc-uk.org