

BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT

INTERIM INSPECTION (Online, Distance & Blended Learning)

PROVIDER: College of Practical Homeopathy

ADDRESS: The Healthy Living Centre
282-284 St Paul's Road
London
N1 2LH

HEAD OF PROVIDER: Mr Tony Farley

ACCREDITATION STATUS: Accredited

DATE OF INSPECTION: 30 November 2018

ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE DECISION AND DATE: Continued accreditation 28 March 2019

PART A – INTRODUCTION

1. Background to the provider

The College of Practical Homeopathy (CPH/the Provider) is a small college based in north east London. It was set up in 2003 as a private company limited by guarantee and has two directors.

CPH's mission is to foster a holistic and diverse approach to well-being and to provide learners with sufficient knowledge to help people change their attitudes to their health and the environment.

Since 2003, CPH has provided part-time, full-time and more recently distance and blended e-learning courses that have helped set the standard for the sector. CPH is now primarily an online training provider.

The Provider adopts a learning approach that promotes the rapid development of practical skills alongside taught theoretical approaches. Its founder, who is also the Director, regularly provides talks and seminars internationally. She is currently developing a homeopathy project in Ghana as well as supporting programmes in Bulgaria, Rwanda, Swaziland and Botswana.

Both directors are involved in the Homeopathic Course Providers Forum (HCPF), which is the key body working towards a common regulatory framework for registration and regulation of individual homeopaths. HCPF also runs an independent Quality Assurance Scheme for course providers, such as CPH, and acts as an accreditation body for the sector.

2. Brief description of the current provision

CPH offers its main course, the Professional Training in Homeopathy, on its e-learning platform. This course, the Post Graduate Licentiate for qualified Health Professionals, consists of 12 modules, and two short introductory courses, the Health Factor and the Home Prescriber.

The Professional Training in Homeopathy course is offered at three levels, Certificate, Diploma and Licentiate. The Licentiate is the standard qualification for homeopathic practice in the United Kingdom. The final certification is based on five assessed personal case studies based on practice. Each of the three levels is divided into ten integrated modules, which allow practical skills to be developed alongside the theory.

Learners have up to an hour of allocated time for online evaluation with their tutor for each module at all levels. Learners can start courses at any time and are normally expected to complete one module a month, working in their own time. The average time for learners to complete a level is two years part-time.

The online distance learning suits many of the learners, who have families and wish to study flexibly. The number of training clinics offered at the Healthy Living Centre (the Centre/HLC), which are an integral part of the provision, has reduced significantly since online, distance and blended learning (ODBL) was introduced because most learners are currently international and gain experience in their own local clinical practice settings. Nevertheless, the clinics provide an opportunity for learners to work together with patients from the local community and to support each other's practical learning. Learners can also attend the occasional taught sessions that are offered.

The three courses, that were running at the time of inspection, were the Professional Training in Homeopathy, which had 35 learners enrolled, the Post Graduate Licentiate in Homeopathy, which had 32 learners and the Connective Programme, which is a specialist training course that consists of six modules for existing qualified doctors who wish to add knowledge of homeopathy. This course had one learner enrolled.

There are currently 68 learners registered on the Provider's programmes, of whom the vast majority are female. There are no learners under the age of 18. Enrolment is worldwide.

3. Inspection process

The inspection was conducted by one inspector over one day. Discussions were held face-to-face with the two directors. Interviews were conducted by telephone with the Course Administrator, two tutors, three learners and the External Moderator. Documents were scrutinised online. Information and documentation were available to the inspector at all times during the inspection. The Provider cooperated fully with the inspector's requests and the directors were very helpful throughout the day.

4. Inspection History

Inspection Type	Date
Full Accreditation	7-8 December 2008
Interim	25 January 2010
Re-accreditation	15-16 March 2013
Interim	16 February 2014
Re-accreditation	4-5 November 2016

PART B – JUDGMENTS AND EVIDENCE

The following judgments and comments are based upon evidence seen by the inspector during the inspection and from documentation provided by the provider.

1. Significant changes since the last inspection

There have been no significant changes since the last inspection.

2. Response to actions points in last report

There were no action points in the last report.

3. Response to recommended areas for improvement in last report

It is recommended that learner results and success rates form part of the audit reports to provide a full picture of the operations and learner progress.

Learners results and success rates have been fully incorporated into the Annual Review and Report for 2017 to 2018 within a broader statistical analysis of the organisation, to provide a full picture of the operations and learner progress. This improves the directors' ability to project the viability of future developments planned by the Provider.

The Provider should consider modifying the learner contract to clarify expectations on completing deadlines and available sanctions if required.

Information packs for the Professional Training in Homeopathy and the Post Graduate Licentiate for Qualified Health Professionals and the Student Agreement have been comprehensively updated. They now provide appropriate information on the length of time the course is expected to take, the ways in which control over learner progression has been tightened and the stricter policy on completion of modules. This has made a considerable difference to the timing of submissions by learners, which is an extremely positive development for the Provider. This outcome has enabled the Provider to give more attention to the learning process, rather than spending time requesting assignments. The implementation of realistic deadlines and a stricter policy with sanctions for the completion of coursework helps to ensure that learners complete each module within an appropriate time frame, on average between one month and six weeks.

The Provider is recommended to incorporate details of the final assessment in the module guide.

Module 1, which is the learner handbook and course guide for both the Professional Training in Homeopathy (Certificate Level) and the Post Graduate Licentiate for Qualified Health Professionals, has been appropriately updated to include confirmation of the graduation criteria. This has led to increased clarity for learners regarding these criteria. Although the graduation criteria appear in a number of documents, the dissemination of graduation criteria could be widened further to increase transparency and give learners further opportunities to become familiar with these.

Modify the Clinic Record to include Supervisors and Tutors, to further develop the internal verification process.

The Clinic Hours Record has been updated to include relevant details of supervisors and tutors and the external moderator, to confirm that the records are being monitored. This further develops the internal verification process.

4. Compliance with BAC accreditation requirements

4.1 Management, Staffing and Administration (spot check)

The standards are judged to be:

Met

Partially Met

Not Met

Comments

The organisation chart shows a clearly defined management structure. All members of staff say that they fully understand the roles and function of the directors. There are no detailed plans in place to secure the long-term future of the Provider and its ability to continue to thrive and develop in the event of the retirement of either of the directors.

Clear communication channels exist between the directors, Administrator, tutors and External Moderator. Tutors are fully aware of which member of staff to communicate with and how, and thus have an excellent understanding of the policies and procedures of the Provider. Methods of communication include e-mail and online interview. Response from other staff members is rapid. Tutors say they are able to provide feedback effectively on the organisation's policies and procedures which fully ensures the continued development of these.

The Administrator's workload is appropriate and ensures the effective management of tasks. The Administrator has a clearly defined area of responsibility and works remotely. Administrative procedures are streamlined and very easy to follow. Modules are dispatched to learners very quickly following the marking of the assignments at the end of each module. Online security systems and secure work practices are in place. Learners are confident that they can move through the courses at the required pace without technical problems or delays in the delivery of course modules.

The storage of data is extremely well managed. Inspection findings confirm a thorough understanding of General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Further quality assurance measures could be implemented to reduce and streamline the quantity of learner data held, specifically with regard to documents submitted by learners as part of their course. This would result in enhanced data management practices.

An effective system for reviewing the performance of teaching staff is carried out which consists of a quarterly review and ongoing communication regarding performance. The system is appropriate for the size of the organisation. As a result, tutors understand their role very clearly.

The website hosts current, accurately updated publicity material for the courses provided. Learners know in advance the course content, which means that learners have the latest, most up-to-date and comprehensive information on which to base their decisions.

4.2 Teaching, Learning and Assessment (spot check)

The standards are judged to be:

Met

Partially Met

Not Met

Comments

The current focus at CPH is on developing, maintaining and growing the Professional Training in Homeopathy and the Post Graduate Licentiate for Qualified Health Professionals courses. The Directors are also working on developing and promoting short seminars and courses, webinars and e-books and developing links with the wider health community and developing links overseas. This comprehensive approach to development will support the Provider in maintaining and improving their unique approach to delivering training and maintaining their market share.

Learners and directors say that tutors are extremely well qualified in their field. Tutors have online and face-to-face experience. Inspection findings confirm this.

Internal programme reviews take place on a continuous basis. Course notes are upgraded by the directors to take account of feedback from tutors and learners. Response to feedback is very rapid and appropriate.

Group meetings of the tutors provide an excellent channel for updates and include reference to the outcomes of meetings that have taken place with other similar providers. The Director, who is a practicing homeopath and author, effectively contributes to courses which learners and tutors say are constantly evolving and at the forefront of current knowledge and practice.

Learners say they have appropriate access to tutors for learning support. Well-structured tutor and learner one-to-one tutorials take place, which are based on the learners' self assessment of their learning. Useful feedback is provided very quickly on the submitted assignments. This individualised instruction leads to learners feeling confident about the method of course delivery and their ability to achieve the stated programme objectives.

Learners are actively encouraged to engage with the practical element of the course by visiting the clinics that are run by the students. The different elements of the course, which are written notes, direction to appropriate websites, recordings of patient cases, an extensive reading list and submission of assignments require learners to foster independent learning skills. This culminates in the final assessment, which requires learners to produce two books based on their learning journey.

4.3 Learner Support (spot check)

The standards are judged to be:

Met

Partially Met

Not Met

Comments

Learners are fully briefed on all relevant information prior to enrolment and inspection findings confirm this view. This enables learners to make a sound judgment on their suitability for the course. This also enables the enrolment process to be smooth and efficient.

Learners are aware of the demanding level of English required. Tutors report that the level of English of the learners is high. This enables learners to achieve the programme objectives effectively.

The learners' activity log provides a regular forum for the raising of problems and issues. This is completed at the end of each module by learners and tutors and looked at by the directors. Any issues raised with the directors regarding course material are addressed very quickly. Any developmental feedback is seen by the Provider as being helpful rather than negative. This ensures that learners are confident that their enquiries will be handled promptly and sympathetically.

The directors design the programme of study. Materials are very clearly written, particularly in terms of methodology and process. To make more effective use of appropriate learning resources, there is a move to replace the audio material with webinars. This will support the Provider with reflecting current practice in online and blended learning.

4.4 Management of Quality (spot check)

The standards are judged to be:

Met

Partially Met

Not Met

Comments

A Peer Review with another homeopathy training provider was undertaken in April 2018. This provided an excellent opportunity for the directors to undertake a self-assessment of the organisation and share best practice leading to the continuing development of CPH.

Policies and procedures are all online. Module notes are very clear for learners. Tutors mark assignments and then directors make comments on the marking. This effectively ensures that tutors are marking to the same level and grade. The process is very transparent.

Open dialogue takes place on a continuous basis between staff, tutors and learners and inspection findings confirm this view. Currently, feedback to the Provider is driven by learners and their concerns. A more

proactive approach could be taken to regularly elicit clearly focused opinion on aspects of the Provider's provision, such as what the Provider is really good at and what they need to do to improve.

4.5 Premises and Facilities – face-to-face component (spot check)

The standards are judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

Training rooms for the student clinic are appropriate in size, well equipped and appropriately heated and ventilated. They are clean and well decorated and allow for the delivery of student clinics to be conducted effectively.

Toilet facilities are appropriate and adequate for the number of people who are present at the student clinics.

The premises are appropriately restricted and secure and enable learners to carry out clinics with patients in a safe space.

Adequate facilities exist for staff to hold private or staff meetings.

4.6 Compliance Declaration

Declaration of compliance has been signed and dated.

Yes No

PART C – SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS AND ACTION POINTS

STRENGTHS

The open dialogue between the directors, Administrator, tutors and learners, through the different means and channels of communication available to them, underpins the entire organisation. This facilitates dynamic operations and constantly evolving courses.

ACTIONS REQUIRED

None

RECOMMENDED AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT *(to be reviewed at the next inspection)*

It is recommended that the communication of graduation criteria to the learners, and confirmation of receipt of this, be increased further to improve transparency and give learners further opportunities to become familiar with these.

It is recommended that more detailed plans appropriate to the size and structure of the organisation, are put in place and clearly communicated where relevant, to ensure the continuity of the organisation in the event of the retirement of either or both of the directors.

It is recommended that further quality assurance measures are implemented with regards to the storage of learner data to optimise data volumes and enhance data management practices.

It is recommended that clearly focused opinion be regularly elicited from the learners on all aspects of the Provider’s provision so as to take a more proactive, targeted approach to identifying what the Provider is really good at and what they need to do to improve.

COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS - FURTHER COMMENTS, IF APPLICABLE