How ‘HCPC ready’ are you?

With a year to go before the next HCPC registration renewal period for occupational therapists, we talk to Yvonne Ellis, who was selected for audit twice in a row, about her experience.

Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) registrants must renew their HCPC registration every two years, and each profession has fixed renewal dates, with the renewal period for occupational therapists next taking place this time next year.

HCPC will ask all registrants to sign a form to confirm that they continue to meet the HCPC’s standards, and in addition, around 2.5 per cent of occupational therapist registrants will be randomly selected to submit a continuing professional development (CPD) profile.

In September 2015, senior occupational therapist Yvonne Ellis was selected for the second time to submit her CPD.

‘I had previously been selected in 2009,’ she says, ‘the first year that CPD selection was introduced for occupational therapists. The first time I took some annual leave from work to concentrate on writing everything up in the format requested by HCPC. The second time, I spent three weekends getting it all together, choosing suitable examples, writing up my reflective logs and compiling relevant evidence of the activity. But, I asked myself, could I have done all this before?’

In order to maintain HCPC registration, occupational therapists have to keep a detailed list of their learning. ‘It is important that I can demonstrate that I am keeping up to date with my professional development and making good use of my new found knowledge,’ Yvonne explains. ‘But how will this change me and my practice?’

‘Despite all the seemingly extra work involved, it was an extremely useful exercise. I was able to reflect on my practice over the intervening two years and see what I had achieved and how my learning has not only helped me, but my colleagues and the company I work for, informed a wider occupational therapy network and, ultimately, all towards a better service to our customers.

‘Had I just written a reflective log at the time of each piece of learning it would have been all about what I am going to do, or what I intend to do, or how I think it will improve my practice or benefit my customer.

‘Had I not been called up, would I have ever bothered to look back and see how it had really influenced my practice? Probably not.’

Since Yvonne’s first CPD submission, she has kept a detailed list of all her learning, with evidence, all dated and in chronological order.

‘This has been my most useful tool,’ she goes on. ‘It made choosing relevant examples easier, and I am now very familiar with the format.’

But how can she be better prepared in future? ‘The personal profile and statement could be started, but would need to be regularly updated. I will still keep the detailed learning list, only this time I will add what “type” of learning this was to each entry.

‘We are asked to submit examples of at least three different types of learning style. I will start a reflective log for some of the learning, but be prepared to update this if selected again. I will make the most of every relevant learning opportunity that comes my way, particularly if it is free.

‘My most useful learning – for resulting impact on my company and customer – has been my self-directed learning. Even if I’m not selected again, I will look back at my learning record every few months to assess what impact it has really had on my work.

‘My only concern is that we do not receive any constructive feedback [from HCPC]. I have put a lot of effort into my CPD. How do I know if I did too much, how does it compare to other people’s CPD, did I need to work so hard, spend so much time, were some bits more relevant than others, could I have done better? I will never know, unless I fail. Will I be ready again this time next year? Will you?’

Yvonne Ellis, senior occupational therapist, Housing Solutions Ltd. For all HCPC audit dates visit: www.hpc-uk.org/registrants/cpd/dates/

COT resources to support you in your CPD and preparation for the HCPC audit

The Learning Zone (www.cot.co.uk/learning-zone) has had a makeover and contains many useful resources. There is a button dedicated to supporting you with the HCPC audit (www.cot.co.uk/ot-helps-you/support-hcpc-audit) and more will be added as we head towards audit time in 2017. New to the Learning Zone is a toolkit to support self-directed learning (www.cot.co.uk/ot-helps-you/toolkit-self-directed-learning) and tips on how to embed CPD into everyday practice.

Further inspiration for CPD ideas can be found by glancing through the ‘taster menus’, which help you to explore the rest of the website to learn more about how to support your evidence informed practice, research activities, ‘smart’ data collection and/or use of outcomes (www.cot.co.uk/ot-helps-you/exploring-rest-cot-website-your-cpd).

Finally, please see the recent CPD blog, ‘Have you explored the Learning Zone yet?’ (https://baotcot.wordpress.com/).