

31 Mar 16

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**CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CPD) FOR FARRIERS:
OPTIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT – A DISCUSSION PAPER (YELLOW)**

1. Issue. Take stock of the current CPD regime for farriers and consider options for evolution. Following engagement with the CPD Steering Group on 5 Jun 14 it was agreed that the CPD system for farriers would be revisited in due course and in light of experience and lessons identified.
2. Recommendations. Action addressees are invited to:
 - **note** the content of this discussion paper;
 - **discuss** the evolution of farrier CPD during 2016; and,
 - **submit** written comment to FRC Sec by 31 Dec 16.
3. Timing. Routine, for discussion during 2016.

What is CPD?

4. Within farriery CPD is defined thus:

"CPD is a continual process of lifelong learning. It includes everything **learned** that makes you better able to carry out your job as a farriery professional, including your role as an employer if applicable".

It follows that successful CPD will require the systematic maintenance, improvement and broadening of knowledge, skills and experience, and the development of personal qualities necessary for the execution of professional and technical duties throughout the farrier's working life.

Where are we and How did we get here?

5. The CPD regime for farriers started in 2007/08 with the intent of establishing a vehicle by which professional development, life-long learning and expanding farriers' knowledge, skills and experience might be advanced. The scheme started small and grew over a three year period with an annual CPD points accrual of five in 2008 growing

to eight in 2009, and then to ten in 2010. While the scheme was encouraged by both the profession (WCF and BFBA) and the regulator (FRC), it remained voluntary until January 2013. In January 2013 it became mandatory for all Approved Training Farriers (ATFs) to accrue ten CPD points each calendar year, or thirty CPD points over a 3 year period. In January 2016 it became mandatory for all new joining farriers to undertake CPD and to accrue ten CPD points each calendar year, or thirty CPD points over a 3 year period.

6. By 2020 the number of farriers undertaking CPD may have grown from the current cohort of circa 300 to around 700; the additional 400 or thereabouts made up of a projected 360 additions to the register plus perhaps up to 6 new ATFs each year. So it may be said that, eight years since its inception, CPD for farriers has come of age. The details of the current scheme are set out in the FRC Guide to CPD for Farriers (2014) at **TAB A** and the CPD points lists for activities (2013 & 2014) at **TAB B(1) & TAB B(2)**

The Current CPD System

7. The first audit of CPD attainment took place in 2015 in which 29 ATFs were selected at random to have their CPD records audited. In sum, 18 ATFs had achieved the required points related to endorsed activities; 7 ATFs had achieved the required number of points but not all activities merited the award of CPD points, and 4 ATFs had failed to complete CPD as required, resulting in referral to the Investigating Committee of the FRC.

8. An examination of the activities undertaken by the 29 ATFs during the audit revealed a predictable focus on shoemaking and fitting. There was negligible engagement by way of interaction with Veterinary Surgeons, or with assessment and analysis of the equine hoof, or with the use of new methods and new technologies. Similarly there was very little engagement with wider business skills such as basic accounting and completion of VAT returns, nor with stock ordering and management, nor with advertising and messaging, nor with the operation of employment law.

9. The current system is essentially an input-based system whereby points are claimed against an activity, and provided the activity appears to meet that set out on the points list, the CPD record is endorsed. It may be argued that there are two key ingredients missing: (1) a *professional* audit of the activities undertaken to ensure that a given activity delivers the professional benefit claimed by the presenter or organiser (essentially a qualitative assessment), and, (2) assurance that the individual claiming the CPD points for the activity did in fact attend all of the activity, contributed meaningfully to it and achieved a clear learning outcome (both qualitative and quantitative assessments).

10. The current CPD points system (last revised in 2013) meets the need of the current regime but is considered by some to be overly prescriptive, and rewarding of some activities where the learning outcome may be marginal. As evidenced in the

first CPD audit some ATFs claimed CPD points for activities outside the scope of the scheme. Some have suggested that the points system might be replaced by recording 'time invested' in learning in multiples of hours, half days or full days.

What does the Profession want from its CPD regime?

11. Having 'come of age' as suggested earlier it may be appropriate for the profession to take stock of the current CPD regime, and to debate its future trajectory such that the regime continues to meet the needs of an evolving profession. Two broad options suggest themselves, others may wish to offer alternatives.

12. Maintain the Status Quo. In sum, growth of the cohort required to complete CPD over time as new joiners swell the numbers and older farriers who have not been required to undertake CPD retire. The activities undertaken and rewarded via the current CPD points regime remain at the discretion of the farrier, and the system continues to rely in large measure on self-assurance.

13. A more 'Directed' CPD Model. Eligibility would remain as under current arrangements but farriers would be required to engage across the key components of farriery: i.e. assess/diagnose; trim and balance; application of hoof care solutions, and perhaps supporting professional and business skills. Administrative assurance would continue as at present but be supplemented by professional assurance. The CPD points regime, key to measuring compliance, would be modernised such that it demonstrably met not just the spirit but the letter of the new model. Such a scheme might go some way to addressing a perceived shortcoming, in that under current arrangements, farriers are not required to re-qualify. A depiction of a possible 'directed' model is at

TAB C

Focussed Question 1

The WCF and BFBA are asked to offer views on the merits of the respective models, or offer alternative proposals, and indicate a preference with supporting rationale.

Focussed Question 2

The WCF and BFBA are asked to offer views on the merits of the current CPD points system, and to offer views as to possible improvements or successor schemes such as the recording of 'time invested' in learning.

What Price Assurance?

14. Any CPD regime will only be as effective as the assurance and holding to account (H2A) procedures that underpin it. Under current arrangements assurance and H2A is delivered by the FRC Sec, this is an entirely proper function for a regulator but, importantly, the FRC may only assure from an administrative perspective, not from a professional perspective. The qualitative judgements referred to earlier may only be delivered by professionals. This begs the question 'to

what extent should the profession (profession in this context is taken to mean the WCF and the BFBA) be responsible for professional assurance?’

Focussed Question 3

Do the WCF and BFBA agree that FRC Sec are best placed to deliver administrative assurance of farrier CPD, and if not, why?

Focussed Question 4

Do the WCF and BFBA consider that they have a role to play in design, planning and delivery of professional assurance of farrier CPD, and to what extent? What model of professional assurance would best suit the needs of both the profession and the integrity of the CPD system?

Resource Drivers

15. The FRC delivers CPD assurance and H2A for those currently required to undertake CPD (circa 300) from within its current resources, as the number grows (estimated to more than double by 2020) the administrative assurance of CPD will become a resource driver. Similarly, if the WCF and BFBA are to play a role in delivering professional assurance this will consume their resources; indeed, the profession may aspire to deliver CPD activities and events themselves, perhaps via a nascent Farriery Centre of Excellence, sponsored by the profession. There are various methods by which this could be achieved including the award of a ‘kite-mark’ to event or programme organisers whose activities are judged to meet the requirements of the profession, and for which a charge might be levied.

Focussed Question 5

The WCF and BFBA are invited to comment as to how they would resource a professional assurance scheme to support farrier CPD, such that the professional assurance scheme was stable and, of itself, did not present a risk to farrier CPD.

Presentation

16. From an external perspective a healthy, progressive CPD regime indicates a profession that takes seriously the continual acquisition of knowledge, skills and experience within a context of life-long learning. This benefits the professional, the farrier, and the recipient of the farrier’s services – the equine through its owner. So a CPD regime that may be viewed as evolutionary and continuing to adapt might be viewed positively by those external to the profession and who rely upon farriers.

17. Internally there are a mixed views, some at the leading edge of the profession embrace CPD without reserve and view CPD as a core part of their professional activities. Some are minimalists, content to acquire the minimum number of CPD points necessary to 'make the problem go away' and take the 'line of least resistance' to acquiring them. And, perhaps unsurprisingly, there remains a small number of refusniks who fail to engage with CPD in even the most perfunctory way. So a CPD regime that may be viewed as evolutionary and continuing to adapt might not be met with universal acclaim throughout the profession.

Focussed Questions 6

The WCF and BFBA are invited to offer a view as to where the best interests of the profession lay. Ought the profession to demonstrate that it is willing to evolve and develop as indicated by a modernised CPD system, and if so to what extent?

Focussed Question 7

Some in the profession complain of change fatigue, and the extent of change post OFSTED is evident. But should this perception be allowed to act as a brake on evolution and the drive to raise professional standards, and if so to what extent?

Discussion during 2016.

18. As set out earlier the purpose of this paper is to stimulate discussion throughout the profession of options for the future of CPD in farriery. Both professional bodies, the WCF and the BFBA, are asked to advance and promote debate of this topic throughout 2016, perhaps at routine meetings, seminars and study days, and perhaps at the Farrier Focus weekend in Sep 16. Armed with comment from the profession the intent is for the future of CPD to be debated in Council sometime in 2017.

Submission of Comment.

19. Registrar WCF and President BFBA are asked to submit responses in writing to the focussed questions posed in this paper, together with any other comment they consider relevant to FRC Sec by 31 Dec 16.



Registrar