

THE HEALTH IMPLEMENTATION WORKING PARTY

MINUTES of a meeting of the Health Implementation Working Party held on 19 December 2002 at the offices of the Health Professions Council, Park House, 184 Kennington Park Road, London SE11 4BU.

Present: Ms M Crawford (*Chairman*)
Ms A Foster
Professor A Hazell
Professor Sir J Lilleyman

In attendance: Mr S Hill (*Newchurch Consultancy*)
Mr G L Milch (*Director/Secretary*)

Item 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Received from Mrs C McGartland, Dr J Old, Mrs J Stark, Professor D E Waller and Dr van der Gaag.

Item 2. NOTES OF THE LAST MEETING

With the correction of a typographical error in minute 5.4, the notes of the meeting held on 27 September 2002 were confirmed as being an accurate record.

Item 3. MATTERS ARISING

3.1 Panels

There was discussion about how panels set up for hearings would be monitored to ensure consistency of approach. It was considered that this might be a common issue across all three Practice Committees.

The Health Committee itself, it was agreed, was the strategic body and, given that over time membership would change, should be subject to an annual review. It was for the Committee to determine whether panels should be set up; screeners would determine whether allegations received were based on grounds of the registrant's health. The meeting was advised that an Occupational Health Physician's services might be useful in this context.

It was recommended that there should be full and proper testing of the procedures before the new system was brought into being in 2003. Legal advice would most likely have to be sought.

The Working Party was advised that the terms of the Disability Discrimination Act might have to be taken into account.

3.2 Partners

It was unclear as to how many Partners might be required to assist the Health Committee in its work. It was reported that, should mediation services be required, these might be out-sourced. It was agreed that the Health Committee and its panels could only be concerned with a registrant's fitness to practise due to matters related to their health.

It was agreed that the Committee's procedures would need to set out clearly in any brochures produced.

The meeting was advised to take into account any relevant statute on limitations that might be included in the Human Rights Act.

Item 4. RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION

Mr Hill of the consultants Newchurch informed the Working Party about the responses to the HPC's UK-wide consultation with specific reference to comments made about the working of the Health Committee.

Few comments had been received. The one concern that had been manifested was a worry that cases might be 'bounced' between the Health and Conduct & Competence Committees. A proper mechanism for referring cases had to be devised.

It was confirmed that medical assessors would only concern themselves with the health of registrants and not their competence.

Item 5. CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

The meeting received and discussed the draft brochure for the general public about the working of the Health Committee.

It was agreed that the language used should be simpler though the overall content and approach was right. Many revisions were suggested. Mr Hill undertook to revise the text in the light of all the comments before re-presenting the document.

It was agreed that the Chairmen and Secretaries (at least) of the three Practice Committees, and Committee members where possible, should meet in January for a practically based day to look at the way cases would be considered by the Practice Committees and how the system of referrals between Committees would operate. This day would inform in particular the paragraphs that would be common to each Committee's publications.

Item 6. GENERAL MEDICAL COUNCIL

The meeting was unable to welcome Ms Jackie Smith of the GMC's Performance & Health Section. Ms Smith was to have informed members of the GMC's procedures and experience of dealing with health issues and registrants but unfortunately had been obliged to cancel.

Item 7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was none.

Item 8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To be arranged¹.

¹ To note that a meeting of the Chairmen and Secretaries of the three Practice Committees is being set up for 24 January 2003.