

## **Executive Summary and Recommendations**

### **Introduction**

The Health Professions Council (HPC) has a policy of not allowing the home and/or work addresses of registrants to be made available to other organisations or individuals. The only exception to the policy is where the HPC is required to release the information due to legal processes being undertaken by the courts or the police.

The policy was adopted following the consultation HPC undertook in 2002. In the *Key Decisions* we specifically stated what information we would and would not publish.

In February 2004 the Department of Health formally approached the HPC requesting that they be allowed to have access to the addresses of registrants. The information would not be released directly to the DoH but would be provided on a confidential basis to a Mailing House. Letters would then be dispatched to selective registrants and ex-registrants as part of a campaign to encourage radiographers to “Return to Work”.

There are both advantages and disadvantages to changing the existing policy. Examples include:

#### **Advantages**

- Demonstrates HPC’s commitment to cooperating with employers of registrants.
- Assists registrants seeking to return to work.
- HPC would fall into line with some other UK regulators of health professionals, such as the NMC, who allow their register to be used by third parties for direct mailing to registrants.

#### **Disadvantages**

- A fundamental change of policy contradicting the views of some registrants expressed forcefully to the HPC in the 2002 consultation process.
- Would set a precedent for other organisations such as independent health care providers or providers of profession insurance to request access to information held on the confidential part of the HPC register.
- Other organisations such as Professional Bodies may be better placed to provide similar information with the support of their membership.
- Some recipients of letters would regard all communications received as “Junk Mail” whatever the good intentions of the sender and hold HPC to be accountable.
- Increases the risk the addresses of registrants would be released in error and HPC would be held responsible.
- If the HPC were to re-consult on the change of policy there would be an unbudgeted expense.

#### **Decision**

The Council is requested to consider if the HPC should change its current policy of not allowing other organisations to have access to registrants’ home or work addresses.