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THE HEALTH PROFESSIONS COUNCIL

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Minutes of the twenty-second meeting of the Registration Committee of the Health Professions Council held on **Tuesday 12 April 2005** at Park House, 184 Kennington Park Road, London SE11 4BU.

PRESENT: Professor R Klem (Chairman)
Professor N Brook
Miss M Crawford
Mr P Frowen (part)
Mr A Mount
Miss P Sabine
Mr G Sutehall
Miss E Thornton
Dr A van der Gaag

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr C Bendall, Secretary to the Committee
Ms S Dawson, International and Grandparenting Registration Manager (part)
Miss C Harkin, Manager, UK Registration
Miss K Johnson, Director, Fitness to Practise (part)
Mr M Seale, Chief Executive and Registrar

Item 1.05/14 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.1 Apologies were received from Mrs S Chaudhry, Dr R Jones and Mr I Massey.

Item 2.05/15 APPROVAL OF AGENDA

2.1 The Chairman welcomed Mr Alan Mount to the Committee.

2.2 The Committee approved the Agenda, subject to the inclusion of an item about the procedure governing return to practice and the following matters being discussed under item 11 (any other business):-

- (a) The future role of the Committee
- (b) The draft report on the Committee's activities for inclusion in the HPC's annual report

Item 3.05/16 MINUTES

- 3.1 It was agreed that the minutes of the twenty-first meeting of the Registration Committee be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

Item 4.05/17 MATTERS ARISING

4.1 Item 4.3 – Self-Referrals

- 4.1.1 The Committee noted that a paper on self-referrals had been approved by the Education and Training Committee at its meeting on 16 February. The Director of Fitness to Practice reported that a further paper, detailing the procedure, would be considered by the Education and Training Committee on 14 June. It was noted that, in order to separate the membership of committees from Fitness to Practice panels, partners would be used as panel members in the future.

4.2 Item 6.2 Report from the UK Registration Manager

- 4.2.1 The Committee noted that the Department of Health no longer issued circulars about the requirement for registration. Instead, the requirement for registration for Operating Department Practitioners had been reported in the bulletins to human resources directors and chief executives. The bulletins had stressed that, in the interests of patient safety, only registrants or those who had applied for registration should be recruited.

4.3 Item 6.4 Report from the UK Registration Manager

- 4.3.1 The Committee noted that the registration renewals project was in hand. This involved several departments and included matters such as changes to the registration system and new publicity material. The renewals cycle would begin on 9 July. The Committee agreed that, as it had overseen the project to date, a copy of the project plan should be presented to the next meeting.

Action: MS

4.4 Item 7.1 Report from the International and Grandparenting Registration Manager

- 4.4.1 In response to a question from a member, it was confirmed that some European Union (EU) applicants had used grandparenting rather than the international route. The International and Grandparenting Registration Manager explained that EU nationals were encouraged to use the international route but some applicants were entitled to use grandparenting and HPC was unable to prevent this. The Committee noted that the standards of conduct, performance and ethics required registrants to contact the HPC if they had any concerns about specific individuals.

4.5 Item 8.6 Article 12 Approvals

- 4.5.1 The Committee noted that a set of frequently asked questions regarding the approvals process had been prepared for the HPC website and would be included in a paper to be considered by the next meeting of the Education and Training Committee.

Item 5.05/18 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

- 5.1 There was no Chairman's report.

Item 6.05/19 REPORT FROM THE UK REGISTRATION MANAGER

- 6.1 The Committee received a report from the UK Registration Manager for the period from 1 December 2004 to 31 January 2005.
- 6.2 The Committee noted that the volume of telephone calls and the number of applications continued to decrease during this period. 93% of calls were answered and calls were answered in 18 seconds on average.
- 6.3 UK registration officers had assisted the International Registration team in processing new applications since the beginning of January and had also been involved in the registration renewal project.
- 6.4 A series of registration seminars had been arranged at universities around the country. The first seminar in Glasgow had been attended by 22 people and had been successful. Forthcoming seminars included events in Southampton and Cardiff.
- 6.5 The Committee noted that the time taken to process and register applications was now three working days, with some forms being processed on the day of receipt. The Committee felt that new graduates should be encouraged to use the online register (accessible via the HPC's website) to check whether they had been registered. It was noted that, from June, registration certificates would be dispatched on a daily, rather than weekly, basis.

Item 7.05/20 REPORT FROM THE INTERNATIONAL AND GRANDPARENTING REGISTRATION MANAGER

- 7.1 The Committee received a report from the International and Grandparenting Registration Manager for the period from 1 December 2004 to 31 January 2005.
- 7.2 The Committee noted that there had been an initial downturn in applications and telephone calls during the Christmas period, followed by a rapid increase during January, due to the graduation period of institutions in the southern hemisphere. Assistance from the UK department in handling the increase had been warmly welcomed.

- 7.3 The Committee noted that, from early January, the International team had begun to provide registration assessors with appeals decisions and an anonymised copy of the original assessment decision.
- 7.4 The Committee noted that registration review days with all assessors were in hand and, to date, these had involved seven of the thirteen professions. The events had been very positive and provided opportunities for networking and feedback. The International and Grandparenting Manager explained that similar points were made across different professions. Members expressed interest in attending these events, as points arising from discussion could have wider implications. The Committee asked that an e-mail should be circulated to members, inviting individuals to attend the remaining review days.

ACTION: SD/CB

- 7.5 There was discussion about the imbalance between the number of registration assessors and the demands on their time. The Chief Executive confirmed that more partners than were required had been recruited. As this was a human resources issue, the Finance and Resources Committee had approved the wording of a letter to partners, which explained that they might be required less often than had been anticipated. The situation had been noted by the Council. In discussion, it was suggested that registrant and alternate members of the new Council should be asked to identify issues raised at Council meetings which might affect the work of a committee.

Item 8.05/21 RETURN TO PRACTICE PROCESS

- 8.1 The Chief Executive reported that operational issues had emerged in the return to practice process, including difficulties in handling applicants from private practice, those working abroad and those from rural or remote areas who had difficulty in arranging a period of supervised practice. It had been decided to suspend the current system whilst the requirements were reviewed. The proposed consultation would be considered by the Council and the HPC would issue a press release to explain the situation.

Action: MS

Item 9.05/22 STANDARD LETTERS

- 9.1 The Committee received a paper to note.
- 9.2 The Committee noted that work continued on editing the content of HPC's standard letters relating to the registration process. A total of 15 standard letters had been reviewed and re-written and were in the process of being viewed by the Communications Department. The Committee would be presented with a complete set of standard letters once they had been "crystal marked".

Item 10.05/23 COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

- 10.1 The Committee received a paper to note.
- 10.2 The Committee noted that following the opening of the Operating Department Practitioner (ODP) Register on 18 October 2004, Mr Alan Mount had been appointed as a member of the Committee.

Item 11.05/24 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 11.1 A member asked for information about the future of the Committee following the election of the new Council. The Chief Executive explained that the new Council would meet on 12 July to elect a President. On 18 July, the Council would select members of Committees who would in turn elect chairmen.
- 11.2 The Committee noted that its future role had been discussed at the meeting of the Education and Training Committee on 30 March. The Registration Committee had put into place many of the key processes and it was prudent to consider whether the Committee should continue to meet or if its functions could be carried out by a different means. In discussion, the Committee noted that the amount of business would probably reduce following the end of grandparenting and the Committee could perhaps meet less frequently. However, it was felt that the Committee should continue to meet, as there were a number of strategic issues relating to registration.
- 11.3 The draft report on the Committee's activities, to be included in the HPC's annual report, was tabled. It was noted that the draft had been submitted to the Chairman for amendments and the Committee was asked for its comments. It was agreed that the paragraph about international courses should be clarified to make it clear that the Committee had identified particular years of qualification in particular courses, rather than a uniform approval of the courses.
- 11.4 The Committee thanked to the Chairman for her work and her contribution to Council meetings. The Chairman thanked the Committee for its support over the last few years.

Item 12.05/25 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

- 12.1 The next meeting would be held on Monday 5 September at 10 a.m.

CHAIRMAN

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