

Education and Training Committee, 11 June 2009

Consultation on the registration cycle for hearing aid dispensers

Executive summary and recommendations

Introduction

The Department of Health is currently consulting on an Order under section 60 of the Health Act 1999 about the regulation of private hearing aid dispensers. Under this Order the Hearing Aid Council will be abolished and responsibility for the registration of hearing aid dispensers will be transferred to the Health Professions Council. Assuming the Order is approved by Parliament, we currently anticipate that a new part of the Register for hearing aid dispensers will open in April 2010.

We consulted last year on the registration cycle for hearing aid dispensers, based upon the Register for hearing aid dispensers opening in April 2009. However, the legislation to transfer hearing aid dispensers from the HAC to the HPC was delayed. As a result, we now anticipate that the Register will open in 2010. The delay to the legislation has also affected the two year registration cycle of hearing aid dispensers. Consequently, we are now consulting on a revised registration cycle.

Decision

The Committee is invited to discuss and agree:

- to consult on setting the registration cycle for hearing aid dispensers; and
- the text of the attached consultation document (subject to minor editing amendments).

The Committee is invited to recommend the decisions above to the Council.

Background information

None

Resource implications

The approach to setting the registration cycle for hearing aid dispensers takes into account resource implications.

Financial implications

The financial implications are those for the public consultation on the fees rules. The hearing aid dispensers project budget incorporates these implications.

Appendices

- Consultation document on amendment to fees rules for hearing aid dispensers.

Date of paper

1 June 2009

Consultation on an amendment to the Health Professions Council (Registration and Fees) Rules Order of Council 2003

Introduction

We are consulting on a proposed amendment to the Health Professions Council (Registration and Fees) Rules Order of Council 2003 in order to set the registration cycle for hearing aid dispensers.

About us

We are the Health Professions Council (HPC). We are a regulator of professionals and our job is to protect the health and wellbeing of people who use the services of the professionals registered with us.

To protect the public, we set standards that professionals must meet. Our standards cover health professionals' education and training, behaviour, professional skills, and their health. We publish a register of professionals who meet our standards.

Professionals on our register are called 'registrants'. If registrants do not meet our standards, we can take action against them which may include removing them from the Register so that they can no longer practise.

Hearing aid dispensers

The Hearing Aid Council (HAC) is the statutory body that is responsible for setting standards of professional training, performance and conduct for individuals and companies involved in the assessment of hearing loss and subsequent sale of hearing aids. The Hearing Aid Council holds a register of hearing aid dispensers.

The Department of Health has recently consulted on an Order under section 60 of the Health Act 1999 about the regulation of private hearing aid dispensers.¹ Under this Order the Hearing Aid Council will be abolished and responsibility for the registration of hearing aid dispensers will be transferred to the Health Professions Council. Assuming the Order is approved by Parliament, we currently anticipate that a new part of the Register for hearing aid dispensers will open in April 2010.

Although the legislative process to transfer the regulation of hearing aid dispensers has not yet begun, we believe that it is important we consult on the proposed amendment to our rules at an early stage, to allow enough time to benefit from the input of stakeholders. In particular, this allows time for a full three month public consultation period.

¹ http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Consultations/Liveconsultations/DH_097577

About registration cycles

Each profession registered with us renews its registration in two yearly cycles.

When a profession is due to renew its registration, we send each registrant a renewal form and ask that they sign the form and return it to us with payment of the registration fee or a Direct Debit authorisation, by the profession's registration end date. If we fail to receive a completed form and payment by the registration end date, the registrant's registration will lapse.

Schedule five to the Health Professions Council (Registration and Fees) Rules 2003 outlines the registration end dates for each of the parts of the HPC Register. For example, the registration end date for operating department practitioners is 30 November in even numbered years.

About this consultation

We consulted last year on the registration cycle for hearing aid dispensers, based upon the Register for hearing aid dispensers opening in April 2009. However, the legislation to transfer hearing aid dispensers from the HAC to the HPC was delayed. As a result, we now anticipate that the Register will open in 2010. The delay to the legislation has also affected the two year registration cycle. Consequently, we are now consulting on a revised registration cycle.

Proposed amendment

We are proposing to amend schedule five to the Health Professions Council (Registration and Fees) Rules 2003 in order to set the registration cycle for hearing aid dispensers.

We are seeking the views of stakeholders on setting the registration cycle for hearing aid dispensers.

We are suggesting that, dependent upon the passage and timing of the necessary legislation, the end date of the renewal cycle for hearing aid dispensers might be 31 July in even numbered years and we would particularly welcome your views on this suggestion.

Your comments

We would welcome your response to this consultation.

This consultation will put our proposals before a range of stakeholders with an interest in the regulation of hearing aid dispensers.

The consultation will run until **16 October 2009**.

This document is available to download from our website and available in hard copy on request.

If you would like to respond to this consultation, please send this response to:

Amendment to Registration and Fees Rules consultation
Policy and Standards Department
Health Professions Council
184 Kennington Park Road
SE11 4BU

Email: consultation@hpc-uk.org
Website: www.hpc-uk.org/aboutus/consultations

We will publish on our website a summary of the responses we receive and the decisions we have taken as a result.

If you would prefer your response not be made public, please indicate this when you respond.

We look forward to receiving your comments.

Yours faithfully

Anna van der Gaag
Chair

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