

THE HEALTH PROFESSIONS COUNCIL

Chief Executive and Registrar: Mr Marc Seale

Park House
184 Kennington Park Road
London SE11 4BU
Telephone: +44 (0)20 7582 0866
Fax: +44 (0)20 7820 9684
e-mail: lucinda.pilgrim@hpc-uk.org

NOTES of the nineteenth meeting of the Registration Committee of the Health Professions Council held on **Monday 13 September 2004** at Park House, 184 Kennington Park Road, London SE11 4BU.

PRESENT : Miss P Sabine (Vice Chairman)
Mr P Frowen
Dr R Jones
Mr G. Sutehall
Dr A. van der Gaag

IN ATTENDANCE :

Miss L. Pilgrim, Secretary to the Committee
Miss S. Butcher, Secretariat
Ms.S. Dawson, Grandparenting and International Registration Manager
Ms. C. Harkin, UK Registration Manager
Miss L. Iyoyo, International Registration Department
Miss N. O'Sullivan, Secretary to Council (Items 1-4)
Ms. E Seall, Fitness to Practise Department

Item 1.04/18 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Professor N. Brook, Mrs. S. Chaudhry, Ms. M. Crawford, Professor R. Klem, Mr I. Massey, Miss E. Thornton.

The Committee was not quorate but proceeded on the basis that any recommendations requiring agreement would be forwarded to the full Committee.

Item 2.04/19 APPROVAL OF AGENDA

2.1 The Committee approved the agenda.

Item 3.04/20 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 20 JULY 2004

3.1 The minutes of the meeting were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Vice Chairman.

Item 4.04/21 MATTERS ARISING

4.1 Item 4.2 Matters Arising

4.1.1 The Committee noted that the article on Language Competence had been sent to the HR Bulletin and had also been sent to other home country health departments.

4.2 Item 4.5.2 Matters Arising

4.2.1 The Committee was told that the process of informing and updating the professional bodies continued. A meeting was being arranged with the Clinical Scientists.

Action:SD

4.3 Item 8 Approved Qualifications Article 12

4.3.1 The Committee was informed that the paper on Article 12 Approved Qualifications had been withdrawn from the Education and Training Committee on 1 September 2004. The International and Grandparenting Registration manager reported that a revised paper would be presented to the Education and Training Committee meeting on 13 October 2004.

Action:SD

4.4 Item 9 Health Disability and Registration

4.4.1 The Committee noted that a paper “Managing Your Fitness to Practise” would be presented to the Education and Training Committee on 13 October 2004. It would then be presented to Council at its meeting on 7 December 2004 and thereafter the document would be consulted on. The paper to be presented to the ETC on 13 October 2004 would be e-mailed to the Committee members for their comments.

Action:RT

4.5 Item 11 English Language Competence Criteria Used to Approve Tests

4.5.1 The Secretary reported that she had given a verbal report to the ETC on 1 September 2004 on the criteria used to approve tests which determined an applicant's English Language competence. A written statement would be provided to ETC on 13 October 2004.

Action:LP

4.6 Item 14.2 Any Other Business

4.6.1 It was noted that the HPC register showed the beginning and the end of a registrant's current registration cycle. It was confirmed that in response to a query from a registrant, the Chief Executive had written and had enclosed copies of relevant documents which explained that the HPC had consulted on this issue, the decision arrived at as a result of the consultation and the relevant information on the website.

4.6.2 The Committee was of the view that despite the letter from the Chief Executive, there should still be a short statement on the HPC website explaining that the dates on the Register showed the beginning and the end of a registrant's current registration cycle but did not show the length of time a registrant had been qualified or practising. The Committee felt that the issue was one of public perception and of clarity for those using the HPC website as a means of confirming a registrant's registration status.

Action:CM/LP

4.7 Item 14.5 Any Other Business

4.7.1 The Committee noted that in some cases original Local Anaesthetic (LA) and Prescription Only Medicines (POM) certificates had been sent to the HPC for the purposes of registration. The UK Registration Manager reported that these would be returned that week by recorded delivery.

Item 5.04/22 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

5.1 The Vice Chairman confirmed that neither she nor the Chairman had any specific matters to report to the Committee.

Item 6.04/23 REPORT FROM THE UK REGISTRATION MANAGER

6.1 The Committee received the report from the UK Registration Manager.

6.2 The Committee noted the increase in the number of telephone calls received by the UK department. The Committee noted that service levels should increase as the date for the last of the 12 professions to renew their two year cycle had been closed and further, that the bulk of the new graduates applying to be registered had been processed.

- 6.3 The Committee was informed that the time taken to process applications had been reduced as the application process was becoming more well known.
- 6.4 It was confirmed that the details about Return to Practise (RTP) were in the Guidance Notes attached to the application forms.
- 6.5 In response to a query about part-time workers and their RTP requirements, it was agreed that the UK Registration Manager would clarify where this information was set out and confirm whether it was on the HPC website.

Action: CH

- 6.6 It was pointed out to the Committee that on page 12 of the statistics the column headed “Rejected-Refused” reflected rejection only on the basis of education and training. Once information had been collated on other reasons for rejection, then additional columns would be added to reflect this.

Item 7.04/24 REPORT FROM THE INTERNATIONAL AND GRANDPARENTING REGISTRATION MANAGER

- 7.1 The Committee received the report from the International and Grandparenting Registration Manager.
- 7.2 Following the conclusion of the discussion about the above report, a separate issue was raised concerning disquiet among employers of physiotherapists about the ability of some international applicants who were registered with the HPC. The issue was one of a clinical nature as it related to the registrant’s ability to properly assess a patient and make an accurate clinical diagnosis. Concern about this problem had also been expressed by the Chartered Society of Physiotherapists (CSP).
- 7.3 The Committee felt that more detailed feedback was needed on why registrants failed to deliver a standard of practice that, on consideration by HPC of their documents, they were felt to be capable of delivering.
- 7.4 The Committee agreed that the making of a formal allegation against such registrants was an inappropriate way of dealing with this problem. There should be a mechanism, short of making a formal allegation, for dealing with the issue. The issue generated a great deal of concern and reflected negatively on the HPC. For these reasons the HPC had to consider how best to address and resolve the problem.

- 7.5 The Committee recommended the setting up of a Professional Liaison Group (PLG)to carry out a review over a twelve month period of the International Registration process. This recommendation would be considered by the Executive in the first instance.

Action: MJS/LP

- 7.6 Dr. Jones and Dr van der Gaag confirmed that if a PLG was set up they would be willing to be members of it.

Item 8.04/25 REPORT FROM THE FITNESS TO PRACTISE DIRECTOR

- 8.1 The Committee received a paper, which was presented by Ms Seall in the absence of the Fitness to Practise Director. The Committee noted that the paragraph headed “Decision” had been added in error.
- 8.2 The Committee queried how the feedback from the Registration appeals was being applied to cases now entering the system. It was told that the Executive was taking steps to stem the flow of appeals by addressing the problem at an earlier stage, namely refining processes where necessary, by training registration officers and by running assessor review days.
- 8.3 It was confirmed that much had been learned as a result of the appeals and that a letter had been sent to registration assessors setting out and clarifying issues of relevance to the assessment of applications for registration.
- 8.4 The Chairman noted that as a result of legal advice 56 cases had been re-assessed or approved immediately. For various reasons a further 57 cases had been withdrawn by HPC or by the appellant.

Item 9.04/26 SELF REFERRAL

- 9.1 The Committee received a paper for discussion which was presented by Ms Seall.
- 9.2 The Committee raised several questions about the content of the paper. The Committee expressed doubt about its function with respect to the issue of self referrals and queried whether the Committee had the power to prevent the Investigating Committee considering self referrals. It felt that if the paper was accepted in its present form the Committee as a non-statutory committee could be usurping the function of the Investigating committee, which was a statutory committee. In addition, there was a need to clarify the issue of how panels were set up.
- 9.3 The Committee was of the view that the paper could not be accepted in its present form. It recommended that comments on the paper should be obtained from Committee members. These would be forwarded to the

Secretary, by 16th September 2004 and would be discussed in the first instance with the FTP Director, prior to discussion of the issue by the Chairman of the Committee and the Chairman of the Investigating committee.

Action:KJ/LP

Item 10.04/27 ASSESSORS

- 10.1 The Committee received a paper to note.
- 10.2 The International and Grandparenting Registration Manager told the Committee that dates had been arranged in October 2004 to train additional assessors. The 51 assessors listed as “trained, not operational” were now operational and accordingly the total number of assessors increased by this number.
- 10.3 The International and Grandparenting Registration Manager reported that the recruitment of additional Radiography and Physiotherapy assessors had been beneficial. She confirmed that at present there was no need to recruit any more assessors for any of the professions. The Committee noted that the workload of assessors varied from profession to profession. It also noted that a 10 day turnaround time for assessment of applications was stipulated in the Partner agreement.
- 10.4 In respect of the Partner agreement the Committee queried whether the title “Medical Laboratory Technician” referred to in the agreement would be amended in the light of the change of this title to “Biomedical Scientist”. The International and Grandparenting Registration Manager would investigate the position and report to the meeting on 4 November 2004.

Action:SD

Item 11.04/28 STANDARD LETTERS

- 11.1 The Committee received a paper for information.
- 11.2 The Committee was told that a joint programme was being undertaken by the UK and by International and Grandparenting Registration Managers to review all Registration department letters. They would be working with the Communications department to get the letters crystal marked. Some of these letters would be presented to the Committee at its meeting on 4 November 2004.

Action:SD/CH

- 11.3 It was agreed that an electronic copy of the 3 letters reviewed at the meeting

on 20 July 2004 would be sent to all Committee members. If the Committee members wanted to comment they could e-mail these to the International and Grandparenting Registration Manager.

Action:SD

Item 12.04/29 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 12.1 A question had been raised as to whether HPC approved Return to Practice (RTP) courses being run by the professional bodies or by education providers.
- 12.2 HPC's position was that it only approved courses that delivered the Standards of Proficiency (SOP's) and enabled applicants to come on to the Register. Returners' courses would not normally be approved by HPC, unless such courses were designed to put people on the Register who had not been there before.
- 12.3 Dr van der Gaag confirmed that in the Speech and Language (SLT) profession some of the RTP courses might be indeed designed to put people on the Register who had not been there before. This situation might apply to other professions, particularly those who, like the SLT's, had only joined HPC's predecessor (CPSM) comparatively recently. In such cases there would be health care professionals who had never been on any Register and were undertaking the RTP course in order to get on to the HPC Register.
- 12.4 The Committee recommended that the issue be considered by the Executive and be put to the Approvals Committee on 18 November 2004 for its consideration.

Action:FN/LP

Item 13.04/30 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

- 13.1 The next meeting would be held on Thursday 4 November 2004 at 10 am.
- 13.2 Further meetings would be held on the following dates:
Tuesday 18 January 2005 at 10 am.

CHAIRMAN