

CONFIRMED

The Health Professions Council

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MINUTES of the twentieth meeting of the Health Committee held at **11.00 on Tuesday 5 February 2008** in the Council chamber at Park House, 184 Kennington Park Road, London, SE11 4BU

Present

Professor T Hazell (Chairman)
Mrs P Blackburn
Mr P Douglas

Professor A Turner
Mr N Willis
Mrs J Pearce

In attendance:

Dr A van der Gaag, President
Mr M Seale, Chief Executive
Ms N O'Sullivan, Secretary to Council

Ms K Johnson, Director of Fitness to
Practise (Fitness to Practise)
Mr M Guthrie, Policy Manager
Mr S Rayner Secretary to Committees

Item 1.08/01 Apologies for absence

- 1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Mrs S Drayton and Mr O Altay
- 1.2 The Chairman welcomed Mrs A Abodarham and Mr R Brown to their posts within the Fitness to Practise department, and Mr S Rayner to the post of Secretary to the Committee

Item 2.08/02 Approval of agenda

- 2.1 The Committee agreed to take item seven before item six. The Chairman notified the committee of two items to be taken under AOB from the President.

Item 3.08/03 Minutes of the Committee of Thursday 12 September 2007

- 3.1 It was agreed that the minutes of the nineteenth Health Committee should be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman

Item 4.08/04 Chairman's report

- 4.1 The Chairman had nothing to report.

Item 5.08/05 Director of Fitness to Practise Report

- 5.1 The Committee received the Director of Fitness to Practise Report, noting that it was longer than normal as it combined the data from November and February reports
- 5.2 The Committee noted that case managers were now presenting Article 30 review hearings would begin to present conviction fitness to practise cases in February 2008. The Committee welcomed this development.
- 5.3 The Committee noted that one of the two outstanding High Court appeals would be heard on 18 February 2008. The other appeal was awaiting a date.
- 5.4 The Director of Fitness to Practise updated the Committee on significant work planned and undertaken since the last meeting:
- An external review of complaints literature and processes was underway, and would report to the April forum.
 - Quarterly meetings had taken place with UNISON to update them on HPC work.
 - Employer events were due to take place in Belfast, Edinburgh and Cardiff.
 - Legal assessor and Panel Chair review days had recently taken place.
 - New Panel member training would take place on 17 and 18 March. Committee members were invited to attend if they wished.
- 5.5 The Committee noted that the Communications Department had a record of the types of organisations which attended employers' events. This would be made available to the committee.

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- 5.6 The Committee noted that 96 complaints about misuse of title had been received between August and December 2007.

- 5.7 The Committee received the January statistics noting that the number of hearings was likely to be 180 by the end of the year; an increase of 105 from last year.
- 5.8 The Committee noted that very few cases concerned the health of registrants.
- 5.9 The Committee noted that in the light of the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act a small change would be made to the Standards of Education and Training and the Standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics so that registrants would no longer be required to inform HPC of a change to their health unless it affected their practice. The Executive would prepare a paper for the Education and Training Committee if there were any further developments relating to this issue.

Item 6.08/07 Update on Fitness to Practise work plan 2007/8

- 6.1 The Committee received a paper from the Executive for discussion.
- 6.2 The Committee noted that much had been achieved.
- 6.3 The Committee noted that it would be useful to have a brief explanation for any slippage in meeting completion dates in the report on the work plan. The Committee noted that cases relating to health made up a very small part of the work of the Fitness to Practise Department.
- 6.3 The Committee noted that there would be discussions regarding the continued existence of a Health Committee as part of the consultations regarding the proposed Section 60 Orders.

Item 7.08/07 Fitness to Practise work plan 2008-2009

- 7.1 The Committee received a paper from the Executive for discussion and approval.
- 7.2 The Committee noted that the main focus was on refining and improving on processes which had been put in place during the previous years.
- 7.3 The Committee noted that the work plan was in the format agreed by the Council.

The Committee specifically noted the following;

- An organisational chart was not included as restructuring and recruitment would not be completed until April 1 2008
- The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 was due to be phased in during August 2008. This would produce a large amount of work.

- New publications would be presented for information to the Fitness to Practise Forum (the Forum) on 23 April 2008
 - A paper on information available on line regarding health cases would also be presented for discussion to the Health Committee
 - Work was being done to determine the possibility of amending the register so that it specifically named those who have been struck off, rather than simply omitting their names.
 - HPC was likely to inherit 70 cases as it took up regulation of Psychologists.
- 7.4 The Committee discussed the use of key performance indicators noting that this was not the appropriate forum to discuss detailed governance issues, but was an issue that Council could consider in the future.
- 7.5 The Committee agreed the priorities, principles and projects outlined in the work plan and agreed to keep the document under review, and request the Executive amend the work plan accordingly.

Item 8.08/08 Committee self evaluation

- 8.1 The Committee received a paper from the Executive for discussion.
- 8.2 The Committee noted that, the observations in the self-evaluation feedback offered a useful insight into the workings of the Committee. The Chairman would raise the comments at the Fitness to Practise Chairs meeting in April. The Committee noted that it is the responsibility of the Committee itself to evolve and improve.
- 8.3 The Committee noted and acknowledged the high quality of the support from the Secretariat

Item 9.08/09 Standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics

- 9.1 The Committee received a paper from the Executive for discussion and approval.
- 9.2 The Committee noted that between 1 June 2007 and 7 September 2007 the Council had consulted on revised standards of conduct, performance and ethics. The responses to the consultation had been analysed and the standards updated.
- 9.3 It was proposed that the new standards should become effective from 1 July 2008. The standards would be publicised by:
- A letter to all registrants

- A mail out of the new standards to professional bodies and any other relevant stakeholders
- A press release and news item on the HPC website
- Articles in the HPC newsletter

9.4 The Committee noted that comments or suggestions would be welcomed both at the meeting, and afterwards by email.

9.5 The Committee discussed the use of the word delegation in standard eight, and asked the Executive to give further consideration to the inclusion of a clearer definition of the transfer of responsibility.

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9.6 The Committee agreed that whilst it supported the proposal not to change standard nine, the rationale behind the concept of informed consent in the public forum was not entirely satisfactory.

9.7 The comments were noted and would be considered when the document was being finalised.

9.8 The Committee agreed the following;

- To recommend to Council the text of the consultation responses document
- To approve the text of the revised standards pending editing necessary to achieve the Plain English Campaign Crystal Mark
- That the revised standards should be effective from 1 July 2008

Item 10.08/10 Appointment of a Registered Medical Practitioner

10.1 The Committee received a paper for note from the Executive.

Item 11.08/11 Any other business

11.1 Commission for Healthcare Regulatory Excellence Work on Sexual Boundaries

The President informed the Committee of the work the Council for Regulatory Healthcare Excellence (CHRE) was undertaking on sexual boundaries to produce guidance for Panels, and education and training and to contribute to outcomes for professionals. The Committee agreed that this should go onto the agenda for the Forum on 23 April 2009.

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11.2 Working Group on Health for Health Professionals

The President updated the Committee on the working Group on Health for Health Professionals of which she was a member. The group was large, and was very doctor focussed. The Committee endorsed the President's involvement.

11.2 Questions that were falling out of the work of the group were; what were the comparisons between health professionals, and what were the lessons that could be learned from these comparisons?

11.3 Initial comparison found that, whilst the highest proportion of health problems amongst Allied health Professionals were orthopaedic related, the biggest problems amongst medics were drug and alcohol addictions.

Item 12.08/12 Date and time of upcoming Health Committees:

12.1 Upcoming Health Committees will be held at:

Wednesday 23 April 2008, 1030am (Fitness to Practise Forum)
Wednesday 17 September, 1030am (Fitness to Practise Forum)
Friday 7 November, 11.00am

Chair:

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Date:

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