

Agenda Item 8

Enclosure 6

Paper RC 6 / 03

REGISTRATION COMMITTEE

Format of Certificates

From : the Executive

FOR DISCUSSION

DECISION PAPER: FORMAT OF CERTIFICATES

BACKGROUND

The purpose of the certificates that the HPC will issue is to enable members of the public to reassure themselves that a registrant is safe and effective. Therefore, the certificates need to be as simple and straightforward as possible.

TITLES

It is vital that the public is not confused as to the nature of a professional's registration with the HPC. There is significant potential for confusion between Parts, Subsections and Protected Titles, if these are all separately reported on registrant certificates. Additionally, the Council has stated its desire to see the Protected Titles become the accepted descriptors for the professions¹.

RECOMMENDATION

The Executive recommends that the Council approve the policy that:

"Only the Protected Title or Titles that registrants are entitled to use, and not the Part or Subsection of the Register in which they are registered, be shown on registration certificates."

QUALIFICATIONS

It is important that the public understands clearly that the HPC's role as a regulator is to ensure that all the professionals on its Register are safe and effective. Its role is to act as an assurer of minimum standards, not to record academic qualifications. For these reasons, the Council proposed in its consultation paper to exclude all qualifications, both approved and non-approved, from its Register, and this decision was confirmed in sending the parts of the Register to the Privy Council for approval². It is therefore implicit that registration certificates will not show qualifications either.

RECOMMENDATION

The Executive recommends that the Council confirms that:

"As the Register will not record approved or non-approved qualifications, these will not appear on registration certificates either; however, information about qualifications will be captured in the IT registration system for internal use."

SALUTATIONS

The HPC must record registrants' salutations on its Register. These can include basic salutations (Mr, Ms etc), salutations that could relate to a registrant's HPC-regulated practice (these are primarily titles related to the registrant's professional and academic qualifications, such as Professor or Doctor), and other salutations (such as rank held in the military or aristocracy, such as Major, Prince or Reverend). Salutations may change over time: a "Miss" may become a "Mrs", a "Private" may become a "Corporal" and a "Princess" may become a "Queen". Each time such a change occurs, the registrant is obliged to inform the HPC that this has happened, and the HPC is obliged to update its records. If salutations appear on registration certificates, then the HPC would also be required to update these as well. While the third example is likely to be very rare indeed, the first example will be quite common.

The HPC must validate all the information it publishes as being accurate and correct. This is the case irrespective of the medium of publication (i.e., it applies to the website, to leaflets, to the Register and to certificates, among other media).

¹ Key Decisions document page 10: *"The Council wishes to see [the Parts and Subsections of the Register] become the commonly accepted descriptors for the professions it currently regulates."*

² Key Decisions document page 12: *"The Council has also decided to ask the Privy Council to agree that the published Register will record the following information for each registrant: Name; Unique identifier (registration number); Parts of register on which registrant is registered; Subsection where applicable; Date of current registration; Date of expiry of current registration; Practice committee orders applying to the registrant, including interim orders; The approximate geographical area in which a registrant practises."*

Although registrants are entitled to be called by the correct salutation, the HPC must consider whether the inclusion of the salutation on a registration certificate as well as their name contributes to public protection. If the HPC were to avoid including all salutations on registration certificates, then there is no chance of ambiguity as to whether a salutation related to person's practice of an HPC-regulated profession. Additionally, it would reduce the number of certificates in circulation due to changes in salutation, cutting costs and reducing the potential for fraud. This is the approach taken by a number of other healthcare regulators in issuing their registration certificates.

RECOMMENDATION

The Executive recommends that the Council adopts the policy that:

"The HPC will record a registrant's salutation on its Register. However, in the interests of the safety and well-being of the public and in particular to avoid appearing to endorse any particular salutation as being related to a registrant's practice of an HPC-regulated profession, salutations will not be displayed on registration certificates."

RECOMMENDATION FOR CERTIFICATE FORMAT

The Executive recommends that the Council approve the following form of words for the certificate:

*"This is to certify that
FirstName MiddleName1toN LastName
is registered with the Health Professions Council and is entitled to practise using the following titles:
Title1
Title2
Title3
...
TitleN"*

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