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MINUTES of the eleventh meeting of the Registration Committee of the Health Professions Council held on Tuesday 15 July 2003 at The Evangelical Alliance, 186 Kennington Park Road, London SE11 4BT.

PRESENT :

Prof. R. Klem (Chairman)
Miss P. Sabine
Miss E. Thornton
Prof. N. Brook (ex-officio)
Mr G. Sutehall (ex-officio)

IN ATTENDANCE :

Miss L. Pilgrim, Director, Secretary to the Committee
Mr M. Seale, Chief Executive and Registrar
Dr P. Burley, Director of Education and Policy
Mrs U. Falk, Manager of Education
Miss S. Dawson, Grandparenting & International Registration Manager
Mr J. Bracken, Bircham, Dyson, Bell
Mr S. Hill, Newchurch

ITEM 1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from :- Miss C.Harkin, Miss M. Crawford,
Mr P. Frowen, Dr R. Jones, Dr A. Van der Gaag, Prof. D. Waller and Mr. C Lea

ITEM 2 APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

The Committee approved the Agenda.

ITEM 3 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 30 APRIL 2003

The minutes of the meeting held on 30 April 2003 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to the following amendment:-

Item 7 to read :

" . . . (a) to the Council and (b) to the County Court ".

ITEM 4 MATTERS ARISING

4.1 In response to a query raised by Miss P Sabine, Mr J Bracken confirmed that the certification of Registrants competent to obtain, supply and administer drugs would be recorded on the Register.

4.2 In response to a question from the Chairman, Mr Seale confirmed that the Grandparenting criteria had been sent to the Professional Bodies and to the Allied Health Professions Forum. A response to their comments had been drafted and a report would go to the Education & Training Committee (ETC).

4.3 It was noted that the Standards of Proficiency (SOPs) had been confirmed at the last Council meeting and were on the website.

4.4 Prof. Brook noted that two workshops had been convened at which groups from each profession had drafted criteria for assessment against the Standards of Proficiency and asked what had been the outcome of this work.

The Secretary reported that the work produced by the groups had been collated. Mr S Hill reported that once he had collated the outcomes drafted by the working groups it was felt that the criteria were drafted in a way that would restrict the assessors' discretion. Consequently an alternative approach to assessing applications had been proposed and a paper briefly detailing the change of approach had gone to Council at its meeting on 4 June 2003.

Members of the Committee were concerned to ensure that the work undertaken would be used to assist assessors to carry out assessments of applications.

After discussion, the Committee agreed to consider copies of the work drafted by the working groups and to debate the issue further later in the agenda.

4.5 On the issue of an applicant's English language competence Dr P. Burley reported that the European Commission had accepted an amendment to the proposed new Directive to make language competence a clinical competence for all health and social care professionals. This would be debated from September 2003 onwards. If passed it would resolve the issue of EEA migrants' language competence at the highest level. However, it could be in the latter part of 2004 before legislation was completed. In the meantime the Committee would still need to make its own provisions.

4.6 It was confirmed that the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) had suspended issuing basic and standard level clearance of applicants. Those applying as U.K. applicants would have had CRB clearance when they began their course of study

at a Higher Education Institution (HEI). Once registered they would undergo further CRB checks when they sought employment. It was confirmed that within the next few months the HPC would check a random sample of applicants.

Miss Thornton confirmed that the issue of the annual declaration by the CRB was one to be put to the Approvals Professional Liaison Group (PLG).

4.7 With reference to Item 11 of the minutes of 30 April 2003 the Chairman asked for it to be minuted that she had not seen the amended Registration / Readmission Form & Guidance Notes.

ITEM 5 RETURN TO PRACTICE

It was noted that the Committee had previously agreed the time scales. It now needed to discuss and agree the actual requirements that would have to be met by those who had not practised for between 2 – 4 years and those who had not practised for over four years. Those who had been out of practice for under two years would not be required to meet any additional requirements. The Committee was reminded of the advice that returners in each category would be assessed as a class and not individually.

It was confirmed that an approved qualification that was over five years old would not be valid of itself; the onus would be on the applicant to update the qualification.

The Committee discussed this issue at great length. It was **AGREED** that the HPC Executive would draft a proposed procedure and that this would be circulated to Committee members for comment and feedback by Wednesday 16 July 2003. The procedure would go to the Registration Committee for agreement and then to the Education & Training Committee for approval prior to a recommendation to Council.

Specifically it was noted that this procedure was an interim one. It was **AGREED** that the major issues of principle would be referred to the Approvals Professional Liaison Group (PLG).

ITEM 6 NEW REGISTRATION PROCESS

Mr Seale raised the issue of the Health Reference Form. He advised that the Committee needed to decide on a generic process for dealing with the information contained in the Health Reference Form where that form revealed possible problems with an applicant's ability to practise. He proposed that a panel of two Committee members, on a rotational basis, be established with a list maintained of those on the panel and for which period. There should be an overlap of panel members so that continuity of decision was maintained. Further, a database of decisions should be built in order to ensure and maintain uniformity of decision-making. The Committee discussed and **AGREED** the proposal.

Miss Dawson provided an update on the new registration process; this would encompass an update on Grandparenting and International Registration at Item 7 and therefore items 6 and 7 would be considered jointly.

The Committee noted the paper put before it. The first applications had been received prior to July 9, 2003 when the HPC began operating under its own rules. The first U.K. application received had been correctly completed and all relevant documents included; this had been the case too with the first Grandparenting application received from a Chiropodist. However, an application form from an international applicant had been incomplete and incorrect and had been returned to the applicant.

In respect of U.K. applicants, pass lists had been received from 76 of the 146 approved programmes and there were approximately 150 applications pending in the U.K. Registration Department.

New applications were taking a longer time to input into the new system as the HPC now required more complex information.

On 9 July 2003, 1,207 calls had been received, of which 86 % had been answered. Since 9 July 2003, 3,445 had been received of which 90 % had been answered in the four days of operations.

Most U.K. calls had related to enquiries regarding the new forms, particularly the Health Reference form.

Other calls had come mainly from Chiropodists requesting an application form in order to apply for registration via the Grandparenting route. Most calls from International applicants had been enquiries about existing applications.

To date, 300 application forms had been sent out.

Mr Seale said that staff had been working very hard but that the two year registration cycle should reduce the workload. There had been complaints that the system had not been available for a short time while the new system was being set up. There had been problems where the incorrect Registration / Readmission form had been put on to the website; this had been rectified.

Applicants who had applied after mid-June 2003 under the old system had been asked to re-submit their applications after 9 July 2003. Applicants already doing a Period of Adaptation would be processed under the old CPSM system. Where an applicant had been asked to do a Period of Adaptation or Test of Competence and the HPC had not received notification of the signing off of this, within 2 months of the date of expiry of period, they would be purged from the system.

In cases where applicants had applied before 9 July 2003 and had been asked to supply missing information and such information had been outstanding for two months, they would be given until 1 September 2003 to supply the information; if the information was not supplied they would be purged from the system.

ITEM 7 GRANDPARENTING AND INTERNATIONAL REGISTRATION

This item was addressed with Item 6.

ITEM 8 REGISTRATION / READMISSION FORMS

The Secretary confirmed that this form was part of the Rules. It was now on the website and could be downloaded by applicants.

The Guidance Notes were not part of the Rules. Miss Dawson reported that they were being changed and updated. Guidance Notes were also being prepared for GPs who were completing references.

Comments on the Guidance Notes should be sent to the Secretary at the end of the next two weeks. The Secretary would pass comments to Miss Dawson.

It was **AGREED** that the Chairman would take Chairman's action on the Guidance Notes following any amendments.

ITEM 9 MINUTES OF THE EDUCATION & TRAINING COMMITTEE MEETING

These were noted.

Standing Orders were suspended to allow the meeting to continue discussion of issues raised earlier.

Continued discussion of Item 4.

The Committee reviewed the work done with respect to assessment criteria by the working groups from each profession. The Committee felt that this work should not be ignored and that it should be used in conjunction with the alternative approach referred to earlier and would be used in the training of registration assessors.

The Secretary reported that two Registration Assessor training days had been planned for 12 and 14 August 2003. Two earlier training days had described the remit and expectation of the assessors under the Health Professions Order 2001 (HPO) and explained the relevant sections of the Human Rights Act 1998 as it affected their decisions. Some assessors had felt that further training was required in order to enable them to assess applications. These comments would be taken into consideration in setting out the content of the planned, and subsequent, training days.

After discussion it was **AGREED** that:

- (1) further training for registration assessors was needed;
- (2) training would be as described above and the agenda would reflect this.

- (3) a pro-forma would be sent to those professions who had not been involved in working groups to determine the profession-specific assessment criteria;
- (4) anonymised case studies would be used;
- (5) there would be input to the programme from registrant professionals.

Dr P. Burley would prepare a position report to the Education & Training Committee.

ITEM 10 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

10.1 Prof. Klem raised the issue of notification of the outcome from Partner interviews. She had received comments from a number of those interviewed several months ago who had still not been notified as to whether or not they had been appointed.

10.2 The Secretary confirmed that recently when she had been asked at very short notice to arrange assessors' training days, the people who had been approached to attend had not been aware that they had been recommended for appointment. This had caused considerable consternation. Partners who had been recommended for appointment as registration assessors could not be approached until a list of their names had been provided by the Human Resources to Council for approval.

10.3 Mr Seale reported that a letter confirming the appointment of Partners should have been sent the previous day. Partners would also receive a contract once detailed issues regarding tax liability had been resolved.

10.4 Contract with Oxford Brookes University. The Secretary reported that after the holiday period a meeting would be arranged with Ms M. Shanahan to discuss this matter. Mr Seale, Miss Crawford and Miss Dawson would attend the meeting.

10.5 Miss Thornton sought clarification of the CPD Professional Liaison Group (PLG) remit in relation to that of the Registration Committee prior to the first meeting of the PLG. Essentially the PLG would look at, inter alia, the definition and meaning of CPD and the frequency with which it would be undertaken. The Registration Committee would deal with cases where an applicant had not completed the required CPD; this would not be the sort of issue with which the PLG would deal.

10.6 The situation where documents submitted by applicants for registration breached patient confidentiality was discussed.. It was noted that this issue arose in other situations and was sometimes unavoidable. The Committee did not make any recommendations.

10.7 A letter of complaint which stated that a registrant was incompetent was brought to the attention of the Committee The Committee considered that this was a matter to be dealt with via the complaints procedure.

10.8 In response to a question from Mr Sutehall, Mr Seale confirmed that statistics compiled to demonstrate how the new registration process was working would be contained in the report he presented to Council.

ITEM 11 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would be held on Wednesday 10 September 2003 at 10.00 a.m.

Meeting in Private

It was

Resolved:

That the remainder of the meeting be held in private because publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest, by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

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CHAIRMAN