

GENERAL OPTICAL COUNCIL

**Minutes of the 16th Meeting of the Registration Committee
held on 17 January 2008**

Present: Dr G Harris (in the Chair)
Mrs M Alexander, Mr D Cameron,
Miss K Devlin, Dr P Kyle, Mr K Lewis, Mr A Sadiq, Professor
A Tomlinson, Miss J Underwood, Mrs R Varley, Mrs S Wild.

In Attendance: Mrs J Burrow, Mr P C Coe, Miss K Fielding (part)
Mr P J Ireland

Election of Chairman

370. The Registrar announced the results of nominations for the position of Chair of the Committee, for which Dr G Harris was nominated unopposed and duly elected as Chairman.

Election of Deputy Chairman

371. The Registrar announced the results of nominations for the position of Deputy Chair of the Committee, for which Mrs K Devlin was nominated unopposed and duly elected as Deputy Chairman.

Chairman's Introductions

372. The Chairman introduced new ophthalmologist Council member Mr. A Sadiq to the Committee and general introductions were made.

Apologies for absence

373. There were no apologies for absence.

Declaration of Interests

374. Members were reminded of the requirement to declare to the meeting any matter to which they had or may be perceived as having a personal interest.

Confidentiality

375. Members were reminded that proceedings of the Committee were confidential under Standing Orders 5.23 to 5.26

Appointment of Advisers for 2008

376. It was noted that the Committee did not presently have any standing advisers appointed by it. It was agreed by the Committee that it would look to appoint any adviser as and when it felt it necessary to do so.

Minutes of the 15th Meeting held on 13 September 2007

377. The minutes of the 15th meeting of the Committee held on 13 September 2007 were approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record of the meeting.

Matters Arising

378. There were no matters arising.

White Paper - Trust, Assurance and Safety

379. It was noted by the Committee that two pieces of work previously concluded by the Registration Work Stream, specifically on the *Definition of Good Character* and *Student Registration* had both been received by the Project Board.

380. The paper on the *Definition of Good Character* had concluded that good character could only be determined by the absence of behaviour that would indicate bad behaviour and therefore pose a risk to the safety of the public and patients. It was agreed this paper would be submitted to CHRE who were coordinating this work across all regulators and that any responses from CHRE be reported back to this Committee.

381. Members noted that the Work Stream paper on *Student Registration* had been submitted to the Project Board and subject to some minor corrections had been approved and would be submitted to government. Again, any responses received from government would be reported back to the Committee.

381. The Committee would now take over responsibility for those items previously identified as part of the Work Streams remit. This included Council's response to:

- what information should be included on the GOC registers, and
- to report on any new and emerging professions in optics which may require regulation.

382. It was noted that the Tackling Concerns Locally National Working Group was leading on issues around what information regulators should hold on their registers and it was agreed to await the outcome of their considerations before formulating its response.

383. Also, the Extending Professional Regulation National Working Group would be considering the work on new and emerging roles and it was agreed the Committee would consider this again once the NWG had met.

EU Directive on Recognition of Professional Qualifications

384. Members noted that internal GOC processes had been established to deal with any applications received from EU professionals wishing to come to the UK and provide services on a temporary or occasional basis. These processes mirrored those already in place for applications for permanent establishment in terms of the assessment made as to an applicants competency to undertake certain regulated activities.

385. It was noted that applications had to be dealt with within one month from the date an application was received. This effectively meant that except for applications from professionals qualified in Holland or Norway, all other EU qualified professionals would be set a date for an aptitude test to address certain deficiencies unless the applicant could prove they were not deficient in the areas we had identified.

386. In identifying such deficiencies, reference would be made immediately to the Overseas Qualifications Sub Committee (OQSC) who have extensive experience in determining the nature and extent of those compensatory measures needed for each country and group.

387. Members raised concerns about how applications may be treated under some specific circumstances. While the methods for dealing with every eventuality could not be anticipated, Members expressed the need to ensure that GOC had in place processes which could be initiated.

Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006

388. Members considered a paper which provided an update to the progress on the implementation of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups legislation. The paper also set out an options appraisal for how the Council might wish to determine the linkage between GOC registration and membership of the Vetting and Barring Scheme (VBS).

389. The options for consideration of linkage to registration were:

- membership of the VBS be a condition of GOC registration
- membership of the VBS be a requirement for registration under the Code of Conduct but not as a condition of registration, making any sanction for non-compliance a fitness to practise matter
- membership of the VBS be a requirement for all registrants who work with children and/or vulnerable adults
- no linkage between GOC registration and the VBS.

The unanimous view of Members was that membership of the VBS be made a condition of registration.

390. It was agreed that Registration Committee be the lead committee for the implementation of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups legislation. It was noted that in its work on reviewing the Codes of Conduct, Standards Committee would reflect the requirement for membership of the VBS as a condition of GOC registration.

Equality and Diversity Monitoring Scheme

391. Members considered a paper on the background, timetable and registration aspects of the Equality and Diversity monitoring scheme which was approved by Council in November 2007. It was noted that the Council will have a statutory duty to report on equality and diversity monitoring in its Annual Report to Parliament.

392. The Committee agreed five principles and recommendations identified for data collection and data monitoring, which were:

- completion of the data collection form be optional but registrants be encouraged to complete the form along with their other registration forms, and that an explanation be given as to the reasons why this information was being requested
- data be stored and linked to an individuals record
- data collected should only be published in an aggregated and anonymised form
- access to individuals data be restricted to only those with a legitimate need to access it and audit mechanisms be put in place to track who has accessed any record
- the GOC would coordinate its monitoring systems with other regulators to allow statistical comparisons across healthcare professions.

Report to Registration Committee on the CET Scheme

393. Members noted the details of the communications plan to support the present cycle of the CET Scheme. A qualification to one of the key messages would be made to the statement that the first cycle had been a success, and it was agreed to qualify this by identifying what was meant by this success.

393. It was agreed that the Committee would not need to review the Vantage Quarterly Report at each meeting but that the executive would highlight any issues which it felt required input from the Committee.

Issues on Teacher and Student registration

394. A verbal report was given to the Committee on the progress of a cross-committee working group who were considering issues of teacher and student registration. The group had considered the circumstances when it would be essential that a teacher should be GOC registered, but the basic principle reached was that anyone teaching the clinical application aspect of optics should be GOC registered. The group had sought to define the definition of clinical applications.

395. The Working Group had concluded that the default position for students was that all students must be GOC registered. However, where cases had arisen which called into question this principle, then decisions would need to be made on an individual basis. The Council expected to build up a list of exceptions to this general principle over time.

396. It was intended the Working Group would continue to meet and complete this work and report back to Registration, Education and Standards Committees.

397. The Registrar highlighted an issue which had been raised at Standards Committee in September 2007 and which concerned whether a dispensing optician undertaking a contact lens training programme was able to fit contact lenses while training. The Act identifies the exceptions to performing a reserved function as a registered student optometrist (SO) and a registered student dispensing optician (SD). This took no account of the dispensing optician who was in training to acquire a contact lenses speciality (CL) but was not a registered SO or SD. Legal advice had been sought and the matter was being progressed by Standards Committee.

Registration Committee Work Plan 2007/8

398. The current Work Plan was noted and there were no items presently under discussion which needed to be added.

Date and Time of Next Meeting

399. The next meeting of the Committee would be held on **Thursday 17 April 2008** at **2:00pm**.