

GENERAL OSTEOPATHIC COUNCIL

**Minutes of Part I of the 60th meeting of the Education Committee (EdC)
which took place on Tuesday 15 June 2010 at Osteopathy House, 176
Tower Bridge Road, London SE1 3LU.**

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Unconfirmed

Chair: Professor Ian Hughes

Present: Miss Paula Cook Professor Bernadette Griffin
Professor Adrian Eddleston Mr Robert McCoy
Dr Jane Fox Mr Liam Stapleton
Mr Nick Hounsfield Professor Julie Stone

In Attendance: Ms Evlynn Gilvarry, Chief Executive & Registrar
Mr Marcus Dye, Professional Standards Manager
Ms Kellie Green, Regulation Manager (12.25 – 13.50)
Ms Joy Winyard, Professional Standards Officer

PART I (*items which will be reported to the Public Session of Council at its next meeting*)

ITEM 1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1. Apologies were received from Ms Fiona Browne who is currently on jury service.
2. No vested interests were declared by the members for any of the items on the agenda.

ITEM 2 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

3. No amendments were suggested and the minutes were accepted as a true record of the meeting of 18 March 2010.

ITEM 3 MATTERS ARISING

4. There were no matters arising reported.

ITEM 4 CHAIR AND PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS DEPARTMENT ACTION AND REPORT

5. The Chair had nothing additional to report. The Professional Standards Manager presented the departmental report. It was pointed out that osteopathic should be

replaced with chiropractic in paragraph 7.d. in the line "...take place in external osteopathic clinics...".

ITEM 5 QUALITY ASSURANCE (QA) – QA VISITORS

6. The Professional Standards Manager presented the paper which highlighted a number of sources of information which were informing the current review of QA processes taking place in advance of a major review in 2012. The Committee was reminded that the current review was tackling those issues that required immediate attention in advance of the more strategic review in 2012 requiring legislative change. As part of this review, an area that was being focussed on was the training and appointment of Recognised Qualification (RQ) review visitors.
7. It was confirmed that since the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) originally recruited the RQ visitors, no further training had been undertaken. The Committee agreed that training was important to ensure Visitors remained up to date and fit to undertake the important role of a reviewing the OEIs.
8. The Committee discussed the status of the RQ review visitors and it was confirmed that the contract exists between the RQ visitors and the QAA and that QAA were contracted to do training. It was agreed that provision should be made in the contract for the QAA to undertake training for the Visitors.
9. It was suggested that in relation to the work to develop a competency based model for review visiting teams that GOsC might look at work undertaken by Skills for Justice in developing National Occupational Standards for its QA work when inspecting service providers. Another point of reference would be the Council for Healthcare Regulatory Excellence (CHRE).
10. The Professional Standards Manager also confirmed that the costs of training and reappointment had already been budgeted for and that they would form part of the new contract with the QAA. Committee cautioned that care would need to be taken in re-appointing the pool to ensure that there was no periods where we do not have sufficient expertise to undertake the QA functions required by GOsC, but was reassured by the fact that a quiet period in terms of RQ was coming up in the next year, so provided a perfect opportunity for new recruitment.
11. Concern was expressed that we should not be training and reappointing review visitors if the whole QA process was going to change in 2012. This would be wasted effort and expense. The Professional Standards Manager confirmed that the major review of QA would only begin in 2012 and would unlikely come to fruition until 2013/14 at the earliest: it was dependant on legislative change, the timetable for which has not yet been confirmed. The long term QA review project will consider more strategic elements such as accrediting the OEI processes as opposed to a specific course which would involve new legislation.
12. The Committee agreed the recommendations in the paper that further work should

be undertaken to revise the job description, team and visitor specifications, and that an amendment be made to the work plan so that specification should be considered at the Education Committee meeting in December 2010.

ITEM 6 CODE OF PRACTICE/STANDARD OF PROFICIENCY UPDATE

13. The Committee were reminded of the Council decision to agree that the Code of Practice and the Standard of Proficiency should be produced as a single document to underpin the close links between the two. The Professional Standards Manager confirmed that two versions of the document will be presented to Council at its July meeting, one based on the structure of the revalidation framework and one on the structure proposed by the working group who previously developed the Code in isolation. Council will be asked to decide on which format it favours for consultation.
14. It was also confirmed that an independent consultant, Hewell, Taylor Freed and Associates, had been appointed to undertake the consultation and this should take place between September and November 2010.
15. The Committee noted the progress made in this project.

ITEM 7 LAY OBSERVERS

16. The Committee was reminded that this issue had been presented to it previously and that, in principle, it had agreed to the discontinuance of lay observers, but that the view of OEIs should be confirmed first. It was confirmed that the proposals had been presented to the OEIs at their meeting with the GOsC on 20 May 2010 and they had indicated their support for the discontinuance of the Lay Observer in the decision making process for Recognised Qualifications (RQ).
17. The Professional Standards Manager confirmed that there was one RQ being processed at the current time in respect of Leeds Metropolitan University and it would be unfair to change the process halfway through. The RQ will be considered at the September Education Committee meeting and it was suggested that a lay observer should be present at this time.
18. The Committee agreed that Leeds Metropolitan University should be contacted and asked whether it requires a lay observer to be present or not. If they are content to proceed without the presence of a Lay Observer, the position would be discontinued with immediate effect. If not agreeable, the post would be discontinued after the September 2010 meeting.

ITEM 8 FITNESS TO PRACTISE

19. The Regulation Manager, Kellie Green, attended the meeting at this point to present this item. It was confirmed that the Education Committee had previously agreed to receive reports from the Fitness to Practise Department (FtP) to try and identify trends and issues from the cases sent to the FtP hearings. This was the first of those reports.

20. It was confirmed that the GOsC only has a small number of cases that are referred to its FtP panels and therefore it can be challenging when trying to identify areas of concern. The Regulation department hopes to build up a more comprehensive picture over time.
21. It was confirmed that poor record keeping was one of the areas of practice that had caused most concern; however this has generally been discovered through investigations surrounding other forms of complaint, rather than reported directly.
22. The figures showed that a sizable number of complaints came from osteopaths who graduated between 1980 and 1989. There was some discussion around the reasons for this and it was speculated that experienced osteopaths who had been qualified for over 20 years might be more comfortable taking shortcuts, than recently qualified osteopaths were still used to working in a more structured way.
23. The question was posed as to whether osteopaths in group practice had more support and therefore did not attract as many complaints. It was felt that whilst there was no specific data comparing the two groups, sole practitioners had similar incidences; however complaints against sole practitioners were generally more conduct or sexual cases.
24. It was noted that whilst these were very small numbers of complaints overall, the trends identified were similar to other healthcare regulators. The Committee wondered whether there was an opportunity to approach other regulators to ascertain whether they would be interested in undertaking a joint project to explore this further.
25. The Committee considered the report and made the following suggestions:
 - a. That it was important to feedback trends to the profession – through the Fitness to Practice bulletin?
 - b. That recommendations for CPD could be drawn from this information. That targeted CPD could be determined in the future if this is something that results from the CPD review.
 - c. That it could inform revalidation in terms of development of assessment criteria/evidence required
 - d. That it can inform the development of clinical audit tools. This was something that Carol Fawkes of National Council for Osteopathic Research was currently working on, or which could be taken forward by the BOA in the future – would be raised as an item on the next BOA/GOsC meeting agenda.
 - e. That it could be shared with the OEIs as it contains some useful learning points.

26. The Committee requested a slight amendment for future reports where the year of graduation was used to show the type and number of allegations found proved by the Professional Conduct Committee (PCC). It was suggested that the total number of registrants on the register for that particular graduation year also be included so that the Committee could obtain a suggestion of the population from where the complaint came.
27. It was also requested that the format of the charts be changed to that of pie charts as they may be easier to follow. This was agreed by the Regulation Manager, who then left the meeting at 13.50hrs.

ITEM 9 COUNCIL FOR HEALTHCARE REGULATORY EXCELLENCE (CHRE) REPORT – HEALTH CONDITIONS

28. The Professional Standards Manager presented the paper on the report, and asked the Committee to note the work currently being undertaken by the Regulation, Professional Standards and Registration Departments in the areas that fall under their remit. It was confirmed that the recommendations listed under 6 d and e have particular implications for education. The Committee was invited to consider the report and comment on the recommendations and further action required. The Committee concluded the following:
 - a. That it was content with the work being taken forward by the executive.
 - b. That the recommendations under 6 b and c also had implications for education.
 - c. That there was a need to explore further the health/medical requirements for entry into the OEIs – to form part of work undertaken on student fitness to practice
 - d. That the approach recommended by CHRE would need to be merged into OEI processes in terms of consideration of fitness to practice rather than health in isolation.
 - e. That further work is required on our own registration procedures in terms of the request for a health reference. What does the GOsC require? Are the requirements of the declaration made clear to the professional who is asked to make it? What advice can the GOsC provide? This is an area that should be taken forward by the Fitness to Practice Policy Committee
29. It was confirmed that Council Member Jenny White had a particular interest in this topic and should be involved wherever possible in the future.

ITEM 10 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

30. Dr Fox enquired whether data resulting from the National Student Survey could be used by this Committee. It was agreed this was a useful source of information to institutions who will receive their own specific feedback on the institution itself, but that the conglomerated data available at national level would not be refined enough to prove useful to the Committee.
31. A question was posed as to how the OEIs use this data to improve their own provision

and it was agreed to raise the subject at the next meeting with the OEIs. OEIs would be asked whether the results were accessible, whether they considered the information useful and what actions they take as a result of the report. This could also be an area which OEIs are asked to report on in Annual Report.

32. The Chair took the opportunity to advise the Committee that external committee members would shortly be receiving the paperwork to begin their appraisals and will be contacted to arrange appraisal dates.

ITEM 11 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

33. Thursday 16 September 2010 at 2.00pm.