



**Bulletin: Issue 41
Meeting of Council: 26 January 2012**

Fitness to Practise Processes

Council decided to request the Department of Health to change the law governing fitness to practise processes. Council wishes to speed up investigations and ensure that they are more cost effective. The Department of Health will be asked to replace the Investigating Committee with two Case Examiners (one lay and one from the profession). Council wishes to stress that these measures are not in any way a criticism of the Investigating Committee, but are simply a modernising proposal. The second major change will be designed to ensure more cases are screened out at the investigation stage, without having to be referred to the Professional Conduct Committee. The proposed new screening process will comply with strict legal criteria and will be informed by the public interest.

There is no guarantee that the Department of Health will agree to implement these changes, although initial contacts have been encouraging. Secondly, we are advised that changing legislation will take about two to three years to implement. However, the effects of these changes, together with other measures that Council have already taken, will reduce costs to about four-fifths of their current level, and speed up investigation by about six months.

Education

The Council reviewed the minutes of the last Education Committee, including draft performance indicators and a 2012 work plan for the education function. Council asked the Education Committee to also consider how it might take forward work to increase the number of chiropractic education providers.

Revalidation

Council received an update on the work of the Revalidation Working Group in the light of the initial report at the last meeting. Council has agreed that the Code of Practice and Standard of Proficiency must be central to all we do and should form the basis of any proposed GCC system of revalidation. Council agreed, therefore that the Code and Standard must also underpin CPD and the Test of Competence; further work will be undertaken to develop these ideas. Council also agreed a tentative timescale for the development which would include involving the professional associations in feedback and discussion in the summer of this year, a consultation phase later in 2012 and a possible start date in 2015.

Registration

The Council noted that the registration process for the current year had been completed effectively without the need to employ any additional temporary members of staff. This was due to the continued success of online retention and the hard work of the registration team. Council extended its thanks and congratulations to the registration team.

Medical reports for initial registration applications

Council agreed that requiring all applicants for registration to provide a medical report from their GP was disproportionate. This is because a chiropractor's fitness to practise is not necessarily impaired if he/ she has a health condition. The requirement will, therefore, be removed from the GCC's Rules as soon as possible. It should be noted that until then, applicants will still need to include a medical report as part of their registration application.

Review of the Test of Competence

The current contract for the test of competence ends in September 2012. Council agreed that the first step in the process was to review the current contract specification and also ensure that the TOC makes appropriate reference to the Code of Practice and Standard of Proficiency. Council agreed that it would like to undertake a full review of the test. The review would be conducted by the Education Committee and if it is not possible to complete the whole process before the end of September 2012, an extension to the current contract will be explored.

Date of next meeting: 29 March 2012