

DECLARATIONS PROTOCOL

Background

1. The GOC introduced a Protocol on the Handling of Criminal Convictions Disclosed by Registrants following the changes to our Registration Rules in 2005, requiring registrants to declare criminal convictions and cautions.
2. Following a review of the overall approach to handling disclosures from registrants carried out at the start of this retention period, the executive proposed some changes to the Protocol.

Revised protocol

3. The proposed revised version removes paragraphs suggesting that the Registrar may seek guidance from members in making her decision, and may invite applicants to an informal meeting to explore the circumstances of the case. It was felt that whilst the Registrar may take advice and seek further information in order to arrive at a decision, the option of an informal meeting was unlikely to be used, given the difficulties of maintaining an informal approach in these circumstances, and given that the Registration Appeals mechanism provides a formalised opportunity for the applicant to challenge the Registrar's decision.
4. Further changes update the issues to be taken into account when considering the decision, and the timelines specified for requesting and providing further information, and informing the applicant following a final decision.
5. A track-changed version of the protocol is attached at Annex 1.

Process

6. The draft was reviewed at the Registration Committee meeting last month, and the Committee agreed that the changes should go forward to Council for approval.
7. A copy was also sent to the optical bodies for comment. A copy of their response is attached at Annex 2.
8. A consideration of the issues raised by the bodies is attached at Annex 3.

Action

9. **Council is asked to approve** the revised protocol. Once approved, we will deal with all future applications containing a declaration of a criminal conviction in accordance with the revised protocol with immediate effect.