

COUNCIL

Report from the Chair of Council

Meeting: 11 May 2016

Status: for decision

Lead responsibility: Gareth Hadley
(Chair)

Paper Author: Gareth Hadley

Introduction

1. This report covers my principal activities since the Council meeting held on **10 February 2016**.

Stakeholders

2. **Professional Standards Authority:** Together with the Chief Executive and Registrar, I attended the PSA annual symposium (**12 February 2016**). Discussion was wide ranging, focusing primarily on the challenges for professional regulators given the changing landscapes within which healthcare was being delivered. These included the emergence of different forms of service provision driven by a wide range of factors including: technological change; shifts towards team-based approaches to delivery; new roles and relationships developing within the workforce; the implications for regulators of enhanced skills and scopes of practice being acquired by some (but not all) of their registrants; changes in commissioning models leading to increased diversity based upon location; patient expectations and developing roles for patients in self-diagnosis and self-management of their conditions; and the consequential need to see resources shifted from hospital provision to local care.
3. Inevitably, there was discussion about the prospect for legislative change. In outlining the timeline for work towards a Bill, Department of Health official William Vineall:
 - 3.1. confirmed the centrality of regulation to helping ensure public protection, making the point that professional regulation did not operate in isolation but needed to complement system regulation;
 - 3.2. confirmed that regulation had to be based on risk, be responsive, be 'right touch', be as close as possible to front line service delivery, and that professionals should only be regulated where there was proven value in so doing; and
 - 3.3. outlined his expectation that any Bill would be aimed at giving clear autonomy to regulators (who would be fewer in number), and at providing

flexibility for regulators to respond to changes in clinical practice without the need for further legislation.

4. Pointing out that, on past experience, consideration of complex issues such as those underpinning the conundrums confronting regulators could easily descend into quibbles about process that had limited impact on public protection, Samantha Peters stressed the need for sight within discussion towards a Bill to be kept on the outcomes – on what legislative reform was intended to achieve rather than on the operational how of getting there.
5. I invited George Jenkins, the recently appointed chair of the **Professional Standards Authority**, to Old Bailey to join me for a cup of tea (**30 March 2016**). Our discussion ranged over challenges for professional regulation generally and for optics in particular, and the prospects and opportunities for legislative reform.
6. **Optometry Scotland:** Together with Scott Mackie, I attended the tenth anniversary dinner of Optometry Scotland (**17 March 2016**) and had informal discussions with a number of registrants. During the course of the evening, registrant Frank Munro, presented a review of the development of optical services in Scotland over the past decade. Frank's presentation incorporated data on the impact of the delivery of enhanced community eye services in Lanarkshire (under the Lanarkshire Eye Health Network Scheme – *LENS*) on the number of hospital referral in comparison to data for other parts of Scotland: it serves to reinforce the strong case for investing in community services as a way of relieving the burgeoning pressure in hospital eye departments. Frank is doing further comparative work, both in relation to the LENS scheme and to a similar scheme operating in the Grampian region: he will keep us abreast of his work.
7. I have also had meetings with other stakeholders:
 - 7.1. Alan Tinger, executive chair of **Local Optical Committees' Support Unit** (**18 February 2016**);
 - 7.2. Dame Mary Perkins, Doug Perkins, senior executives of **Specsavers Optical Group**, and some Specsavers' joint venture partners (together with Paul Carroll and the Director of Policy and Communications) (**22 March 2016**);
 - 7.3. Chris Hunt, chair, and other board members of the **Optical Confederation** (together with the Chief Executive and Registrar) (**23 March 2016**);
 - 7.4. Nigel Clarke, Chair, and Duncan Rudkin, Chief Executive and Registrar, of the **General Pharmaceutical Council** (together with the Chief Executive and Registrar) (**24 March 2016**);
 - 7.5. David Hewlett, Chief Executive of the **Federation of Dispensing and Ophthalmic Opticians** (**13 March 2016**); and

- 7.6. Fiona Anderson, President, and Sir Anthony Garrett, General Secretary of the **Association of British Dispensing Opticians** (together with the Chief Executive and Registrar) (**20 April 2016**).

Government

8. A paper for discussion in the private part of today's Council meeting reports on the work undertaken by the Legislative Reform Working Group, set up by Council at its meeting on 10 February 2016. The Group (comprised of Samantha Peters, Alistair Bridge, David Rowland, Paul Carroll, Fiona Peel, and me) met Department of Health officials (**28 April 2016**). At our meeting, we stressed that the regulation of the sector will require modernization if it is to respond to changes in the way optical services are delivered as well as the challenges presented by rapid and extensive technological development. We identified a number of issues which we felt would need to be properly considered as part of the their consultation on reform, including: the changed context in which professionals are delivering eye care, the radical and multi-faceted innovation which is taking place, and the features of the current legislation which make it difficult to respond to that.

Council and Committees

9. I chaired Council (**23 March 2016**) for the special meeting arranged to approve our Business Plan for 2016/17. Although the meeting took place in private, the paper that we considered has been published on our website and the draft minutes will be published once approved by Council today. I also chaired a meeting of Nominations Committee (**15 April 2016**) and attended a meeting of the Legislative Reform Working Group (**14 April 2016**).

Management

10. In addition to my regular conversations with the Chief Executive and Registrar, we have had three long bilateral discussions concerning the work and direction of the Council.
11. Members will recall that, at the last meeting of Council, I reported that a further interview panel (Investigation Committee chair Caroline Corby; Glenn Tomison; independent assessor Chris Dearsley; and me) had been convened to recommend the appointment of a dispensing optician member of the Investigation Committee. Interviews were held on **9 February 2016** and resulted in the appointment of Sarah Baylay. Sarah has over 16 years' experience in the optical sector, and in 2004 graduated with a degree in Optical Management. She has managed six different practices, including eight years at a high street multiple and has trained and mentored a number of optical consultants, trainee dispensing opticians and new managers.

12. Following campaigns to strengthen the Education Visitors' Panel by the recruitment of a further two dispensing opticians and an ophthalmologist, interviews were held on **15 March 2016** (for the dispensing opticians) and **18 March 2016** (for the ophthalmologist). The interview panel for the dispensing optician appointments comprised optometrist panelist Julie-Anne Little, dispensing optician panelist Jo Underwood, independent assessor Penny Bennett, and me. The interview panel for the ophthalmologist appointment comprised Fiona Peel, optometrist panelist Julie-Anne Little, independent assessor Penny Bennett, and ophthalmologist panelist Paul Baines. The successful candidates were Nicholas Wilson-Holt (ophthalmologist panel member); and Kevin Gutsell and Graeme Stevenson (dispensing optician panel members).
13. Nicholas is a Consultant Ophthalmologist Royal Cornwall Hospitals Trust, and has in his time with the Trust held the posts of clinical tutor, lead consultant and divisional director for specialist head and neck services as well as a Trust appraiser. Kevin is a senior Tutor at ABDO College and has a wide range of experience across the optical sector, including for professional bodies and in the commercial sector. Graeme is an employee of a major optician and has been very actively involved in his career in a range of work across the sector in Scotland.