

GENERAL OPTICAL COUNCIL**Minutes of the 226th public meeting of Council held on
Wednesday 9 May 2018 at 10:00 at 10 Old Bailey, London, EC4M 7NG**

Present: Gareth Hadley (Chair), Helen Tilley (Senior Council Member), Sinead Burns, Josie Forte, Mike Galvin, Rosie Glazebrook, Scott Mackie, Clare Minchington, David Parkins, Roshni Samra, Glenn Tomison and Selina Ullah.

GOC attendees: Kayleigh Allen, Alistair Bridge, Marie Bunby, Lisa Davis, Marcus Dye, Nicola Ebdon, Simon Grier, Claire Herbert, Safia Iman, Angharad Jones, Howard Miller (minutes), Philippa Mann, Vicky McDermott, Michelle Norman, Anita Phillips, Batool Reza and Mark Webster.

Welcome

8711. The Chair **welcomed** members, employees and those in the public gallery to the 226th public meeting of Council.

Apologies

8712. There were no apologies.

Declaration of members' interests

8713. The following declarations of interest were **noted**:

- all registrant members of Council **declared** their interest in the Education Strategic Review (item six on the agenda) due to their involvement in the management, delivery and design of education provision, pre-registration and post-graduate training as they were likely to be directly affected in their non-GOC roles by the direction, progress and outcome of this review. David Parkins additionally **declared** his membership of the Clinical Council for Eye Health Commissioning which advises/seeks to influence NHS commissioning processes in England; and
- Scott Mackie **declared** his interest in CET (item seven on the agenda) given his role (and his partner's) as a CET Approver.

8714. All members had received un-redacted papers and Council were **content** that none of the declarations presented a direct conflict and therefore the members were permitted to participate in the discussion and make decisions.

Minutes of the last meeting held on 28 February 2018

8715. Council **approved** the minutes of the meeting held on 28 February 2018 as an accurate record of the meeting.

Updated Actions – C12(18)

8716. Council **noted** the action points.

Matters Arising

8717. There were no matters arising.

Chief Executive and Registrar's report – C13(18)

8718. Council **noted** the report and:
- **noted** the adoption of a proposed new operating model for the GOC had been discussed in detail by Council on 8 May 2018;
 - **requested** the Executive check the categories included in the renewal EDI monitoring form;
 - **acknowledged** the work of the Registration Department during the recent renewal period;
 - **acknowledged** the widespread support of the sector for the second annual Love Your Lenses campaign which contributed to its success and **noted** the intention to repeat research next year (after the completion of the first three annual campaigns) in order to measure the project's impact on changes in behaviour;
 - **noted** the positive outcomes of the first meeting of the Defence Stakeholder Group and the ongoing commitment from participants to the initiative;
 - **requested** a more comprehensive account of planned communications with registrants, including informal consultations;
 - **noted** the implementation of a new consultation platform which would make consultations more accessible; and
 - **noted** progress made with the targeted consultation with key stakeholders on revised Accreditation and Quality Assurance principles and documentation.

Chair's report – C14(18)

8719. Council **noted** the report and:
- **agreed** the competences for Council members be amended in line with the proposal set out in annex one; and
 - **agreed**, with effect from 1 September 2018 and until 31 December 2018, Helen Tilley and Selina Ullah be appointed as members of the Nominations Committee for the purpose of Council member reappointments only.

Education Strategic Review (ESR): consultation analysis and next steps – C15(18)

8720. Council **considered** the paper which:
- updated them on progress with the ESR, which continued to be delivered in accordance with the project plan;
 - informed them of the Principles and Concepts Consultation feedback;
 - explained how the project was aligned with work to develop the Continuing Education and Training (CET) system and changes proposed to the education quality assurance process;
 - proposed further consultation in June to July 2018 as part of a single consultation exercise also covering CET and the education quality assurance process; and
 - set out a proposed indicative implementation timeline.
8721. In discussion, Council:
- **welcomed** the progress that continued to be made and the Executive's response to Council's request for implementation to be speeded up and aligned with the CET review;
 - **acknowledged** the potential challenges of earlier implementation for some stakeholders;
 - **noted** the Executive's ongoing engagement with providers aimed at enabling successful implementation;
 - **confirmed** the importance of linking the forthcoming consultation with other related consultations;
 - **noted** the draft new Education Standards and Learning Outcomes would be shared with Council prior to the consultation and the outcomes of the consultation would be presented to Council as part of the subsequent decision making process;
 - **requested** a combined plan for future work on ESR/CET/ Education Quality Assurance be provided to Council in July 2018 to give assurance regarding the coordination of their implementation;
 - **noted** a fuller version of the implementation programme would be presented to Council following the consultation on draft standards and learning outcomes, including the key decision points for Council;
 - **suggested** not using the term 'trailblazer' (because of the potential for confusion given that the word was currently being used in the context of the Government's apprenticeships initiative) and consider the term 'early adopter';
 - **noted** the date by which all providers would have to implement the changes was yet to be set;
 - **noted** the plans for post implementation review, including regular research with newly qualified registrants, and the draft Standards would be designed to facilitate ongoing review and change; and
 - **noted** it was currently expected the current number of Education Visitors

would be sufficient for future requirements, although some retraining would be required. The experience of other regulators in moving to a new system would be analysed.

8722. Council **agreed**:

- the proposed indicative implementation timeline, subject to operational and legal readiness testing;
- to consult on draft new education standards and learning outcomes from June to July 2018; and
- final approval of the draft education standards and learning outcomes for consultation be delegated to the Chair and Chief Executive and Registrar.

Continuing Education and Training (CET) – C16(18)

8723. Council **considered** proposed revised plans regarding the review of the CET scheme.

8724. In discussion, Council:

- **welcomed** the proposed revised plans and **noted** the CET Reference Group's positive response to the proposal;
- **stressed** the importance of suitable messaging to registrants regarding the need to continue with any non-mandatory peer review during the transitional year;
- **recommended** an impact assessment be undertaken on the arrangements for the transitional year to ensure that mitigating actions are identified to ensure no disproportionate impacts, for example on registrants on career breaks;
- **noted** the potential challenge for some registrants to fulfil the proposed requirements of the transitional year and the possible consequent need for additional support;
- **noted** practice risks research, to inform all aspects of regulatory work, was required now for the CET review and would be carried out after the consultation;
- **highlighted** the importance of considering proportionality in both approving and auditing CET and the need to focus primarily on outcomes;
- **noted** the current IT tender was for a five year contract (to the end of the next CET cycle) based on the present IT system; there would be suitable flexibility built into the contract to facilitate operational change that might be required during that period; and any move to a new system would form part of the GOC's wider review of IT systems;
- **suggested** investigating the possibility of an off the shelf IT solution in the future, but **noted** that the system is wholly separate to the CRM and is tailored to provide back-office services for GOC staff, approvers

- and providers as well as a registrant-facing interface;
- **recommended** break points be included in the IT system contract to ensure contractual flexibility;
- **stressed** the need for and **noted** the Executive's plans for rigorous testing of each stage of the IT provision;
- **suggested** future CET be linked to research on fitness to practise concerns and promoting professionalism; and
- **queried** the need to consult twice with registrants, once at an early stage about the timetable and broad principles and later about the proposals and **noted** this was important in order to ensure proper engagement with registrants.

8725. Council:

- **agreed** the revised project deliverables and timescales and to undertake a consultation on the proposed changes;
- **agreed** CET requirements during the proposed 'transitional year' would be completion of a pro-rata 12 points including six interactive points, **stressing** the need for the GOC to continue to promote completion of peer review and reflective practice even though it is non-mandatory;
- **delegated authority** to the Chief Executive and Registrar and Chair of Council to approve the consultation document and appoint the provider to deliver the IT system, particularly noting the importance of rigorous testing throughout.

Non-EEA route to registration for optometrists – C17(18)

8726. Council **considered** a recommended new route to registration for optometrists qualified outside of the European Economic Area (EEA).

8727. In discussion, Council:

- **acknowledged** the support of the College of Optometrists, which had been confirmed in writing following its Board meeting;
- **noted** a suitable formal agreement would be established with the College;
- **welcomed** the proposed process as being proportionate for applicants and adequately robust from a public protection perspective;
- **noted** the Executive had explored with the College the possibility of some applicants carrying out only part of the Scheme for Registration but the College had advised this would not be possible for practical reasons;
- **noted** the interview stage would provide an opportunity to explore further whether it would be appropriate for applicants to join the Scheme for Registration and have access to patients;
- **noted** the purpose of the interview would be clear in the guidance;
- **noted** the intention to recruit additional assessors with more practice-based knowledge when resources allowed;

- **noted** the process would need to be reviewed in relation to the ESR outcomes and Brexit implications and changes to streamline the process could be considered at that time;
- **recognised** the limitations on being able to check applicants' overseas employment and FTP histories and **suggested** any gaps in employment history be probed during the interview as well as obtaining employment references; and
- **requested** the inconsistency between paragraph 15.4.1 of the paper and the table on page four be corrected.

8728. Council **agreed** to:

- introduce a new non-EEA route to registration for optometrists as of 4 June 2018, which involved mapping applicants against the GOC's stage one and stage two competencies, an interview, further academic training if required, then the full Scheme for Registration operated by the College of Optometrists (described in the paper as option four), conditional on a suitable agreement with the College being in place; and
- introduce a further fee of £200 for applicants approved to progress to the interview stage of the new route to registration.

Fitness to Practise (FTP) acceptance criteria – C18(18)

8729. This item was **deferred** until July 2018 to enable the Council Champions to consider the consultation responses, how action has been taken as a result and draft guidance before recommendation to Council for approval.

Performance report: quarter four 2017/18 – C19(18)

8730. Council **considered** the content of the performance report. The FTP glide path analysis on pages 8, 9 and 10 was **withdrawn** and would be **sent to Council** by Friday 18 May. It was suggested that performance against the FTP recovery plan would be reported in addition to actual performance.

8731. In discussion, Council:

- **welcomed** the ongoing improvements in performance reporting, both in terms of content and style;
- **noted** the report had not been updated in relation to the GDPR project and that preparations for GDPR compliance were on track and progress of this project had been closely monitored by ARC each quarter. Training had been provided to all staff, the Information Governance Handbook, privacy statement and privacy notices had been updated. Some outstanding actions relating to IT had been reallocated to the IT strategy;
- **suggested** a statement on the website and/or on all registrant communications confirming the GOC's GDPR compliance;
- **noted** the increase in data security incidents (caused by human error)

and **requested** more information be reported to Council in July 2018;
and

- **requested** a fuller update on legislative reform at the next meeting.

Financial performance report: quarter four 2017/18 (full year to 31 March 2018 – C20(18))

8732. Council **considered** the financial performance report and **noted**:
- the key figures highlighted by the Executive;
 - preparations for the external audit were on track; and
 - no investment funds had yet been withdrawn, but ARC were aware of plans to do so in the coming year.

Accreditation and quality assurance: University of West of England – C21(18)

8733. Council **considered** the recommendations of the Education Committee and **granted** (subject to conditions being met) provisional approval to the BSC (Hons) Optometry programme at the University of West of England to commence in September 2018, **noting**:
- a maximum cohort of 60 students;
 - 16 conditions were imposed;
 - three recommendations were made; and
 - the Education Visitor Panel would visit the University before the start of the programme.

Council forward plan – C22(18)

8734. Council **noted** the forward plan, in particular that the Scheme of Delegation and the risk management strategy and policy would be postponed to later in the year.

Any other business

8735. It was **noted** online access to Council papers was being considered as part of the comprehensive IT strategy.
8736. The Chair **did not agree** to a request for Council members to have electronic access to the office as a matter of routine.
8737. The GOC's role and responsibilities in raising concerns/safeguarding would be **included** on a future agenda paper.
8738. The meeting closed at 13:15.

Date and time of next meeting

8739. The next public meeting of Council would be held on **Wednesday 11 July 2018** at 10 Old Bailey, London, EC4M 7NG at 10:00.