

**GENERAL OPTICAL COUNCIL****Minutes of the 229th public meeting of Council held on  
Wednesday 14 November 2018 at 10:00 at 10 Old Bailey, London, EC4M 7NG**

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

**GOC attendees:** Lesley Longstone, Alistair Bridge, Marcus Dye (paragraphs 8800 to 8803), Nicola Ebdon, Simon Grier, Lisa Harmshaw (minutes), Natalie Heppenstall (paragraphs 8800 to 8803), Angharad Jones (paragraphs 8801 to 8803), Manori Inzi-Muneer, Subo Shanmuganathan, Keith Watts.

**Welcome**

---

8790. The Chair **welcomed** members, employees and those in the public gallery to the 229th public meeting of Council. A particular welcome was **extended** to Lesley Longstone (interim Chief Executive and Registrar) and Dr. Subo Shanmuganathan (interim Director of Education) who were attending their first Council meeting.
8791. Thanks were also **extended** to Gordon Carson who would demit from his role as Chair of the CET Approvers as of 31 December 2018, having served in the role since 2004. An announcement of his successor would be made shortly. *[post meeting note: a public announcement was issued on 22 November 2018 advising that Kathy Morrison would succeed Gordon Carson].*

**Apologies**

---

8792. Apologies were **received** from Roshni Samra.

**Declaration of members' interests**

---

8793. The following declarations were **noted**:
- Item six (business standards): all registrant members who are a director/shareholder of or connected with a body corporate registered with the GOC, and Glenn Tomison (also in his capacity as a Director of FODO) as they are likely to be directly affected in their non-GOC roles by the outcome of this work;
  - Item seven (CET): Scott Mackie as he is an active CET Approver and all other registrant members as they will be affected by the outcome of this work; and

- Item eleven (registration fees rules 2019/20): all registrant members of Council as they will be affected by this decision.

8794. Council **agreed** that none of these declarations represented a significant conflict and that all members could continue to participate in the discussion and make decisions as required.

#### **Minutes of the meetings held on 11 July and 12 September 2018**

---

8795. Council **approved** the minutes of both meetings subject to the removal of the final bullet point on paragraph 8766 (September 2018 minutes) as Helen Tilley had now completed her studies at Cardiff University.

#### **Update actions – C39(18)**

---

8796. Council **noted** the actions as well as:
- action 19(18) that consistent discussion with staff on budgets and future financial planning was being undertaken (most recently at the all staff meeting held on 11 November 2018, where Clare Minchington and Gareth Hadley had presented the recommendations from the organisational transformation (OT) audit), and would be again at the next all staff meeting on 26 November; and
  - action 20(18) the intention to analyse FTP cases and establish real learning, trends and how this might feed into education as part of the business plan for 2019/20.

#### **Matters Arising**

---

8797. Going forward, Council **requested** more detailed progress updates on actions which were 'in progress' along with intended timescales for when progress would be complete.

#### **Interim Chief Executive and Registrar's report – C40(18)**

---

8798. Council:
- **noted** that a redacted paper had been published on the GOC website until the GOC was in a position to make a formal announcement of the Director of Casework and Resolution [*post meeting note: a public announcement was made on 14 November 2018 – following the conclusion of the Council meeting – that Dione Spence would join the GOC as of 28 January 2019*];
  - **extended thanks** to those stakeholders who had met the interim Chief Executive and Registrar and the constructive feedback provided;
  - **welcomed** the signs of progress at the earlier stages in the FTP glidepath;
  - **noted** that the consultation on new draft standards for education and learning outcomes for students had been published on 13 November 2018 and welcomed responses;

- **noted** that the level of completed CET at this point in the cycle was lower than expected but that some registrants will wish to be removed from the register at the end of the cycle. Targeted communications had been sent to registrants yet to meet the requirements and the GOC was engaging with other stakeholders on this issue. Council commented that it was of concern that some registrants were not actively engaging in professional development on an ongoing basis and requested thought be given to exploring why this was the case with that group of registrants;
- **welcomed** the publication of the FTP complaints Acceptance Criteria and **requested** an update in Spring 2019 on how use of the criteria was progressing; and
- **extended thanks** to those stakeholders who had submitted evidence to the PSA as part of the GOC performance review.

### **Chair's report – C41(18)**

---

8799. Council:

- **noted** that Glenn Tomison had been unable to attend the interviews for the dispensing optician members of the Education Visitor Panel on 6 November and that further interviews for optometrist members would take place on 15 and 16 November 2018. Overall, the interview panels had been impressed with the quality of applications received across all the roles available (panel chair, dispensing optician, and optometrist);
- **noting** that the reverse had been agreed by Council in November 2017, **agreed** that members of the Statutory Advisory Committees (SAC) would no longer be proscribed from being appointed to the Investigation Committee (IC); and
- **agreed** that, due to her being absent on maternity leave, from 15 November 2018 until 12 February 2019 (inclusive), Roshni Samra's agreement would not be required for a Council decision by e-mail to be valid.

### **Business Standards – C42(18)**

---

8800. Council **welcomed** Pye Tait who presented a summary of the consultation findings (published [here](#)) to Council which were **noted**. Council:

- **extended thanks** to everyone who had responded and particularly **welcomed** the views from patients who had clearly engaged with this consultation;
- **noted** the level of concern from respondents that unregistered businesses were not bound by the standards prescribed for those that were registered, but **acknowledged** the Executive's intention to encourage all businesses, registered or unregistered, to comply with the standards and to promote the benefits of registration;
- **acknowledged** that the standards might serve to assist boost public perception of dispensing opticians and optometrists as healthcare

providers and the importance of the sector's role in explaining this fact to patients;

- **suggested** that businesses should be encouraged to display notices in their practice premises to demonstrate their compliance with the standards;
- **noted** that a Task and Finish group comprised of a sub-group of Standards committee members had been established to provide views on potential amendments to the draft business standards in light of feedback received from stakeholders; and
- **noted** the planned next steps, which included further meetings with those who had responded to the consultation and to publicise more widely the rationale for change, which did not appear to be widely understood.

### **Continuing Education and Training (CET): project delivery timeframe – C43(18)**

---

8801. Council **agreed** to revert to the original plan of a three year cycle commencing in 2019 under current requirements and introduce the new CET scheme in 2022. In doing so Council took into account:
- the need to align the CET and Education Strategic Review (ESR) projects;
  - the balance of risks associated with breaking the current CET cycle, which included: the lack of progress with legislative change; reputation and patient safety;
  - the lack of sufficient time and resource to meet necessary delivery timescales, both for the GOC and for its delivery partners; and
  - that this would provide additional time to introduce concepts and changes incrementally during the three year cycle to effect behavioural change.
8802. In agreeing to revert back to the original plan Council:
- **requested** clear and coherent communications to all interested parties to ensure clarity going forward and avoid confusion;
  - **noted** the intention to continue to proceed with IT changes to the current system and **received assurance** from the Executive that the current IT contract would support the change back to the original plan;
  - **suggested** progress be made with introducing phased changes in readiness for the start of the next cycle, particularly in relation to reflective learning and the need for culture change (moving from a tick box exercise to that of professional learning and development) within the bounds of existing legislation; and
  - **noted** that the additional time available would provide the Executive with the opportunity to take on board previous Council comments on the sharing of learning from FTP cases.

8803. Council **welcomed** Enventure who presented a summary of the consultation findings (published [here](#)) to Council. Council **noted**:
- the headline finding – that registrants were keen to have professional learning and development arrangements that matched those of other healthcare professions;
    - the need to understand more clearly the profile and behaviours of those registrants who: did not engage in CET; who left completion until the last minute; and who did not find the process valuable;
    - the need to explore registrants' expressed desire to have more control over their continued development through lifelong learning and reflection; and
  - the other factors involved such as commissioning and care pathway changes, requiring practitioners to operate at a higher level in relation to improved clinical decision making.

#### **PSA Performance Review – C44(18)**

---

8804. Council:
- **noted** the GOC had met 22 of the PSA's 24 standards of good regulation;
  - **welcomed** the passing of the tenth fitness to practise standard (information governance) which had been failed the previous year and **acknowledged** the improvements which had been made;
  - **noted** the failure of the first FTP standard (due to PSA concerns with how triaged decisions were recorded) and the sixth FTP standard (for the third year running) around overall timeliness of the complaints process but **acknowledged** the action taken as a result to help ensure a pass in future; and
  - **noted** the next performance review would cover the 13-month period 1 October 2017 to 31 October 2018, that initial information had already been shared with the PSA and that the GOC was waiting to hear whether we will be subject to a targeted review next year.

#### **Quarter two 2018/19 performance report – C45(18)**

---

8805. Council **considered** the quarter two performance report and **noted**:
- the implementation of the Egress Email Threat Detection solution which would assist in reducing information breaches;
  - that those projects marked 'delayed' referred to them being delivered behind original timescales published in the business plan, but they were on course to be delivered in revised timescales notified to Council; and
  - the contribution to delayed delivery as a result of high staff turnover.
8806. In relation to the Education Strategic review project, Council **questioned** whether the education learning outcomes were expected at the point of graduation or registration and **noted** that the most recent consultation

would assist in determining this going forward and where accountability for quality assuring the outcomes would lie.

8807. In relation to delivery of FTP, Council were **supportive** of the initiatives being taken in relation to speed up the consideration of complaints, **acknowledging** the issues related to timeliness. However, Council **stressed** that the quality of decision-making should not be compromised in pursuit of speed. Council **received assurance** from the Executive that additional resources were now in place and that the quality of decision-making remained high, most recently evidenced by an external audit which would be presented to the Audit, Finance and Risk committee in due course.
8808. In relation to FTP the open caseload and achievement of the glidepath, Council **requested** the Executive consider how to present this information so that it provides more assurance, identifies risks and associated mitigations and an explanation of what factors have changed in instances when the glidepath has not been achieved.
8809. Council:
- **requested** the report include additional information focused on the risks identified and mitigations in place to achieve expected performance;
  - **requested** a summary of key themes from exit interviews (temporary and permanent employees) be presented to Council with the results of the staff survey in February 2019;
  - **requested** the information on rolling staff turnover be supplemented with an analysis of the number of vacancies/target staffing level;
  - **suggested** the report should include information on the number of internal promotions and/or upskilling opportunities; and
  - **requested** the report include financial performance indicators.

#### **Financial performance reports – C46a and C46b(18)**

---

8810. Council **received** the half year financial report for 2018-19 and **requested** that the Audit Finance and Risk committee consider a change in the reporting format in manners which:
- linked financial performance narrative on risk assessment and overall achievement of business plan, projects and strategic objectives, instead of a statement of where we are;
  - included trend analysis of expenditure related to significant items; and
  - gave assurance of the overall financial health of the organisation (for example including analysis of financial risks, investment value, project costs, contract negotiations, trends, compliance with policies and financial mechanisms).
8811. Council **received** the mid-year forecast for 2018-19 and **noted**:

- CET costs would require re-forecasting as a result of Council's decision to revert back to a three-year CET cycle; and
- the budget spend for the Education Strategic Review (ESR) had reduced as a result of clearer planning now that the project was fully underway.

#### **Registration Fees Rules 2019/20 – C47(18)**

---

8812. Council **approved** the Registration Fees Rules for 2019/20 in accordance with the full tariff set out in the published paper. Council:
- **requested** clear communications to all registrants which explained appropriate reasoning for the increases;
  - **suggested** that registrants might welcome a pie chart (or similar graphic) to assist with explaining how the income was spent on the four regulatory functions and strategic projects; and
  - **noted** the intention to review the costs of assessing applications from outside of the UK once more data was available.

#### **Council appointment campaign – C48(18)**

---

8813. Council **agreed** the recommendations from the Nominations committee (Nomco) in relation to a lay member appointment campaign as set out within the paper, including;
- the advertising strategy which would make use of all free advertising and a paid advertisement on Guardian online; and
  - **requested** Nomco consider including any other skills relevant to the GOC in the next Council skills evaluation such as experience of fitness to practice and customer service.

#### **Forward Plan – C49(18)**

---

8814. Council **noted** the plan and requested time be allowed for Council to develop the next strategic plan during 2019/20.

#### **Any other business**

---

8815. There was no other business for discussion.

8816. The meeting closed at 13:30.

#### **Date and time of next meeting**

---

8817. The next public meeting of Council would be held on **Wednesday 13 February 2019** at 10 Old Bailey, London, EC4M 7NG (time to be confirmed).