



News release

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### **HPC and HAC launch joint consultation on standards and qualification entry level for Hearing Aid Audiologists/Dispensers**

Today the Health Professions Council (HPC) and the Hearing Aid Council (HAC) have launched a joint consultation on the standards of proficiency and the threshold level of qualification for entry to the Hearing Aid Audiologists/Dispensers part of the HPC register.

In 2005, the Government announced that the Hearing Aid Council was to be abolished and its registration and regulation functions transferred to the Health Professions Council.

In preparation for the transfer the HPC and HAC are consulting together in recognition of the role each organisation plays as statutory regulators and the expertise of each organisation in developing standards.

Marc Seale, Chief Executive for the HPC, commented:

“We are looking forward to listening to stakeholder views on the standards of proficiency and the threshold level of qualification entry for hearing aid dispensers/audiologists parts of the HPC register.

“The HPC is experienced in taking on new professions and setting standards for registrants by collaborating with our stakeholders and ensuring that they are robust and fit for purpose. We very much want to hear the views of different stakeholders before any decisions are taken.

“We are looking forward to the results of this consultation and to continuing to work effectively and in collaboration with HAC and stakeholders from this profession. The HAC continue to be supportive about the transfer and we’re confident it will be a smooth transition in spring 2009”.

When the Hearing Aid Council is abolished and its functions are transferred to the HPC, the HAC code of practice and standards of competence will be replaced by Standards of Proficiency: and the threshold qualification within the Standards of Education and Training. Dispensers will also be required to meet the HPC’s standards of conduct, performance and ethics: standards that are common to all professionals regulated by the HPC.

Sandra Verkuyten, Chief Executive for the HAC, commented:  
"The HAC strongly supports the transfer to the HPC which we believe will be good for consumers and good for the industry. We are working closely with our stakeholders, especially the HPC, to make sure the handover is a success and I would urge everyone to have their say on these standards by participating in the consultation".

Although the legislative process to transfer the regulation of hearing aid audiologists/dispensers has begun, the necessary legislation has yet to be passed. However, both the HPC and HAC believe that it is important to start work as early as possible to allow enough time to benefit from the input of stakeholders and therefore have launched this three month public consultation.

-ENDS-

Notes to editors:

1. To download copies of the consultation response, please see the HPC website [www.hpc-uk.org/](http://www.hpc-uk.org/)
  2. For further information about this consultation, please contact Michael Guthrie on 020 7840 9768 or email [michael.guthrie@hpc-uk.org](mailto:michael.guthrie@hpc-uk.org)
  3. For further information about routes to registration please see the HPC website [www.hpc-uk.org/apply/](http://www.hpc-uk.org/apply/)
  4. The HAC is an independent, statutory regulator set up by the Hearing Aid Council act (1968, as amended) to register dispensers and their employers working in the private hearing aid sector. It sets the standards of education, training, conduct and performance dispensers must meet join the register and investigates any alleged breaches of those standards. There are around 1500 hearing aid dispensers on the HAC register.
  5. The Health Professions Council is an independent, UK-wide health regulator set up by the Health Professions Order (2001). The HPC keeps a register for thirteen different health professions and only registers people who meet the standards it sets for their training, professional skills, behaviour and health. The HPC will take action against people who do not meet these standards or who use a protected title illegally.
  6. HPC currently regulate the following thirteen professions. Each of these professions has one or more 'protected titles'. Anyone who uses one of these titles must register with the HPC. To see the full list of protected titles please see:  
[www.hpc-uk.org/aboutregistration/protectedtitles/](http://www.hpc-uk.org/aboutregistration/protectedtitles/)
- Arts therapists
  - Biomedical scientists

- Chiropodists and podiatrists
- Clinical scientists
- Dietitians
- Occupational therapists
- Operating department practitioners
- Orthoptists
- Paramedics
- Physiotherapists
- Prosthetists and orthotists
- Radiographers
- Speech and language therapists