

HEARING AID COUNCIL

Minutes of the Strategy Executive Committee
Held in Closed Session at 70 St Mary Axe, London EC3A 8BD

on Thursday 13th March 2008

PRESENT: Huw Vaughan Thomas (Committee Chair)
Michael Bishop
Peter Ormerod
Prof Norma Brook
Chris Hughes

APOLOGIES: None

IN ATTENDANCE: Sandra Verkuyten Chief Executive Officer
Chris O'Leary Director of Policy and Communications
Justin Parfitt Director of Resources
Stuart Holland Modernisation and Transfer Manager
Sarah Cottis Executive Assistant (minute taker)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCES

1.1 The Chair received no apologies for absence.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

2.1 No interests were declared other than those on the register of interests.

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

3.1 The minutes of the Strategy Executive Committee (SEC) meeting held in open session on 10th January 2008 were approved.

3.2 The minutes of the SEC held in open session on 10th January 2008 were signed as a true record.

3.3 The minutes of the SEC meeting held in closed session on 10th January 2008 were approved.

3.4 The minutes of the SEC held in closed session on 10th January 2008 were signed as a true record.

4. MATTERS ARISING

4.1 There were no matters arising from the SEC meeting held in open session on 10th January 2008 other than those covered in the current agenda.

4.2 The Committee noted that, subject to the points listed below all matters arising from the SEC meeting held in closed session on the 10th January 2008 had been actioned.

4.3 The Chief Executive and Registrar (CEO) reported that at the Council Meeting on the 23rd January, the Hearing Aid Council (HAC) members received a controversial document from the British Society of Hearing Aid Audiologists (BSHAA). The Chairman of the Council wrote to the President of BSHAA asking for an explanation of the document. The President of BSHAA requested a meeting, which occurred on the 21st February. The CEO reported the meeting was positive and an agreement was reached on areas where the HAC and BSHAA could work together.

5. TRANSFER PLAN AND UPDATE

5.1 The Modernisation and Transfer Manager (MATM) gave a verbal report that the HAC were still working towards a transfer date of the 31st March 2009. It was reported that work was commencing with the Executive team and with the HPC to ensure all areas of work are covered and to identify possible problems ready for the Department of Business Enterprise Regulatory Reform (BERR) and the Department of Health (DH). It was also reported work around communications had begun to ensure RHADS and consumers know what is happening. The MATM reported that the HAC had not yet received a legislative timetable from BERR regarding the transfer, this will be discussed in the next quarterly meeting with BERR. However the transfer plans the HAC has already prepared can be adapted once a timetable has been agreed.

6. UPDATED BUDGET

- 6.1 The Director of Resources (DoR) reported the January Council agreed to a retention fee of £695. To balance the budget the executive team have agreed to cut costs in certain areas such as reducing the amount of time the office needs to be kept open after transfer and reducing the amount of meetings held. The SEC noted that the budget is now at a break even position, based on an assumed increase in the number of dispensers in 2008/09 by 275. However the number of candidates taking the 2008 (1) exams is dramatically down on last year this may result in a reduced number of people coming on to the registrar. It was also reported a number of dispensers are asking to be voluntarily removed from the registrar.
- 6.2 The Director of Policy and Communications (DoPC) reported that the HAC has contacted one of the training companies to ask why they have not entered any candidate for the 2008 (1) exams. Other companies will be written to in the future to explain the reduction in trainees. The HAC has taken steps to remind anyone removing themselves voluntarily from the register that they will be committing a criminal act if they continue to dispense privately.
- 6.3 The SEC noted the potential shortfall in dispensers on the register and instructed the DoR to organise appropriate contingency plans. ACTION

7 CORPORATE PLAN

- 7.1 The MATM presented the draft corporate plan and asked for the SEC to agree which workstreams they would like to prioritise from the statement of regulatory intent to progress forward.
- 7.2 The SEC agreed to focus on management responsibility and to develop professional standards through the professional bodies. AGREED

8. HOW CAN WE COMMUNICATE COMPLAINTS

- 8.1 The SEC noted that the HAC have received comments that the disciplinary cases on the website are hard for consumers to see, understand and use to make informed decisions.
- 8.2 The SEC instructed the DoPC to change the way disciplinary cases are grouped on the website, but to make sure the information is in context. ACTION

9 DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT 07/08

- 9.1 The committee received the draft annual report.
- 9.2 The SEC instructed the MATM to contact all Council members and ask them to be prepared to advise the executive team of what they would like included in the report at the next Council. ACTION

10 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- 10.1 The date of the next meeting of the committee is the 13th March 2008.

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Signed

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Date

Action list from the meeting of the Strategy Executive Committee 13.03.08

ITEM	ACTION REQUIRED	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	DATE
6.3	The SEC noted the potential shortfall in dispensers on the register and instructed the DoR to organise appropriate contingency plans.	Director of Resources	ASAP
8.2	The SEC instructed the DoPC to change the way disciplinary cases are grouped on the website, but to make sure the information is in context.	Director of Policy & Communications	ASAP
9.2	The SEC instructed the MATM to contact all Council members and ask them to be prepared to advise the executive team of what they would like included in the report at the next Council.	Modernisation & Transfer Manager	20 th March 2008

Agreements from the meeting of the Strategy Executive Committee 13.03.08

ITEM	DECISIONS AGREED
7.2	The SEC agreed to focus on management responsibility and to develop professional standards through the professional bodies.