

## **Hearing Aid Council appoints new legal advisors**

*29.4.09 1.45pm*

The Hearing Aid Council is pleased to announce that it has appointed Jonathan Bracken as its new legal director plus Kingsley Napley as its new Disciplinary Committee solicitors and case handlers. The decision followed a value for money review of the Council's legal framework and will be met within existing budgets.

Jonathan Bracken, of Bircham Dyson Bell, specialises in regulation and public affairs. His considerable experience includes serving as Legal Advisor to the Health Professions Council since its inception. Jonathan has been commended by The Legal 500 and Chambers UK. Jonathan will also serve as solicitor to the Council.

Kingsley Napley is an internationally recognised law firm with expertise in regulatory law. Its clients include the Health Professions Council and the Chief Police Officers Staff Association. Chambers UK awarded Kingsley Napley its top rank in 2009. Michael Caplan QC will have primary responsibility for managing the firm's relationship with the Council, along with John Harding and Nicola Hill. The Times named Michael one of the UK's 100 most influential lawyers.

Commenting on the decision to review how the Council meets its legal needs, the HAC Chairman, Chris Hughes OBE said:

"I am absolutely delighted to welcome such high calibre associates to the Council ahead of what promises to be a uniquely challenging year. In March 2010, we will transfer our powers to the Health Professions Council. Jonathan Bracken's expertise, particularly in the legislation which must be passed to effect the transfer, will be invaluable. Securing the services of Kingsley Napley and Michael Caplan QC adds fresh momentum to our push to achieve excellence in our complaint handling. As both Jonathan and Kingsley Napley already fill similar roles at the Health Professions Council, their appointment is a sensible way of helping the transfer go as smoothly as possible.

"Our value for money review balanced quality against cost with Jonathan and Kingsley Napley clear winners for their respective roles. On behalf of the Council, I would like to thank all those who contributed to the review, particularly our previous contractor, IODEM Healthcare. We have made great progress in recent years and I look forward to working with our new appointees to build on those accomplishments".

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Notes:

1. The Hearing Aid Council is the UK statutory registration and regulation body for hearing aid dispensers and their employers. The Council was founded following the Hearing Aid Council Act 1968 (as amended). It is illegal for someone to act as a dispenser of hearing aids

in the UK unless that person is registered with the Council or in training to become registered.

2. The Hearing Aid Council has a statutory duty to publish standards of education and training for individuals wishing to be registered. It also has a duty to set standards of professional conduct and to consider complaints made against dispensers and their employers.

3. In 2008, the Health and Social Care Act included provision for the dissolution of the Hearing Aid Council and the transfer of its regulatory function to the Health Professions Council. The Health Professions Council is the UK statutory registration and regulation body that regulates thirteen healthcare professions, including speech and language therapists, physiotherapists and radiographers. The transfer is due to be completed by 31st March 2010.

4. The Council has around 1500 registered dispensers and 300 registered employers. It typically receives around 75 complaints a year about those registrants of which around 10 per cent tend to be upheld by the Council's Disciplinary Committee.

5. Both appointments take effect from 1 April 2009.

6. For more information please contact Stuart Holland:

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