Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 20 October 2010 at 129 Lambeth Road, London SE1 7BT at 11.00am

Present

Bob Nicholls - Chair Ray Jobling
Cathryn Brown Liz Kay
Sarah Brown Lesley Morgan
Celia Davies Keith Wilson
Soraya Dhillon Peter Wilson
John Flook Judy Worthington
Kirstie Hepburn

In attendance

Duncan Rudkin (Chief Executive & Registrar)
Christine Gray (Head of Corporate Governance)
Michele Savage (Council Secretary)
Bernard Kelly (Director of Resources and Corporate Development)
Elaine Mulingani (Head of Private Office)
Hugh Simpson (Director of Policy and Communications)
Priya Sejpal (Acting Head of Regulatory Standards, Policy & Ethics) (min 313 to min 321)
Damian Day (Head of Education and Quality Assurance) (min 306 to min 312)
Joanne Martin (Accreditation and Recognition Manager) (min 306 to min 312)
Janet Flint (Post-registration Manager) (min 316 to min 318)
Heather Walker (Project Manager) (min 330 to min 331)

ATTENDANCE & CHAIR’S INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

The Chair welcomed Council members, staff and members of the press and public to the meeting. Apologies had been received from Tina Funnell. The Chair reported that since the 27th September the GPhC had been operating well. The Chief Executive thanked the GPhC staff and RPSGB Commercial Services
for all their hard work in ensuring a smooth transition. The Chair updated the Council on the Stakeholder events and Council meetings to be held in Edinburgh and Cardiff and said the Council may wish to consider how best to engage stakeholders in the English regions.

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

298 The Chair asked members whether they had any interests to declare in respect of the agenda items. The following interests were declared:

298.1 Bob Nicholls, Soraya Dhillon, Ray Jobling and Keith Wilson confirmed they had interests to declare in respect of the education items because of their membership of Medical Education England and/or Modernising Pharmacy Careers. It was agreed that they would speak at the end of the discussion on the education items if they wished to do so;

298.2 Peter Wilson declared an interest in the item relating to CPD because of previous work with the RPSGB and it was agreed that he would speak at the end of that discussion if he wished to do so.

**MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

299 The minutes of the meeting held on 15 September 2010 were agreed as a true record of the meeting.

**MATTERS ARISING AND OUTSTANDING ACTION POINTS**

300 There were no matters arising.

301 The Council noted the schedule of outstanding actions.

301.1 Minute 224: The Council was advised that the review in Summer 2011 of the just disposal of legacy cases was to clarify if the policy was still required. Progress on dealing with the legacy caseload would be reported to the Council separately.

**GUIDANCE ON PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION AND PROVISIONAL SUSPENSION OF COUNCIL MEMBERS**

302 Elaine Mulingani presented paper 10.10/C/01 requesting the Council’s agreement to the draft guidance attached to the paper at Appendix 1. The Council noted that it was unclear for how long the Appointments Commission would be undertaking the Privy Council’s functions in this respect and that alternative arrangements would be needed for the future.
It was agreed that the guidance attached at Appendix 1 be approved.

AGREEMENT TO TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF EXTERNAL AUDITORS

Bernard Kelly (BK) presented paper 10.10/C/02 seeking the Council’s agreement to the terms and conditions of Grant Thornton and to delegate responsibility to the Chair to sign the engagement letter.

The letter from Grant Thornton referred to addressees as ‘parties’ but then referred to ‘the Council and ‘the board of the Council’. It was not clear whether this should refer to the GPhC as an organisation or the Council. BK agreed to seek clarification on this.

It was agreed that:

the terms and conditions of Grant Thornton be approved;

responsibility be delegated to the Chair to sign the engagement letter received from Grant Thornton, subject to clarification on whether the letter referred to the GPhC as an organisation or the Council.

CONSULTATION ON EDUCATION STANDARDS FOR PHARMACISTS AND COMPLEMENTARY ACCREDITATION METHODOLOGY

Duncan Rudkin (DR) introduced paper 10.10/C/03 seeking agreement on the documents to be used for consulting on new education standards for pharmacists and on a revised accreditation methodology. The Council had previously asked that any major public consultation document on an issue to be determined by the Council should be approved by the Council before publication.

Damian Day (DD) informed the Council that the draft standards had been developed over a period of time with input from a range of stakeholders.

Joanne Martin (JM) explained that there had been a rethink as to how the Public and Patient (PPI) consultation events would be organised. An umbrella organisation in each of the three countries, Community Health Council (Wales), Voluntary Health Scotland and National Voices (England), together with the Black Health Agency would organise workshops and then feedback results to the GPhC. This was felt to be a more targeted and cost effective way of engaging the right people in the consultation process.

A discussion took place on what other organisations it might be useful to include in the PPI consultations, such as the CHRE Public Stakeholder Network, and DD
said he would look at these. BN also asked that Tina Funnel be asked for any comments.

310 It was identified in the discussion that it would be useful to highlight more clearly the distinction between the responsibilities of universities and the expectations of pre-registration training. The Council questioned whether research and science should be more strongly brought out in the document but agreed that this was something for respondents to the consultation to consider. Devolution must be factored into the standards so they were applicable across the three countries. The role and responsibility of the GPhC with regard to qualifications of pharmacy technicians and other pharmacy support staff needed to be clearly defined.

311 DD noted all the suggested changes to the documents and said they would be taken into account before publication. The Chair asked that any further comments be emailed to DD in the next 2 to 3 days. The Chair also made the point that the timetable for this consultation was tight if the GPhC was to give the universities time to implement the standards.

312. **It was agreed that**

312.1 subject to the amendments and additions as stated, the documents for a consultation on new education standards for pharmacists be approved; and

312.2 the documents for a consultation on a revision to the accreditation methodology be approved.

**REGULATORY STANDARDS POLICY**

313 Hugh Simpson presented paper 10.10/C/04 seeking agreement to the regulatory standards policy. He explained that it was important to have a consistent approach to the development of standards across the organisation.

314 The Council discussed the document and there was consensus that it should make clear this did not relate only to standards of conduct, ethics and performance but included premises, education etc. The policy needed to make clear what was a statutory duty and what were the principles and how the GPhC would achieve these. The Council also asked that a section that discussed review of standards be added.

315 **It was agreed that** the regulatory standards policy set out in Appendix 1 be approved subject to the Council’s comments being incorporated and a review of the policy being scheduled for late 2011.
CONSULTATION ON CPD FRAMEWORK AND RULES

316. Christine Gray (CG) presented paper 10.10/C/05 asking for agreement to consult on the CPD rules and to publish the consultation document on the CPD framework and rules. The Council had asked that the consultation on the CPD framework and rules should be a single exercise.

317. The Council was generally content with the consultation document but asked that it stated more about the process for the review of CPD records. There were no further comments on the draft rules.

318. It was agreed that

318.1 the CPD rules be consulted upon;

318.2 the consultation document on the CPD framework and rules be published.

DEVELOPING PROFESSIONALISM IN PRE-REGISTRATION TRAINEE PHARMACISTS

319. DR introduced paper 10.10/C/06, which proposed that the Standards of conduct, ethics and performance for pharmacy professionals be the principal source of guidance for pre-registration trainee pharmacists on professional conduct, and that there was no need to draft a separate code specifically for trainees.

320. The Council agreed that this was a sensible approach but wanted to be assured that this would be properly communicated to pre-registration trainee pharmacists and tutors. It was agreed that guidance would be issued in the New Year, when the standards would come into force for trainees.

321. It was agreed that pre-registration trainee pharmacists should use the Standards of conduct, ethics and performance for pharmacy professionals as the principal source of guidance on professional conduct.

PERFORMANCE MONITORING

322. DR introduced report 10.10/C/07 asking for comment on the format and content for performance monitoring reports to be received by Council. DR explained that the work stemmed from Council Members and staff workshops led by Satjit Singh. It was early days in the development of the monitoring system and the report was for comment and not for agreement at this stage.

323. BK explained that it had been identified that there were four essential areas to report on at this time – fitness to practise, renewals of registrations, new registrations and financial statements. The reports were based on an accounting
model with spreadsheets presented as tables, commentary and graphical representation.

324 The Council discussed the reports and consensus was that the three methods of reporting were helpful but the commentary could be expanded. Concern was raised about the quality assurance of the figures to be provided. The Council was informed that there were accurate data for finance, registration and renewals but estimated figures would need to be used for some aspects of fitness to practise at this stage. Council noted that the information provided in the prototype report was quantitative. For the future it would be important to develop indicators which gave an assurance as to the quality of outcomes of the regulatory processes. DR confirmed that this would be a future phase of developing the monitoring reports. This needed to be part of a desired move towards a more balanced picture of the organisation’s achievement of the Council’s aims.

325 The reporting methods would be reviewed in a future workshop. The Chair asked that the end of October figures for the current renewals of registration be circulated to Council before the November Council meeting. Council members were asked to email any further comments to BK.

326 The Council agreed that the report was a good start and moving in the right direction. In particular, the Council agreed that the three proposed modes of reporting (balance sheets, narrative commentary and graphical views of key data sets) were useful and should, in their developed form, provide the Council with the right kind of information.

327 The Council’s comments were noted on the content and format of the performance monitoring report.

FITNESS TO PRACTISE TASK AND FINISH GROUP

328 DR presented paper 10.10/C/08 and sought agreement to the terms of reference for an appointments task and finish group and for the Council to agree a mechanism for the appointment of members to the group. DR explained that in view of the uncertain future of OHPA the proposed terms of reference of the group had been widened.

329 It was clarified that the group would bring recommendations to the Council on matters within its remit. The Chair said the TORs should be finite and that the remit of the group was not to review FTP processes. The Chair asked that expressions of interest to sit on the group should be notified to him.

330 It was agreed that;
330.1 the terms of reference for the establishment of an appointments task and finish group be adopted; and

330.2 that the process as identified in paragraph 2.7 for identifying members for the task and finish group be adopted.

REGULATORY TRANSITION PROJECT PLAN

331 Heather Walker presented paper 10.10/C/09 which updated the Council on the transfer of regulatory responsibility from the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain to the General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC). In addition to the matters reported in the paper, DR reported that the green cross internet pharmacy logo which should link to a premises record was not currently working as a link. A detailed and timetabled plan to solve this problem was in hand.

332 It was agreed that the report be noted.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 4.25pm

Date of next meeting – 17 November 2010 - Edinburgh