
Council – 9 December 2010

Appointment of Medical Assessors

Executive summary and recommendations

Article 35 of the Health Professions Order 2001 (“the Order”) enables the Council to appoint suitably qualified registered medical practitioners as “medical assessors” to give advice to Practice Committees on “matters within their professional competence in connection with any matter” which the Panel is considering.

The Fitness to Practise Department has revised its Assessors and Expert Witnesses Practice Note.

This paper sets out the policy for the appointment of medical assessors. The power to appoint medical assessors is delegated to the Chief Executive under the scheme of delegation, subject to “any appointments process established by the Council.”

Decision

The Council is asked to approve the attached policy for the appointment of medical assessors.

Background information

Fitness to practices operational guidance is being drafted to assist Case Managers on the types of cases where the appointment of a medical assessor may be appropriate.

Resource implications

Financial implications

The cost of appointing a medical assessor to assist the Panel will vary depending on the nature of the case and extent of the advice required.

Appendices

Policy - Appointment of medical assessors

Date of paper

15 November 2010

Policy Appointment of medical assessors

Introduction

Medical assessors should be appointed to give advice on matters within their professional competence. Medical assessors should be appointed from among suitably qualified registered medical practitioners.

By virtue of Article 35 (4) of the Health Professions Order 2001, appointed medical assessors must not be a member of the Council, a member of a statutory committee, a visitor or registrant assessor.

Medical assessors should be appointed to fulfil the role on an ad hoc basis. Any such appointment should be made on the basis of the standard letter of engagement which, among other things, incorporates the code of conduct for assessors.

Fees

Where a medical assessor is identified, an estimate of time should be requested from the medical assessor in advance of the work being undertaken, and full day or half day fees agreed depending on the amount of time required to provide the advice.

The fees may be determined on a case by case basis in a similar manner to the fees for expert witnesses.

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