

**Health Professions Council
Finance and Resources Committee 8th February 2006**

HPC Proposed Scheme in Response to the Race Relations (Amendment) Act

Executive Summary and Recommendations

Introduction

At the Finance and Resources Committee meeting on 20th September, approval was given for further external advice to be sought about HPC's specific obligations under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act ("the Act") and how best to address these. A proposal for a scheme was then to be developed by the Executive Management Team, and presented to the Finance and Resources Committee in February 2006.

A proposed Equality and Diversity Scheme has been developed (attached) for the Committee's consideration. If this is approved by the Committee the Scheme will then be presented to Council for approval in March 2006.

The Executive Management Team is currently in the process of developing strategies and timetables to address the Scheme and obligations under the Act. Following an initial risk assessment which was conducted by the Executive Management Team, the three areas below were proposed as those in need of most immediate attention:

1. Fitness to Practise Department;
2. International Registrations Department; and
3. Communications Department.

The reasons for these areas being the key areas that Fitness to Practise allegations and applications for overseas professionals to practice in the UK, have been the focus of claims by ethnic minority groups. In particular, the ways in which allegations and applications are made by people, marketed to people, and processed. For example, forms have been found to be more "user friendly" to people with less English skills, than letters when making allegations.

The Communications Department is also seen as a key priority due to the need to demonstrate that HPC is targeting their media strategies and campaigns at people from minority groups, and increasing the provision of information about regulation to people in these groups.

It was proposed that although the Scheme and the Act's typically take a 3 – 5 year period to fully implement and address, the above areas should be actioned as the first priority in HPC's response to the Act during 2006/2007. The process will be for the Directors of each Department to research strategies used by other organizations, and the Information and Information Technology Department to develop any necessary computer systems.

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| 2006-02-01 | a | CER | PPR | HPC's Proposed Scheme in Response to the Race Relations (Amendment) Act | Final DD: None | Public RD: None |

Subsequent amendments to forms, documentation and policies will then be developed as appropriate.

Decision

The Committee is asked to agree the following:

- Approval of the proposed Equality and Diversity Scheme, which will then be taken to the next Council meeting (March 2006);
- Approval of the proposed plan of action by HPC to target the areas of Fitness to Practice, International Registrations and Communications as a first priority.

Background information

None

Resource implications

None

Financial implications

None

Appendices

Equality and Diversity Scheme attached

Date of paper

8th February 2006