

Council, 7 October 2009

Recommendation to Secretary of State for Health about the regulation of sonographers

Executive summary and recommendations

Introduction

At the meeting on 10 September 2009, the Council made a final decision about an application from the Society and College of Radiographers for the regulation of sonographers under the new professions process.

A draft copy of the letter to the Secretary of State for Health outlining the Council's decision is attached.

Decision

The Council is invited to discuss and agree the text of the Council's decision.

Background information

- Previous papers considered by the Council on 27 March 2008, 3 July 2008, 11 December 2008 and 10 September 2009.

Resource implications

None at this time

Financial implications

None at this time

Appendices

None

Date of paper

28 September 2009

Rt Hon Andy Burnham MP
Secretary of State for Health
Department of Health
Richmond House
79 Whitehall
London, SW1A 2NS

October 2009

Dear Mr Burnham

Re: Statutory Regulation of Sonographers

At a meeting of the Health Professions Council on 10 September 2009, it was decided that Sonographers should be recommended for regulation.

Article 3 (17) of the Health Professions Order 2001 states:

(17) The Council may—

- (a) make recommendations to the Secretary of State concerning any professions which in its opinions should be regulated pursuant to section 60(1)(b) of the Health Act 1999

The reason for the recommendation is that there is a risk of harm to the public arising from inappropriate, inadequate and unnecessary scanning. Although many practising sonographers are already registered, for example as radiographers and midwives, there are a relatively small but still significant number of practitioners who are working as sonographers without being subject to statutory regulation.

In making this recommendation, the Council would also like to suggest that the following two points should be considered in deciding if sonographers should be statutorily regulated:

Firstly, the service delivery of ultrasound could be regulated by the licensing of scanning equipment by the Care Quality Commission.

Secondly, in light of the conclusions of the Department of Health's Extending Professional Regulation Working Group and given the extent to which sonographers are already regulated, that Occupational Licensing should be considered as a method of regulating sonographers.

Should you require any further information, please let me know.

Marc Seale
Chief Executive and Registrar

cc. Ministers in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales

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