

The attached paper was considered with enclosure 8 at the Finance and Resources Committee meeting on 7 February 2007.

**Health Professions Council
Finance and Resources Committee
7th February 2007**

Fees rise consultation

Executive Summary and Recommendations

Introduction

The attached paper provides a summary of the first 800 responses received to the fee rise consultation.

Decision

This paper is for information only.

Background information

None

Resource implications

None

Financial implications

None

Background papers

None

Appendices

None

Date of paper

7th February 2007

Fees rise consultation

This paper provides an overview of responses to the fees consultation.

About the statistics

We have received and processed 1042 responses to the consultation to date (as of 05/02/07). The statistics and analysis in this document are based on the first 800 responses received.

Many of those who responded to the consultation did not answer the specific consultation questions. For this reason, the statistics for each question indicate the percentages of those who answered the specific question who agreed or disagreed. The response rate for each question is also given.

In the “overall” section we give a figure for overall dissatisfaction with the proposals. When each response was inputted, we classified each response as to whether the respondent was broadly in favour with our proposals, based on their comments and the balance of their responses to the specific questions.

Overall

- 46% of all those who responded expressed strong overall dissatisfaction with the fees proposals
- Many said that our responses were above the rate of inflation; a small number of others were more positive, commenting that our proposals were both reasonable and necessary.
- Other topics for comment included:
 - Costs of the consultation process
 - NHS financial shortages
 - Perceived duplication of effort between HPC and professional body
 - Fitness to practise costs
 - Salaries of registrants compared to other healthcare professionals

Our questions

Q1. Do you agree that we should set out fees to minimise cross-subsidisation between different services?

- 86% of those who responded to this specific question were in agreement (the response rate to this question was 64% of all those who responded).

Q2: Do you agree that we should review our fees every two years?

- 82% of those who responded to this specific question were in agreement; 18% were in disagreement (the response rate to this question was 65%).

Q3: Do you agree with the proposals for our fees laid out in option 1?

Q4: Do you agree with the proposals for our fees laid out in option 2

- Option 1: 37% agreed with this proposal; 63% disagreed (the response rate to this question was 72%).
- Option 2: 55% agreed with this proposal; 45% disagreed (the response rate to this question was 72%).
- A number of respondents said that option 1 was the preferable option, questioning why any cross-subsidisation was necessary. Others felt that it was appropriate for new graduates to be helped on to the register.
- A small number of students replied, saying that they felt that the cost of the fees outlined in option 1 was prohibitive.

Q.5: Do you agree that we should introduce a scrutiny fee of £280 for applicants who hold an approved course and are applying to become registered for the first time two or more years after completing their course – to cover our costs in processing their applications?

- 74% agreed to the proposal; 26% disagreed (the response rate to this question was 64%).
- Almost all of those who disagreed with this proposal queried why it cost more to process applications from those who did apply until two years after passing an approved programme.

Q6: Do you agree that we should introduce a higher readmission fee, including the first year of registration, to cover our costs in processing these applications?

Q7: Do you agree that we should not charge a higher readmission fee if we receive an application within one month of a registrant being lapsed from the Register?

- 79% agreed with our proposals in question 6; 21% disagreed (the response rate to this question was 64%).
- 89% agreed with our proposals in question 7; 11% disagreed (the response rate to this question was 64%).
- A number of those who responded were worried that our proposals would deter people from returning to work after career breaks. Some felt that the groups of people most likely to be in the position would be those taking a

break to care for children and therefore that the charge would be discriminatory.

- In contrast, a number of other people were supportive of our proposals, assuming that the registrant had not lapsed through our error. A number of people pointed out that registrants often lapse when they do not tell us their new address and that there was no excuse for accidentally lapsing.

Q8: Do you agree that we should introduce a higher restoration fee, including the cost of registration to cover our costs in processing these applications?

- 85% agreed with the proposal; 15% disagreed (the rate of response to this question was 63%).

Q9: Do you agree that the scrutiny fee for international and EEA applications should increase to £400 to cover the costs of processing these applications?

Q10: Do you agree that the scrutiny fee for grandparenting applications should increase to £400 to cover the costs of processing these applications?

- 84% agreed with the proposed international fee increase; 16% disagreed (the response rate to this question was 64%).
- 81% agreed with the proposed grandparenting fee increase; 19% disagreed (the response rate to this question was 60%).
- A small number of those who responded felt that the increases were too substantial; others felt that we should increase the fees substantially more.