

Press Release - 13th March 2009

Formation of Professional Competence Steering Committee

A Professional Competence Steering Committee has been established by the Medical Council and the Forum of Postgraduate Training Bodies to facilitate the development and implementation of comprehensive and effective Professional Competence Schemes for medical practitioners. The Committee represents a partnership of the key stakeholders, namely medical practitioners, Postgraduate Training Bodies, the HSE and other Employers, the Department of Health and Children and the Medical Council. The Committee is chaired by Ms Anne Maher, former CEO of The Pensions Board.

The Medical Practitioners Act 2007 (MPA 2007), is being commenced in a number of stages, with Parts 6 and 10, dealing with 'registration' and 'education and training' commencing this month. Part 11 of the MPA 2007 introduces a statutory obligation on each registered medical practitioner to maintain their own professional competence on an ongoing basis "pursuant to a professional competence scheme applicable to that practitioner". The MPA 2007 places the responsibility for the development and implementation of such schemes on the Medical Council. The role of the new Professional Competence Steering Committee is to participate in shaping the direction, policy and implementation of the Professional Competence Schemes which the Medical Council will introduce.

The Professional Competence Steering Committee is working in the expectation of Part 11 of the MPA 2007 being commenced by the end of 2009. On commencement of Part 11 of the MPA 2007, it will be a **mandatory requirement for all registered medical practitioners** to enrol in a Professional Competence Scheme in order to demonstrate the maintenance of standards and of professional competence in their practice. While medical practitioners are currently expected to engage in continuing professional development, the mandatory Professional Competence Schemes will seek to make such activities more robust and develop them further. The mandatory Schemes being developed will augment and build on existing voluntary competence assurance structures such as case conferences, clinical audit, practice reviews and continuing professional development.

The introduction of mandatory Professional Competence Schemes is recognised as one of the most important developments for the medical profession in many years and it will bring benefits and improved service to patients. It represents an enormous challenge as well as a tremendous opportunity for all stakeholders.

The Committee encourages all stakeholders to actively participate and engage with the process in order to promote a sense of partnership in the development and implementation of the Professional Competence Schemes and to maximise opportunities to influence this important process.

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For further information, please contact the Committee through:

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