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Dear Registrant

Registration with the Health Professions Council

In March 2005, the Government announced its intention to abolish the Hearing Aid Council and transfer its professional regulatory functions to the Health Professions Council. The Government has subsequently announced that this change-over will happen at the end of March 2009. At this point, anyone registered with the Hearing Aid Council will be automatically transferred to the Health Professions Council provided that the individual:

- is registered with the Council (ie have not been voluntarily removed from the register);
- has paid the 2008-9 retention fee;
- has met the Council's CPD requirements;
- is not being investigated in relation to a potential breach of the Council's regulations (ie has an outstanding complaint against them).

Over the next year, we will write to you with specific information about the transfer process. In the meantime, you do not need to take further action about this provided that you adhere to the standards set out in the Council's regulations.

The requirement for registration as an employer of dispensers of hearing aids will cease once the Hearing Aid Council Act is repealed. Employers are and will continue to be regulated as ordinary businesses. The Council has stated that it wants to see an Office of Fair Trading consumer code developed, that will cover all employers of dispensers and provide additional protection to consumers. BSHAA has stated that it is working on such a code.

Unfair Commercial Practices Regulations (2008)

These new regulations come into force on 1st April 2008, and apply to any individual selling goods (including hearing aid dispensers). The regulations provide a significant change in the legal framework for commercial transactions and the sale of goods and services. The regulations require that consumers are treated fairly when they buy goods or services, provide additional protections for consumers that may be vulnerable (including those purchasing hearing aids), and provide a range of civil and criminal sanctions for those traders that fail to treat consumers fairly.

The new regulations provide significant regulatory cover those purchasing hearing aids, and are a more than adequate replacement for the current section 3 criminal offence contained in the Hearing Aid Council Act. The Council strongly recommends that registered dispensers and their employers ensure they read, understand and follow the regulations. Further information on the regulations is available from the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform's website at www.berr.gov.uk. The Council may take disciplinary action against dispensing companies where significant and systematic breaches of these regulations are identified.

Changes to the Council's regulations (Code of Practice, Standards of Competence and Registration Rules)

Effective immediately, the Council's regulations have changed. The changes have been made to introduce the foundation degree in hearing aid audiology as a training route for dispensers, to close the company-based training route and to implement the Recognition of Professional Qualifications Regulations (2007) as they affect the standards of competence for registering as a dispenser. **The changes will not affect your practice as a dispenser unless** you supervise a trainee or student dispenser. The new regulations can be downloaded from our website at www.thehearingaidcouncil.org.uk. As always, you are required to ensure that a copy of the code shall be made available to any person requesting it (clause 15, Code of Practice (2008)). The changes made to the regulations are set out and below.

Changes to the Code of Practice

The final line of clauses 24, 25, 26 and 27 has been changed from 'This paragraph does not apply to 'degree entrants'' to 'This clause does not apply to the supervision of 'degree entrants''.

The words 'BSc (Audiology) student' in clause 28 have been changed to 'student on approved degree course'. This change enables registered dispensers to supervise individual student and trainees on all types of degree courses, provided those courses meet the standards set by the Council. All students enrolled on an audiology or hearing aid audiology degree course MUST be accepted as a trainee by the Council if they undertake or an involved in dispensing activities during the studies.

In clause 31, the definition of 'BSc (Audiology) student' has been deleted and replaced with a definition of 'Student on approved degree course'. Again, this change enables registered dispensers to supervise students on all degree courses approved by the Council.

In clause 31, the definition of 'degree entrant' has been changed from "'degree entrant' means a person who has undertaken a BSc (Audiology) course which has been accredited by the Council and who has produced a certificate from the university of higher education provider evidencing completion of the appropriate modules of the degree and has complied with the provisions of paragraph 4 of the Standard of Competence to the satisfaction of the Council' to degree entrant" means a person who has been accepted for admission on a degree course approved by the Council and notified to the Registrar as undergoing full time training with a view to becoming a dispenser of hearing aids and under the supervision of a registered dispenser.

Changes to the Standards of Competence

A new clause 1 (1) has been added to enable individuals holding a foundation degree in hearing aid audiology to register as a dispenser of hearing aids.

The previous clause 1 (1) has been renumbered as clause 1 (2) and the words 'For individuals notified to the Council as undergoing full time training with a view to being registered as a dispenser of hearing aids and acting under the supervision of a registered dispenser, and who are accepted by the Council before 31st March 2008' have been added. These additional words close the current company-based training route for new trainees accepted by the Council after 1st April. If you intend to employ someone as a trainee dispenser after this date, they must be undertaking a degree course approved by the Council. This change does NOT affect existing trainees.


The previous clause 1 (4) has been deleted and clauses have been renumbered.

A new clause 1 (3) has been added as part of the overall changes to implement the Recognition of Professional Qualifications Regulations 2007. These changes are required to ensure the Council complies with European law.

Changes to the Registration Rules

Changes have been made to as part of the overall changes to implement the Recognition of Professional Qualifications Regulations 2007. These changes are required to ensure the Council complies with European law.

Yours Faithfully



Sandra Verkuyten
CEO & Registrar