



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SECURITY

To: Regional Health Authorities)
 Area Health Authorities)
 Boards of Governors) for action
 Family Practitioner Committees)

Community Health Councils - for information

August 1979

PERSONNEL

THE HOSPITAL PRACTITIONER GRADE

SUMMARY

This Circular describes revised arrangements for the part time employment of principals in general medical and dental practice within the hospital service in the grade of hospital practitioner and replaces earlier guidance set out in HSC(IS)179.

SCOPE AND FUNCTION

1. The purpose of the grade is to provide appropriate conditions of employment for general medical and dental practitioners wishing to work as part of a hospital team headed by a consultant. Employment in the grade will be limited to a maximum of 5 sessions a week.

ESTABLISHMENT OF POSTS

2. All new posts established in the grade will be advertised except where express approval to dispense with this requirement has been obtained from the Department. Area Health Authorities should, in agreement with the consultants concerned and after full consultation with the relevant cog-wheel and district medical committees, submit to Regional Health Authorities any proposals they may wish to make for the establishment and advertisement of new posts. Regional Health Authorities will consult the appropriate specialist advisory committees and Regional Manpower Committees or their Chairmen, and thereafter inform Area Health Authorities whether or not to proceed with their proposals.

3. General medical and dental practitioners holding part-time medical officer or dental officer appointments (under paragraph 94 and 107 respectively of the Terms and Conditions of Service of Hospital Medical and Dental Staff), or who hold senior hospital medical officer/senior hospital dental officer or medical assistant/assistant dental surgeon posts, may consider themselves eligible for appointment as hospital practitioners. They may therefore, at any time, request their employing authority to consider regrading their posts. The procedure set out in paragraph 2 must then be followed. If an Authority decides to regrade a post, the contract of the practitioner concerned would be terminated, but it would be open to the Authority to apply to the Department for approval to establish the new post without advertising it so that it could be filled by that practitioner without competition.

4. When a medical assistant is regraded as hospital practitioner, the former medical assistant post ceases to exist under the terms of the Third Progress Report agreement on staffing structure. Departmental approval is required in the normal way if it is proposed to appoint another medical assistant.

CRITERIA FOR APPOINTMENT

5. Only principals in general practice who have been fully registered for at least 4 years may be appointed hospital practitioner. Apart from this basic requirement, the qualifications and experience required will depend upon the needs of individual posts and the degree of supervision to be exercised by the consultant in that specialty. General guidance on the criteria for appointment to the grade has been drawn up by the profession (the Joint Consultants Committee and the General Medical Services Committee) and for ease of reference is attached at Annex A.

6. Posts should have a written job description which should only be drawn up after full consultation with the relevant consultant(s) in that speciality. The Royal Colleges and Faculties are prepared to offer advice for posts of this nature and are represented on the appointing committee. If it appears to the Authority constituting the appointments committee that a university and/or a College of Faculty other than one already represented on the committee has a substantial interest in the appointment, the Authority may consult them.

APPOINTMENTS PROCEDURE

7. (a) Applicants for posts in the hospital practitioner grade should be selected by an advisory appointments committee constituted as set out at Annex B. Where the appointment is being made by an Area Health Authority (Teaching), the appointments committee should be constituted by that AHA. In the case of an appointment by a Board of Governors preserved by an order under Section 15 of the National Health Service Reorganisation Act 1973, the appointments committee should be constituted by the Board of Governors. In all other cases it should be constituted by the Regional Health Authority.

(b) The appointments committee is not obliged to interview all applicants but no-one should be appointed hospital practitioner (whether in a new or regraded post) without having been interviewed by the committee. The committee should advise the RHA, AHA(T) or Board of Governors which (if any) of the candidates is suitable for appointment or whether an applicant for regrading is suitable for appointment to the hospital practitioner grade.

TENURE OF APPOINTMENTS

8. (a) Appointments to regraded posts as described in paragraph 3 above will be for an indefinite period. For all other posts, practitioners shall be offered appointments for one year in the first instance and these shall be renewable, subject to confirmation, for an indefinite period. These provisions are subject to (b) below.

(b) An appointment will be terminated when a practitioner reaches retiring age in accordance with paragraph 200 of the Terms and Conditions of Service of Hospital Medical and Dental Staff or ceases to be a principal in general medical or dental practice, whichever is the earlier.

REMUNERATION

9. Remuneration will be on the basis of a rate per annum for each weekly notional half day, with annual increments in the rate up to a maximum of 6 increments. The rates are set out in the current circular on "Pay and Conditions of Service: Remuneration of Hospital Medical and Dental Staff". As indicated in paragraph 1 above, employment will be limited to a maximum of 5 sessions a week. The rate of remuneration for locum tenens appointments is set out in the same circular.

STARTING SALARIES

10. (a) Starting salary on appointment to the hospital practitioner grade is a matter for the employing authority, and shall be determined in accordance with paragraphs 121-132 of the Terms and Conditions of Service of Hospital Medical and Dental Staff. An Authority may at its discretion fix the starting salary of a hospital practitioner on first appointment up to the third incremental point above the minimum of the scale taking into account age, special experience and qualifications as a whole. The discretion is intended to provide for particularly well qualified doctors. In exceptional cases an Authority may request the Department to consider whether an appointee should start at a higher incremental point.

(b) Although it is for the employing authority to determine the level of the starting salary, it is open to an advisory appointments committee to indicate to the employing authority whether a candidate recommended for appointment should receive a starting salary above the basic level, listing those factors that they have taken into account. The committee should not, however, suggest a particular incremental point on the scale, nor should its views be made known to the candidate.

ANNUAL LEAVE

11. Practitioners shall be entitled to leave at the rate of 6 weeks per year.

12. Subject to the conditions laid down in paragraph 211 of the Terms and Conditions of Service of Hospital Medical and Dental Staff, locum hospital practitioners shall be entitled to leave at the rate of 6 weeks per 12 months' continuous locum service.

FEEES FOR LECTURES

13. The fees for lectures to nurses and other non-medical and non-dental staff and the fees for lectures to medical and dental staff (payable under paragraph 170 and 172 respectively of the Terms and Conditions of Service of Hospital Medical and Dental Staff) are set out in the current circular on "Pay and Conditions of Service: Remuneration of Hospital Medical and Dental Staff". Where a fee is payable, travelling and subsistence expenses may also be paid where appropriate.

STUDY LEAVE

14. Subject to the provisions in paragraphs 251, 252 and 254 of the Terms and Conditions of Service of Hospital Medical and Dental Staff, the recommended standard of leave is a maximum of 30 days (including off duty days falling within the period of leave) in any period of 3 years for professional purposes related to the appointment within the United Kingdom.

REPRESENTATIONS AGAINST DISMISSAL

15. Paragraphs 190-191 of the Terms and Conditions of Service of Hospital Medical and Dental Staff shall apply.

OTHER CONDITIONS OF SERVICE

16. When a general practitioner is working in his capacity as a hospital practitioner he cannot have independent charge of hospital beds; the responsibility for these is vested in the appropriate consultant. However, the same general practitioner can, when not working as a hospital practitioner, have independent charge of general practitioner beds in a general practitioner hospital or unit.

17. A general practitioner who has contracted as a hospital practitioner must give his first loyalty to his hospital duties during the contracted time, and must make other arrangements for his general practice. It is the responsibility of the employing authority, before making an appointment, to satisfy itself that a prospective hospital practitioner's general practice commitments are not such that he might find difficulty in discharging his hospital duties.

18. The responsibilities of a hospital practitioner for emergency and on-call duties should be clearly stated in his job description.

19. A hospital practitioner is responsible to a named consultant. Should this consultant resign, retire or die the hospital practitioner will remain in post and will become responsible to another named consultant designated by the appropriate specialty committee or cog-wheel division.

20. In regard to matters for which provision is not made above, the terms and conditions for hospital medical and dental staff shall apply. Doctors with preserved rights under paragraph 284 shall retain them.

PERIODICAL RETURNS

21. The Department will continue to ask for periodical returns of the hospital practitioner posts created, showing for each post:-

- (a) the specialty involved;
- (b) whether the appointee held a hospital post (and if so, of what type) immediately before appointment;
- (c) the sessional commitment of the post;
- (d) the starting salary.

CIRCULARS CANCELLED

22. HSC(IS)179 is hereby cancelled.

ACTION

23. Employing Authorities are asked to follow the terms of this circular when considering the establishment of hospital practitioner grade posts. They are also asked to keep suitable records to facilitate the preparation of the periodical returns described in paragraph 21 above.

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B/M97/032

Further copies of this Notice may be obtained (by written request wherever possible please) from DHSS Store, Scholefield Mill, Brunswick Street, Nelson, Lancs BB9 0HU, Tel Nelson (0282) 62411/2 Ext 17, quoting code and serial number appearing at top right-hand corner.

**GENERAL GUIDANCE ON THE CRITERIA FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE
HOSPITAL PRACTITIONER GRADE DRAWN UP BY THE JOINT CONSULTANTS COMMITTEE
AND THE GENERAL MEDICAL SERVICES COMMITTEE**

CONDITIONS OF APPOINTMENT

The grade will be open to all principals in general practice who have been fully registered for a minimum of 4 years, and who fulfil one or more of the following conditions:-

(a) 2 years' whole-time hospital experience in a specialty or specialties appropriate to the Hospital Practitioner appointment in question, or experience in a part-time hospital appointment or appointments, or any combination of appropriate whole-time and part-time experience which provides comparable experience to 2 years' whole-time in the appropriate specialty or specialties;

OR

(b) Possession of an appropriate specialist Diploma and experience in a part-time Medical Officer appointment (under paragraph 94 of the Terms and Conditions of Service of Hospital Medical and Dental Staff) or part-time Dental Officer appointment (under paragraph 107) over a total of 5 years (not necessarily continuous) appropriate to the Hospital Practitioner appointment in question;

OR

(c) Such other experience, eg in HM Forces or overseas, as is deemed to meet any of the above criteria.

COMPOSITION OF ADVISORY APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEES

1. FOR AN APPOINTMENT BY AN AREA HEALTH AUTHORITY, OTHER THAN A TEACHING AREA

The Committee shall be constituted by the Regional Health Authority as follows:-

1 layman who shall be the Chairman (appointed by the RHA);

2 medical/dental members appointed by the RHA from outside the area where the vacancy exists. One should be a consultant appointed after consultation with the appropriate College or Faculty of the specialty concerned, and the other a general practitioner nominated by the Regional Medical/Dental Committee;

2 consultants from the area concerned, appointed by the AHA on the nomination of the appropriate cog-wheel division, and at least one of whom should be from the specialty concerned;

1 general practitioner appointed by the AHA on the nomination of the appropriate LMC/LDC.

2. APPOINTMENT BY AN AREA HEALTH AUTHORITY (TEACHING)

The AHA(T) shall constitute an Appointments Committee as follows, and shall appoint all the members:-

1 layman who shall be the Chairman;

3 consultants: one should be from outside the area where the vacancy exists, appointed after consultation with the appropriate College or Faculty of the specialty concerned. The other two should be nominated by the appropriate cog-wheel division and at least one should be from the specialty concerned;

2 general practitioners: one should be nominated by the appropriate LMC/LDC and the other should be from outside the area and nominated by the Regional Medical/Dental Committee.

3. APPOINTMENT BY THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS OF A POSTGRADUATE HOSPITAL

The Board shall constitute an Appointments Committee as follows, and shall appoint all the members:-

1 layman who shall be the Chairman;

3 consultants: one should be appointed from outside the area in which the relevant hospital is sited after consultation with the appropriate College or Faculty of the specialty concerned. The other two shall be nominated by the appropriate cog-wheel division and at least one should be from the specialty concerned;

2 general practitioners: one should be nominated by the LMC/LDC for the Area in which the hospital is sited, and the other should be from outside that Area and nominated by the Regional Medical/Dental Committee.