

**THE REGULATION OF THE
NON-MEDICAL HEALTHCARE
PROFESSIONS**
A review by the Department of health

**Voluntary Registration Council
For
Healthcare Science
*Response***

The Department of Health has for some time now indicated its intention to extend regulation across the healthcare workforce. Drivers for this important change have come from several very important sources including the Shipman report. With this in mind it has always been apparent that significant changes to current regulation would have to be made to ensure consistency between regulators so that those being regulated and importantly the public may have clear expectations.

The desire to regulate a large proportion of the NHS workforce is bound to create logistical problems. From the VRC perspective it has been clear from the outset that the Health Professions Council alone would have great difficulty in regulating the 53 healthcare science groups. To cast its net wider without change would undoubtedly produce an almost unworkable leviathan that would perhaps have difficulty in fulfilling its primary aim of protecting the public. VRC therefore welcomes this report.

It is perhaps surprising that the report makes no mention of VRC especially when one considers that VRC was founded and initially funded by the Department of Health. It is accepted that at the time the report was compiled VRC was still engaged in developing everything needed to operate but even so it is an important oversight to ignore VRC altogether.

In general terms VRC supports the majority of the recommendations contained within the report. VRC does have concerns (as we are sure other groups do) regarding employer lead regulation and revalidation. It may be that once the Scottish Pilot scheme has finished and been adequately evaluated and reported that many of the concerns may be addressed. We must wait and see what issues it raises and then comment.

It is assumed that the current procedures for taking a profession forward to statutory regulation will remain. VRC is only too aware of how difficult and time consuming it is to prepare a profession for statutory regulation. VRC was specifically set up to undertake this process and has in place everything that is required to prepare professions for this important step forward. Although VRC has been set up provisionally to deal with healthcare science professions there is no reason why it could not be used as the vehicle for all healthcare professions seeking statutory regulation.

Terry Johnson
VRC Chair