

## Minutes of Investigations Oversight Committee Meeting 4 June 2015

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Location	Present	In Attendance
8 Weymouth Street London W1W 5BU	Nabila Zulfiqar (Chair) Alex Wright Arun Singh	Simon Howard Sandra Ison (for Item 12)

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Note	Action
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### 1 Apologies

None

### 2 Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes from the meeting of 12 February 2015 were agreed.

#### Matters arising

AS reported that he had attended the Investigations Pool meeting on 23 February 2015

Action: SH to add AS' name to the list of attendees in the 23 Feb IP meeting minutes.

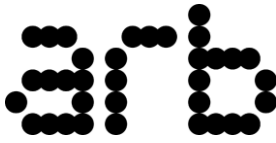
The IOC noted that the Investigations Pool had been reminded of the seriousness test which must be applied to all cases when deciding whether an architect has a case to answer at the PCC.

The IOC considered the Scheme of Decision Making, in conjunction with its own Terms of Reference. It noted that its responsibilities are limited to advising the Board on its responsibilities to investigate architects under section 14 Architects Act, rather than making its own decisions.

### 3 Investigations Pool update

The IOC noted the minutes of the IP meetings of 23 February and 30 April 2015.

The IOC noted from the IP minutes a question about when it was acceptable for IP members to undertake their own investigations. The IOC held the view that such



work should only be undertaken in limited circumstances, and on points of general knowledge. There should not be any further investigation about a particular case by any individual IP member. Further investigations can be instructed by the Panel.

#### 4 Professional Conduct Committee update

The IOC considered PCC decisions that have been reached since its last meeting. In particular it noted the agreement of the first PCC Consent Order, which resulted in the erasure of an architect who had committed a serious criminal offence. The IOC expressed its confidence in the Consent Order regime, and hoped to see more offers to resolve by consent being made to architects referred to the PCC.

The IOC expressed its concerns over the limited membership of the PCC, particularly in Scotland. This issue was raised by the Chair of the PCC at the last Board meeting, highlighting the potential conflict of interest risks. SH advised that any expansion in the membership of the PCC would require legislative change, which has been requested as part of the Periodic Review. In the meantime, there is a reserve Scottish architect available should the relevant PCC member be unable to sit on a particular case.

It was agreed that consideration should be given to inviting the Chair of the PCC and a representative of the Investigations Pool to a future IOC meeting, to encourage the sharing of information and consistency of approach.

Action: SH to invite PCC Chair & IP member to a future IOC meeting.

#### 5 Legal Challenge update

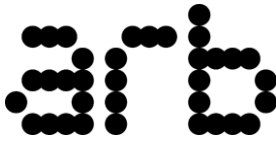
SH updated the IOC on any legal challenges.

#### 6 Costs Update

SH reported that the Professional Standards department was £60,000 under budget as of the end of May. There is a heavy schedule of PCC cases in the second half of the year that is expected to result in the spend coming in to the agreed budget.

#### 7 KPIs

The tabled KPIs were considered by the IOC which noted that the figures were good, albeit with room for improvement. All of the KPIs set are being met in the first five months of the year, with the exception of the delivery of Investigations Panel decisions. The 12 week target for IP decisions is being met in 74% of cases, just below



the 80% required. The figure is nevertheless higher than it has historically been, and the IOC expressed its encouragement at this increase in performance.

## 8 Equality & Diversity Data

SH provided a breakdown of the type of complaint that ARB receives. As previously the most common complaints relate to a lack of terms, or poor communication. Most complaints concern smaller domestic projects. The IOC agreed to consider under Agenda item 12 the most effective ways of communicating this information to the profession, in an attempt to minimise risk in these areas.

There continues to be a lack of Equality & Diversity data about architects and particularly complainants, but this will hopefully be remedied by the introduction of the new online complaints form, which should capture E & D data more effectively.

Given the particular problem of there being only one Scottish architect on the PCC, the IOC asked that further analysis of the numbers of complaints about architects in Scotland.

Action: SH to report to the next meeting on the number of Scottish architects on the Register, whom complaints are made about, and who are referred to the PCC.

## 9 Professional Standards Authority Review Comparison

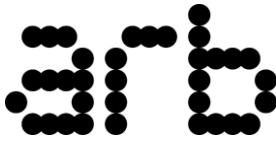
The IOC considered the report of the Professional Standards Authority (the oversight regulator for health regulators) which detailed the performance of each organisation in the investigation of professional conduct matters.

The Committee noted that although ARB performs well in comparison with those other regulators, limited weight should be attached to such a report as all of the organisations have different regulatory frameworks and deal with different professions. It is not a like for like comparison.

The selected section of that report is appended to these minutes.

## 10 IOC Annual Report to the Board

The proposed structure and content of the IOC Annual Report was discussed. It was agreed that the report should focus on the outcomes of the IOC's work in relation to its Terms of Reference, and should include a section on its proposals for future work.



Action: SH to provide a draft report to the IOC members for comment.

## 11 Business Plan 2016 planning

The IOC discussed any proposed work that would likely have an affect on the 2016 Business Plan and Budget.

It noted that the Section 14 Review still needs carrying out, but that this is dependent on the outcome of the Periodic Review. It also considered that any Code of Conduct review was likely to be a large piece of work, which the Committee would likely be involved in, but that this is dependent on the decision of the Board whether to undertake such a review.

It was agreed that the IOC would review its Terms of Reference at its next meeting. It will consider whether to request that the Board agrees to a revision to those Terms to allow it to progress any review of the Code of Conduct.

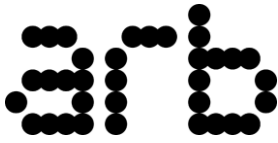
## 12 Communication of professional standards issues

Sandra Ison, Communications Coordinator, attended this item of the meeting.

The IOC discussed what methods could be used to communicate messages about professional standards issues to the profession (and the public) better. The Committee noted, under agenda item 8, the most common areas of complaint, and agreed that these were the issues which most require guidance from ARB.

Among the suggestions were to use complaints statistics as the basis of an article which could be picked up by the trade press, and read by those architects who don't receive direct communications from ARB. Further suggestions were greater use of case-studies to reflect situations architects encounter in their professional lives; continued with co-operation with the professional bodies, and using annual retention documentation to highlight issues.

Action: SH & SI to provide update on a proposed communication approach at the next IOC meeting



Note

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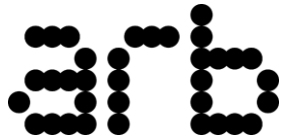
**15 AOB**

SH provided a brief update on the potential impact of the incoming Regulations on Alternative Dispute Resolution.

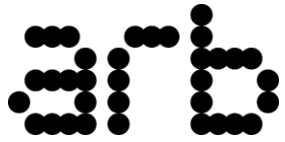
Action: SH to share legal advice on the impact of the ADR Regulations once received.

The IOC agreed that Professional Standards Officer Tanya Davies should attend the next IOC meeting.

Date of next meeting: 7 October 2015



	<b>ARB</b>	General Chiropractic Council	General Dental Council	General Medical Council	General Optical Council	General Osteopathic Council	General Pharm. Council	Health Care Profs Council	Nursing & Midwifery Coouncil
Number of Registrants	<b>35,919</b>	2,959	103,765	259,826	24,421	4,810	71,221	322,037	680,858
Number of Investigation cases	<b>84</b>	105	781	2,373	262	35	132	707	2,961
Investigations per 1,000 registrants	<b>2.5</b>	35	7	9	10	7	2	2.2	4
Number of PCC cases	<b>31</b>	27	84	241	34	20	69	267	1,756
<b>Time taken from receipt of initial complaint to final IP decision</b>									
Average time (weeks)	<b>25</b>	23	46	29	25	16	45	27	39
Longest Case	<b>62</b>	258	187	388	148	73	230	162	226
Shortest case	<b>18</b>	3	5	1	9	5	15	4	10
<b>Time taken from receipt of initial complaint to final PCC decision</b>									
Average time (weeks)	<b>65</b>	97	100	97	90	52	97	68	97
Longest Case	<b>126</b>	174	320	381	286	135	260	231	571
Shortest Case	<b>35</b>	29	38	17	46	28	42	23	28



Note

Action

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