

Our ref:

Your ref:

When telephoning please ask for:



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Dear Mr Cohen,

unison.org.uk

LETTER TO HCPC REGARDING PROPOSED FEES INCREASES

I am writing to you regarding the proposed increase in registration fees for registrants with the Health and Care Professions Council. I am concerned about the potential impact of these changes on healthcare practitioners across the country.

I am aware that your recent consultation proposed an increase of 18% in the annual fee. I note that the HCPC imposed a large increase on registrants in 2015 and if the new increase is imposed, health staff will have seen their registration fee increase by 40% since 2014.

I appreciate that professional regulators are reliant on their funding from registrants but I am concerned that this increase is disproportionate to the current rate of inflation and fails to take account of the real-terms wage freezes that many health staff have had to endure over the last few years.

I also believe that at a time when the NHS is struggling with staff shortages in many areas we should be doing all we can to ensure paramedics, occupational therapists, dieticians and the other health professionals that you regulate remain in their roles and to encourage new people to join those professions.

This proposed increase is also likely to serve as a particular disincentive to the many part-time workers in the health service or those considering reducing their hours before or after retirement who must pay the full fee despite not receiving a full-time salary.

Your consultation stated that one of the reasons for the increase is due to the transfer of regulation of social workers to Social Work England. It seems unreasonable that those health staff remaining on the register should be made to pay for the upheaval in the regulation of social workers. What is more, I understand that social workers account for more than half of all fitness-to-practise cases within the HCPC despite only making up one-quarter of registrants, so the associated costs should decrease significantly when social workers leave the register.

I note the recent report by the Professional Standard Authority for Health and Social Care in 2018 which was critical of the HCPC and suggested that cases were being referred to the Fitness to Practise panel by its Investigation Committee too readily. The report stated: "In our review of its performance this year, we set out our concerns about how the HCPC approaches the discontinuance of cases. Our view was that the approval of discontinuance decisions by the HCPC (with no additional information or evidence being presented since the decision of the Investigation Committee to refer the case) may indicate that the Investigation Committee is failing to identify when there is no case to answer."

I, therefore, would urge you not to impose this increase but to look at other options for increasing your funding such as more closely examining how your processes and procedures may be improved, so that health staff can be reassured that there will be no more arbitrary or avoidable increases in their registration fees and their trust in their regulator will not be dented.

Yours Sincerely,

Ruth Smeeth MP

Keith Vaz MP

David Drew MP

Eleanor Smith MP

Our ref:

Your ref:

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