

CONSTITUTION

Recommendations

Establish a Nursing and Midwifery Council to replace the United Kingdom Central Council for Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting (UKCC) and the four National Boards.

The Council to have 24-27 members as a central strategic body, with equal representation of elected nurses and midwives from each UK country, a professional majority and a minimum of one third lay members.

Two joint (nursing and midwifery) policy committees to deal with Registration Standards and Professional Development; and a third with Resources and Planning.

The Council to decide, having due regard to each profession, the structures and rules for the committees, ensuring that neither one profession can be outvoted by the other on matters solely affecting that profession.

The appointment of a Director of Nursing Regulation and a Director of Midwifery Regulation.

This new Council to have ultimate control of the regulatory process and ownership of setting and monitoring standards.

Each country to be free, if it wishes, to establish national arrangements outside the statutory framework for implementing the standards set by the Council.

Response

We accept the majority of these recommendations. However, we do not agree with the recommendation that health visitors should cease to have representation on Council. We propose that there should be equal representation of elected nurses, midwives and health visitors from each country. We would emphasise the importance of the Council's responsibility to ensure that its procedures do not allow any one of these professions to be outvoted by the others on matters of sole concern to that profession. The Council should choose a President and Vice-President from among its members.

IMPROVING ACCOUNTABILITY

The new Council will remain accountable to Parliament through the Secretary of State. We propose that the Secretary of State for Health should have a default power (as in other schemes). However, this would not apply to individual decisions on admission to the register or on unfitness to practise.