

1. Health Care Professionals Bill 2014 – Third Reading approved

Mr Butt to move:

That the Health Care Professionals Bill 2014 be read a third time and do pass.

The President: We turn to Item 1, Hon. Members, the Health Care Professionals Bill 2014 for Third Reading.

I call on Mr Butt.

Mr Butt: Thank you, Madam President.

I am glad to be able to move the Third Reading of the Health Care Professionals Bill. I would like to thank Members for their contributions and questions during the previous readings and the clauses stages, and I hope those questions have been dealt with to their satisfaction.

The main purposes of the Bill are to prescribe the manner in which certain health care professionals are required to be registered and, most importantly, the aim of the Bill is to facilitate new arrangements for doctors' revalidation, by giving our Health Service the legal authority to act as a designated body in the same way health trusts in the United Kingdom are, so that we can appoint a responsible officer to report to the General Medical Council on the fitness to practise of every doctor on the Island, once every five years.

This Bill also updates and improves the legislation around the regulations on various health care professionals including doctors, nurses, midwives, chiropractors and osteopaths, and to bring the Island into line with the United Kingdom.

The consultation process prior to this Bill received almost unanimous support for the proposals.

It is not anticipated that any local regulations will be required to be made under this legislation as the intention is to maintain exact reciprocity with the United Kingdom, and their regulations will be used.

In relation to clause 5 which deals with the appointment of responsible officers to evaluate and report on the fitness to practise of doctors, the doctors' revalidation is to be done in accordance with the United Kingdom Responsible Officer's Regulations.

This, and the Bill overall, is to make sure that, going forward, the Island stays in exactly the same position as the United Kingdom in this essential area. We have to be able to attract doctors to come and work here, and they have to have the ability to move back into the United Kingdom knowing their qualifications and training are acceptable in both areas.

With regard to the appointment of a responsible officer for the Isle of Man, it is the intention of the Department that the Medical Director will take on this role.

In relation to new practices which may become accepted in the future, this Bill ensures that if there are any changes in the United Kingdom we will be able to adopt them immediately.

Madam President, I would like to thank officers from the Department, Colin Brew and Kate Usher, for their assistance to me during the course of this Bill.

Madam President, I beg to move the Third Reading of the Health Care Professionals Bill to be read and do pass.

Mr Coleman: I beg to second, and reserve my remarks.

The President: The Hon. Member, Mr Downie.

Mr Downie: Yes, thank you, Madam President.

I would just like to reinforce again my support for the Bill. Without this Bill the whole of the delivery of health in the Isle of Man would, I think, be out of kilter with the United Kingdom. I think this legislation is very well intended to provide a level playing field and an easy to understand situation when doctors come into the Isle of Man or when they return to the United Kingdom.

Also I am pleased that it clearly identifies what is a 'health service professional'. As we are seeing new names, new terminology – perhaps in some instances not properly qualified and recognised – this Bill will actually provide a vehicle to make sure that there is no one here who is operating as a bogus doctor, a health service professional, or whatever you want to call them.

So I think that in supporting the Bill I wish the Department well. They have got a lot of issues to deal with in healthcare at the moment, and I think to keep the Isle of Man attractive to new medical people is vitally important.

I think this Bill will overcome some of the problems that would obviously have been there if we had been out of step with current medical thinking and medical practices in the UK.

The President: The mover to reply.

Mr Butt: Thank you, Madam President.

I thank my seconder for his support and to Mr Downie for his support. He is right in that... and as recent experience has shown, being an isolated community we can sometimes fall behind UK practices and this Bill does help us to ensure that we do stay level with them in these particular areas.

Of course, part of the Bill which I did not mention in the Third Reading: it does have penalties for people who actually are purporting to be health care professionals when they are not. So anybody who is a charlatan or a 'quack', shall we say, is caught up by this Bill as well – if they are not actually within the registered profession they can be dealt with.

The notion in the future that there may be other skills that are brought forward to become registered such as, say, homoeopathy or Chinese medicine etc, if that were ever to happen – which I think it is unlikely in homoeopathy – but if those things were ever to happen we would have a Bill here which will be able to accommodate those straightaway, and those people would then be registered as professionals, and then can be regulated in the way as other health care professionals.

So I thank Mr Downie for his support and Members overall, and beg to move, Madam President.

The President: The motion is that the Bill be read a third time and do pass. Those in favour, please say aye; against, no. The ayes have it. The ayes have it.