

(Section 29 of the 1959 Act) so as to avoid misuse of the emergency power.

(f) There will be a legal obligation on hospital managers to do what they can to ensure that detained patients understand their legal status and their rights and also to give written information to the patient's nearest relative if possible.

(g) Social workers will be more involved even where the nearest relative has applied for the patient's admission. From 20 October 1984 mental welfare officers will be replaced by approved social workers who will be specially trained for their work under the Act.

(h) Where a doctor is not immediately available, certain nurses will be authorized to detain, where necessary, someone already in hospital as an informal patient for up to six hours.

(i) New powers will enable a Court, after appropriate consultation, to remand a person to hospital for a report or treatment or to make an interim hospital order, so that the Court can assess whether a mentally disordered person appearing before them ought to be made the subject of a hospital order. These remand and interim order provisions will be phased in gradually in the next two to three years.

(j) Regional Health Authorities will be required to give information to the Courts, on request, about what hospital places are available for a mentally disordered offender.

(k) Provisions concerning legal proceedings against staff carrying out their work under the Act are being changed so that permission for *criminal* proceedings will be sought

from the Director of Public Prosecutions rather than the High Court. The word 'substantial' has been deleted from the requirement to show grounds of bad faith or lack of reasonable care on the part of the member of staff before permission is given.

(l) From 1 April 1983, informal patients in mental hospitals will be able to make a declaration which allows their names to be included on the 1984 electoral register.

Action

4. Various orders and regulations will have to be made by 30 September 1983 when the Act will come into effect. Regulations will be needed for the treatments which require consent *and* a second opinion, or consent *or* a second opinion (para b above); an order will be required to specify which categories of nurse can exercise the new holding power (para h); and regulations will have to be made revising the forms and procedures laid down in the Hospital and Guardianship Regulations 1960. The intention is to consult on all these about the middle of February, but we shall have to set a closing date for comments towards the end of April if we are to meet the time constraints imposed by Parliamentary and printing timetables. In view of the inevitably short time that will be available for consultation, authorities and other bodies who wish to take part in this consultation process may wish to make preparations in advance to fit this timetable.

5. District Health Authorities are asked to draw this circular to the attention of all private mental nursing homes registered with their Authority under the Nursing Homes Act 1975. Those with detained patients have a particular interest.

The College's Medals and Prizes

Gaskell Medal and Prize

In addition to the medal the award attached to this prize is £150. The annual examination for the prize will be held in April or May 1983. Entries should be sent in by 31 March 1983.

The Prize has always been considered one of the foremost academic distinctions obtainable in clinical psychiatry, and members are asked to bring it to the notice of suitable candidates at their hospitals who may be eligible to compete.

Full particulars of the Regulations are given below, and entry forms may be obtained on application to the Dean.

REGULATIONS

The examination must be held in England according to the terms of the Trust.

Candidates must produce evidence of (a) having been qualified officers in one or more psychiatric hospitals or

clinics in psychiatry in the United Kingdom or elsewhere in the Commonwealth or in the Republic of Ireland for at least two years; (b) having passed the MRCPsych examination or possessing any other degree or diploma in psychological medicine.

Candidates must be over 23 and under 35 years of age on 1 January of the year of the examination.

The examination includes a written paper, a clinical and an oral.

An entry fee of £5 is charged, returnable to bona fide candidates.

Research Prize and Bronze Medal

A College Prize is awarded for Research and the winner receives the College Bronze Medal.

The value of the prize is £150. A limit of two such prizes will be awarded each year. No prize will be awarded if a sufficient standard is not reached.