

Approval of Doctors under Section 12 of the Mental Health Act 1983

Joint Statement of The Royal College of Psychiatrists and The Royal College of General Practitioners

The following joint statement of the Royal College of Psychiatrists and the Royal College of General Practitioners was endorsed at the October meeting of Council. Council was concerned that this statement should not mark a retreat from its original ideal that all doctors approved under Section 12 should possess the MRCPsych. They therefore endorsed these recommendations as an interim measure which should be reviewed in five years time. During this period the College would consider ways in which to increase the number of approved doctors for the MRCPsych.

(a) General principles:

- (i) Sufficient numbers of approved doctors must be available in every Region. (But not too many as this is counterproductive).
- (ii) These approved doctors must be sufficiently skilled.

(b) The Royal College of Psychiatrists' position

The Royal College of Psychiatrists' Statement (*Bulletin*, September 1984, 8, 183), approved by their Council in January 1984, should be regarded as their ideal.

(c) Present recommendations

- (i) Regional Approval Panels should include the Regional Adviser of The Royal College of Psychiatrists or Deputy Regional Adviser and the Chairman of the appropriate College Division or Deputy, a represen-

tative from The Royal College of General Practitioners and one other member (e.g. a police surgeon); noting that different arrangements would be needed in Wales in the absence of a Regional structure there.

- (ii) Non-psychiatric Medical Practitioners applying for the first time must have had the equivalent of at least six months full-time approved psychiatric experience. For re-appointment, such doctors should be able to provide evidence that they had actively been using Section 12 (i.e. approximately four recommendations a year at least), with allowance being made for exceptional situations, such as rural areas.
- (iii) The Panels should ensure that appropriate training in Section 12 procedures and related matters is provided at a Regional level. They should also be responsible for establishing further criteria for approval in the light of local needs.
- (iv) These criteria must not be so restrictive that they would exclude general practitioners who had experience and ability to undertake such work; nor must these criteria exclude general practitioners from opportunities for further training so that they might undertake it in the future.

These recommendations should be monitored by both Colleges and reviewed in five years time.

PROF. R. G. PRIEST
August 1986

Psychiatric and Psycho-social Aspects of AIDS

A multi-disciplinary conference on this subject will be held on 27 February 1987 at the Institute of Psychiatry, London. The Department of Health and Social Security is joining with the Institute of Psychiatry, King's College School of Medicine and Dentistry, the Royal College of Nursing, the

British Psychological Society and the Royal College of Psychiatrists in the arrangements for this one day conference. Enquiries: Professor R. H. Cawley, Institute of Psychiatry, De Crespigny Park, Denmark Hill, London SE5 8AF.

Reading List in Liaison Psychiatry

A Reading List has been prepared by the Liaison Psychiatry Group Executive Committee and is available on request

from Miss Deborah Hart, Royal College of Psychiatrists, 17 Belgrave Square, London SW1X 8PG.