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15 June 2011

Dear Mr Amy

Department of Health Additional Papers to CEAs Review May 2011

I am writing to place on record the Academy of Medical Royal College's response to the Department of Health's additional papers submitted to you in May 2011 on the issues of the timescale for applying for awards, whether there should be a 2012 round, non-financial recognition of consultants work and accrued rights.

Process

I apologise for late submission of these comments recognising that your deliberations must be nearing completion. This does raise a general point that we do find it frustrating, as possibly you may do, that the Department of Health submits evidence on four important topics at this late stage. Whilst two of the papers (timescale for applying for awards and accrued rights) could be seen as clarification of earlier evidence, the papers on whether there should be a 2012 round and non-financial recognition are new topics not mentioned in its original evidence.

We believe this is unsatisfactory in terms of process irrespective of the content of the submissions. It has, of course, resulted in further submissions (including our own) from other parties in response to the Department's papers. This cannot be a satisfactory way to conduct a review. This response is therefore made somewhat reluctantly, but we felt we had no option but to address some of the new issues put into the discussion by the Department at this late stage.

Timescale for applying for awards

We said to you at our oral evidence session that we saw absolutely no rationale to move to an annual awards process which would simply be time consuming and costly. This remains our position and we are entirely unconvinced by the Department's paper which we find confused and weak. We concur with the view put forward by ACCEA that direct comparison with an annual PRP bonus is misleading. As ACCEA state "the current scheme was never intended to serve the same objectives as annual bonus schemes."

We firmly believe that running any scheme providing a similar number of awards with a similar level of scrutiny and assessment as at present on an annual basis would be ridiculously burdensome on applicants, assessors, employers and ACCEA.

Should there be a 2012 awards round?

We find it highly unsatisfactory that the Department has asked the DDRB to make a recommendation on this issue at this stage of the process. If the Department wanted a view from the Review Body on this question it should have included it in the terms of reference of the review.

At this point in time when many individuals and organisations will have begun work in good faith for the 2012 process it would seem invidious to now consider scrapping the 2012 round. Whilst clinicians recognise the right of the Government to review the scheme they will perceive that this proposal is moving the goalposts in an unacceptable manner and an act of bad faith by the Government. We therefore believe that irrespective of the recommendation made for the future the 2012 round should continue as planned.

Non-financial recognition for consultants

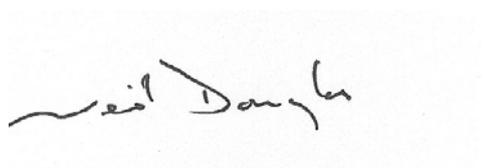
We do have to say that we found this one of the flimsiest papers we have ever seen from any part of the Department of Health. There is a valid discussion to be had over the role that non-financial recognition can play in reward systems but this was not it.

The Academy believes there is a clear role for non-financial awards and recognition of many sorts at both local and national level. However, to suggest that consultants will consider that the introduction a Surgeon of the Year award could or should replace clinical excellence awards shows both a paucity of thinking and a remarkable degree of naivety.

Accrued rights

This is not an area that we feel that we have the expertise to make comment on and that these are contractual questions which need to be resolved between the DH, the BMA and NHS Employers.

Yours sincerely



Professor Sir Neil Douglas
Chairman

cc
Dr Patricia Hamilton - DH
Mr Martin Sturges - DH