



# the college

## AGM Minutes – 2008 Thirty-Seventh Annual Meeting

The 37th Annual Meeting of the College was held at Imperial College, London, from 1 to 4 July 2008.

### Business Meeting

The Business Meeting of the Royal College of Psychiatrists was held on Wednesday 2 July 2008 and was chaired by the President, Professor Sheila Hollins. It was attended by 164 members of the College.

The minutes of the previous meeting held in Edinburgh on Wednesday 20 June 2008 and published in the *Psychiatric Bulletin*, December 2007, were approved and signed. Proposed: Dr Greg Richardson; Seconded: Dr Vivien Deacon.

The Registrar read out the obituary list of Members who had died since the Winter Business Meeting and a minute's silence was observed.

The President and other Officers presented their annual reports. Full text available at [www.rcpsych.ac.uk/pdf/Annual%20General%20Meeting%20Minutes%202008%20\(2\).pdf](http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/pdf/Annual%20General%20Meeting%20Minutes%202008%20(2).pdf).

### General Business

The approval of the Annual Accounts for 2007 was proposed by Dr Rao Nimmagadda and seconded by Dr Rupendra Brahma.

The proposed fees and subscription rates with effect from 1 January 2009 were approved. Proposed: Professor John Gunn; Seconded: Dr Ian Hall.

The reappointment of Buzzacott as Auditors of the College to hold office until the next Annual General Meeting was approved. Proposed: Dr Michele Hampson; Seconded: Professor Nick Bouras.

### Changes to the Supplemental Charter

The following resolution, proposed by Professor Sue Bailey and seconded by Professor George Ikkos, was discussed and carried unanimously.

That the Bye-laws of the College be amended, revoked and added in accordance with the memorandum thereof containing such amendments, revocations and additions sent to the Members with the notice of this meeting provided that such amendments, revocations or additions shall not take effect until the same shall have been approved

by the Privy Council and provided further that the Central Executive Committee of the College shall have authority to approve any further amendments required thereto by the Privy Council.

### Conference fees for overseas members

Dr Rupendra Brahma raised as a matter for discussion the issue of conference fees for overseas members. Thanking the meeting for consideration of the issue, Dr Brahma invited exploration of ways of reducing conference fees for retired overseas members in a manner commensurate with the reductions in annual subscription and registration fees. Dr Pearl Hettiaratchy spoke in support of any means of enabling Members from the Indian Sub-Continent to attend annual meetings of the College.

The President thanked Dr Brahma and it was noted that constitutionally the issue should be referred to the Central Executive Committee of the College. The Finance Management Committee and the Programmes and Meetings Committee would provide input to the discussion at the Central Executive Committee.

### Presentation of Honorary Fellows for 2008 at the Presentation Ceremony

The full text of the citations is available at [www.rcpsych.ac.uk/pdf/Annual%20General%20Meeting%20Minutes%202008%20\(2\).pdf](http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/pdf/Annual%20General%20Meeting%20Minutes%202008%20(2).pdf).

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### Proposal for a special interest group in mental health aspects of working in areas of violent political conflict

Procedure for establishing a special interest group:

1. Any Member wishing to establish a special interest group shall write to the Registrar with relevant details.
2. The Registrar shall forward the application to the Central Executive Committee.
3. If the Central Executive Committee approves the principle of establishing such a special interest group then it will

direct the Registrar to place a notice in the Bulletin, or its equivalent, asking members of the College to write in support of such a Group and expressing willingness to participate in its activities.

4. If at least 120 members reply to this notice within 4 months of publication, then the Central Executive Committee shall formally approve the establishment of the special interest group.

In accordance with this procedure, the Central Executive Committee has approved a proposal for the establishment of a special interest group in mental health aspects of working in areas of violent political conflict.

### Background to the proposal from Professor Rachel Jenkins and Lord Alderdice

Three-quarters of countries have had one or more state-based armed conflicts within their own borders since 1946, and the UK has been engaged in an armed conflict at home or abroad for 4 years out of every 5 since 1946.

Conflict has many consequences for clients with pre-existing mental illness and learning disabilities, and it also causes additional burden of mental disorders in people who were previously well. For people with pre-existing disorders, these may be aggravated by the additional grave stress and loss of former family and community supports, loss of access to care and medication, and, for many, often starvation. For people who were previously well, there is an increased rate of new disorders of depression and anxiety, psychosis and post-traumatic stress disorder. People with mental disorders and learning disabilities are also vulnerable to being used in a conflict as combatants, either deployed by states or by rebel groups. The psychological aftermath for some can be long lasting and severe, and many psychiatrists are involved in working with affected families and children.

The College has members who have come from a conflict area; work in one or more conflict areas, contributing to programmes for refugees and internally displaced people; are involved in conflict resolution processes, developing peaceful alternatives to conflict (including working with former child soldiers and former combatants, as well as with civilians), capacity building the mental health system (including aspects of health, social welfare, employment, education and



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criminal justice systems in countries vulnerable to conflict); and who are involved in the mental healthcare of state-based armed forces.

The special interest group would aim to share experience, expertise and instruments in working in fragile states, conflict and post-conflict areas for the improvement of mental health, its contributions to education, employment and community cohesion, as well as for the protection of the human rights of people with mental illness.

Members are invited to write in support of this group and express willingness to participate in its activities. Interested Members should write to the Registrar, care of Miss Sue Duncan at the College. If 120 members reply to this notice within 4 months of publication, then the Central Executive Committee shall formally approve the establishment of this special interest group.

**Professor Sue Bailey** Registrar, Royal College of Psychiatrists

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## Standards on the use of Section 136 of the Mental Health Act 1983 (2007) (version for England)

College Report CR149, September 2008, £12.50, 66 pp.

Section 136 of the Mental Health Act 1983 gives the police powers to remove a person who appears to be suffering from mental disorder and who is 'in immediate need of care or control' from a public place to a place of safety. Removal may take place if a police officer believes it is necessary in the interests of that person or for the protection of others. The purpose of removing a person to a place of safety (usually a police station cell or hospital emergency department) is to enable them to be assessed by a doctor or interviewed by an allied mental health professional; however, they may be discharged from there without ever having seen a mental health practitioner. Because Section 136 is the only civil

detention under the Mental Health Act for which no statutory form is required, there is a lack of reliable data on the use of Section 136.

This report is a set of standards giving guidance on the use of Section 136. It advocates the provision of dedicated assessment facilities in mental health units, which are adequately staffed. It includes 24 separate recommendations focusing on:

- physical standards of places of safety
- staffing issues
- conveyance of patients between places of safety
- local policy and monitoring of standards (both at the local and the national level).

The report includes the first ever standardised recording form to monitor Section 136 detentions; this will give rise to much-needed data on the quality of care.

This report replaces *CR61: Report of the Working Group on Standards of Places of Safety Under Section 136 of the Mental Health Act (1983)*.

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