

A statement on attendance of Health Authority Officers at Consultants' Advisory Appointments Committees

One of the recommendations in NAHA's evidence to the Prime Minister's Review was that District General Managers should take part in the Consultant Appointment Committees in assessing consultants managerial ability. This matter has been discussed at the Joint Consultants Committee with the DHSS and it is quite clear the present guidelines are that the Manager and other Officers of the Authority cannot participate in Appointment Committees.

This has been clarified in a letter from the DHSS to General Managers of Regional Health Authorities, dated 28 September 1987 [DA(87)46], as follows:

"The NHS (Appointments of Consultants) Regulations 1982 set out clearly membership of such committees, oblige the RGM to provide such clerical or other assistance as the Committee may require, and lay down that the procedure of the Committee shall be such as the members of the Committee think fit. The Committee can, therefore, request the assistance at their meeting of any officer, whether of the RHA or of the DHA in which the selected consultant will be working, but the attendance of any non-member at the meeting can only be in accordance with the wishes of the Committee. Circular HC(82)10 states that the chairman of the AAC can issue the invitation. It is however clear from the Regulations, which of course reflect the formal legal position, that the Chairman does not have the power to act alone in this

respect and may issue such an invitation only if it is the wish of the majority of the members of the Committee.

The AAC procedures aside, it is likely that potential candidates for consultant posts and senior managers in health authorities would welcome the opportunity to discuss matters of common interest (for example, local plans for service developments, likely availability of manpower and other resources). Such meetings might form a natural part of the programme when potential candidates visit the District(s) in question in order to meet their potential future consultant colleagues and to familiarise themselves with the locality and its health facilities."

If members of the College are asked about the attendance of a Manager at an Appointments Committee, they should state very clearly that the Manager should be available to the Committee, *before the actual interviewing process begins* to discuss any particular details about the facilities available for the post which require clarification. *The Manager should not be present when the interviewing and selection process is taking place.*

Dr J. L. T. BIRLEY

This statement, prepared by the President, was approved by Council at its meeting on 17 January 1989.

Obituary

Editor: Henry R. Rollin

ANTHONY CLARE FAIRBURN, Consultant Psychiatrist; Department of Child and Family Psychiatry, Royal United Hospitals, Bath

Anthony Clare Fairburn – Tony – as he was known to his many friends, died suddenly at the age of 61 on 3 October 1988 while at work in his Department.

Tony was born in Singapore where his parents were working with the Colonial Service. He was educated in this country and qualified from St Mary's Medical School, London, in 1951. After his call up for military service, he requested a posting to Malaysia, where at that time British troops were actively engaged in fighting a guerilla enemy. His work as a junior specialist included the medical care of a Gurkha unit and it was typical of his careful, thorough approach that he not only took pains to learn Gurkhali, but also published a *Handbook of*

Medical Gurkhali which has been extensively used. This interest continued throughout his life and he made two specialist advisory tours in Pakistan on behalf of the British Council in 1985 and 1986. He was considering a third such invitation at the time of his death.

On his return to this country he decided upon a career in paediatrics and early in his training he became concerned with the emotional and social aspects of childhood illness. He therefore sought further training in child psychiatry at Great Ormond Street and Queen Charlotte's Children's Hospitals and later at the Maudsley Hospital. He was then appointed to registrar posts at Glenside & Barrow Psychiatric Hospitals Bristol and to Bristol Children's Hospital. The consultant post which he held until the time of his death was a joint post in child psychiatry and mental handicap.