

Our ref: **Code A**

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Council

28 January 2011

St James's Buildings
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By email only: **Code A**

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Dear **Code A**

Freedom of Information Act 2000 – Information Request

I write regarding your letter dated 23 December 2010 in which you request information about Professor Bulstrode. Your request has been considered in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA). Please accept my apologies for the delay in responding to you on this matter.

Firstly, you ask for information regarding Professor Bulstrode's service as a Council member.

I can confirm that Professor Bulstrode was an elected member of Council from 1 July 2003 to 31 December 2008. Professor Bulstrode also served on the Resources Committee from September 2003 to September 2005, on the Education Committee from September 2003 to October 2008, and was a trustee of the GMC pension scheme from November 2003 to March 2008.

With regards to whether Professor Bulstrode ever sat on any fitness to practise panels; I should explain that in November 2004 a decision was made by Council to exclude any Council members from sitting on fitness to practise panels. Therefore, Professor Bulstrode would not have sat on a fitness to practise panel after November 2004. We have checked our records of sittings of the Committee on Professional Performance, the Professional Conduct Committee, the Assessment Referral Committee and the Health Committee between 1 July 2003 and 30 November 2004. I can confirm that we have no record of Professor Bulstrode having sat on any of these panels.

In relation to our knowledge of the relationship between Professor Bulstrode and Dr Barton, I can confirm that the suggestion that they are related was put to our Press Office by a journalist in the summer of 2009. We were not aware of their relationship prior to this. Given that Professor Bulstrode was not a Council member at the time of the hearing, and as a Council member from 2003-2008 would have had no involvement or influence in the case, we did not pursue this.

With regards to whether any of the Fitness to Practise Panel knew Dr Barton personally; none of the panellists concerned declared any personal association with Dr Barton.

Indeed, if this had been the case this would have been prejudicial to the case and would have resulted in any panellists concerned being recused from the hearing.

However, with regards to whether any of the Fitness to Practise Panel knew Professor Bulstrode personally; there would be no expectation on the panellists to declare such an association as Professor Bulstrode was in no way connected with the case. Therefore we are not aware of whether any of the panellists knew Professor Bulstrode personally.

You also ask whether Professor Sikora is an associate of Professor Bulstrode, Dr Jane Barton or Mr Tim Barton. In accordance with the FOIA, I can confirm that we do not hold this information.

Finally, you have asked for the cost to the GMC of Dr Jane Barton's hearing. I can confirm that the combined cost of solicitors and counsel in relation to this case was £606,300. Costs incurred specifically in relation to the hearing were approximately £392,338. This figure includes panellist fees, transcriptions and staff and running costs on the days of the hearing. I should add that we are unable to quantify staff costs relating to the investigation stage of this case, as the investigation team do not record time spent on individual cases.

I hope this information is helpful to you. If you have any concerns regarding the handling of this request please address these to Julian Graves, Information Access Manager, at

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Yours sincerely

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