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21-4 March February 2013

General Medical Council

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Code A

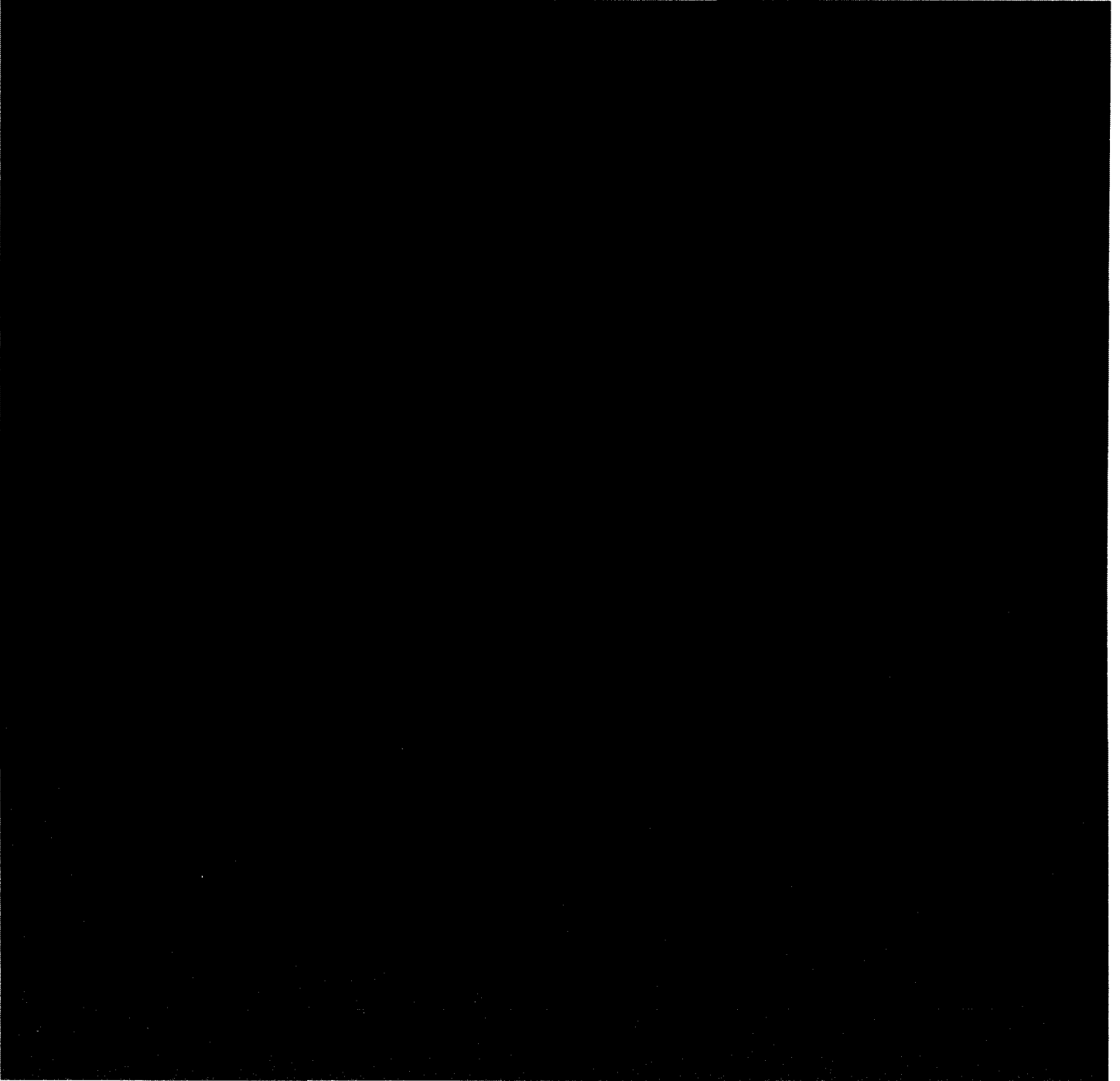
2nd Floor, Regents Place
350 Euston Road, London NW1 3JN

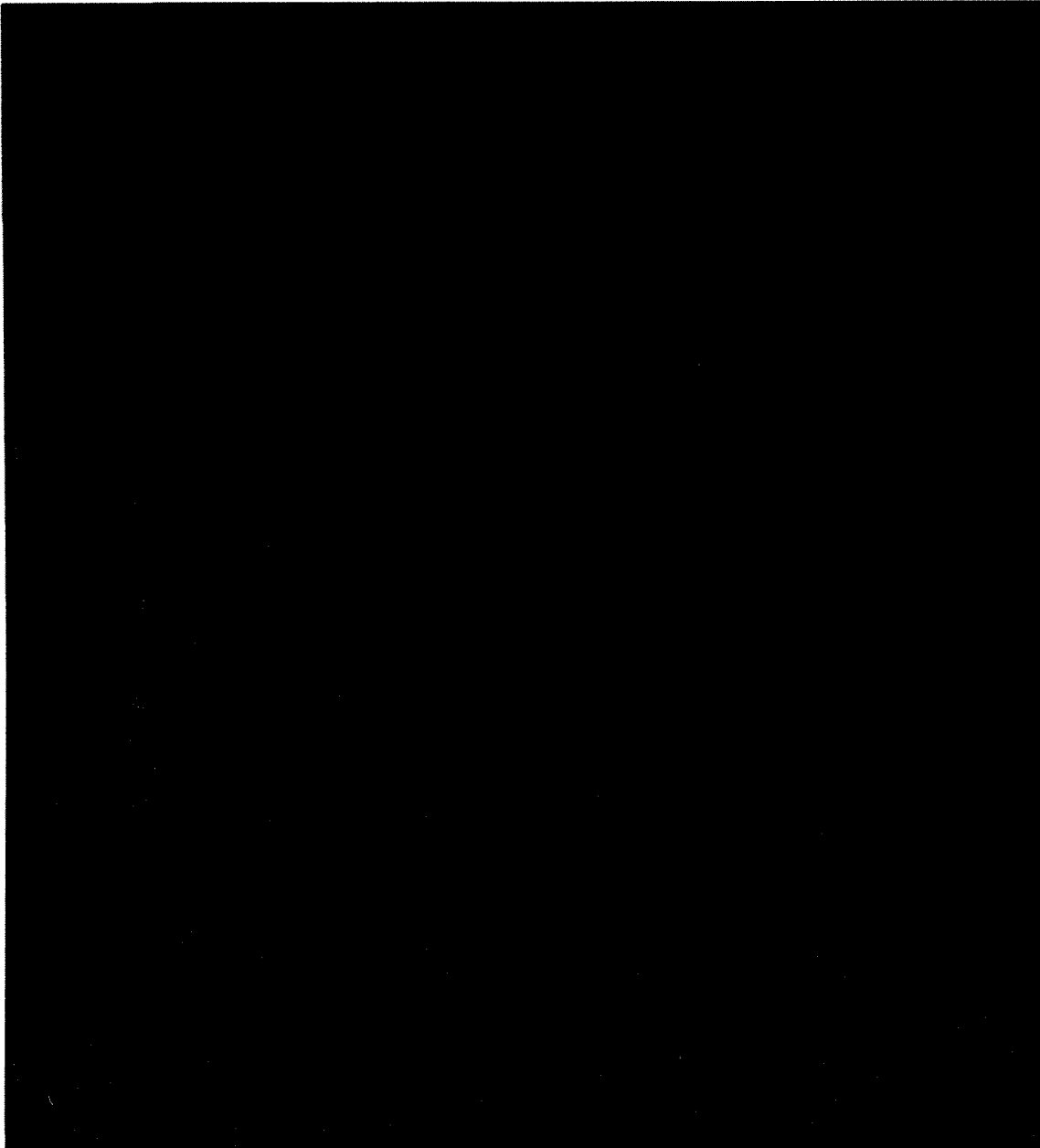
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Dear Code A

I am writing in response to your various emails sent to various GMC staff over the last couple of weeks. I feel it would be useful to respond in one comprehensive letter and cover all of your points in one go rather than in a piece meal fashion.







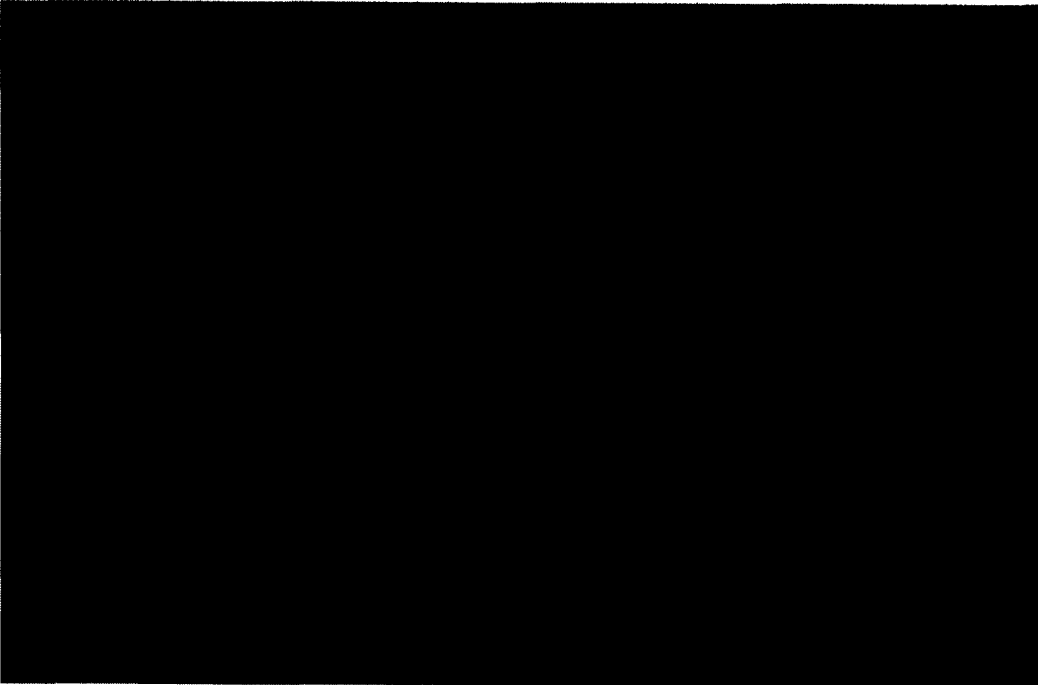
Professor Christopher Bulstrode

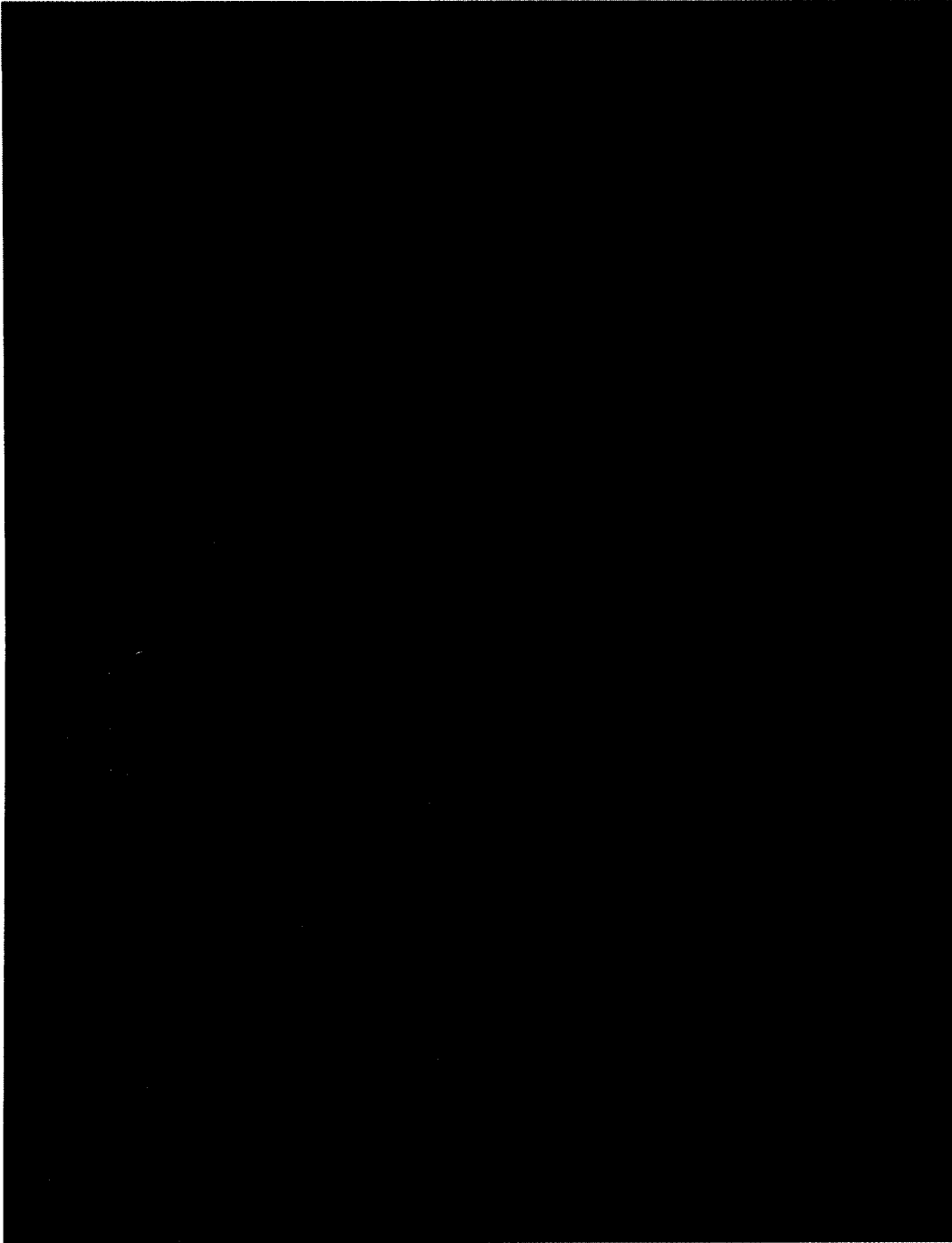
In your email to Mr Dickson of 31 January 2013 you have asked if Professor Bulstrode was admonished for failing to declare his conflict of interest in his sister's case. Dr Jane Barton's case was heard by a Fitness to Practise panel.

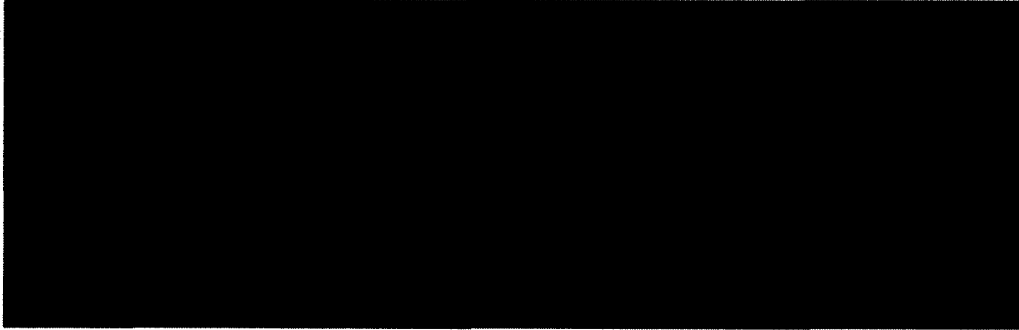
These allegations were put to us and formally considered by our triage team in February 2011 under our reference Code A. We closed this complaint at triage and explained the reasons for our conclusion that it was not appropriate for us to take any action against Professor Bulstrode. Our closure letter was detailed and I am enclosing a copy of it here for your ease of reference. We explained the dates that Professor Bulstrode was elected as a Council member and that he had not sat as a panellist from 1 November 2004. We were told about his relationship with his sister by a journalist in 2009 in advance of her hearing but by that time he was not a council member and would have had no involvement or influence on her case.

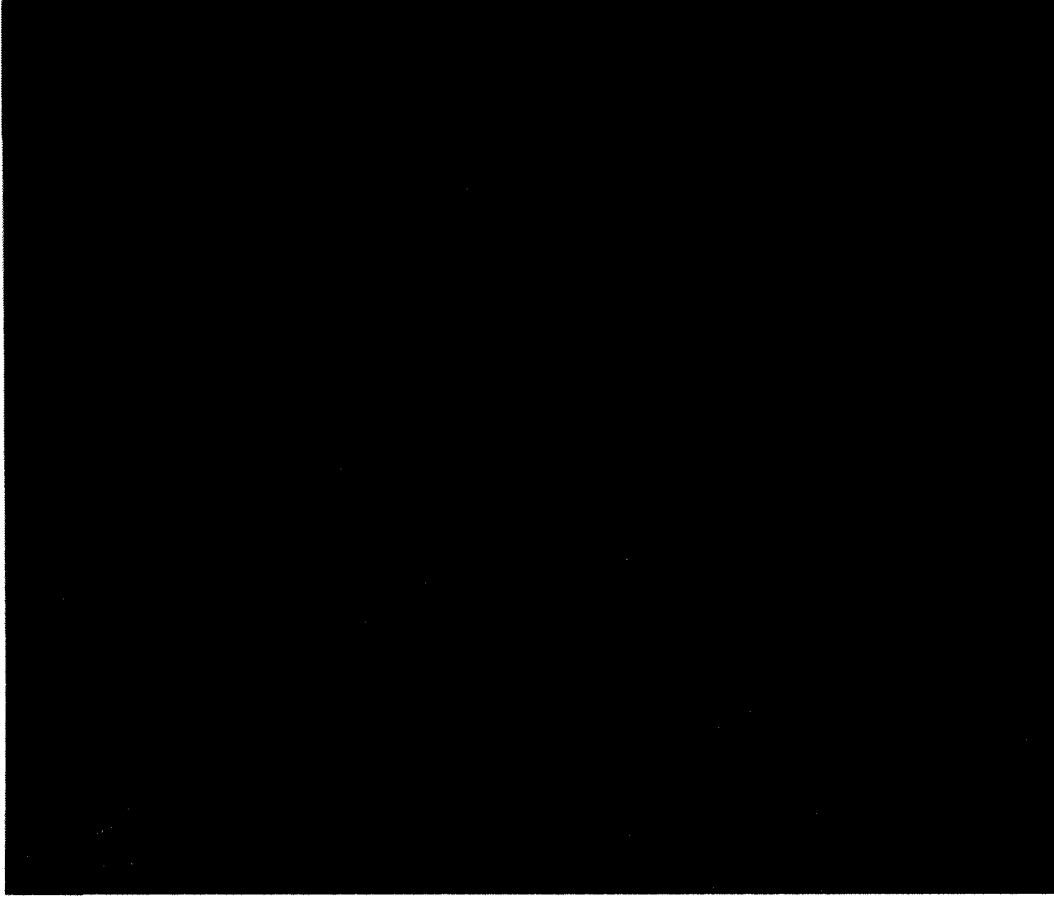
You say in your recent email that it is a matter of public interest in knowing that people cannot get away with breach of GMC policy and I would agree with that. However, when Professor Bulstrode signed his statement of commitment to the Code of Conduct for a Council Member in 2003, he was not required to declare any family association to a registered doctor. He did not breach any GMC guidance at that stage. Clearly if a family member who was a doctor had a case coming before a Fitness to Practise panel a panellist would be required to declare an interest, but that was not what happened in Professor Bulstrode's case. By the time his sister's case was being considered he was no longer a Council Member and so was not obliged to declare anything.

Professor Bulstrode had not acted inappropriately during the time he was a Council member, he did not breach any of our guidance. There was no legitimate basis for us taking any action against.









Yours sincerely

Christine Couchman
Head of the Deputy Chief Executive's Office
and Corporate Complaints Manager

Code A