

responsibility to ensure that patients' interests are protected and that the trust between doctor and patient is not eroded by patients' fears that information disclosed to doctors will not be treated as confidential.

The Department's guidelines on supervision registers indicate that entries should be treated in the same way as other medical records and should be subject to the same rules of confidentiality. Although this is acceptable in principle, the Department's draft guidance on 'The confidentiality, use and disclosure of personal health information' allows disclosures on the basis of 'implied consent' on too broad a basis to afford patients the confidentiality they have a

right to expect. In commenting to the Department on the draft the GMC drew attention to the problems this might bring in sensitive areas such as mental health, and in particular to the implications of the guidance for confidentiality of information held on supervision registers. The same general concerns have also been raised in the GMC's comments on the draft 'Guide to arrangements for inter-agency working for the care and protection of severely mentally ill people'.

FINLAY SCOTT, *Chief Executive and Registrar, General Medical Council, 44 Hallam Street, London W1N 6AE*

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## Confidential Inquiry into Homicides and Suicides by Mentally Ill People

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### **Applications for post of Director (Part-time)**

The Confidential Inquiry was set up by the Royal College of Psychiatrists in January 1992 at the invitation of and funded by the Department of Health. The Inquiry examines cases of mentally ill people who have committed suicide or acts of homicide at a time when they have been receiving psychiatric care. Its objective is to identify factors in the patients' management which may be related to the deaths and to recommend measures designed to reduce such incidents.

Dr Bill Boyd, the current Director, will be retiring later this year and applications are invited for his replacement. The successful

applicant will be responsible for continuing the current programme and developing, in agreement with the Steering Committee, the future research policy and programme of the Inquiry. The appointment will be part-time, with a maximum of four sessions per week. The Director may be employed directly by the College or seconded from an academic institution, NHS setting or the private sector.

For further details please contact The Secretary, Royal College of Psychiatrists, 17 Belgrave Square, London SW1X 8PG (Tel: 0171 235 2351). The closing date for applications is 10 April 1995.