

NEWS

NHF TO DEBATE CALLS FOR MANDATORY REGISTRATION

The NHF is to debate at conference this October moves by the **Hairdressing Council** to establish a mandatory register for hairdressers, a proposal that is expected to be voted on by Parliament later this year and, if passed, could create a range of challenges for salons.

The council is preparing the ground for a **Ten Minute Rule Bill**, in which politicians will be able to vote on whether a mandatory register for hairdressing should be established for the first time.

The move is being led by Conservative MP **David Morris**, who was a hairdresser for 26 years before being elected at the 2010 General Election.

The vote is currently understood to be pencilled in to take place on November 29, Parliamentary time permitting, with the bill provisionally entitled **The Hairdressers (Compulsory Registration) Bill**. An Early Day Motion (see panel), which is simply used by politicians to highlight an issue, was put forward in Parliament in June.

Making registration mandatory could have significant ramifications for salons, with the NEC discussing the issue in August as well as putting it to conference in October.

Any move to mandatory registration would bring the UK into line with most salons within the European Union, and key questions for members include whether it would be viable in terms of the structure of the UK industry, how or whether it would add value, how it would be policed and managed and what it would cost salons.

Mandatory registration could nevertheless have the advantage of putting the industry on a more even footing in terms of high-street competition, quality and training.

It could also mean salons at a stroke being able to present a more reputable image to the public.

"If this goes through there is a lot of detail that will need to be thrashed out, such as will it be individual hairdressers or employers who pay, how will registration be linked to qualification or competence, how will it improve standards and who will police and inspect the registration process," said Federation secretary-general **Eileen Lawson**.

"If it raises standards and quality, registration has the potential to be extremely positive. The challenge is to have a system of registration that is meaningful and affordable to the profession and public alike and does not just become another cost," she added.

At the moment registration with the Hairdressing Council is voluntary, through the **Hairdressers (Registration) Act**



PARLIAMENT: SET TO VOTE ON REGISTRATION

1964. Applicants are required to show evidence of their qualifications and the length of time they have been a hairdresser. Fees as they stand are £39, with graduate hairdressers being charged £32.

Moving to mandatory registration is not in itself a new idea, having been debated a number of times since 1964. The most recent was in 1997 when Labour MP **Austin Mitchell** tried to amend the Act to make registration mandatory, only to run out of Parliamentary time.

David Morris told *SalonFocus* that, under his bill, the Hairdressing Council would be given new powers "to strike off hairdressers".

He added: "This change in the law will put hairdressers on a level field with other skilled professionals and is designed to remove those who are not fit to practise."

WHAT THE EARLY DAY MOTION SAID

David Morris MP tabled the following Early Day Motion on June 21:

"That this House notes that 245,000 people work in the hairdressing industry representing one per cent of the working population; further notes that the National Hairdressing Council was established by the Hairdressers (Registration) Act 1964 and that all major hairdressing trade bodies are now campaigning for the compulsory registration of all hairdressers with the full support of industry leaders **Andrew Barton, Trevor Sorbie and George Hammer**; believes that with compulsory registration standards of professionalism within the hairdressing industry will be raised; further believes that it is dangerous to allow unqualified individuals to apply hazardous chemicals to customers' hair without proper training and, whilst customers can seek recourse through the civil courts for any mistakes, this does not prevent those responsible continuing to practise; and urges the Government to amend the Hairdressers (Registration) Act 1964 to include compulsory registration of all hairdressers and the ability of the national Hairdressing Council to strike off those who do not practise in a professional manner."