

*To approve*

**Minutes of the Meeting on 9 December 2009<sup>1</sup>**

**Present**

Professor Peter Rubin, Chair

Professor Jane Dacre  
Dr Sam Everington  
Ms Sally Hawkins  
Archy Kirkwood  
Ms Ros Levenson  
Mr Robin MacLeod  
Professor Rajan Madhok  
Dr Johann Malawana  
Dr Joan Martin

Mrs Suzanne McCarthy  
Professor Jim McKillop  
Mrs Ann Robinson  
Mrs Enid Rowlands  
Dr Mairi Scott  
Professor Iqbal Singh  
Professor Terence Stephenson  
Ms Anne Weyman  
Mr Stephen Whittle

Mr Paul Philip  
Acting Chief Executive and Registrar

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<sup>1</sup> These Minutes should be read in conjunction with the Council papers for this meeting, which are available on our website at <http://www.gmc-uk.org>

## Chair's Business

1. Apologies for absence were noted from Dr John Jenkins, Professor Malcolm Lewis, Professor Trudie Roberts and Dr Hamish Wilson.
2. The Chair congratulated:
  - a. Professor Rajan Madhok on his appointment as Chair of the British Association of Physicians of Indian Origin.
  - b. Dr Joan Martin and Mrs Suzanne McCarthy on their appointments as lay reviewers for the Invited Review Panel, Royal College of Surgeons of England.
3. The Chair noted Sir Rodney Brooke's decision that it would be inappropriate to remain as a Council member, in the light of the Council for Healthcare Regulatory Excellence's report on the General Social Care Council's conduct function which identified some serious deficiencies during Sir Rodney's tenure as Chair. The Chair paid tribute to Sir Rodney's contribution to the work of the General Medical Council, and in particular as Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee, during his time on the Council. The Chair confirmed that discussions were underway with the Appointments Commission on the arrangements for filling the vacancy.
4. Council agreed:
  - a. To invite Professor Stuart Macpherson, as Chair of the Postgraduate Medical Education and Training Board, to continue as a co-opted external member of the GMC's Postgraduate Board for a period of one year following the merger of PMETB with the GMC.
  - b. To invite Mr John Smith, as Chair of the Assessment Committee and of the Surveys Working Group, PMETB, to serve as a co-opted external member of the GMC's Postgraduate Board for a period of one year following the merger of PMETB with the GMC.
5. The Chair advised:
  - a. That the programme of visits around the UK to meet with doctors continued, with recent meetings held in Exeter and Nottingham. Details of the forward programme for the first quarter of 2010 were tabled, and members invited to join the Chair.
  - b. That he had recently spoken at conferences in Glasgow and London for the purposes of engaging with doctors about the GMC's priorities, and in particular revalidation.

## **Minutes of the Meeting held on 22 October 2009**

6. Council approved the minutes of the meeting on 22 October 2009 as a true record.

### **Chief Executive's Report**

7. Council considered the Chief Executive's report, noting progress since the meeting on 22 October 2009, mapped against the key aims in the 2009 Business Plan.

8. Council noted:

a. The successful introduction of licences to practise on 16 November 2009, with 97.3% of all registered doctors providing confirmation of their licensing decision.

b. The findings of KPMG's final evaluation report of the GMC Affiliates Pilots, which was very positive about the quality of the pilots and the impact of the Affiliates in the pilot areas. The Fitness to Practise Reference Group would consider issues arising from the report on 15 December 2009, and Council at its meeting on 16 February 2010. Members emphasised the importance of ensuring that the issues and opportunities were reviewed in the context of the different healthcare systems in the four UK countries, and that the issues should be included in the forward seminar programme for discussion in 2010.

c. The achievement of a reduction in the cost of legal services in the order of £2.4 million against the 2009 budget.

d. The successful implementation of Phase 3 of the Strategic Applications Project.

e. That the British Standards Institute had validated the GMC's ISO 27001 certification for another year, following an assessment of the information security arrangements.

f. That Table 1 in Annex A to the report included information, inadvertently omitted from the October 2009 report, about the numbers of applications for registration in approved practice settings in August and September 2009.

g. That the amount of reserves referred to in paragraph 21 of Annex E to the report should be £19 million instead of £20 million.

9. Council received information on performance against delivery of service targets. The Chief Executive advised that continuing high referral rates of cases into the fitness to practise procedures, together with increases in the average hearing length of some cases, was putting additional and sustained pressure on meeting targets, despite the provision of increased hearing capacity. Whilst this was likely to mean that the adjudication service target would not be met in the early part of 2010, members were advised that a number of measures were being explored with a view to achieving improved performance during the later part of 2010. Progress would continue to be monitored and reported. Members noted that the issues would also be discussed with the Office of the Health Professions Adjudicator during the transition period.

10. Council:

a. Agreed, further to the decision taken at the Council meeting on 22 October 2009 and following further consideration by the Chair of Council, that the Equality and Diversity Research Forum should be chaired by a Council member. Members were invited to submit expressions of interest to the Office.

b. Agreed that the Chair of the Resources Committee should determine any appeal by the Chair of Council in relation to the procedure for dealing with complaints against members.

c. Endorsed the appointment of Ann Robinson and Anne Weyman as members of the Audit and Risk Committee; and of Ann Robinson as Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee.

## **The Corporate Strategy**

11. Council considered the draft Corporate Strategy and draft supporting Communication Strategy, developed during the course of 2009. In developing the drafts, members had agreed an overarching strategic framework setting out the high level priorities for 2010-2013; the GMC's purpose, vision and future framework for medical regulation; and defining what would constitute success in terms of demonstrating that the work undertaken by the GMC had led to improved quality of healthcare and enhanced patient safety.

12. Council agreed:

a. The draft Corporate Strategy at Annex A of the paper, which sets out the GMC's strategic priorities for 2010-2013 focused on protecting the public; helping doctors; working with partners; and delivering value for money.

- b. The draft supporting Communication Strategy 2010-2013 at Annex B of the paper, which sets out the GMC's communication aim, objectives, and the values that will inform delivery of communications. Members agreed that the draft should be amended to include specific reference to the need for four UK country working.

## **2010 Budget and Business Plan**

13. Council considered the 2010 Business Plan, budget and future fee levels for registration. It was noted that the approach to the 2010 budget had been to seek to constrain the costs of operational activities in order to release resources to support policy development and the delivery of the Corporate Strategy; and that significant reductions had been made by stripping out discretionary expenditure and identifying opportunities for business efficiencies and improved effectiveness across the organisation.

14. Council:

- a. Endorsed the 2010 Business Plan.
- b. Endorsed the Resources Committee's decision to approve the 2010 budget based on revenue expenditure budget of £85.3 million matched by income of £85.3 million.
- c. Endorsed the Resources Committee's decision to approve the 2010 capital programme of £4.0 million.
- d. Agreed to make the revised General Medical Council Registration Fees Regulations, to reflect new fee levels from 1 April 2010 of: £145 for provisional registration; £420 for initial full registration; and £420 annual retention fee for registration with a licence to practise. Members noted that the annual registration fee for registration without a licence remained unchanged at £145.
- e. Approved an increase in the threshold for eligibility for the lower income discount, to £22,190, effective from 1 April 2010.
- f. Endorsed the Resources Committee's decision to approve a 2010 revenue expenditure budget of £6.1 million for PMETB activities, to be fully funded by certification fee income, Department of Health gap funding and operational efficiency savings.

15. During the discussion, members:

- a. Noted that operational plans were being finalised and would be circulated early in 2010, with relevant plans included on the agendas of each of the Reference Groups' meetings.

- b. Recognised that there was a balance to be struck between driving improvement, maintaining day to day operational performance, and developing policies and strategies.
- c. Noted that there would be a number of uncertainties in the future on income and expenditure, including the impact of the introduction of licensing, the introduction of revalidation, the transfer of the GMC's adjudication function to the Office of the Health Professions Adjudicator, undertaking PMET functions following the merger, the outcome of the evaluation of the GMC Affiliates pilots, and future development of the GMC's strategies and policies, all in the context of a challenging economic climate. In the light of these circumstances, members agreed that the Resources Committee's decision to maintain reserves towards the higher end of the £15 million to £20 million range was prudent.
- d. Emphasised the importance of effective communications with key interests in explaining the increased fee levels in the context of the GMC's overall work programme, the efficiency savings that have been made, and opportunities for further savings going forward.
- e. Noted that the programme of improvements to the GMC's economy, efficiency and effectiveness continues; and that in 2010 the aim was to achieve efficiencies in the order of 3% when compared to 2009. Going forward, further work would be undertaken during 2010 to identify opportunities for annualised savings in the range of 3% to 5% from 2011 onwards.

### **Revalidation: Progress Report**

- 16. Council considered a report on the ongoing revalidation work programme, including progress on each of the 12 work streams.
- 17. Council:
  - a. Noted the successful completion of Project 2, with the introduction of the licence to practise on 16 November 2009.
  - b. Noted the work of the UK Revalidation Programme Board, including an update on the issues considered at its meeting on 8 December 2009. Members were advised that the UKRPB had agreed to defer consideration of the planned paper on planning the implementation of revalidation pending further one to one discussions with key interests represented on the UKRPB.

c. Noted the work of the Continued Practice Board in considering revalidation issues, including work on the development of criteria and principles for Multi Source Feedback tools and the accreditation of those tools for use in revalidation.

d. Agreed to delegate to the Continued Practice Board the review of submissions from the medical Royal Colleges on standards and evaluation methods in advance of the consultation exercise in 2010.

18. During the discussion, members:

a. Emphasised the continuing need for effective communications with key interests about the information that is currently available to doctors about revalidation and work underway to prepare for implementation, including the readiness of systems upon which delivery is dependent and the timetable for roll-out.

b. Noted that the consultation on revalidation would provide a variety of opportunities for the GMC to communicate key messages on revalidation and engage with key interests.

c. Noted that the proposed consultation on revalidation would be considered by Council on 16 February 2010.

### **Joint Co-ordination Group: Progress Report**

19. Council received a progress report from the Joint Co-ordination Group on progress towards the merger of PMETB with the GMC.

20. Council:

a. Noted that the full business case for the merger had been approved by DH(E) on 23 October 2009, including the provision of £7.1 million of DH(E) funding.

b. Noted continuing good progress on integration activities, including on governance arrangements and other areas of joint work in preparation for the merger.

c. Endorsed the assurance provided by the Joint Co-ordination Group that the project to merge PMETB with the GMC is on track.

### **Member Appraisal**

21. Council considered a proposed framework for the appraisal of Council members, following a review of the previous arrangements.

22. Council:

- a. Noted the key issues and feedback arising from the review, including:
  - i. That 360 degree or multi source feedback provides a helpful and practical core element to the process.
  - ii. The existing Competency Framework provides a good basis for the system with scope for further refinement.
  - iii. The need to provide flexibility within the system to allow members to tailor the process to their own circumstances, in terms of both the application of a system using multi source feedback and the use of external support.
- b. Noted the requirements of the Appointments Commission in relation to recommendations for re-appointment.
- c. Agreed the proposed framework and timetable for Council member appraisal.

**Report of the Audit and Risk Committee**

23. Council received a summary of the Audit and Risk Committee's activities for the period May 2009 to October 2009.

24. Council:

- a. Noted details of the internal audit programme, including:
  - i. The outcome of seven internal audit reports conducted since the previous report, with Sound and Substantial assurances being reported.
  - ii. That an internal audit review had been commissioned on the integrity of Fitness to Practise performance information.
- b. Noted the arrangements for review of risk management, including that a review of risk management was underway.
- c. Noted progress on internal audit work and the Committee's review of external audit services.
- d. Endorsed the activities of the Audit and Risk Committee.

## **Any Other Business**

25. The Chief Executive advised that an event would be held on the afternoon of 22 February 2010 to update members on the results of the research projects on 'Regulating Medical Performance', undertaken as part of the Economic and Social Research Council's Public Services Programme. Further details would be circulated after the meeting.

26. Council noted the date of the next meeting on 16 February 2010.