To note

Evaluation of the Foundation Programme

Issue

1. The General Medical Council’s submission to Medical Education England’s evaluation of the two-year Foundation Programme.

Recommendation

2. To note the GMC submission to Medical Education England on the evaluation of the Foundation Programme (paragraphs 10-12 and Annexes A and B).

Further information

3. If you require further information about this paper, please contact us by email: gmc@gmc-uk.org or tel. 0161 923 6602
Background

3. Medical Education England (MME) was asked to commission a formal evaluation of the two-year foundation programme, introduced in 2005, by former health minister Lord Darzi in his *NHS Next Stage Review: A High Quality Workforce*.

4. The review is being led by Professor John Collins. A similar review, by Dr Alistair Cook, is taking place in Scotland.

5. Professor Peter Rubin met Professor Collins in December 2009 to discuss the background to, and priorities for, the review, and the GMC has observer status on the review group.

6. The GMC submitted written evidence on 26 March 2010, with contributions from Council members, answering the five core questions posed by MEE.

7. The Postgraduate Board noted the submission without further discussion at its meeting on 7 April 2010.

8. Professor Collins will report with recommendations to the Secretary of State and DH (England) on the future path of the Foundation Programme in England by the end of June 2010.

Discussion

9. The Chairs of the Undergraduate and Postgraduate Boards, together with the Convenor of the Education and Training Reference Group, had discussions in March 2010 about how to approach our evidence. Out of this emerged the following key points:

   a. There should continue to be a period of wide and general training at the beginning of a new doctor’s career.

   b. Any changes to the Foundation Programme should only be made in the context of the continuum of education.

   c. Change must be based on a strong evidence base, and the case to move away from the current two-year programme has not yet been made.

   d. There is, however, a need clearly to articulate and communicate the purpose of the Foundation Programme.

   e. The review should identify other improvements that could be made.

   f. The outcome of this review will have UK wide implications as the Foundation Programme is delivered in the four countries of the UK. Measures to take recommendations of the evaluation forward will need to include the devolved administrations as well as England in a process agreed by the four countries.
g. The review may also have implications for the review of the EU Directive 2005/36/EC planned to take place in 2012.

10. The oral evidence that we gave (led by Dr John Jenkins with support from Paul Buckley, Martin Hart and Susan Redward) reflected these points. We have drafted our submission on the same basis, and it is attached at Annex A. We provided other supporting material which is attached at Annex B:

a. The General Medical Council’s (GMC) role in regulating medical education and training.

b. Summary of key developments affecting the pre-registration year (now Foundation Year 1) from 1944 to date.

c. Analysis of requirements, recommendations and notable practice identified in GMC/PMETB quality assurance reports.

d. Note of a seminar of trainees held at the GMC in February 2010 which was facilitated by Lord Naren Patel.

e. Mapping of the Foundation Programme Curriculum to the GMC’s Good Medical Practice Framework for Appraisal and Assessment.

11. Finally, we understand that the Department of Health in England is considering a review of postgraduate medical education and training. However, given the far-reaching implications of this review, and the fact that the Foundation years cannot be seen in isolation from the preceding and subsequent stages of medical education, we believe that there is a need to feed its findings into a wider review of medical education which would need to be conducted on a UK wide basis.

   **Recommendation:** To note the GMC submission to Medical Education England on the evaluation of the Foundation Programme.

**Resource implications**

12. There are none arising from this paper.

**Equality**

13. There are none arising from this paper.

**Communications**

14. The submission will be publicly available on the GMC website and from MEE.