

To consider

Joint Co-ordination Group: Progress Report

Issue

1. At its first meeting on 1 June 2009, the Joint Co-ordination Group agreed to provide a regular progress report to Council on progress toward the merger of PMETB with the GMC, consisting of a short statement of assurance together with a note of any 'by exception' issues that needed to be brought to the attention of Council members. This paper provides a review of progress.

Recommendation

2. To endorse the assurance provided by the Joint Co-ordination Group that the project to merge PMETB with the GMC is on track (paragraphs 10-22).

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

4. In January 2008, the final report of the Independent Inquiry into Modernising Medical Careers recommended that PMETB should be merged with the GMC and, in February 2008, the Secretary of State for Health accepted the Inquiry's recommendation.
5. The benefits of merging PMETB with the GMC include:
 - a. Rationalisation and simplification of regulation: a single competent authority for medical regulation from entry to medical school to the end of a medical career.
 - b. A single point of contact for key interests.
 - c. The opportunity to share best practice and achieve improvements.
 - d. An integrated approach to education and training.
 - e. Access to greater resources through a wider cost base.
 - f. The complete integration with other regulatory functions enabling a focus on the whole doctor at key stages of the career pathway.
6. In advance of the necessary legislation, each body, as a competent authority, must continue to exercise its statutory duties and powers on its own account.
7. With PMETB, we have recognised the need to put in robust arrangements to plan and prepare for the merger, and the need to bring activity together across the two organisations. We have been working increasingly closely with PMETB to agree plans, identify and mitigate risks, and ensure business continuity.
8. To support the merger process, we have put in place joint oversight arrangements, with two groups. The first is the Joint Implementation Group, which acts on behalf of the governing bodies to consider joint proposals from the two management teams and resolves issues as they arise. The second is the Joint Co-ordination Group (which has replaced the Joint Oversight Group), chaired by John Jenkins (with Johann Malawana as Deputy Chair) and comprising PMETB and GMC members, to provide assurance to both governing bodies that risks are being managed, plans are being developed, and resources are in place. The JCG also has a remit to develop key areas of joint working.
9. In addition, with PMETB, we are members of a Joint Steering Group, chaired by the Department of Health (England), which meets monthly to plan and monitor progress.

Discussion

Project phasing

10. There are a number of phases for delivering the project to merge PMETB with the GMC; and, in accordance with our normal practice we will also carry out a post-implementation review and evaluation. The project phases are:

- a. Phase 1 - Scoping and groundwork (now complete).
- b. Phase 2 - Planning and implementation (May 2009–April 2010).
- c. Phase 3 - Delivering post-merger benefits (from April 2010).
- d. Phase 4 - Post-implementation Review and Evaluation (mid-late 2011).

11. The JCG has reviewed and commented on the project governance structure, the phases of the project, and the major milestones up to April 2010.

Assurance and risk

12. During Phase 1, it was recognised that legislation and co-location are ‘critical path’ activities with external dependencies not wholly controlled by PMETB or by us. We have been working closely with DH(E), through the JSG, to identify and mitigate the risks associated with those activities, and to ensure that the necessary arrangements are put in place.

13. Two important and necessary precursors for embarking on Phase 2 were to agree appropriate draft legislation and to secure co-location funding. We were able to report to members, on 5 June 2009, significant progress relating to both:

- a. The draft legislation that will transfer PMETB’s functions to the GMC (a Section 60 Order) was published for consultation on 4 June 2009. The consultation period will end on 28 August 2009. This is the first of two legislative stages, the second of which will be informed by the outcomes of the independent review led by Lord Naren Patel.
- b. DH(E) have confirmed that they have approved our outline business case, including the costs of co-locating the two organisations in our London office.

14. More generally, the JCG has reviewed plans across our four agreed workstreams:

- a. Legislation.
- b. ‘Mechanics’ of merger, incorporating accommodation, human resources, finance and information systems. For Phase 2 we have added two further sub-workstream projects: business integration and the closure of independent operations at PMETB.
- c. Communications.
- d. Post-merger benefits, incorporating agreed areas of joint working and the Patel Review.

15. Of particular note is the process for staffing and human resource issues, which was conveyed to all PMETB staff and appropriate GMC staff at an open forum meeting at the GMC on 18 May 2009. This includes initial proposals on organisational design and an objective process for job evaluation.

Joint working

16. Phase 2 of the project requires maximum engagement with PMETB staff and relevant staff at the GMC.
17. Both organisations agreed, early in Phase 1, to begin early joint work in five specific areas (Annex A).

Planning for 2010 and beyond

18. There are two important strategic planning processes that will be informed by joint work:
 - a. The GMC's longer-term corporate strategy, which will include the Council's vision for regulating all stages of medical education and training in the UK.
 - b. The GMC's Business Plan and Budget for 2010. This will be shaped and informed by the corporate strategy, and will give full consideration to the policy imperatives inherited from PMETB.
19. Both will take account of joint work already underway, the challenges raised by the 'mechanics' of merger (for example, funding models and longer-term IS solutions), and issues emerging from Lord Patel's review, which we expect to report early in 2010. The Postgraduate Board will be closely involved.

Communications

20. External and internal communications are managed by the Joint Communications Group, which meets regularly.
21. We foresee an increase in communications activity as Phase 2 gets underway. This will take two forms:
 - a. *External communications to key interest groups.* Our focus will be on telling key interests what will stay the same in 2009-2010, what the immediate tangible differences will be, and what are the more longer-term benefits and challenges. Among other things we are holding an event for key interests later this month, to coincide with consultation on the draft Section 60 Order.
 - b. *Regular internal communications to staff.* The joint open forum held at the GMC on 18 May 2009 received positive feedback, and we plan to hold more regular joint events as the formal merger becomes closer and joint work increases. We also plan regular bulletins to staff.
22. Given the greater degree of certainty around the legislation and co-location aspects of the project, and on the basis of a progress review of all four workstreams, the JCG is able to give assurance that good progress is being made and that delivery of the objectives flowing from the merger of PMETB with the GMC is on track.

Recommendation: To endorse the assurance provided by the Joint Co-ordination Group that the project to merge PMETB with the GMC is on track.

Next steps

23. The JIG meets on 14 July 2009. Any significant emerging risks or issues will be reported to Council.

Resource implications

24. There are no direct resource implications arising from this progress report.

Equality

25. An Equality Impact Assessment was conducted as part of the process of agreeing the draft Section 60 Order, and Equality and Diversity has been agreed as a formal area of joint working. We plan a joint meeting of PMETB's Equality and Diversity Committee and our own Equality and Diversity Reference Group in September 2009 which, among other issues, will discuss integration of the equality schemes of the two organisations.