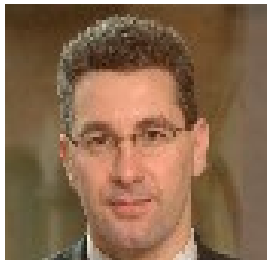


**GENERAL MEDICAL COUNCIL
EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY SCHEME 2011 - 2014**



I am delighted to present the General Medical Council's 2011 – 2014 Equality and Diversity Scheme which outlines how we propose to make meaningful progress on equality and diversity both as a regulator and employer.

The Scheme demonstrates the GMC's ongoing commitment to equality and diversity and illustrates the work that we are undertaking to uphold not just the letter but also the spirit of equality legislation. It provides an overview of what we've achieved already and what we are proposing to do.

We are grateful to those who took the time to give us their views as we developed the Scheme and we will continue to engage with interest groups to help inform our activities as they develop.

Paul Philip
Deputy Chief Executive,
Director of Standards and Fitness to Practise,
Senior Sponsor, for the GMC's work on equality and diversity

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The GMC's Equality and Diversity Scheme 2011 – 2014 sets out how we will deliver on our commitment to embed equality and diversity considerations into our functions and meet our legal responsibilities as a public body under the Equality Act 2010 to:

- a. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- b. Advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups
- c. Foster good relations between people from different groups.

2. The Scheme and accompanying action plan were developed through detailed external and internal engagement. The action plan is structured under seven equality objectives:

- a. Providing accessible information and services
- b. Helping doctors to provide high quality care
- c. Being a fair regulator
- d. Using our influence to create positive change
- e. Being an employer of choice
- f. Improving our evidence base
- g. Our internal governance supports our work to advance equality, diversity and human rights

3. Each action has associated accountabilities, timescales and outcomes. We will review this Scheme and action plan on an annual basis.

BACKGROUND TO THE SCHEME

4. This Equality Scheme supports and builds on our [Equality and Diversity Strategy 2010 – 2013](#) and the work the GMC has done previously to promote equality and diversity. It is linked to our corporate strategy, business plans and directorate action plans. It takes account of the views of the many interest groups who participated in the consultation exercise on the Scheme as well as our own assessment of the relevance of our policies and functions for equality and diversity.

THE LEGAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR EQUALITY

5. This Scheme has been developed in line with the recent Equality Act 2010 which covers the protected characteristics of age, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, disability, religion or belief, race, gender reassignment and pregnancy and maternity as well as associated and perceived discrimination. An overview of the legislative framework is at **Appendix 1**.

ABOUT THE GENERAL MEDICAL COUNCIL

6. The GMC is an independent regulator for doctors in the United Kingdom. We have four main functions - keeping up-to-date registers of qualified doctors, fostering good medical practice, promoting high standards of medical education and taking firm but fair action where those standards have not been met. We are not here to protect the medical profession - their interests are protected by others. Our job is to protect patients and we have strong and effective legal powers designed to maintain the standards the public have a right to expect of doctors. Where any doctor fails to meet those standards, we act to protect patients, if necessary by removing the doctor from the register and removing their right to practice medicine.

7. Patients' interests are best served by independent, accountable regulation and a regulator that is publicly accountable. This means we will put patient safety first, support good medical practice, promote fairness and equality and value diversity and respect the principles of good regulation: proportionality, accountability, consistency, transparency. See **Appendix 2** for more information on the GMC.

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

8. We have invested in a number of initiatives to promote fairness of outcomes and transparency around our policies, procedures and processes. These include:

- a. Issuing guidance for medical schools on reasonable adjustments for disabled people called 'Gateways';
- b. Working to ensure that our website and publications are accessible and reflect diversity;
- c. Providing equality and diversity training for legal assessors and panellists involved in fitness to practise procedures and for all our staff;
- d. Developing action plans for each directorate which shows how they are embedding equality and diversity in their business plans and core activities;
- e. Targeting, consulting and engaging with a diverse range of interest groups in developing and implementing our plans;
- f. Commissioning research to inform our understanding of key developments and trends relating to diverse groups of doctors, patients and communities;
- g. Constantly reviewing and adapting our policies to ensure that they are fair, robust and non-discriminatory for the stakeholders on which they impact;
- h. Participating in employer-led diversity networks and sharing good practice with other regulators and other bodies and partners.

DEVELOPING OUR EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY SCHEME

9. In developing this Scheme we undertook an audit of our functions, reviewed progress we have made on equality and diversity and the steps that are needed to take the agenda forward. The audit of our functions is at **Appendix 3**.

10. We identified a number of equality themes that helped us to structure and carry out a comprehensive programme of consultation in each of the four nations through one to one interviews, a focus group and an online consultation exercise. Further detail on the consultation exercise can be found at **Appendix 4**.

11. By and large consultees agreed with the themes we proposed and these have now been further developed into Equality Objectives. After assessing their functions and policies for relevance to equality, directorates then developed action plans setting out what they propose to do to help the GMC achieve its equality and diversity objectives. The results of this work are set out in the action plan at **Appendix 5**.

OUR ACTION PLAN

12. The action plan is a starting point for our work on equality and diversity. It is structured under seven equality objectives:

- a. Providing accessible information and services
- b. Helping doctors to provide high quality care
- c. Being a fair regulator
- d. Using our influence to create positive change
- e. Being an employer of choice
- f. Improving our evidence base
- g. Our internal governance supports our work to advance equality, diversity and human rights

13. Each action has associated accountabilities, broad timescales and outcomes for delivering our activities. We aim to update and refresh the plan annually in order to reflect our work as it develops.

14. We recognise that monitoring across the protected characteristics at all stages of involvement with the GMC is required in order to support many of the objectives set out in the action plan. We will set out in due course what we plan to monitor and when monitoring arrangements will be in place.