
4a - The Corporate Strategy - Annex B

Communication Strategy 2010-2013

1. The GMC has approved a Corporate Strategy for the period 2010-2013 that sets out the Council's high-level aims for medical regulation. The Corporate Strategy and associated annual Business Plans describe what we intend to deliver; this Communication Strategy focuses on how to ensure that our key interests understand and support our intentions.
2. The Communication Strategy will inform the annual Communications Directorate Operational Plan and itself will be refreshed annually.

Our corporate aim

3. Our aim in the 2010-2013 Corporate Strategy is to demonstrate that regulation improves the quality of healthcare and enhances patient safety. We have focused our priorities around four themes that encompass the approach that will be required to deliver this aim.
 - a. *Protecting the public.* Providing assurance to the public by giving people more confidence that doctors are fit to practise; and providing them with greater access to information about their doctor's practice, and an understanding of the role of the regulator.
 - b. *Helping doctors.* Providing doctors with first class guidance at all stages of their medical careers, thereby enhancing their professionalism for the benefit of patients.
 - c. *Working with partners.* Working in partnership with key interest groups across the UK, Europe, and internationally, particularly the NHS and other healthcare providers, to develop appropriate, more effective relationships that will enhance patient safety.
 - d. *Delivering value for money.* Using our resources efficiently and effectively, and ensuring the organisation is well governed, with a clear purpose and evidence-based policies that demonstrate 'better regulation' principles.

Our communications aim

4. Our aim is to consistently deploy proactive communications to maintain and enhance the reputation of the GMC as a regulator that improves the quality of healthcare and enhances patient safety.
5. We define the GMC as having four key interests: patients and the public, doctors, medical schools and medical Royal Colleges; the NHS and other employers of doctors. Our task as a Directorate is to deliver effective two-way communications that help us to understand, inform and influence these key interests.
6. We will deliver a range of communication activities in order to deliver our strategy, including: media relations; the web; publications; marketing and events; stakeholder engagement; public affairs; and internal communications. We will bring one or more of these together in order to deliver communications projects or campaigns that support the Corporate Strategy.
7. We will identify measures of performance to ensure that we can evaluate the effectiveness of our work.

Our communication objectives

8. Underpinning the four themes in the Corporate Strategy are eight strategic aims. We have used these to develop five high-level communications objectives:
 - a. To increase the awareness of patients/public and their representatives in all aspects of the work of the GMC and to increase the influence of the GMC in public policy debate.
 - b. To increase the involvement of doctors – at all stages in their careers – in the development of GMC guidance and policy; to enhance their understanding of the positive contribution of the GMC to their professional work; and to develop their support for revalidation and other reforms of medical regulation.
 - c. To increase the awareness and understanding of employers and educators of the work of the GMC and how it can contribute to improved standards of healthcare and professionalism.
 - d. To provide an effective corporate communications service that contributes to the maintenance and enhancement of the reputation of the GMC as an effective regulator across the UK and beyond.
 - e. To develop innovative approaches across the range of our engagement activity while providing value for money.

Measurable goals to support the objectives

9. Our strategic approach requires that we set measurable goals against these objectives. Our goals are to demonstrate:

- a. Improved levels of confidence in medical regulation from our four key interests.
- b. Improved understanding of the role and functions of the GMC from our four key interests.
- c. Improved recognition from our four key interests of the GMC as an effective two-way communicator.
- d. A contribution to the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of the GMC as determined by the Resources Committee.

10. We will use a range of measures including survey data to measure our performance against goals 1-3 above.

The communications plan

11. The Communications Directorate will produce an annual plan containing the supporting initiatives – derived from the work priorities of other directorates and our own initiatives – that we judge each year are required to support our strategic communications objectives and deliver our communications goals.

12. To be included in the operational plan any activity, project or campaign must:

- a. Support one or more of our strategic objectives.
- b. Support or be supported by effective engagement with our key interests.
- c. Meet the requirements of the GMC Equality and Diversity Strategy, including where necessary being subject to an equality impact assessment.
- d. Contain at least one success measure agreed, where appropriate, with the client directorate.
- e. Provide value for money.

Our communication values

13. In delivering communications for the GMC we will adhere to a set of communications values that demonstrate the kind of organisation we are trying to be. These values are:

- a. Openness – we will seek to be open in all our communications within the constraints of our legal and operational requirements.
- b. Responsiveness – we will seek to understand and satisfy the needs of our audiences.

- c. Proactivity – we will seek to anticipate and meet communications challenges and demands.
- d. Innovation – we will explore, develop and introduce new approaches to communication that improve our economy, efficiency or effectiveness.
- e. Relevance – we will seek to ensure that our communications are timely, targeted, accessible and of interest to our audiences.

14. We will incorporate these values into the development and appraisal of our Communications Directorate staff.

Internal communications

15. The ability of the GMC to deliver its Corporate Strategy depends on a well-motivated and informed staff team.

16. An additional communications objective for the Communications Directorate will be to provide an effective internal communications service that supports the delivery of the GMC's corporate strategic aims.

17. We will use future staff surveys to ensure that we are meeting this objective.

Reporting

18. We will report on progress towards our communication objectives alongside an annual review of the Corporate Strategy.