

To approve

Minutes of the Meeting on 25 February 2014¹

Members present

Peter Rubin, Chair

Shree Datta
Christine Eames
Michael Farthing
Ajay Kakkar
Deirdre Kelly

Suzi Leather
Jim McKillop
Enid Rowlands
Hamish Wilson

Others present

Niall Dickson, Chief Executive and Registrar
Paul Buckley, Director of Strategy and Communication
Judith Hulf, interim Director of Education and Standards
Anthony Omo, Director of Fitness to Practise

Christine Payne, Council Secretary
David Pearl, Chair of the Medical Practitioners Tribunal Service (item 5)
Una Lane, Director of Registration and Revalidation
Neil Roberts, Director of Resources and Quality Assurance

¹ 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** It was noted that apologies for absence had been received from Helene Hayman and Denise Platt.
- 2** Council noted that, as recently announced, the Chair and Hamish Wilson would be stepping down from Council at the end of 2014.

Minutes of the Meeting on 10 December 2013

- 3** Council approved the minutes of the meeting on 10 December 2013 as a true record.

Matters arising

- 4** Council noted that, in relation to paragraph 6f of the minutes, a useful discussion between Enid Rowlands and the Executive had taken place following the previous meeting about the data strategy work and how it would help inform future strategic plans. This issue would be incorporated into Council's forward work programme.

Chief Executive's Report

- 5** Council considered the Chief Executive's Report, noting developments in the external environment and progress on our strategy, and key outcomes of note from the Performance and Resources Board meeting on 22 January 2014, and the Strategy and Policy Board meeting on 13 February 2014. Council noted:
 - a** The commentary on significant issues potentially affecting operational performance.
 - b** A summary of progress in delivery of our operational plans.
 - c** A financial summary to 31 January 2014.
 - d** Operational performance and volumes of activity for fitness to practise, registration and certification work, Professional and Linguistic Assessments Board tests, contact centre and reception services, and revalidation.
 - e** Summary information on current judicial reviews and appeals.
- 6** Council noted an increase of 33% in Stream 1 cases during the first two months of 2014, compared to 2013. Case levels would continue to be monitored to ensure that any action necessary to manage the increase was taken.
- 7** Council noted that the 2014 staff pay award, which applies from 1 April, had been approved by the Chief Executive, following a recommendation by the Performance and Resources Board. The core award would be 1.5% with scope for additional progression.

- 8** Council approved the proposed amendments to the Statement of Purpose of the GMC/MPTS Liaison Group that it should meet on a bi-annual rather than quarterly basis.
- 9** During the discussion, Council noted:
 - a** The interim management arrangements which had been put in place pending the appointment of a new Chief Operating Officer and a new Director of Education and Standards. These arrangements would temporarily supersede the relevant sections of the Governance Handbook which relate to the responsibilities of the Chief Operating Officer, and meant that the responsibilities of the Chief Operating Officer under the Financial Regulations have reverted to the Chief Executive. Recruitment for the roles would start shortly.
 - b** That it was less likely that the Law Commissions' Bill would be taken forward in the fourth session of Parliament by the Government. Should this be the case, a process of pre-legislative scrutiny was expected. We had established a team to support this work. Given that we had a number of important reforms which had been placed on hold pending the Law Commissions' Bill, we would revisit with the Department of Health what measures could be taken through a Section 60 Order if required.
 - c** That the Section 60 Order in relation to language testing had been laid before Parliament, and that both legislative and operational changes were expected to be in place by summer 2014.
 - d** We had established a cross-regulatory working group on the duty of candour, and were working through this group to try and strengthen the consistency of approach between regulators.
 - e** That discussion was ongoing with Health Education England and other key interests about the possibility of moving the point of full registration.
 - f** That we were committed to the on-going development of the medical Register, to see how it could be further developed to be more useful and accessible to patients, doctors and employers. This issue, and the data strategy work, would be included in Council's forward work programme.
 - g** That the Strategy and Policy Board had endorsed the direction of travel of the review into our standards work. It was agreed that a summary of the review should be circulated to members for information.

Human Resources Report 2013

- 10** Council considered the annual report on Human Resources issues relating to the GMC as an employer, an updated diversity report for 2013, and the main themes for the proposed People Strategy.
- 11** During the discussion, Council noted that:
- a** We typically have between 80-90 staff vacancies per year, and that we have demanding service level targets for recruitment, as well as having a competitive employment benefit package which helps to attract and retain staff.
 - b** An increase in internal promotion and transfers, as well as the introduction of the Employer and Regional Liaison Services, were contributing factors to an increase in recruitment activity. While current retention levels remain broadly stable and in line with the wider labour market, some difficulties are experienced in appointing to some posts including Investigation Officers and some Information Services roles.
 - c** Within the next 18 months we would be conducting a review to benchmark remuneration levels to ensure we remain a competitive and attractive employer.
 - d** We have a range of proactive staff engagement activities and consultation arrangements in place, including an established Staff Forum. It was agreed that a summary of the arrangements should be circulated to members for information.

Report of the Chair of the Medical Practitioners Tribunal Service

- 12** Council considered a report of the Chair of the Medical Practitioners Tribunal Service (MPTS) on the work and performance of the MPTS since the previous report to Council in September 2013.
- 13** During the discussion, Council noted that:
- a** Recruitment for new lay panellists had recently taken place, to replace those demitting office between September 2013 and May 2014, with over 800 applications received. Interviews had taken place, and 70 appointments were expected to be made. Once the process had concluded, the diversity information for the new appointments would be made available to members.
 - b** The Quality Assurance Group meets regularly to review determinations made by panels, looking in detail at the sanctions and reasons given, and to provide feedback on areas of good practice as well as when concerns are identified. These issues were also addressed through regular panellist communications and annual training sessions.

Report of the Review of Quality Assurance of Medical Education and Training

- 14** Council considered a report of the Review of Quality Assurance of Medical Education and Training, carried out during 2012 and 2013.
- 15** Council noted the outcome of the review, and agreed that it would return to the issue at a future meeting to endorse the report of the review, in order to allow further time for consideration of a number of points raised by members, and to discuss implementation and next steps.
- 16** During the discussion, Council noted:
 - a** That the review builds upon work we had already undertaken, with the development of common standards based on outcomes rather than curriculum.
 - b** That it would be helpful to discuss the plans for implementation, including the issue of how we could use and share information in reports such as the Annual Specialty Report with colleges, patients and junior doctors to help drive improvements in training and the quality of patient care.
 - c** That we had an important role in providing public assurance, as well as maintaining public trust, in our quality assurance work.
 - d** That a published scale of regulatory sanctions might be considered to support more effective interventions.
 - e** The role of the medical Royal Colleges, including what the scope might be of their enhanced role and interest in the training environment.

Amending the List of bodies entitled to award UK Primary Medical Qualifications

- 17** Declarations of interest were noted from the Chair, as his partner, Professor Lindsey Davies, had been a member of the GMC's education visit team at Swansea University; and from Jim McKillop, who had been involved in the previous review of Swansea University College of Medicine in his capacity as former Chair of the GMC's Undergraduate Board.
- 18** Council considered and agreed a request to add Swansea University to the GMC's List of bodies entitled to award UK Primary Medical Qualifications.

Making sure all licensed doctors have the necessary knowledge of English to practise safely in the UK

19 Council considered a report on the outcome of the consultation *Making sure all licensed doctors have the necessary knowledge of English to practise safely in the UK*, and the related proposed changes to:

- a** The General Medical Council (Licence to Practise and Revalidation) (Amendment) Regulations 2014.
- b** The General Medical Council Fitness to Practise (Amendment) Rules 2014.
- c** The General Medical Council (Voluntary Erasure and Restoration following Voluntary Erasure) (Amendment) Regulations 2014.
- d** The General Medical Council (Restoration following Administrative Erasure) (Amendment) Regulations 2014.

20 Council:

- a** Noted the changes to the draft Fitness to Practise Rules following the consultation.
- b** Noted the consultation report.
- c** Noted the independent audit of the responses to the consultation.
- d** Agreed to delegate authority to the Chair of Council to make the Regulations (as listed in paragraph 19 above), once any final drafting points had been agreed with Department of Health lawyers.

2015 Schedule of meetings

21 Council agreed the 2015 schedule of Council, Committee and UK Advisory Fora meetings.

Any other business

22 Council noted that the next meeting would be a seminar and closed session held on 3 April 2014, which would be held in London.

Confirmed:

Peter Rubin, Chair

21 May 2014