

To consider

Chief Executive's report

Issue

1. This report sets out progress on our strategic aims and significant changes in our external environment since Council last met:
 - Section one: outlines developments in our external environment.
 - Section two: reports on progress on our strategy.

Recommendation

2. Council is asked to consider the Chief Executive's report.

Section one — Developments in our external environment

Major events affecting our strategic priorities

3. The report of the Public Inquiry into Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust will be published on 6 February 2013. We gave evidence to the Inquiry and have been monitoring developments and preparing for the launch of the report.
4. We have recently taken part in a number of events ahead of its publication. These include a roundtable organised by NHS Employers chaired by the Secretary of State for Health and a roundtable organised by the Dr Foster Ethics Committee at which Stephen Dorrell MP spoke.
5. On 23 January 2013, the European Parliament voted on the Recognition of Professional Qualifications Directive. This included three issues which have a major impact on the regulation of doctors in the UK. The outcome was positive in each case:
 - a. Maintaining the proposed length of basic medical training at five years (all UK programmes will be compliant).
 - b. Giving clear powers to the GMC and other regulators to test the language skills of EU health professionals after recognising their qualifications, but before giving them access to the profession.
 - c. Requiring regulators to circulate information about fitness to practise cases, including where they have erased professionals or put conditions on their practice.
6. The European Council of Ministers will consider the proposed Directive in the next few months and, thereafter, member states will have two years to bring the changes into national law.

Government and Parliamentary activity which may impact on our work

7. The House of Commons Health Committee published its report on the GMC on 3 December 2012 following our annual accountability hearing. The report was positive and constructive, welcoming the leadership role we have taken in relation to the profession and concluding that we are performing effectively.
8. The report also recognised the achievement of launching revalidation, and supported our efforts to change the law so we can language test doctors from the European Economic Area. The report called for a change in our current target time for fitness to practise cases from 15 to 12 months. We are working to achieve this and will report to Council later this year on progress.

9. In his speech in London on 21 January 2013, the Prime Minister cited the issue of hospital doctors' working hours 'being set by Brussels' as an example of where the UK's relationship with the EU needed to be renegotiated. We plan to publish our report on the impact of the working time regulations shortly.

10. The government has commissioned a review into how the Liverpool Care Pathway is being used. The review, chaired by Lady Neuberger, is expected to report in the summer.

11. On 8 January 2013, the Chair gave evidence to the Parliamentary Commission on Banking Standards and on 30 January 2013, the Chair appeared before the Joint Committee scrutinising the draft Care and Support Bill which establishes Health Education England as a non-departmental public body.

Key engagements

12. The Chair and I have had several meetings with Dr Dan Poulter MP, the minister responsible for professional regulation, on a range of subjects including the arrangements for the revalidation of locums and language testing. I am also due to meet Mark Hoban MP, Minister for Employment, who is seeking advice on doctors' professional responsibilities.

13. On 10 January, Paul Buckley and I met with the Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) to discuss differential pass rates in the RCGP examinations.

14. On 21 December, I appeared before the Review of the Regulation of Cosmetic Interventions, chaired by Sir Bruce Keogh. In our evidence we stressed the potential contribution of revalidation, the development of credentialing (accrediting doctors for their knowledge, skills and performance in a defined area of practice) and our standards work.

Other points of interest in the external environment

15. David Prior has been appointed Chair of the Care Quality Commission replacing Dame Jo Williams. The Chair and I will meet him in early March.

Section two — Progress on our strategy

Strategy and Policy Board

16. The Strategy and Policy Board met in shadow form on 30 January 2013 to discuss ways of working. The first substantive meeting will be on 18 March 2013 and in future this report will include key issues discussed at the Board.

Legislative reform

17. We have been engaging Department of Health officials on the timetable for legislative change affecting the GMC's work. There have been a number of delays but we are pleased that a set of 'quick win' rule changes have now been agreed with

the Department. We expect these changes to the rules to be in force by early May. In addition the Section 60 Order required to establish the Medical Practitioners Tribunal Service in law as a committee together with associated changes to our adjudication function has now been given a timetable and we expect the changes to be in place by mid-2014. We are also encouraged that the Department has agreed to consult on legislative change to support language testing of doctors from the EU this summer, with a view to changing the Medical Act by early next year. Further changes in European law (see paragraph 5 above) will extend this power.

18. However, the future timing of other changes we are seeking remains uncertain. These include significant reforms to our fitness to practise procedures and to the way we quality assure undergraduate medical education provided overseas by UK medical schools. The Department has now indicated that it wishes to deal with these matters through the draft Bill that the Law Commission is planning to produce early next year. At this stage though, we do not know either the detail of legislative changes or the likely timetable for its passage into law — the Department hope it will be introduced in the 2014/15 session of Parliament.

Responsible Officers

19. We have responded to the Department of Health's consultation on draft amendments to the Responsible Officer Regulations 2010. The amendments reflect the structural changes to the health system in England and require Responsible Officers to ensure the language competency of doctors on their list.

National Quality Board

20. Last year we contributed to drafting the National Quality Board's report Quality in the new health system. The report was published in its final form on 18 January 2013.

Education concerns

21. We monitor concerns about training environments, including issues with facilities or programmes, the safety or well-being of patients and doctors. At the start of 2012 we had 30 outstanding concerns which had risen to 53 in January 2013. This may be because we have encouraged reporting rather than evidence of a deterioration in quality. We now have a Response to Concerns Assessment Team to respond quickly to concerns and we are committed to be more open and transparent about these concerns and any action taken.

Good Medical Practice

22. We are preparing for the launch of the new version of our core guidance *Good Medical Practice* in March 2013, and for the first time we will also produce a guide to *Good Medical Practice* for patients. We are consulting with patient groups and others across the UK over the format of the guide.

Publication of other guidance

23. On 31 January 2013 we published updated versions of our guidance on prescribing and on assisted suicide.

Supporting information

- Details of the review of the Liverpool Care Pathway:
<http://www.dh.gov.uk/health/2013/01/review-lcp/>
- The terms of reference of the cosmetic interventions review:
<http://www.dh.gov.uk/health/2012/12/responses-cosmetic-surgery/>
- The Law Commission's consultation on professional regulation reform:
<http://lawcommission.justice.gov.uk/consultations/healthcare.htm>
- The National Quality Board's *Quality in the new health system*:
<http://www.dh.gov.uk/health/category/policy-areas/nhs/nqb/>
- Updated guidance documents following publication:
<http://www.gmc-uk.org/guidance/index.asp>
- Further information on the contractual duty of candour can be found here:
<http://www.dh.gov.uk/health/2012/12/duty-candour/>
- Further information on the review of the Liverpool Care Pathway can be found here:
<http://www.dh.gov.uk/health/2013/01/review-lcp/>
- The terms of reference for Bruce Keogh's review of the regulation of cosmetic interventions can be found here:
<http://www.dh.gov.uk/health/2012/12/responses-cosmetic-surgery/>
- The Dr Foster Hospital Guide can be found here:
http://download.drfoosterintelligence.co.uk/Hospital_Guide_2012.pdf
- The Law Commission's consultation on the regulation of health and social care professional can be found here:
<http://lawcommission.justice.gov.uk/consultations/healthcare.htm>
- The National Quality Board's report on *Quality in the new health system* can be found here:
<http://www.dh.gov.uk/health/category/policy-areas/nhs/nqb/>
- The updated guidance documents will be available following the publication date on the guidance pages on our website:
<http://www.gmc-uk.org/guidance/index.asp>

If you have any questions about this paper please contact:

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