

12 December 2017

## Council

*To approve*

## Minutes of the meeting on 7 November 2017\*

### Members present

Terence Stephenson, Chair

Steven Burnett  
Shree Datta  
Christine Eames  
Michael Farthing  
Anthony Harnden  
Helene Hayman

Deirdre Kelly  
Paul Knight  
Suzi Leather  
Denise Platt  
Amerdeep Somal

### Others present

Charlie Massey, Chief Executive and Registrar  
Susan Goldsmith, Chief Operating Officer  
Paul Buckley, Director of Strategy and Communication  
Una Lane, Director of Registration and Revalidation  
Colin Melville, Director of Education and Standards  
Patricia Morrissey, Council Secretary  
Anthony Omo, General Counsel and Director of Fitness to Practise  
Neil Roberts, Director of Resources and Quality Assurance

\* 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 The Chair welcomed the following observers to the meeting:
  - a Paul Reynolds, the new Director of Strategic Communications and Engagement, who would join the GMC in January 2018.
  - b Mary Morgan-Hyland, Head of Governance and Council Secretary, who would return from maternity leave in January 2018.
- 2 The Chair reported that Council had approved, on action taken between meetings, the reappointment of Patricia Moultrie and Judith Worthington as members of the MPTS Committee.

## Minutes of the meeting on 28 September 2017

- 3 Council approved the minutes of the meeting on 28 September 2017 as a true record.

## GMC Corporate Strategy 2018-2020

- 4 Council considered the draft GMC Corporate Strategy 2018 – 2020, which had been further developed in light of Council's feedback.
- 5 Council approved the GMC Corporate Strategy 2018 – 2020 subject to the following proposed revisions:
  - a Redrafting the success measure on supporting good medical practice to state that the GMC would "demonstrably" support good medical practice or "get better at supporting good medical practice."
  - b Redrafting references to regulation in the Corporate Strategy to ensure the tone was not inadvertently negative, broadly speaking it was not regulation per se that was necessarily burdensome but rather the processes around it.
- 6 During discussion Council noted:
  - a That consideration would be given to how the strategic aims outlined in the Corporate Strategy could be developed into measurable Key Performance Indicators.
  - b That the plan was that the new strategy would be formally launched around the GMC Conference in March 2018.
  - c That Council would have the opportunity at its July 2018 away day to discuss progress against the strategy.

## The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2018-2020

- 7 Council considered the draft Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (ED&I) Strategy 2018 – 2020, which had been developed with the particular support from Shree Datta, Christine Eames, Deirdre Kelly and Amerdeep Somal. It was noted that the final version of the strategy would be considered by Council for approval in December 2017.
- 8 Council were supportive of the direction of the draft strategy to date and agreed that the following points should be considered and incorporated, as required:
  - a Reviewing the references to the Council's role in approving the ED&I strategy and holding the executive to account for its delivery. Further emphasis should be added in relation to Council's role, if necessary.
  - b Further information on barriers to progression and how we plan to address these going forward.
  - c References to the importance of respecting religious and cultural differences; this was particularly important as the diversity of the profession increased and as pressures in the system increased.
- 9 Council also highlighted the importance, when engaging with stakeholders, to also engage with the carers/ advocates of those stakeholders with learning difficulties. Council noted ongoing work with Mencap across the GMC.
- 10 During discussion Council noted:
  - a That consideration would be given to taking external advice on the implementation plan and metrics of the strategy.
  - b The current advice on rights to free medical treatment would be clarified.
  - c The GMC had well established staff networks for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT), parents and carers and there was interest from staff in developing Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) and health and disability networks in 2018. The GMC was also a proud supporter of Pride in London and Manchester.
  - d Flexible working and the intergenerational aspects of such arrangements would continue to be considered as part of the implementation of the strategy.

## GMC annual report of corporate complaints

- 11 Council considered the *Independent review of the General Medical Council customer complaints handling: Annual report*.
  - 12 Council noted Verita's positive response to the GMC's complaints handling process and commended the work of the team.
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**13** During discussion, Council noted:

- a** That further consideration would be given to differentiating complaints from feedback or opinions, and differentiating between complaints arising from fitness to practice cases and corporate complaints.
- b** The challenges the GMC faced in bringing complaints to a close, particularly in cases where our complaints process had been exhausted but the complainant did not agree with the GMC's response and continued to correspond on the matter. Terminating correspondence at an earlier stage was supported in these situations.
- c** That the Continuous Improvement team would be asked to look at complaints closures. The results of this review would be considered by Council in April 2018.
- d** The considerable pressures faced by GMC staff when dealing with ongoing complaints and the importance of ongoing support provided to staff.
- e** Complaints described as vexatious were often high profile, particularly complex and multifactorial, and typically involved on-going correspondence even when the complaints procedure had been exhausted and the GMC had done everything in its power to resolve the situation.
- f** Describing complaints as vexatious was emotive and some externality on our vexatious complaints policy would be helpful.

**Any other business**

**14** Council discussed its working arrangements in relation to participation in Council meetings and Committee meetings via video conference (VC) or teleconference. Council agreed that participation in meetings via VC or teleconference should be at the discretion of the chair, and should only be used in exceptional circumstances. Council noted the practical difficulties of participating by VC or teleconference for larger or longer meetings, such as Council and Audit and Risk Committee.

**15** Council noted:

- a** That the seminar on 11 December 2017, in Manchester, would start at the earlier time of 5pm.
- b** The date of its next meeting on 12 December 2017, in Manchester.

Confirmed:

Terence Stephenson, Chair

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