General Medical Council

Annual Report of the ED&I Steering Group

Action	To note
Purpose	As part of their governance of ED&I, Executive Board receive an annual report from the ED&I Steering Group.
Decision Trail	The recommendations approved in 2021, from a governance and compliance review which included reconstituting the ED&I SG so it is part of our governance of ED&I, included an annual report to EB of the ED&I SG's work. There have been four annual reports provided to EB between 2022 and 2025. This report will be the fifth, and will provide a summary of progress, alongside any key achievements of the group this year.
Recommendation(s)	To note 2026 ED&I SG activities and how we are progressing our continuous improvement activities.
Annexes	Annex A: ED&I SG Statement of Purpose
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Agenda item 4
Annual Report of the ED&I Steering Group

Background

1 A governance review was completed in May 2020 into the compliance and governance of the GMC's ED&I practices in relation to its role as a regulator. This review included assessing the effectiveness of the role of the ED&I Steering Group (SG), which up until that point, had functioned as a sounding board, with no formal governance role.

2 In April 2021, Executive Board (EB) reviewed the findings and agreed to reconstitute the group. This process included a statement of purpose (see **Annex A**), defined accountability to EB through annual updates on progress and a more diverse membership of the group by level/grade, protected characteristics and diversity of thought and lived experience.

3 The group supports the Executive Board by providing advice on progress against our ambitions. It reviews and challenges the outcomes we are achieving, the pace of progress, barriers preventing progress (whether structural, behavioural, cultural, financial or individual) and considers steps needed to achieve our ambitions. The group also considers our position on emerging ED&I issues, opportunities, and where we may need to adjust or enhance our strategic approach.

ED&I SG – 2026 activities

4 This section of the paper summarises the work of the group in 2026 and updates on key actions, matters or achievements since the last EB report in October 2025.

Topics covered in 2026

5 Key topics covered by the ED&I SG this year are summarised below. Please note that this is not an exhaustive list of all agenda items in 2026. Policy and project leads who brought these items were seeking assurance and expert input from the group to inform their work programmes.

- Progress updates on our corporate employment and regulatory targets (e.g. staff survey measures and Fairer Training Cultures.
- The implications of the Mann Review and updates on recommendations received.
- Feedback on the development of the 2026 ED&I plan.
- An update on our Regulatory Fairness Review programme.
- Reflections on the constitution and themes from the new Anti-Discrimination Advisory Group.
- A session on using Outreach's work with stakeholders to progress ED&I initiatives.
- The People Team's workforce ED&I targets.

Update on other matters or achievements

6 Several examples were provided in the EB report in 2025 of how the group's feedback has been used to inform and strengthen activities. This evidence base continues to build, with many examples this year of how the group has informed organisational activities, for example:

- The team developing the Raising Concerns Guidance were prompted by the Steering Group to involve further external organisations and charities in their consultation, in addition to the External Advisory Forum who have been planned into the work. They have subsequently consulted a range of organisations, such as the Association of Pakistani Physicians & Surgeons, and the Christian Medical Fellowship who are part of our ED&I external forums. Surviving in Scrubs and the Working Party on Sexual Misconduct in Surgery also contributed perspectives on sexual harassment particularly affecting young women in healthcare. The Disabled Doctors Network were also approached, to provide perspectives on the guidance and key issues for disabled doctors, and input was received from the AoMRC's Patient and Lay Committee.
- The Steering Group considered how PA/AA data is collected and analysed, noting that faith declaration may depend on external factors. They also suggested a link between monitoring PA/AA referral and revalidation data and the preventative measures from the Fairer Employer Referrals project. Both points will inform plans to monitor data on PA/AA protected characteristics going forward.
- The GMC recruitment forms have been changed following concerns raised by the FTSU representative in the group, to reflect updated terminology around neurodiversity.
- Regarding the Regulatory Fairness Review, comments and questions from the group provided valuable insights and perspectives, around both the breadth and depth of the programme's scope. This will be particularly helpful as the programme moves into developing its narrative for the transition to business as usual in the new year.
- The engagement process to develop new workforce EDI targets 2027 – 2030 commenced with the Steering Group in June 2026. The diversity of the group contributed to a rich discussion and supported endorsement of the recommended way forward.
- An interactive Outreach item provided valuable insights into ED&I issues within the healthcare system, which members could share with their team's raising awareness and strengthening a joined-up approach between our external stakeholders and internal processes.
- The external newsletter published by Marcomms has been made more accessible following extensive feedback from the group.

7 A successful recruitment campaign was completed at the beginning of 2026, and the high volume and quality of applicants indicate strong interest and visibility of the Steering Group amongst GMC colleagues.

The Group's continuous improvement activities

8 Having assessed the agenda items considered over 2026, and the flow of new topics for the Group to consider, we have reviewed the optimum frequency of the Steering Group and decided to shift from monthly meetings to bi-monthly. This is also in the context of the wider priority of identifying more efficient working and reducing demands on the organisation.

9 In May, the Steering Group took part in interactive workshops from Outreach and Marketing Communications. Strong engagement with both sessions demonstrated the Group's openness to varied formats and highlighted opportunities to tailor future agenda items to directorate needs.

10 The Steering Group accessibility factsheet published on our intranet has received positive feedback, indicating that it is being used effectively by colleagues who are new to the group, and has been particularly useful for those with neurodivergent conditions.

11 Network chairs are now included as standard in all communications regarding the group, including having sight of all papers and notes, even if they are not attending the meetings.

Key focus for 2026 into 2027

12 Key areas of focus for 2026 into 2027 will include:

- Strengthening forward planning by working proactively with directorates to secure agenda items in advance, align discussions with ED&I priorities, major programmes and equality considerations, while retaining flexibility to consider emerging issues and organisational priorities as they arise.
- Using a range of meeting formats to promote engagement, encourage meaningful discussion and ensure organisation wide oversight.
- Maintaining accessibility for and participation of operational areas by keeping meeting formats and materials under review, ensuring they remain effective and inclusive.
- Sustaining strong stakeholder engagement through regular feedback and communication between the ED&I team, contributors, network chairs and Steering Group members.
- Monitoring and evaluating impact, ensuring the Steering Group continues to add value to the organisation, with progress reported through future Executive Board updates.

Conclusions and recommendations

13 The group has provided scrutiny and oversight of a wide range of activities over the last year and there is strong evidence that colleagues have used feedback from the group to inform their activities. We want to place on record our gratitude to those colleagues who serve as members of the Steering Group, and those who have brought items for discussion, and EB Directors may want to remind themselves of who from their Directorate has contributed to the Group's work (at Annex A). We welcome any reflections from EB on the EDI Steering Group's activities and achievements.

Annex A - ED&I Steering Group – Statement of Purpose

Purpose

The ED&I Steering Group provides oversight and scrutiny for our work on ED&I across the organisation to ensure we deliver against our ED&I commitments, legal obligations as an employer and regulator, and the ED&I commitments in our Corporate Strategy.

Duties and Activities

The ED&I Steering Group:

- Provides assurance and reports on progress in relation to its activities annually to the Executive Board, highlighting any issues or risks.
- Oversees and scrutinises progress of performance against the ED&I commitments and priorities set out in our Corporate Strategy, including our diversity targets to make progress in tackling persistent issues related to inequality, and to achieve positive change and outcomes for everyone. This involves:
    - **a** reviewing the progress, we are making in relation to delivering our ED&I targets and informing the annual progress report to Council on achievements, issues and risks.
    - **b** advising on the development and delivery of diversity targets and strategic / diversity strand specific plans to underpin delivery of ED&I priorities including the value and need for these activities.
    - **c** reviewing ED&I performance via the Performance and Risk Report (PRR) (which covers both regulatory and employment activities). Also, ED&I data for BAU, e.g. the National Training Survey, registration and revalidation processes etc to identify actions to address impacts for groups who share protected characteristics.
    - **d** reviewing and informing the annual HR ED&I report to Council before submission and agreeing actions to address any disproportionalities.
    - **e** providing oversight and evaluation of the outcomes from ED&I / fairness audits, ED&I related research and wider equality impact assessments, externally where they are relevant to our regulatory and employment activities, and internally, including our approach/plan to conducting them, to strengthen assurance and delivery.
- Makes recommendations to the Executive Board / SMT on the development, design and implementation of ED&I interventions, based on quantitative and qualitative evidence.

- Influences corporate strategic and business planning to ensure ED&I is being effectively considered and addressed in organisational activities.
- Ensures communication, alignment and collaboration to foster a joined-up and cohesive approach to progressing ED&I, both internally with other directorate / business areas, groups and colleagues engaged in ED&I activities, and externally with key stakeholders.
- Formalises the process of knowledge exchange across the GMC and raises awareness of the ED&I issues that arise from our regulatory and employment activities.
- Provides advice and guidance to enable the organisation to spot gaps, risks or opportunities e.g. potential impacts or mitigations in policy development.
- Considers ED&I related risks and the adequacy of our organisational response. This includes commissioning relevant horizon scanning to better understand or anticipate emerging issues.

The Steering Group may make recommendations for topic led working groups or action learning sets to be established to progress a specific ED&I issue.

Members are responsible for building their own capacity and understanding of ED&I issues and keeping abreast of key topical issues (with support from the ED&I team).

Working arrangements

- The Steering Group will meet on a bi-monthly basis for a maximum of 90 minutes, but this will be reviewed regularly. Members may also conduct business outside of meetings via email where needed.
- Members are expected to attend all Steering Group meetings unless there are extenuating reasons or reasonable circumstances e.g. annual leave. Members should only delegate attendance in limited and exceptional circumstances.
- Members are expected to read papers in preparation for meetings and also respond to any emails that relate to Steering Group business.
- The time commitment for a Steering Group member is approximately 3 hours every month.
- In the interests of openness and transparency all ED&I Steering Group papers and information will be published on the intranet for colleagues to see.
- Occasionally members may be exposed to sensitive information – this should be kept confidential and not disclosed outside of the group.

Membership

- Director, Strategy and Planning (Chair).
- Assistant Director, Strategy, Business Planning and Inclusion
- Head of ED&I
- Assistant Director, Registration and Revalidation
- Assistant Director, Education Operations
- Freedom to Speak Up (FTSU) Guardian
- Assistant Director, Fitness to Practise
- Executive Manager, MPTS
- Assistant Director, People
- Assistant Director, Audit and Risk Assurance
- Assistant Director, GMC Legal
- Strategic Communications Manager, SC&E
- Head of the Office of General Counsel & the Director, Fitness to Practise (staff representative)
- Education Data Analyst, Education and Standards (staff representative)
- Project Administrator, Outreach (staff representative)
- Senior Legal Adviser, Fitness to Practise (staff representative)
- Principal Legal Adviser, Fitness to Practise (staff representative)
- Education Quality Analyst, Education and Standards (staff representative)
- Rotating clinical fellows
- Rotating diversity staff networks chairs
- ED&I Manager and Officer (responsible for managing and supporting the group)

The membership of the group will be reviewed every 3 years. Any members who leave during their term of office will be replaced in accordance with a documented appointment procedure. Although the membership will be formally reviewed every 3 years, the broader working arrangements of the group will be reviewed annually, to ensure it remains fit for purpose.