Professor Terence Stephenson starts as our new Chair

Professor Terence Stephenson took over from Professor Sir Peter Rubin as the Chair of the GMC’s Council from the start of 2015.

As Chair, together with Council, he will take forward the ambitious agenda set out in the GMC’s Corporate strategy 2014–17 (www.gmc-uk.org/corporate), hold the executive team to account and monitor its performance, and make sure the organisation maintains effective relationships with those who have a key interest in its work.

Terence said: ‘I am committed to working with doctors, patients, employers and educators to build on the achievements of the GMC over recent years and to make sure we continue to use our expertise and leadership to help ensure safe, high quality care for patients and high standards of professionalism.’

Terence is Nuffield Professor of Child Health at the Institute of Child Health at University College London, and Honorary Consultant Paediatrician at UCL Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust & Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children NHS Foundation Trust. He was previously Chair of the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges and President of the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health, and was a member of the GMC Council between 2009 and 2012.

New Council member

Julian Lee has also been appointed as a new lay member of the GMC’s Council, replacing Hamish Wilson who stepped down at the end of 2014 after six years of distinguished service. Find out more at www.gmc-uk.org/news/26014.asp.

Reviewing how we treat vulnerable doctors under investigation

We have committed to reviewing the way we treat vulnerable doctors who are in our procedures. This follows an independent report we commissioned into doctors who committed suicide while being investigated. We are following up on all its recommendations but want to go further and undertake a wider review to see if there is more we can do to reduce the stress on doctors who already have significant mental health or addiction issues when they are referred to us.

Find out more at www.gmc-uk.org/news/26011.asp.
What do you think of the GMC’s confidentiality guidance?

Over the coming year we are reviewing our guidance on confidentiality. This is one of the key issues about which doctors seek advice. Can you help? We are running a short survey to help us understand what you think of our existing guidance and learning materials on confidentiality, and how we could improve them.

Tell us what you think by 23 January at www.gmc-uk.org/confidentialityreview.

Find out more about the review on our blog at https://gmcuk.wordpress.com/2014/12/10/what-do-you-think-of-our-confidentiality-guidance/?dm_i=OUY,31OZO,4KFBL1,AY65I,1.

Dealing with conflicts of interest

Do you have financial interests in medical products or services? Have you been paid for attending a conference or giving a talk?

Our guidance Financial and commercial arrangements and conflicts of interest covers these and other issues, such as whether you can accept a gift from a patient or their relative, commissioning services in the NHS, and how to make sure any interests you have don’t prevent your patients making informed decisions.

Read the guidance at www.gmc-uk.org/guidance/ethical_guidance/21161.asp.

GMC conference 2015

Creating a culture of openness, safety and compassion

16 March 2015 | The Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre, London

This year the GMC conference is on 16 March in London. It will cover differential attainment, what information the GMC should publish about doctors, and patient safety in undergraduate medical education.

If you are interested in attending please register at www.gmc-uk.org/gmccconf – it is free.

There are also less than two weeks left for doctors in training to submit an abstract for the conference poster exhibition at www.gmc-uk.org/about/events.asp.

In December, we hosted a conference in Belfast. For a flavour of the discussion, take a look at the Twitter feed #GMCCconfNI (https://twitter.com/search?f=realtime&q=%23gmccconfni&src=typd).

If you can’t join us, you’ll be able to follow the discussion using #GMCCconf.
GMC hosts its first conference in Northern Ireland #GMCCConfNI

In December, we hosted our first conference in Belfast. The conference brought together more than 100 doctors and other key partners to discuss issues relating to medical professionalism and patient safety.

There are more than 7,000 doctors registered with the GMC in Northern Ireland, and the health system and legislation governing medical practice there is notably different from other parts of the UK.

The GMC’s Chief Executive, Niall Dickson, said:

‘The different health systems in which doctors’ work of course have a huge impact on their practice and how our guidance applies, and so we have had a team in Northern Ireland since December 2005. This year alone we engaged with more than 1,200 doctors and medical students across Northern Ireland. In some sessions, up to 90% of doctors said it had encouraged them to reflect on their practice or make a change in the way they work.

‘As we enter our tenth year, the team will roll out a wider programme of professionalism events working with doctors and healthcare organisations to encourage ongoing conversations and reflections in the future.’

How the day unfolded

The event opened with keynote speeches came from the GMC’s Chief Executive, Niall Dickson, and Northern Ireland Health Minister, Jim Wells MLA. Delegates also heard from and posed questions to a panel including:

- Dr John Woods, Chair of the BMA’s Northern Ireland Council
- Dr Paddy Woods, Northern Ireland’s Deputy Chief Medical Officer
- Professor Keith Gardiner, Chief Executive and Postgraduate Dean of the Northern Ireland Medical and Dental Training Agency
- Maeve Hully, Chief Executive of the Northern Ireland Patient and Client Council.

Closing reflections came from Dr Anne Kilgallen, Medical Director and Responsible Officer for the Western Health and Social Care Trust and Maureen Edmondson, Chair of the Patient and Client Council.

During the day, delegates also attended workshops to explore issues around confidentiality, raising and acting on concerns and communicating with patients.

Find out more

See the discussion on Twitter using #GMCCConfNI.

Find out more about our Northern Ireland, Scotland or Wales offices at www.gmc-uk.org/about/devolved_offices.asp.

Find out more about the work of our regional liaison service in England at www.gmc-uk.org/about/22348.asp.

We’re hosting a UK-wide conference on 16 March in London, following our 2013 conference in Manchester. Registration is now open: www.gmc-uk.org/gmccconf.