To consider

2015 equality and diversity plans

Issue
1. The themes of the plans for activity in 2015 to ensure that we remain compliant with equality and human rights legislation; deliver against the commitments made in our Equality and Diversity Strategy 2014-17; and consider the relevant equality and diversity issues in our core activities.

Recommendations
2. The Strategy and Policy Board is asked to agree:
   a. The key themes and direction of travel for the 2015 equality and diversity plans.
   b. That the Performance and Resources Board will review progress in implementing the plans later in 2015.
   c. That an audit of papers considered by the Strategy and Policy Board and by Council be undertaken, to ensure that the equality duty is being considered in line with good practice.
**2015 equality and diversity plans**

**Issue**

3 Our Equality and Diversity (E&D) Strategy 2014-17 reaffirms our vision for where we want to be as a result of our work in this area:

- a Being a fair regulator: considering the impact of our activities on our interest groups who share protected characteristics; remaining legally compliant; analysing and sharing E&D data; understanding the differentials in outcomes that arise from our work; consulting and involving people from the protected groups.

- b Confidence and reputation: doctors, patients and our other interest groups believing that we act fairly in our dealings with them as a regulator and employer.

- c Being a fair employer: being a diverse workforce at all levels, and treating everyone who works for us with dignity and respect.

4 The Strategy also sets out some outcomes that we want to make progress towards achieving by 2017:

- a Ensuring that people from the protected groups have a good understanding of our role and how to raise concerns appropriately.

- b Ensuring that all patients receive good standards of care by giving doctors guidance and support to meet the needs of patients with protected characteristics.

- c Working with others to understand why some doctors are at increased risk of involvement in our fitness to practise procedures.

- d Working with others to ensure that medical education and training is fair.

- e Having comprehensive equality and diversity data on registrants and complainants, and a good understanding of how our activities affect doctors and patients with protected characteristics.

**Scrutiny and challenge**

5 We continue to face considerable scrutiny and potential challenge on the grounds of fairness and compliance with the Equality Duty. The action plans play a role in enabling us to respond to this ongoing scrutiny. Some examples of the issues being raised with us include:

- a The differences in referrals and outcomes from our fitness to practise procedures (as we have reported, for example, in the *State of medical education and practice* report).
b The fairness of training pathways and assessments generally, and the differentials in outcomes for some cohorts of doctors, particularly UK qualified BME doctors.

c The extent of our statutory responsibilities under the equality duty for those who deliver aspects of our functions. For example, the role of the professional regulator in ensuring that curricula and training (for which medical schools and medical Royal Colleges are responsible) equip doctors to meet the needs of particular groups of patients with protected characteristics.

d The impact of revalidation on doctors from the protected groups and the fairness of related processes, for example, objective assessments.

e How we ensure that decision-making in each of our functions is fair and unbiased.

Themes for our work in 2015

6 The work in plans for 2015 builds on progress to date and contributes to delivering against the commitments made in the E&D strategy. There are five themes that cut across this year’s E&D plans for each GMC directorate and the Medical Practitioners Tribunal Service (MPTS).

a Considering the E&D issues that arise in major policy and change projects, including the development of a National Licensing Examination; the review of Education Training Standards; objective assessments and the evaluation of revalidation; implementing the Professional and Linguistic Assessments Board (PLAB) test review; and the Section 60 and Rules changes for fitness to practise.

b Ensuring that we remain compliant: assessing our compliance with the equality duty for major projects; developing guidance for the medical royal colleges and faculties; rolling out unconscious bias training for staff making decisions across our functions; meeting our legal obligations for the accessibility of our website, publications, facilities and IS projects.

c Data and intelligence: developing our evidence base and our understanding of areas of risk by cohort, environment and stage of career to aid policy and process development. This includes research and data analysis to inform this year’s State of Medical Education and Practice report. Other examples include a review of the consistency of decisions made by Interim Orders Panels; a study to understand the nature of referrals by employers; and an extensive programme of research and analysis into the extent and causes of differential attainment.

d Maintaining standards: assessing the E&D issues in the reviews of our guidance on confidentiality (and other ethical guidance); assessing compliance with the standards on E&D through our quality assurance of medical education and training; considering the E&D issues when approving changes to curricula and assessments.
e Engage: continuing to target and involve doctors, patients and other people from the protected groups in our consultations and outreach throughout 2015.

There are a number of initiatives and projects identified in the plans that have far reaching E&D implications, for example, our programme of work on differential attainment. This work will be underpinned by the development of a joined up corporate ‘narrative’ with supporting communication plans to help to consolidate our reputation as a fair regulator, and raise awareness of our work amongst our interest groups.

Workforce plans

The high level themes for our 2015 Human Resources action plan are to:

a Act on E&D related insights from our data and the staff survey, and to carry out a full E&D analysis of the staff survey recommendations.

b Benchmark our approach with two external networks of organisations working on the diversity agenda.

c Support staff wellbeing through additional training, internal communication and promoting existing mechanisms for staff welfare.

d Review flexible working and scheduled homeworking.
Supporting information

How this issue relates to the corporate strategy and business plan

There are E&D issues arising from each of the five strategic aims of the Corporate Strategy. The E&D action plans help to ensure that these issues are identified and considered in a systematic way. They also provide an audit trail that demonstrates the work underway across the GMC in this regard.

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