To consider

**Task and finish groups for standards and ethics projects**

**Issue**

1. The establishment of task and finish groups for two guidance development projects.

**Recommendations**

2. The Strategy and Policy Board is asked to:

   a. Note the establishment of, and schedules for, the task and finish groups for the development of new guidance for doctors who offer cosmetic interventions, and for the review of our confidentiality guidance.

   b. Approve the proposed reporting and governance arrangements.

   c. Note the updated Terms of Reference, at Annex A.
Task and finish groups for standards and ethics projects

Issue

Establishment of the task and finish groups

3 At its meeting on 22 May 2014, the Board gave approval in principle for two task and finish groups to be established to:

a Develop new guidance for doctors who offer cosmetic interventions.

b Revise our guidance on confidentiality.

4 At the same time, Board approved draft terms of reference for these task and finish groups, at Annex A.

Meeting schedules for the two groups

Cosmetic interventions

5 The cosmetic interventions task and finish group has already started work. In the first phase of the project the group is developing draft guidance for consultation in the summer of 2015 and is scheduled to meet on four occasions:

a 26 January 2015.

b 13 February 2015.

c 12 March 2015.

d 27 March 2015.

6 A fifth meeting may be scheduled ahead of consultation if needed.

7 In the second phase of the cosmetics interventions project the task and finish group is expected to meet once. It is anticipated that the group will finish its work in the autumn of 2015 (timing is dependent on the length of the consultation, which is yet to be decided).

Confidentiality

8 The confidentiality group is in process of being established. It is expected to meet on three occasions to prepare revised guidance for consultation in the autumn of 2015. The approximate dates are:
In the second phase of the project the group is expected to meet on two further occasions. It is anticipated that the group will finish its work by April 2016.

**Reporting mechanisms and governance**

10 The secretariat (provided by the Standards and Ethics Section) will provide regular progress reports, on behalf of the task and finish group, to the Director of Education and Standards (the project sponsor).

11 We propose that the following governance approach should be adopted for both guidance development projects:

- **a** The Strategy and Policy Board approves draft guidance for consultation and the consultation plans. Given that the guidance is only in draft at this stage we do not propose to seek Council approval to publish it for consultation.

- **b** Council discusses the draft guidance through a slot at one of their scheduled meetings during the consultation period (in the case of the cosmetics guidance this will be just before the consultation starts, because of the way meeting dates fall). This is to ensure that Council is able to influence the final draft of the guidance.

- **c** Consultation outcomes are agreed in principle by the Strategy and Policy Board before the outcomes and revised guidance are presented to Council.

- **d** Council approves the final guidance prior to publication, and approves plans for any further materials.

- **e** The Strategy and Policy Board approves any further materials to be published that derive from the guidance approved by Council.

12 Following this approach, the key dates for the confidentiality review are currently expected to be as follows:

- **a** Strategy and Policy Board – approval of draft guidance and consultation plans – on circulation July/August 2015.

- **b** Consultation launch – late September 2015.

- **c** Council engagement – 11 November 2015.
Consultation closes – December 2015.

Consultation outcomes agreed in principle by the Strategy and Policy Board – date to be confirmed.

Council approves guidance for publication – 19 April 2016.

For the cosmetic interventions guidance, the schedule would be:

- Consultation launch – 8 June 2015.
- Consultation closes – currently scheduled for July 2015 (dependent on consultation length – to be agreed).
- Consultation outcomes agreed in principle by the Strategy and Policy Board – date to be confirmed.
- Council approves guidance for publication – currently scheduled for 10 December 2015.
Supporting information

How this issue relates to the corporate strategy and business plan

This issue relates to Strategic Aim two: to help raise standards in medical education and practice.

If you have any questions about this paper please contact: Mary Agnew, Assistant Director for Standards, Guidance and Education Policy, magnew@gmc-uk.org, 020 7189 5325.
Terms of reference for Task and Finish Groups for guidance development projects

Purpose
Section 35 of the Medical Act 1983 (as amended) provides the General Medical Council with the power to ‘provide, in such a manner as the Council thinks fit, advice for members of the medical profession on standards of professional conduct; standards of professional performance; or medical ethics’.

The GMC provides this advice in the form of guidance on good practice, which sets out the standards of competence, care and conduct that the GMC expects of all doctors.

The GMC’s Strategy and Policy Board has agreed that work should start to develop new/revised guidance on [Private and Cosmetic Practice/ Confidentiality]. It has agreed to set up a Task and Finish Group, comprised of members external to the GMC, to help inform this work.

Role of the Task and Finish Group
The role of the Task and Finish Group is to advise on the content and structure of guidance. It will gather and consider evidence to inform the development of draft guidance; make policy recommendations; and submit a consultation draft to the Strategy and Policy Board for approval.

The GMC’s remit is UK wide and the Group’s approach to developing guidance must take account of that fact. Bearing in mind the GMC’s role and remit, the Group will need to consider:

a what should be the core issues for inclusion in [updated] guidance

b whether and how any related issues should be addressed by the GMC
**Membership**

The Task and Finish Group should have a membership that reflects a variety of professional, public and employer perspectives from across the UK. The group should be able to provide input on the ethical and legal considerations, healthcare policies and practice, and the views and experience of professionals, patients and other key interest groups. The Chair will be nominated by the Director of Education and Standards and approved by the Chief Executive of the GMC.

The Task and Finish Group will be comprised of:

- At least one licensed medical practitioner with clinical experience that is relevant to the guidance under development
- At least one member of a professional organisation that represents the interests of doctors
- At least one member of an organisation that represents the interests of patients
- At least one member from an employer or service provider organisation
- At least one member of a medical education and training organisation
- At least one member from each of the four countries of the United Kingdom
- At least one member who can provide legal and ethical advice that is relevant to the guidance under development
- At least one member from an organisation representing a nursing (or other health or care professional) perspective

Group members will participate as individuals, applying their particular experience and knowledge to the issues under consideration, rather than representing the interests of any particular organisation.

**Duties**

a. To review the content of any existing GMC guidance relevant to the issues under consideration

b. To consider evidence presented by the secretariat about current policies and practice and the nature of existing or emerging concerns about good practice relating to [guidance subject]

c. To consider the implications of developments in the law and any current ethical debates which bear on [guidance subject]

d. To identify and consider any work other organisations have done, or are doing, on issues in [guidance subject] and how this might relate to or complement any GMC guidance
e  To advise on the scope and structure of new guidance; recommend the policy positions to be adopted; and support development of the draft text, taking account of the need for consistency with the principles underpinning other GMC guidance

f  To consider ways in which key interest groups can contribute to the development of the draft guidance from the initial drafting into the public consultation stages

g  To oversee any external engagement and evidence gathering activities that support drafting of the new guidance

h  To agree a consultation draft of new guidance for submission to the GMC Strategy and Policy Board

i  To review the results of formal consultation exercises and to make recommendations about revisions to the guidance based on the analysis provided

j  To consider ways in which the new guidance should be promoted and its impact assessed

k  The Task and Finish Group will be dissolved when the guidance is published

**Timetable**

The aim is to produce draft guidance for consultation by [Insert date] with a view to publication in [Insert date]. An outline project plan will be provided by the secretariat and any subsequent changes to milestones and meeting dates will be negotiated through the Chair.

The Group will meet approximately five times for approximately 2 hours each time. Work will also be progressed by e-mail where possible.

**Reporting**

The Group will provide regular progress reports to the Director of Education and Standards, who will report to the Strategy and Policy Board.

**Secretariat and attendance**

The GMC Standards and Ethics Section will provide secretariat support to the Group. This will include background research, drafting papers and guidance, planning and delivery of engagement and consultation activities, analysing and providing reports on the outcome of public consultation. The secretariat will record actions and minutes for each meeting.

Agendas and draft papers will be agreed between the Assistant Director for Standards and Guidance and the Chair of the Group.
The Director of Education and Standards and other GMC staff with relevant policy or operational responsibilities will attend as required for the discussion of agenda items.

Confidentiality and Freedom of Information

Reports on the development of the project will be made public throughout the process.

Agendas and agreed minutes will not be published, although they can be disclosed in response to a request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Task and Finish Group papers and discussions at meetings are expected to be treated ‘in confidence’ and not disclosed to third parties without prior agreement. Members will be expected to direct any enquiries from journalists to the GMC media team.

Members should be aware that the GMC is a public body and that information it holds is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (including papers, e-mails and other correspondence). This means that e-mails, papers and other documents related to the work of the Group (from which members may be identifiable) may be released where there is a relevant request.

Fees and Expenses

Members of the Group will not be remunerated unless they are existing GMC Associates. Travel and subsistence expenses will be paid in line with the GMC’s policy for Council members and Associates. If an external Chair is appointed, remuneration will be determined by the Chief Executive.