Minutes of the Meeting of the General Dental Council held at 10am on Friday 27 June 2025 in Open Session at Wimpole Street, London

Council Members present:

Lord Harris (Chair)
Reshard Auladin
Ilona Blue
Anne Heal
Angie Heilmann MBE
Serbjit Kaur MBE
Sheila Kumar
Mike Lewis
Timea Milovecz
Simon Morrow
Laura Simons

Executive Team Members in attendance:

Tom Whiting	Chief Executive and Registrar
Stefan Czerniawski	Executive Director, Strategy
Gurvinder Soomal	Chief Operating Officer
Katie Spears	Executive Director, Legal & Governance
Theresa Thorp	Executive Director, Regulation (Via Videolink)

Staff and Others in attendance:

Samantha Bache	Associate Director, Finance
Rebecca Cooper	Associate Director, Policy and Research
David Criddle	Head of Business Intelligence, Delivery and PMO
Rachael Gilleard	Deputy Head of Governance (Interim)
Dorian Kennedy	Policy Manager
Dan Popple	Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)
Joanne Rewcastle	Associate Director, Communications & Engagement
Ross Scales	Head of Upstream Regulation
David Teeman	Head of Regulatory Intelligence
Ian Vaughan	Head of Governance (Interim) (Secretary)

Others in Attendance

Members of the public and other GDC staff attended online and in person as observers.

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

1.1 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, including the Council Members, members of the public and staff.

1.2 The Chair advised attendees the meeting was being streamed live and informed them that while the camera would be fixed on Council Members and GDC staff, they could be visible on the broadcast.

1.3 Apologies were received from Donald Burden, Council Member.

2. Declaration of interests

2.1 The following declarations were received:

a. Item 11, Scope of Practice Guidance – Council Members working clinically or running a dental business.

3. Questions Submitted by Members of the Public

3.1 No questions had been received before the meeting.

4. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting

4.1 The full minutes of the public meeting and the abbreviated minutes of the closed meeting held on 25 April 2025 had been **approved via correspondence.**

5. Matters Arising and Rolling Actions List

5.1 The Council **agreed** that the recommended action was closed.

6. Decisions Log

6.1 The Council **noted** that no items for Public Council had been approved via correspondence.

7. Assurance Reports from the Committee Chairs

7.1 The Council heard from the Committee Chairs in respect of the assurance taken from work conducted in Committee since the last Council meeting.

<u>Audit and Risk Committee</u>

7.2 The Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) informed the Council that the Committee had met once since the last meeting. The Committee received an update from the Chief Executive and discussed aspects of the report.

7.3 The Committee considered the Annual Report and Accounts 2024 (ARA) and acknowledged the work of the team in successfully developing an ARA that the Committee was very happy to recommend to Council.

7.4 The Committee received a Risk Deep Dive on financial delegations, an update on actions from an IT discovery audit and discussed the findings from the Purple Teaming Cyber Assessment.

7.5 The Committee scrutinised the Strategic Risk Register and also considered the internal audit process, significant legal developments and Whistleblowing and Gifts and Hospitality policies.

Finance and Performance Committee

7.6 The Chair of the Finance and Performance Committee (FPC) informed the Council that the Committee had met once since the last Council meeting.

7.7 The Committee considered the organisational performance report for Q1 2025 and discussed the presentation and content of the report, and the appropriate level of detail for Council reporting.

7.8 The Committee also discussed the round 1 of the Business Plan 2026-28 and received an in-depth review of the performance of the Dental Complaints Service.

Remuneration and Nomination Committee

7.9 The Chair of the Remuneration and Nomination Committee (RemNom) informed the Council that the Committee had met once since the last Council meeting.

7.10 The Committee received updates on succession planning and talent management, the gender, ethnicity and disability pay gaps and the progress of the Total Reward project.

7.11 The Committee scrutinised and endorsed the processes for setting objectives of the Chief Executive and appointments and reappointments in 2026. The Committee also discussed and recommended to Council the change to the remuneration of the Senior Independent Council Member.

7.12 The Chair of RemNom updated Council on the appointment of the new Chair of the GDC and the appointments of two new lay Members and explained the next steps to the appointments process.

7.13 The Council **noted** the assurance reports.

8. Chief Executive's Report

8.1 The Chief Executive provided an update on key areas of organisational delivery, structured in line with his objectives, and focussing on matters that might not otherwise be captured in other reports and for discussion with the Council.

8.2 On people, culture and staff engagement, the Council was updated on the 'Inspire; leadership' development programme, the Management Essentials course and key internal communications events including the session arranged for FPC Members and staff on 12 June.

8.3 Updating on external engagement, collaboration and partnerships, the Council heard that there had been meetings with the Scottish Government, the Scottish Health Minister, Royal College of Surgeons in Edinburgh and an emergency NHS dental facility in Edinburgh.

8.4 The Council discussed the town hall event that was held on 19 June 2025, with approximately 280 staff members joining the event, and heard that it provided staff with an update on the strategy, and there was a healthy debate with staff asking questions and engaging through the chat function.

8.5 The Council discussed the gender and ethnicity pay gaps and the programme of work and prioritisation, such as investment in management and development, that had been developed to reduce the gaps. The Council heard that RemNom had discussed the way in which progress would be measured.

Action: The Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion to ensure that gender and ethnicity pay gap data is added to the EDI updates to the Council.

8.3 The Council **noted** the update.

9. Organisational Performance Report

9.1 The Head of Business Intelligence and PMO introduced the report, which provided a view of organisational performance in relation to delivery of the GDC's core functions and progress towards the priorities set within the Costed Corporate Plan (now termed Business Plan) for 2025. A summary of Q1 2025 was provided for the reconciled budget position and latest month end updates were provided for delivery and operational performance, where appropriate.

9.2 The Council **discussed** the following:

a. The presentation of the report was welcomed. The Council noted that the way the information was presented was clear and helpful and had been set at the right level for Council and was accessible for the public. The Council requested a snapshot of the GDC registers be added to future reports.

b. The Council sought clarification on various aspects of the report including education quality assurance and the additional inspections required, resource for case examiners and the DPHS, the approach to the throughput of cases and the activation of the additional resource to address the uptick in cases arriving at the Hearings stage of the FtP process.

c. Mindful of the ongoing procurement exercise, the Council discussed next steps for the Overseas Registration Examination (ORE) tender including the evaluation process, moderation exercise and date the procurement was due to conclude. The Council noted the process was included in the project delivery summary under tenders and mobilisation, and acknowledged the report could be refined further to provide more clarity on the 'route to green' in the RAG status.

d. Other areas raised by the Council included the process for returned or incomplete submissions, engagement with public bodies/representatives and the Q1 budget versus actuals year to date, and the extent to which it was on track.

e. The Council noted that the report would be published on the reporting section of the GDC website.

9.3 The Council **discussed** the report.

10. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy (2024-2025)

10.1 The Chief Operating Officer introduced the report accompanied by the Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) and the Head of Regulatory Intelligence. The report provided an update on the progress of the current Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy 2024-2025 (EDI Strategy), a detailed overview for each EDI objective and the potential data sources for reporting on GDC's 2024/25 EDI bridging strategy.

10.2 The Head of Regulatory Intelligence explained how the bridging strategy reporting measures would be reviewed and refined down for bridging strategy reporting in Q1 2026, and how this work would also inform EDI measures, monitoring and evaluation.

10.3 The Executive Director, Legal and Governance, explained the role of the Executive Leadership Team, with each member taking strategic ownership of an EDI objective, providing corporate leadership through network sponsorship and overseeing the delivery of specific initiatives, e.g. improving templates and guidance in respect of conducting equality impact assessments.

10.4 The Council **discussed** the following:

a. The challenge of creating a sufficiently robust process to measure success, noting that qualitative data through colleague engagement and feedback from across the organisation, including those outside of the colleague networks, was necessary. The Head of Regulatory Intelligence explained the importance of the GDC decision making being led by evidence and favouring those improvements in respect of EDI delivery that would make the most impact against strategic aims.

b. The proposed RAG rating was acknowledged as being helpful, but there was a sense that the volume and level data included was probably more operational than was appropriate for the Council audience. The Council noted that focusing on the 24 main actions, without including the 58 sub-actions would be a more appropriate level of detail for Council discussion.

c. The role and work of the EDI Data Group in evolving the metrics and ensuring the data sets were complete and accurate. The EDI Group would work collaboratively to streamline the existing reporting measures in the 2024/25 EDI bridging strategy and lead on ensuring that the EDI data capture across the GDC was fit for purpose.

d. The role of the Cross Regulatory Research Group and the PSA. The Council discussed the joint endeavours and the benefits and importance of engaging with other regulators on best practice.

e. The actions to embed EDI into all aspects of the GDC's work including the Corporate Strategy 2026-2028. Noting there was still work to be done, the Council was happy with the direction of travel and the inclusion of EDI into the Strategy, but stressed the importance of retaining a clear picture of the desired EDI outcomes.

f. The progress against the PSA Standard on EDI. The Council heard that PSA Standard 3 was monitored by the EDI Delivery Group which had a clear understanding of what was expected and what was required to deliver against it.

10.5 The Council **discussed** the report.

11. Scope of Practice guidance

11.1 The Head of Upstream Regulation introduced the report, which provided an update on the progress of the guidance for Scope of Practice through to implementation. The Council was asked to note the consultation outcome report and approve publication of the revised guidance.

11.2 The Council **discussed** the following:

a. The technical aspects of the guidance and the broader implications of the changes. The Council sought clarification on various aspects of the guidance and how these would apply in practice.

b. The profession-specific information and how and where the boundaries of the roles may overlap. The Council recognised that in practice, the boundaries would not be as clearly defined, and it was important for all involved that there were clear lines of accountability. The guidance provided that clarity.

c. The stakeholder responses post consultation and whether there were lessons the GDC could learn. The Council heard that the points raised through the stakeholder engagement had not all been raised during the consultation. Nevertheless, the Council agreed it was right that the GDC listened to and acted upon the issues raised. Lessons learned would therefore be around how to obtain full and considered responses at the right time.

d. The Outcome report and the fact that supporting materials and examples would be helpful, particularly for dental professionals who have trained overseas. The Council noted the intention to provide supporting documentation in due course.

11.3 The Council **noted** the consultation outcome report and **approved** publication of the revised guidance for Scope of Practice, subject to some minor amendments.

12. The Council's Role in Consultations

12.1 The Policy Manager introduced the report which was intended to bring greater clarity to the decision-making processes regarding internal and external consultations, particularly regarding the role of the Council and the Executive for approving consultation responses and consultation proposals.

12.2 The Council **discussed** the following:

a. The position proposed was in line with the existing protocols, but it was important to embed a consistency of approach. The distinction between the three options covered in the protocol were made clearer to show the protocol is dependent upon the type of issue under consideration, with ELT involved in the development of each option. A flow chart would be added to illustrate the process.

b. The approach to the approval of final text and the extent to which it was the best use of Council's time. In line with their respective roles, the recommended approach was for the Council to help steer the GDC's policy and strategic approach and then for the GDC executive and staff to develop proposals that gave effect to that approach.

c. The scope of the protocols and the recommendations to elaborate on certain aspects including the Council's involvement in outcome reports. The Council discussed the circumstances where there might be a change in approach, whether some form of materiality test should be applied and how urgent matters would be addressed. The Council noted that the protocols were designed as a framework and therefore there would continue to be some flexibility.

12.3 The Council **discussed** and **noted** the position and process set out in relation to the Council's role in consultations.

13. Forward Plan

13.1 The Council **noted** the Forward Plan.

14. Any Other Business

14.1 The Council noted this was the last Council meeting for the Head of Governance (Interim) and wished him well in his new role.

15. Date of Next Meetings

13.1 The Council **noted** the date of the next meeting – 26 September 2025 at Wimpole Street, London.

The meeting closed at 12.25.