Update on actions taken in response to Professional Standards Authority Review of the GDC’s performance against the Standards of Good Regulation in 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose of paper</th>
<th>To report on the actions being taken to address issues identified in the PSA’s annual review for 2015/16 against the Standards of Good Regulation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Status</td>
<td>Public Session</td>
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<tr>
<td>Action</td>
<td>For discussion.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Corporate Strategy 2016-19</td>
<td>Performance: Objective 1&lt;br&gt;To improve our performance across all our functions so that we are highly effective as a regulator</td>
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<td>Decision Trail</td>
<td>The PSA Performance Review was published on 14th November 2016.&lt;br&gt;A detailed action plan was presented at Public Session of Council on 1st December 2016.</td>
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<td>Next step</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<td>Recommendations</td>
<td>The Council is asked to note and discuss this report.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Authorship of paper and further information</td>
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<td>Appendices</td>
<td>None.</td>
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Executive summary

1. The Professional Standards Authority (PSA) Annual Performance Review provides an annual assessment of the GDC’s performance against twenty-four standards of good regulation, split across four separate functions: guidance and standards, education and training, registration and fitness to practise (FTP).

2. The 2015/16 Performance Review was published by the PSA on 14th November 2016. It concluded that the GDC met all the Standards of Good Regulation in relation to its Guidance and Standards, Education and Registration functions; and had met 7 of the 10 Standards for Fitness to Practise.

3. A detailed presentation was made at Public Session of Council on 1st December 2016 setting out the Executive Team’s proposed actions in relation to the Annual Performance Review. The paper focussed primarily on the proposed work undertaken in relation to the FTP function to secure the outstanding three Standards in FTP. This paper provides an update on the work being undertaken in the other areas to maintain the Standards achieved.

4. Having changed the annual review process in 2016, the PSA has just begun work on reviewing the Standards of Good Regulation themselves. At this stage, PSA staff members are talking to stakeholders to gather views on how the Standards need to develop. There will be a consultation on the direction of change in the spring and then a further one on the proposed new Standards later in 2017.

Guidance and Standards

5. The GDC has met all the PSA standards for Guidance and Standards in each year that we have been reviewed. We continuously review our work in this area to ensure that we continue to meet the PSA standards. As part of the regulatory reform work taking place across the GDC we are seeking to embed our Standards throughout registrants’ working lives, starting during training. To this end we are developing a programme of student engagement which will introduce trainee dental professionals to the GDC, its functions and its requirements.

6. We will be doing more to feed back learning points from FTP cases to registrants, to help them avoid pitfalls. We are working with FTP to identify suitable cases and will expand the standards microsite on the new GDC website with case studies based around particular Standards. We will use our various digital communication channels to highlight these to the profession.

7. In addition, we will:
   a. continue the rolling review of the additional guidance documents which support the Standards, beginning with the Standards for Commissioning and Manufacturing Dental Appliances to ensure that registrants are aware of the requirements of the new Medical Devices Directive (due early 2017);
   b. review and revise/expand the guidance for employers, given the increasing presence of multiples in the dental sector;
   c. work with the other healthcare regulators to explore the development of joint guidance on conflicts of interest;
   d. continue to implement the Evidence Strategy to ensure that policy and guidance is based on sound evidence and to share the results of that work.
8. We are working with the PSA and with colleagues across the GDC on the proposed revision of the Standards of Good Regulation and will keep Council updated on developments.

**Education and Training**

9. All five of the PSA standards of Good Regulation for Education and Training have been met by the GDC in the PSA performance review. We are looking to continuously develop and improve our work to ensure that the standards continue to be met.

10. In future, as part of our corporate objective of securing regulatory reform, we are committed to ensuring information from our other statutory functions (particularly FtP) is included in education programmes and CPD.

11. The Education and QA Team are investigating sources of intelligence and information about education programmes outside the quality assurance activity undertaken by the team. This includes:

   - the research undertaken by Peninsula regarding FtP data;
   - working with the Registration Team to ensure that the qualification data within the CRM database is as accurate as possible. The aim of this is to ensure that significant confidence can be placed in future reports produced, including those indicating the relationship between education programmes and FtP cases; and
   - a survey of new registrants that provides the opportunity for reflection on their primary training.

12. By the end of the 2017/18 academic year, all programmes will have been inspected against the Standards for Education. A significant project for the team throughout 2017 will be the development of a risk-based approach to quality assurance. From the 2018/19 academic year, we intend to introduce a revised quality assurance schedule which will be based on the risk profile of each education programme. The risk profile will relate to a range of factors including information gathered from outside quality assurance activity, such as that listed above, as well as findings at inspections and through the annual monitoring exercise. It is planned that this profile will determine the timing, frequency, duration and type of activity undertaken. Council and PRB will have the opportunity to provide feedback on this development throughout 2017.

13. Following a pilot in 2015/16, we are also continuing to develop the quality assurance process for specialty training. The next step will be a consultation on the revised Standards for Specialty Education in early 2017. We are also working with the Specialty Advisory Committees in the development of updated curricula that will be outcome-based, contain shared generic outcomes and be of a consistent style.

14. The work of the QA team will be moving onto the CRM database in 2017. This will provide a significant benefit in terms of recording and retrieving information and storing templates for letters and emails, as well as assisting with planning and providing links with other GDC teams. It will also help to ensure that the most up-to-date information regarding education programmes is easily accessible across the organisation.

15. It is planned for there to be greater levels of engagement with education providers outside the quality assurance process, following the successful pilot of a workshop with hygiene and therapy providers. This workshop focused on three Standards of Education that were proving harder to meet, as well as updates on key developments within the sector and at the GDC. The QA team will also play a significant role in the development and delivery of the Student Engagement Strategy.

16. In preparation for the introduction of ECPD in 2018, we will draft new guidance to support the revised CPD scheme. The guidance will reflect the feedback received during the consultations and will be developed in discussion with stakeholders.
Registration

17. All five Standards of Good Regulations concerning Registration have been met in the 2015/16 performance review.

18. In January 2016, Registration made changes to operational processes to introduce alert mechanisms. To be compliant with revisions made to the Directive 2005/36/EC on the recognition of professional qualifications, the GDC was required to implement processes to facilitate the sharing and receiving information of professionals with restrictions or prohibitions on their practice with other European competent authorities. This requirement was a driver for change to transfer all publication responsibility for the online register to Registration (it was previously shared with FTP). The change in process for publishing sanctions on the online register ensured we met the third Standard of Good Regulation for Registration which the GDC did not achieve in the 2014/15 performance review.

19. The Registration directorate are continuing to review and improve processes, particularly the launch of phase two of online applications at the end of January 2017 will result in efficiencies to timeliness of first registration applications and improve the registration process for applicants.

Fitness to Practise

20. We are committed to further improvements against all FTP Standards as part of our commitment to secure all the PSA Standards and our ethos of continuous improvement generally. A detailed summary of the work being undertaken to secure Standards 4, 8 and 10, under the FTP Improvement Programme was included in the paper for Council on 1st December. The actions continue and reports on progress are provided to EMT each month via the updates from FTP Improvement Project and to Council through the work of the FTP Improvement Board which reports to each Finance and Performance Committee and Appointments Committee and to a full Council Meeting from time to time.

21. To ensure that the Standards we achieved in the last Review cycle are strengthened, we propose to take the following actions:

   a) Conducting a corporate end to end review of the FTP process in 2017, drawing on expertise from across the GDC and stakeholder input, to challenge established ways of working to identify and implement initiatives which aim to improve focus on risk, timeliness and customer service. This work will include exploring ideas such as streaming certain FTP case types, front loading more serious cases and extending the work completed in 2016 which repatriating low level NHS concerns, to cover a wider range of bodies including other regulatory partners in England, Scotland, Wales and NI, and those private practices with the capability to handle complaints effectively and more proportionately (targeted at Standard 6 and 7).

   b) Improving our witness support processes. Since the introduction of our new witness support process in May 2012, hearing levels have almost doubled and the amount of witnesses requiring support has risen by 200%. We therefore conducted a thorough review of the process and made several recommendations which are intended to strengthen the level of support we can offer to both GDC witnesses and unrepresented registrants. The Project Plan for this piece of work was approved by our FtP Improvement Board on 3 August 2016 and the work started in September 2016. We estimate that the work will be completed by end March 2017 and will include reviewing our guidance for witnesses and staff, expanding the role of hearing assistants to deliver face to face support at hearing venues and training for all staff involved in witness management. We will continue to ask all witnesses involved in an FTP case about the level of customer service they received and to ask how our processes can be further improved (targeted at Standard 7).
22. In addition, the organisation is:
   
a. Continuing to provide HR assistance for staff and Associates with support on recruitment, performance management and learning and development opportunities.

b. Providing HR support with the ongoing structural changes which are being made across the GDC.

c. Ensuring oversight and delivery of the 2017 business plan with set milestones agreed.

d. Reviewing the revised balanced scorecard, which reflects the organisation’s key performance measures, at EMT board meetings to ensure continued management of organisational performance.

e. Ensuring that the work of the Internal Compliance Team becomes a second line of defence for other areas of GDC work. This will ensure greater resilience for areas outside FTP, which has been the focus of that Team’s work since 2014.

f. Extending the 18-month rolling forecast tool to budget, forecast and manage resources for FTP introduced in July 2016 to a 3-year forecast model. This will run from January 2017 to January 2020.

Recommendations
23. The Council is asked to note and to discuss the results of this report.