

Report to the Council from the Policy and Research Board meeting on 15 February 2017

Purpose of paper	To report on the key items considered by the Policy and Research Board at its meeting on 15 February 2017.
Action	For noting.
Corporate Strategy 2016-19	Performance objective 1: To improve our performance across all our functions so that we are highly effective as a regulator.
Business Plan 2017	Priority one: Continue to build a cost effective and efficient organisation.
Decision Trail	In accordance with the General Dental Council Standing Orders for the Non-statutory Committees of Council 2016 the Policy and Research Board will report to the next Council meeting following its meeting.
Recommendations	The Council is asked to note the report from the Policy and Research Board's meeting on 15 February 2017.
Authorship of paper and further information	Nicholas Preece, Governance Manager npreece@gdc-uk.org 0207 167 6328
Appendices	Appendix 1 - Horizon scanning report

1. Executive summary

- 1.1. This paper reports on key issues considered by the Policy and Research Board (the Board) at its meeting on 15 February 2017.
- 1.2. The Council is asked to note the update from the Board.

2. Introduction and background

- 2.1. The key purpose of the Board as defined in its terms of reference is to provide oversight of the development and implementation of strategy, policy and research initiatives and report on them to the Council.
- 2.2. In accordance with the General Dental Council Standing Orders for the Non-Statutory Committees of Council 2016, the Board is required to report to the Council meeting following each meeting.

3. Defence organisations

- 3.1. The Board invited Dental Protection Ltd, the Dental Defence Union and the Medical and Dental Defence Union of Scotland to its meeting to participate in a discussion of their role as one of the influencers of professional behaviour across the system of dental service provision, including initiatives for harnessing that influence, for example in relation to improving the quality of complaints and feedback handling in the practice. The discussion covered broad themes on influencing the behaviour of their members, risk management and engagement opportunities. The three main areas that the GDC would pursue with the defence organisations were:
 - 3.1.1. Joint initiatives on improving standards of handling complaints and feedback in the practice. There was a willingness by the defence organisations to participate in events under a joint banner, although there would need to be further discussions by the commercial teams of defence organisations if asked to jointly fund events.
 - 3.1.2. The GDC and defence organisations would explore the establishment of common data sets around casework to support efforts to extract and disseminate themes to the profession. The defence organisations indicated a willingness to assist with that work and, in principle, to share themes that emerged from their analysis.
 - 3.1.3. Defence organisations would help identify areas for improvement in the GDC's approach to fitness to practise, with a view to achieving the *Shifting the balance* vision of deploying the GDC's enforcement powers for serious shortcomings in conduct or competence.

4. Peninsula fitness to practise data analysis

- 4.1. The Board reviewed the key findings of the fitness to practise data analysis carried out by Peninsula, noting that whilst the analysis delivered important empirical findings which would form the basis for immediate action, further work would be needed to put them into context before publication. The Council would be invited to discuss the findings with an action plan for engagement and additional analysis on 16 March 2017.

5. Oversees Registration Exam (ORE) research report

- 5.1. The Board discussed two pieces of research: a survey carried out by the GDC research team and qualitative research by the Work Psychology Group. There had been many positive comments regarding the ORE, however there were some points made by the ORE graduates

that would be looked at when engaging with stakeholders for feedback. Recommendations regarding the content of the exam would be referred to the ORE Advisory Group. The Council would receive a report of the findings and recommendations on 11 May 2017.

6. Review of language controls

6.1. The Board discussed the scope for the proposed review of the impact of the new powers and the changes to the IELTS scores for dental nurses and dental technicians, which came into effect in April 2016. The executive had worked with the Faculty of Dental Surgery of the Royal College of Surgeons to scope the review. The Board were satisfied with the scope of the review and the findings would be presented to the Council on 22 June 2017.

7. Research digest

7.1. The Board discussed a prototype for a research digest and considered what sources of research would be included in the final version. This was a further facet of the GDC's developing horizon scanning activity with which Council was already familiar.

8. Website developments

8.1. At its meeting on 2 November 2016 the Board asked staff to investigate a self-filtering mechanism to help patients understand better which was the most appropriate organisation to deal with their complaint. Initial work had highlighted the potential benefit of:

- testing systems directly with patients
- seeking behaviour insight expertise
- engaging with other regulators and the PSA

and this would now be pursued.

9. External calibration group

9.1. Work was underway to establish a calibration group to look at themes of fitness to practise cases considered for referral to NHS England under the NHS Concerns handling scheme, initially with NHS England and then aim to involve the CQC and the Faculty of General Dental Practice. The group would consider themes of cases and try to create a consensus of what good looked like across the organisations. The aim was to have the group established by April 2017 and a formal evaluation undertaken in April 2018. The Board noted that this group would not look at individual cases, had no decision-making powers and did not have any influence over Fitness to Practise.

10. Registrant and patient surveys

10.1. The Board noted the planned surveys and their timetables for 2017. Both would be followed up with qualitative research. A survey for new registrants, which would cover areas of education, would be discussed at the next meeting.

11. National engagement

11.1. The Board discussed the initial stages of a proposed engagement framework to further develop the GDC's relationships with stakeholders across the four nations. The proposed framework included attendance at events that where the GDC could reach a large number of

stakeholders, engagement with influential stakeholders to drive GDC initiatives, stakeholder engagement programmes for major GDC projects, and GDC operational functions that needed stakeholder relationships. The Council would discuss this further at a workshop on 15 March 2017.

12. Date of the next PRB meeting

12.1. 5 April 2017.

13. Recommendations

13.1. The Council is asked to note the report from the PRB's meeting on 15 February 2017.