

Horizon scanning report – March 2017

Purpose of paper	This is the latest GDC horizon scanning report. Its purpose is to give the Council and staff visibility of the external environment that the GDC is operating within, to inform decision making and to facilitate discussions about possible activity that will allow the GDC to shape and prepare for external events.
Status	Public session
Action	Discussion
Corporate Strategy 2016-19	Having an improved understanding of our external environment is integral to the successful delivery of Patients, Professionals, Partners, Performance An Improved understanding of the external environment is objective A of the Communications and engagement strategy
Business Plan 2017	As with the 4Ps, having an improved understanding of our external environment is integral to the successful delivery of the business plan .
Risk register	ST8 on strategic risk register
Decision Trail	On 27 January the Council signed off the Communications and engagement strategy. The plan to establish the editorial board, the internal structure responsible for horizon scanning, was discussed at the Policy and Research Board on 10 February and Executive Management Team on 21 March. The EMT approved the terms of reference for the editorial board on 23 May.
Next stage	This paper will be distributed to staff for information and discussion
Recommendations	There are no recommendations in this paper
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Appendices	Appendix 1 Broad context narrative Appendix 2 GDC orbit Appendix 3 GDC engagement calendar

Table of events

1. This table lists the recent and future events in the external environment that are of interest to the GDC. It covers:

- Government policies and issues in the media
- Stakeholder developments
- Clinical/patient developments
- Developments in the dental system
- Legal developments
- Some internal issues

2. Relevant dates are listed, as are UK applicability and the activity the GDC is taking to respond to the event.

3. New updates, that were not included in the last horizon scanning report, are highlighted in blue. Events are listed in chronological order. A new column 'why this matters' has been included, which has been added for the new developments since the last horizon scanning report.

Event	Associated dates	UK/E/SW/NI	GDC activity
Budget	8 March – Government's spring budget , which will be the last to take place in the spring	UK	Watching brief
NI elections	4 March – results announced of NI election 2 March – elections to Stormont after dissolution of parliament due to Renewable Heat Incentive scheme	NI	Watching brief
Scottish health policy	2 March – Scottish Government defeat patient safety 27 Feb – CMO 2nd annual report calls on all health professionals to put patients at centre of decision making by 2025 31 Jan – Health and Sport Committee evidence session with Health Improvement Scotland 19 Dec – Scottish government publishes national delivery plan for health and social care	Scotland	Watching brief
Reform of health prof regulation	Spring – expected launch of Department of Health consultation on health professional regulation 14 Feb – comment on super regulator proposal in Dental trade press 8 Feb – Speculation regarding the government's plans for a 'super regulator' 19 Dec – Health Secretary quoted as saying that health regulators will not merge before 2020	UK	Active engagement

	26 – Sept DH confirms that the Secretary of State for Health has agreed to submit a bid for parliamentary time in the next session and that the consultation is planned for the autumn		
UK exit from European Union	<p>28 Feb – Health Select Committee evidence session with Charlie Massey, chief executive and Registrar, GMC and Jackie Smith, chief executive and Registrar, NMC re Brexit and health and social care</p> <p>26 Feb – Speculation that freedom of movement will end with the triggering of Article 50</p> <p>2 Feb – Dept for Exiting EU publishes white paper, The United Kingdom's exit from, and new partnership with, the European Union</p> <p>24 Jan – Supreme Court decision: Government loses appeal, Parliament will vote on triggering Article 50</p> <p>19 Jan – Corbyn confirms Labour MPs will be asked to support triggering Article 50</p> <p>17 Jan – PM speech on government's position on Brexit</p> <p>20 Dec – Scottish government publishes their position following EU referendum result</p> <p>5 Dec – Supreme Court hearing on how Article 50 to be triggered to start</p> <p>22 Nov – speculation regarding Whitehall's ability to cope with legal challenge regarding Brexit</p> <p>21 Nov – PM commits to early resolution on UK nationals in Europe and EU nationals in UK</p> <p>18 Nov – Scots and Welsh governments to be allowed to have a say in Supreme Court ruling on how Article 50 should be triggered</p> <p>18 Nov – Legal challenge on whether Northern Irish government to have a say in how article 50 should be triggered</p> <p>3 Nov – High Court ruled that parliament must vote on triggering Article 50</p> <p>24 Oct – Lord Prior, health minister in the Lords and ex-Chair of CQC, reported as stating that leaving EU is a mistake during an after dinner speech</p> <p>21 Oct – Jeremy Hunt reported as saying that UK exit from EU offers opportunity to reform professional regulators (reported in HSJ, link unavailable)</p> <p>2 Oct – Prime Minister commits to triggering Article 50 by end of March</p>	UK	Applying to GDC constitutional group

	<p>29 Sept – International Trade Secretary makes post EU/UK free trade speech</p> <p>23 Sept - GMC outlines possible impact of UK withdrawal from EU</p> <p>20 Sept – Health Select Committee launch 'Brexit and health and social care' inquiry</p> <p>14 Sept – coalition of health and social care experts on mission of guarantee status of EU staff</p>		
NHS budget	<p>27 Feb - Public Accounts Committee report into financial sustainability of the NHS</p> <p>11 Jan – Simon Stevens gives evidence at Public Accounts Committee</p> <p>27 Dec – Chief Nursing Officer says NHS spending too much money on hospitals rather than caring for people at home</p> <p>6 Dec – Debate in House of Lords on long-term sustainability of the NHS</p> <p>24 Nov – Autumn statement, with some criticism that the Autumn statement did not include extra funding for health and/or social care including from Lord Lansley, former health secretary</p> <p>23 Nov – Chancellor made statement to House of Commons</p> <p>22 Nov – NAO publish report, Financial sustainability of the NHS</p> <p>18 Nov – Chris Hopson, Chief Executive of NHS Providers, states the financial settlement set out in Five Year Forward View needs to be increased, with a focus on general practice and social care</p> <p>8 Nov – Kings Fund, Nuffield Trusts and The Health Foundation urge government to address social care in autumn statement</p> <p>8 Nov – Philip Hammond, Chancellor, responds to letter from Health Select Committee</p> <p>1 Nov – St George's Foundation Trust put into special measures</p> <p>31 Oct – Urgent question to Health Secretary on NHS spending</p> <p>27 Oct – Audit Scotland published NHS in Scotland 2016, which should that due to increasing costs, staffing pressures and unprecedented savings targets meant that health boards are finding it difficult to balance demand for hospital care with investing in community services (Scotland)</p>	Primarily England, but financial pressures exist across the UK	Watching brief

	26 Oct – Dr Sara Wollaston, chair of Health Select Committee wrote to Chancellor regarding concerns about NHS budget		
Developments in health structures	27 Feb – Simon Stevens, NHS England CEO, says Sustainability and Transformation plans could end purchaser/provider split 15 Dec – All STPs published	England	Watching brief
NHS data	27 Feb Health Secretary called to Parliament after NHS loses patient data	England	Watching brief
Prisons and Courts Bill	23 Feb – Prisons and Courts Bill published	England	Watching brief
Dental statistics	16 Feb - NHS Digital has published statistics on dental activity for England covering April to September 2016 and patients seen data for 24 month period up to 31 December 2016 10 Jan - NHS dental statistics published for 2015 and 2016 23 Sept - Annual report published, shows that less than half of the adult population saw a dentist in the past two years	England	Watching brief
Winter pressures and NHS performance	9 Feb – 24 A&Es could be closed or downgraded 13 Jan – BDA call for more urgent dentistry slots to alleviate pressure on A&E 13 Jan – 4 in 10 hospital trusts issue emergency alerts, lead Lib Dems to call for an urgent cash boost for NHS 12 Jan – Latest NHS performance statistics published, showing dip in performance April – Nov 2016 a summary can be found on NHS England’s website 11 Jan – opposition day debate in House of Commons on NHS and social care funding and feature heavily in PMQs 11 Jan – Wales waiting time figures published, showing recent reduction prompting debate in Welsh Parliament 7 Jan – Newcastle University’s Centre for Oral Health Research study finds people going to A&E instead of dentists cost NHS up to £18m per year and that the true number of people going to A&E for dental problems is around 10 times official government figures, reported in The Times	Primarily England, but pressures faced across UK	Watching brief

	<p>6 Jan – Royal College of Emergency Medicine states emergency care is in crisis in response to official winter situation reports collected from acute trusts</p> <p>16 Nov – Quarterly monitoring report published by Kings Fund shows demand for health care has risen and suggest this will be a particularly challenging winter with finances and performance under pressure</p> <p>2 Nov – Report from Health Select Committee argues for Government to address underfunding of adult social care to relieve pressure on A&E departments</p>		
Patient access to general practice/ 7day services	<p>11 Jan – NAO finds govt proposals have not been evaluated for cost-effectiveness</p> <p>Sept 2014 – Govt commits all to providing evening and weekend access to GPs and 5000 extra GPs by 2020</p>	England	Watching brief
Primary care pressures	<p>1 Jan – RCGP says 7 day GP service cannot be achieved within 'serious impact' on weekday services</p> <p>Jan – NI GP committee of BMA states GPs likely to leave NHS if govt unable to implement rescue package due to snap election</p> <p>Dec - GPs sign undated resignation letters due to funding concerns and workforce strain</p> <p>25 Oct – NI Govt launch Benogoa review, which is being described as an ambitious plan to make Northern Ireland's health and social care system fit for the 21st century</p>	UK, with country specific issues	Watching brief
Tooth decay	<p>3 Jan - PHE publish stats that say children eating half their daily allowance of sugar for breakfast</p> <p>10 May 2016 – Tooth decay improving in under fives say PHE</p> <p>26 Feb 2016 – Tooth decay on the rise among children new statistics released from HSCIC</p>	England, UK	Watching brief
Quality of dentistry	<p>2 Jan – Letter in Telegraph from dental professionals calling for 'dentistry to be taken out of the hands of inept politicians'</p> <p>4 Jan 2016 – Letter in Telegraph from dental professionals re quality of NHS dentistry</p>	England	Watching brief
Quality	21 Dec – National Quality Board publishes new quality framework for all national health organisations	England	Watching brief
Govt appointment	Dec - Lord O'Shaughnessy replaces Lord Prior as health spokesperson in the Lords	England	Watching brief

Sustainability Transformation Plans	14 Nov – Kings Fund claim STPs best hope for future of NHS in England but criticise problems , such as lack of patient involvement Circa end Oct - 44 different local plans submitted to NHS England Circa August – Draft STPs lead to reports that maternity units, A&E departments and district general hospitals could close because of STPs. See Sky News and BBC News , for example	England	Watching brief
Reform of community pharmacy	20 Oct – DH announce plans to modernise communicate pharmacies	England	Watching brief
Refugees	19 Oct – David Davis MP suggests child refugees teeth should be checked to verify age, dentists criticise suggestion	UK	Watching brief
Oral health reform	15 Sept - Oral health consultation	Scotland	Active engagement
Health speech at Conservative Party conference	4 Oct - speech from Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP, Secretary of State for Health at Conservative Party Conference	England	Watching brief
Junior doctor contract negotiations	1 Oct – expected roll out of new junior doctor contract 28 Sept – Government wins high court case with junior doctors regarding the safety and sustainability of the new contract 25 Sept - GMC welcomed suspension of industrial action 24 Sept - BMA suspends industrial action 14 Sept – GDC reissues advice to dentists regarding industrial action 5 Sept - GMC issues advice to doctors regarding industrial action	England	Watching brief
Health speech at Labour Party conference	27 Sept - public services speeches, including Shadow Health Secretary, Diane Abbott	England	Watching brief
Labour leadership	24 Sept - Jeremy Corbyn re-elected Labour leader, won nearly 62% of the vote	UK	Watching brief

Consultants' private income	26 Sept – Letter from Clare Marx, RCS and Nigel Hunt, Times, suggesting improved conflict of interest would  Faculty of Dental Surgeons published letter in the not be achieved by publishing this information 20 Sept – NHS England consult tackle conflicts of interest, with a proposal for consultants publishing their private income Consultants' pay - Times clipping 26 Sep	England	Watching brief
Welsh Five Year Plan announced	20 Sept – Welsh Govt launches plan to deliver improved and reformed public services, among other things	Wales	Watching brief
RPQ Directive delayed	16 Sept - DH confirmed in meeting of Alliance of UK Health Regulators on Europe	UK	Watching brief
England CDO comments on frequency of dental check ups	7 Sept – Sara Hurley comments on dentist failing to follow NICE guidelines regarding frequency of visits to the dentist , speaking at NHS Expo conference	England	Watching brief
Scottish independence	1 Sept – You Gov poll suggests 50% of Scots oppose and 37% favour a second referendum	UK	Watching brief
Obesity strategy	18 Aug – DH childhood obesity strategy published	England	Watching brief
New dentist and SAS doctors charter launched	9 Aug – New charter for staff and associate specialist doctors and dentists launch to ensure they are properly supported in the work place	Wales	Watching brief
Dental Commissioning Statistics	4 Aug – UDAs commissioned by 14 NHS England Local Officers from June 2016 for next 12 months are 0.5% down compared to previous 12 months	England	Watching brief
NHS Reinstatement Bill	13 July – Bill that proposes to abolish the purchaser-provider split in the NHS in England was presented in the House of Commons by Margaret Greenwood, Labour MP for Wirral West	England	Watching brief
Care.data scrapped	6 July – announcement that the policy is to be abandoned	England	Watching brief
HSIB	April 2016 – Healthcare Safety Investigation Branch starts operating	England	Watching brief
Integration of health and social care	1 April 2016 – Integration of health and social care legislation came into force	Scotland	Watching brief
Devo Manc	1 April – Manchester takes responsibility for devolved health budget	England	Watching brief

Draft Public Service Ombudsman Bill was published	2015 Queen's Speech	England	Watching brief
CQC	2 March – Report on quality of hospital care	England	Watching brief
Scottish Public Services Ombudsman	2 March – First report on informed medical consent	Scotland	Watching brief
CQC	23 Feb – CQC's role to expand to overseeing local government's management of social care	England	Watching brief
PSA/NMC	20 Feb – Health Secretary asks PSA to investigate NMC regarding handling of Morecambe Bay	UK	Watching brief
BDA	10 Feb – Mick Armstrong and Eddie Couch re-elected as PEC chair and vice-chair. Alyson Lockyer elected chair of Education, Ethics and the Dental Team (EEDT) Working Group	UK	Watching brief
NHS England	9 Feb – New guidance on conflicts of interest	England	Watching brief
GMC	Feb – Data about European doctors	UK	Constitutional group considering
GMC	31 Jan – Consultation launched on medical licensing	UK	Considering active engagement
FGDP	30 Jan – Faculty of General Dental Practice announces seeking to become royal college	England	Active engagement
NMC	25 Jan - Draft Nursing and Midwifery (Amendment) Order 2017 laid before House of Lords	UK	Watching brief
PSA	16 Jan - Three new board members	UK	Watching brief
DH	16 Jan – 500 civil servants to lose jobs at DH, as part of drive to cut running costs nu 30% by 2020	England	Watching brief
Patients' experience of complaining	16 Jan – Patients Association published report in patients' poor experiences with PHSO	England	Watching brief
	13 Jan – Healthwatch publish report highlighting need to easier ways for patients to share feedback		
NMC	11 Jan – Section 60, which removed supervision from regulatory legislation	UK	Watching brief
NICE	9 Jan – Consultation on oral health in care homes	England	Watching brief

CQC	16 Jan - 36 dental practise inspection reports published 4 Jan – 52 dental practise inspection reports published 28 Nov – After one year of inspecting dental practises, CQC concludes that most dental practises are safe 21 Nov – CQC inspection on 28 dental practices published	England	Watching brief
GOC	Jan – introduction of fee for late payment of annual fee	UK	Watching brief
GOC	21 Dec – CEO and Registrar, Samantha Peters, to step down		
CQC	20 Dec – Consultation launched on next phase of regulation	England	GDC preparing a response
BMA	16 Dec – Guidance issued to GPs to inform them of their obligations to patients either requesting emergency dental treatment or asking for an NHS prescription for drugs recommended by dentists	UK	Watching brief
Gambling Commission	16 Dec – Gambling Commission issues £3m fine to Camelot	UK	Watching brief
BDA	12 Dec – considering legal challenge over NHS England's approach to deductions from patient charge revenue	England	Watching brief
CQC	7 Dec – Accountability hearing with health select committee	England	Watching brief
BDA	Dec – Result of Principle Executive Committee results include two ex-GDC Council members: Alison Lockyer and Anthony Kilcoyne		
NHS England	9 Nov – consultation announced that includes plans to cut obesity and reduce sales and consumption of sugary drinks	England	Watching brief
EU Commission	Jan – Next steps on national action plans on regulated professions expected See for more information 12 Oct - PSA response	UK	Active engagement
Heathwatch	24 Nov – Healthwatch publish report about what the public want from NHS dentistry , can be summarised as good access, good information and good complaints system	England	Embedded in ongoing complaints word
PSA standards review	14 Nov – PSA publish GDC standards review Now published GOsC GPhC and HCPC	UK	Active response

NHS England	14 Nov – Self-care forum calling on people to make more use of their pharmacist rather than GP if they are ill	England	Watching brief
Complaints regulators	to 6 Nov – Complaints to NMC up by one third	UK	Watching brief
Licence practise	to 4 Nov – Doctor what was struck off the GMC's register for disputing the existence of shaken baby syndrome, wins a High Court appeal hearing GMC statement	UK	Watching brief
RCS	28 Oct - New guidance on consent, as a result of Supreme Court ruling in the case of Montgomery v Lanarkshire Health Board in 2015	UK	Investigating other stakeholder responses
GMC	27 Oct – State of medical education and practice published, which highlighted growing pressure on doctors	UK	Watching brief
BDA	25 Oct – 47% of practice owners report difficulties in recruiting new dentists in the past year	UK	Watching brief
CQC	13 Oct – State of care report published, which finds that most health and adult social care services in England are providing safe, high quality and compassionate care, but raises concerns about the sustainability of health care	England	Watching brief
HCPC	9 Oct – Psychologist worked at hospital after being struck off for misconduct	UK	Watching brief
NMC	26 Sept - Allegations of misconduct against nurses and midwives will no longer be published (linked to Pauline Cafferkey's hearing)	UK	Watching brief
PSA	3 Oct – PSE published Regulation rethought and Right-touch assurance	UK	Writing to George Jenkins, Chair of PSA
CQC	21 Sept – first 1000 inspections of dental practices, assessing findings	England	Policy lead
MNC	14 Sept - Pauline Cafferkey's fitness to practise hearing No misconduct found	UK	Watching brief
Medical Practitioners Tribunal Service	31 Aug - Dame Caroline Swift appointed chair of MPTS, will take up post from 1 January 2017	UK	Watching brief
GMC	25 Aug – Dr Colin Melville appointed new Director of Education at GMC, will take up post from January 2017	UK	Watching brief
GMC	4 Aug – GMC launched pilot schemes to speed up FtP and reduce stress on doctors didn't issue a press release, but the Royal College of Ophthalmologists issued a statement	UK	Watching brief

NHS Digital	1 Aug – Health and Social Care Information Centre changes name to NHS Digital	England	FYI
BDA	28 July - BDA launches largest ever member engagement programme	UK	Watching brief
GOC	26 Aug – Optometrist found guilty of manslaughter suspended from practising under a GOC interim order Coverage in the Guardian	UK	Watching brief
GMC	14 July - Charlie Massey appointed as new CEO of GMC	UK	Active engagement
PSA	20 June – PSA research on dishonest behaviour published	UK	Watching brief
CQC	24 May 2016 – New CQC strategy 2016 - 2021	England	Active engagement
BDA	1 April – BDA survey, 93% of dentists think govt targets get in the way of patient care	England	Watching brief
GMC 'relational regulation'	March – new model of regulation launched at PSA conference	UK	Watching brief
Revalidation	16 Jan - Taking revalidation forward published, conclusions of Revalidation Advisory Board, chaired by Sir Keith Pearson	UK	Policy reviewing
Use of antibiotics	18 Nov - PHE statistics show that use of antibiotics decrease across all healthcare setting for first time Significant awareness campaign from Public Health Wales	England, Wales	Watching brief
Oral cancer	17 Nov – FGDP figures show instances of oral cancer risen by a third	UK	Watching brief
Dental contract changes	6 Jan – BDA highlight effect Stormont problems have on reforming dental contract 14 Nov – DH announce pilot involving 70 dentists that aims to pay for prevention rather than activity Estimated roll out of new contract is 2018-19	England, Northern Ireland	Watching brief
Dental working hours	8 Dec – NHS Digital publishes statistics on working hours, motivation and morale for NHS dentists	England	Watching brief
Dental association	Circa Q4 2016 (exact date unknown) – new British Association of Cosmetic Dental Professionals has been established	England, Scotland, Wales	Watching brief
Corporate dentistry	18 Nov – BUPA acquires Oasis dental care	UK	Watching brief
First private dental school	2018 – expected to start operating	England with	Watching brief

		implications for the UK	
Increase in direct services	Sept – perceived increase in patients receiving direct treatment, particularly regarding orthodontic treatment	UK	Exploring joint communication opportunities
UDAs and quality	7 Sept – letter received from Dentistry regarding a possible link between number of UDAs and quality/safety of patient care	England	Drafting a response, in line with NHS England
Supreme Court ruling	5 Jan - Habib Khan v General Pharmaceutical Council		Legal team reviewing
Amendments to the Dentist Act	26 Sept - Amendments have been made via Section 5 of the Health and Social (Safe and Quality) Act 2015, insert overarching objective to protect the public	UK	Making relevant changes to FTP procedures and drafting messaging relating to regulatory reform

Burrows v GPhC	July 2016- Dishonesty case where the Court commented that regulators should forewarn registrants that a failure to attend their hearing is likely to severely prejudice their case	UK	Template letters and Hearing Notices are likely to require amendment – work ongoing
PSA v Silva and the NMC:	July 2016 - PSA won an appeal on the grounds that the determination was too lenient. NMC had failed to draft allegations properly	UK	Watching brief
New info commissioner	28 June – Takes up post New Information Commissioner appointed	UK	Watching brief
Children and Social Work Bill	20 May 2016 - first reading in House of Lords, could mean new regulators for social workers	England	Watching brief
General Data Protection Regulation	May 2016 came into force (will be applicable from 25 May 2018)	UK	Planning in hand
BMA v GMC and Secretary of State for Health	May 2016 - Challenge to fairness of GMC tribunal's procedure rules. The case was ultimately unsuccessful but raises important broader issues about the right to a fair trial in regulatory prosecutions	UK	Watching brief
Scott v Solicitors Regulation Authority	May 2016 - Appeal rejected, agree that lacking integrity sufficient even when there is no dishonesty	UK	Watching brief
GMC v Adeogba and GMC v Visvardis	April 2016 - judgment: outcome is regulations have some discretion in proceeding in absence of a registrant in disciplinary proceedings	UK	Watching brief

Protected job title	March 2016 - Criminal prosecution from unlawful use of 'osteopath'	UK	Watching brief
Michalak v GMC	March 2016 - ruling Discrimination claim can be heard in Employment Tribunal	UK	Watching brief
Judgement of appeal of Davey v GDC: dismissed	February 2016	UK	Watching brief
Review of Civil Courts	July 2016 – final report published December 2015 – interim report published	England and Wales	Watching brief
Suddock v NMC	December 2015 - court confirmed that witness's behaviour when giving evidence is not a reliable indicator of whether they are telling the truth	UK	Watching brief
Appeal of O v Nursing and Midwifery Council	November 2015 - judgment: fitness impaired due to conviction for assaulting and ill-treating their children. Appeal upheld due to the panel being defective and flawed and developments in the criminal case, e.g. children had been returned to O under supervision	UK	Watching brief
Yassin v GMC	October 2015 - court reiterated that charges of dishonesty must be clear enough for the registrant to know the case against them	UK	Watching brief
NMC v Meethoo High	September 2015 - Court refused application for 12 month extension to interim order due to their being not enough urgency	UK	Watching brief