**Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy and Action Plan**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose of paper</th>
<th>This paper provides an update on the development of the EDI Strategy and action plan and invites Council to approve next steps.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Action</td>
<td>For approval.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Corporate Strategy 2016-19</td>
<td>Performance - Objective 1: To improve our performance across all our functions so that we are highly effective as a regulator.</td>
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</table>
| Business Plan 2017 | Priority 1: Continue to build a cost effective and efficient organisation  
Priority 2: Improve our overall performance |
| Decision Trail   | The Remuneration Committee considered the EDI strategy and 2017 action plan at its meeting on 4 July 2017.                               |
| Next stage       | This report will be submitted to Council on 27 July 2017 for approval.                                                             |
| Recommendations  | The Council is asked to approve:  
- The 2017-2020 EDI Strategy  
- 2017 EDI Action Plan |
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| Appendices       | Appendix 1: EDI Strategy  
Appendix 2: 2017 Action Plan |
1. Executive Summary

The themes of the plans for activity in 2017 is to ensure that we remain compliant with equality legislation; consider the relevant equality, diversity and inclusion issues in our core activities and deliver against the commitments made in our Equality and Diversity Strategy 2017-2020. It is anticipated that during the lifecycle of this strategy we will aspire to the following ambitions:

- 2017 – Emerge and develop
- 2018 – Achieve
- 2019 – Embed and mainstream
- 2020 – Excellence

2. Background

The GDC is committed to promoting equality, valuing diversity, being inclusive and meeting our statutory duties. The GDC aims to be an inclusive organisation, where EDI is encouraged, respected and built upon. Our approach to business is underpinned by a belief that all individuals should be treated fairly and have access to equal opportunities, regardless of their protected characteristic or status. We are committed to respecting and embracing talent and working to support a culture that is inclusive and reflective of our vision and values. We also look for high levels of diversity and inclusion in our registrants and encourage them to adopt similar philosophies in their relationships with their own employees and service users.

We believe that EDI are integral to our work as a regulator and an employer for several reasons:

- Our ability to protect patients and improve standards of dental practice is reliant on maintaining the trust and confidence of all our interest groups and stakeholders.
- We want to understand and take account of the needs and expectations of the diverse groups of patients, dentists, dental care practitioners and others affected by our work.
- We want to continue to comply with equality legislation, and to be recognised as an organisation that aspires to high standards and good practice on the issues that arise from this.
- The UK’s working population is diverse, and we want to have a workforce that reflects the diversity of the communities in which we operate at all levels.

Our strategy outlines the principles for identifying and acting on the EDI issues that are relevant to our work. We have developed our strategy to complement our values and to demonstrate the following in all that we do:

- **Fairness**: we will treat everyone we deal with fairly
- **Transparency**: we are open about how we work and how we reach decisions
- **Responsiveness**: we can adapt to changing circumstances
- **Respect**: we treat dental professionals, our partners and our employees with respect.

Our strategy is a firm statement of our intent in meeting our EDI objectives and in delivering of our strategic and business plans. We aim to be a high performing and efficient regulator, ensuring the quality of dental care for patients through supporting dental professionals to deliver high standards of care and through providing better information to patients. We will also work with our partners to reform the overall system of dental regulation, and the dental complaints system, so that it works more effectively and efficiently, promoting local resolution of complaints where possible. We will base all of this on evidence and make the most of the data that we have available to us.
Our EDI strategy will complement and help achieve our ambition in four key areas:

- **Patients:** we will put patient and public protection at the heart of what we do. We will empower patients to make informed choices about the care they receive.

- **Professionals:** we will work closely with the dental profession to identify priority areas for action and use collaborative approaches in tackling them.

- **Partners:** we will work with our partners in the dental sector to protect patients and make the system of dental regulation in the UK more effective.

- **Performance:** we will continue to strive to become a high performing, proportionate regulator which has the confidence of patients, the public and dental professionals.

Six objectives have been developed within the strategy to fulfil our commitments to equality, diversity and inclusion. Our EDI objectives for 2017-2020 are to:

1. Protect patients through effective regulation.
2. Regulate the dental team fairly.
3. Be a fair and enabling employer, providing an inclusive and supportive environment for all staff.
4. Establish a robust equality, diversity and inclusion base to inform strategy, policy and operations.
5. Engage the public and our stakeholders in the design and delivery of our policies and procedures.
6. Integrate equality, diversity and inclusion with governance and management processes.

A key element of delivering against the strategy will be to ensure the effective monitoring of our performance. The associated objectives outlined above will support the delivery of our strategy. The activities will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that EDI practice is being embedded. This will also help inform service planning, identify gaps and set future activities.

### 3. Risks and considerations

#### Communications

A comprehensive internal communication programme has been initiated to ensure the GDC is best placed to move this agenda forward in a positive and co-ordinated way. This report has been written taking the views of staff and external stakeholders into account. Once approved, the objectives will be shared with all stakeholders and updated and discussed regularly at the Staff Forum.

We are also developing a page on the intranet to raise the profile of EDI. The intranet page will also contain all key EDI resources.

#### Equality and Diversity

The GDC has a statutory obligation under equality legislation to eliminate unlawful discrimination. The EDI strategy, policies and procedures aim to support us in meeting our requirements. If our policies and practices are fair and consistent then our registrants, patients, associates and staff will have greater levels of satisfaction. If we have greater representation of our diverse communities then we will be able to find solutions to barriers in relation to employment and accessing services.

The key benefits are in relation to a healthy and productive workforce and services that meet the needs of registrants, patients and the workforce.
**Legal**

The Equality Act 2010 places the GDC under an active duty to promote equality, which includes:

- Having due regard to the aims of the General Equality Duty in the exercise of our functions;
- Carrying out equality analysis;
- Setting at least one equality objective, and
- Publishing information and data to demonstrate our compliance with the Equality Duty.

As a public body, the GDC must have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, by
  a. Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics;
  b. Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people, and
  c. Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low; and
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, by
  a. Tackling prejudice, and
  b. Promoting understanding between people from different groups.

**Policy**

This report fulfils the GDC’s legislative requirements under the Equality Act (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011 and complements the organisation’s strategic objectives.

**Resources**

It is intended that the achievement of the objectives for 2017/18 can be met within existing resources.

**National**

None at present

**Risks on registers**

A significant identified risk is the organisation’s ability to deliver a more diverse and representative workforce within the funding and recruitment constraints against a backdrop of changing demographics. This report and the EDI objectives contained within the strategy and proposed monitoring aim to mitigate these risks.

Discrimination in the workplace may give rise to a claim through the employment tribunal. In general, failure to comply with the statutory duties may give rise to a claim for compensation for injury to feelings and costs may be awarded on such a claim if it is successful. There is also a risk to reputational damage.

The Council’s People Strategy, EDI Strategy and well developed policies and procedures aim to mitigate these risks wherever possible.

Lack of internal communications and a low profile for EDI: this will be addressed through the implementation of the strategy, equality impact assessments, working in collaboration with the Communications team and the development of the intranet page.
4. **Recommendations**

Council is asked to approve the following:

- EDI Strategy
- 2017 Action Plan

5. **Appendices**

- Appendix 1: EDI Strategy
- Appendix 2: 2017 Action Plan