

Horizon scanning report – Public Council December 2018

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	For noting.
Action	For noting.
Corporate Strategy 2016-19	Having an enhanced understanding of our external environment is integral to the successful delivery of <i>Patients, Professionals, Partners, Performance</i> . An improved understanding of the external environment is Objective A of the <i>Communications and engagement strategy</i>
Business Plan 2018	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 the strategic risk register
Decision Trail	On 27 January 2016 the Council approved the Communications and Engagement strategy. Objective A of this strategy is to achieve an improved understanding of the external environment. The Horizon Scanning paper is designed to support this objective.
Next stage	This paper will be distributed to staff for information and discussion and an abridged version will be made available to key stakeholders.
Recommendations	None.
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Contents

1. This report includes the following sections:
 - a. EU exit
 - b. Healthcare policy and health sector updates
 - c. Developments in regulation
 - i. Foreign doctor checks after fake psychiatrist case
 - ii. PSA performance review
 - iii. Scotland's first court sentencing guidelines came into force
 - d. Developments in dentistry and the dental sector
 - e. Summary of media issues and coverage achieved
 - f. External stakeholder update

EU exit

2. At the time of writing, and as we await the House of Commons vote of 11 December on the Prime Minister's exit deal, uncertainty remains as to whether or not the UK will maintain access to the single market as that deal proposes.
3. If the deal is agreed and access continues, the Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications Directive (2005/36/EC) will continue to apply to the UK and its requirements relevant to the GDC – primarily in Registration and Education matters - will be maintained.
4. If the deal is voted down on 11 December, the future may still not be clear if government makes further efforts to address the nature of EU-exit and so avoid a no-deal outcome.

Healthcare policy and health sector updates

5. The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care (England), Matt Hancock MP, has established a new advisory group to support the greater and better use of technology across the NHS in England. The group will 1) assist in policy creation, 2) challenge departmental decision-making, and 3) act as a sounding board for new ideas. It will be chaired by Dr Ben Goldacre, a well-know clinician and academic, and includes representatives from health, industry, and finance. More information at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/health-technology-expert-panel-meets-for-the-first-time>
6. The Secretary of State has also published a vision document, 'Prevention is better than cure' describing his plans to transform the way in which the NHS in England undertakes prevention activities. The document, a precursor to the publication of a green paper in 2019, includes plans to halve childhood obesity by 2030, and diagnosing 75% of cancers at stages 1 and 2 by 2028. More information at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/health-secretary-launches-prevention-is-better-than-cure-vision>
7. The Scottish Government has published it's 'Alcohol Preventative Framework' (20 Nov) setting out its national prevention aims for alcohol policy, with a focus on protecting young people, evaluating the impacts of the minimum unit pricing, and supporting government and community agencies to be effective in influencing alcohol licensing across the country. More information at: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/alcohol-framework-2018-preventing-harm-next-steps-changing-relationship-alcohol/pages/2/>
8. The Scottish Government is consulting on ways to address the impacts on public health of people being overweight and the rise in obesity across the Scottish population. The

consultation is specifically considering how to reduce the harms from foods high in fat, sugar or salt, and will run until January 9th, 2019. More information at:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/reducing-health-harms-foods-high-fat-sugar-salt/>

9. The Welsh Government is providing £3million of funding for a three year 'Digital Inclusion and Health' programme, aiming to help health and care staff and patients engage with technology to support improved population health, and enable more people to access and manage their medical information online. More information at: <https://gov.wales/newsroom/health-and-social-services/2018/access-to-technology/?lang=en>
10. The Welsh Government has announced funding of £210,000 to prepare the Welsh health service for Brexit. The money will be split between Welsh NHS boards and Public Health Wales, and will be used to fund a 'Brexit Transition Support Programme' and to support health security and protection. More information at: <https://gov.wales/newsroom/health-and-social-services/2018/brexit-fund/?lang=en>
11. Published on 28 November, the seventh national report from the NHS England 'Getting It Right First Time' (GIRFT) programme has identified opportunities for improvements in the way oral and maxillofacial surgery are delivered. Key among the recommendations is for work to continue on developing the 'hub and spoke' approach to oral and maxillofacial surgery, to ensure patients are receiving the best possible care according to their needs.
12. Key recommendations in the report are for the widespread adoption of a hub-and-spoke approach to organising service delivery, for theatre time to be allocated for oral and maxillofacial emergency cases, and for a standard protocol to be introduced across the country to reduce unwarranted variations in the number of hospital follow-up appointments after surgery. The report argues that these changes would help to improve patient experience, through reducing admissions, repeat visits and the length of hospital stays, and deliver cost efficiencies of up to £25m. More information at: <http://gettingitrightfirsttime.co.uk/omfs-report/>

Developments in regulation

Foreign doctor checks after fake psychiatrist case

13. The GMC has discovered that a woman from New Zealand, [Zholia Alemi, falsely claimed to have a medical degree from Auckland university when she registered in the UK in the 1995](#). She has been practising psychiatry for 22 years without any qualifications. This was discovered after jailed for fraud in October after she faked a dementia patient's will in an attempt to inherit her £1.3m estate. Alemi lost her job after being arrested in 2016 and was suspended by the medical tribunal service in June 2017. As a result, the GMC is 'urgently checking' 3,000 foreign doctors in the UK.
14. The GDC registered dentists with reciprocally recognised overseas qualifications without any further test of knowledge and skill up until 1 January 2001 (although this was from a limited number of nations). Since 2001 the majority of overseas (non-EEA) qualified dentists have been required to sit and pass the Overseas Registration Examination (ORE) before applying for registration. To provide a sense of scale, as of 29 November, there are 1,257 dentists registered with the GDC who registered with reciprocally recognised qualifications.
15. The GDC has a number of controls in place in order to mitigate the possibility of individuals joining the register fraudulently. We consider that the risk of fraudulent registration from the cohort of dentists registered prior to 2001 is low and that a full lookback exercise at the current time would not be proportionate. We are keeping a watching brief on the Alemi case and will take any necessary action that may be required.

16. To note, however, that the GDC has dealt with a previous historical case, [in 2010 regarding a woman who worked as a dentist in a hospital](#).

PSA performance review

17. The [PSA has published](#) the 2017/18 performance reviews of three professional regulators – the GCC, GPhC and HCPC.
18. The GCC has now met all 24 standards – an improvement on the past two years where it met 23. The GPhC met 24 of the standards for the third year running.
19. The HCPC met 18 of the 24 standards in 2017/18, with six of its fitness to practise standards remaining unmet from the previous year. This is a small decline from 2015/16 when it met 21 of the standards. The PSA noted that whilst six fitness to practise standards remain unmet, the HCPC has made significant progress in addressing the serious concerns it had raised in about the HCPC's performance in relation to fitness to practise in 2016/17.
20. The results that have been published have been set out in the table and bar chart below:

Regulator	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16
GCC	24	23	23
GOC	-	22	22
GPhC	24	24	24
HCPC	18	18	21
NMC	-	23	23
GMC	-	24	24
PSNI	-	24	24
GDC	-	23	21
GOsC	-	24	24

Developments in dentistry and the dental sector

21. A charity called VictimFocus has published a guide for dental professionals on supporting patients with histories of sexual abuse and trauma. It has produced a [free resource pack](#) for dental professionals to implement trauma-informed practice and better support for victims and survivors of abuse and trauma when they visit the dentist. The pack includes a PDF guide for dental professionals, two posters for dental practices and a patient form to collect data on triggers, trauma responses and how to improve practice for their patients.
22. The Department of Health in Northern Ireland is conducting a review of regulation of health and social care in NI. It held two engagement events over the summer - one for service providers (i.e. those currently registered with RQIA) and another for service users. The Department will be writing to all stakeholders in the coming weeks with a more formal update on progress.
23. [BDA Scotland](#) has warned that plans to amend advice on dental check-ups to once every two years (from six months) could put lives at risk. A survey of Scottish dentists indicated 97% of

206 dentists, working across Scotland's health boards, said the reforms would put oral cancer detection at risk.

24. On 22 November, NHS Digital published its dental activity statistics for England covering April to June 2018 and patients seen data for 24-month period (adults) and 12-month period (children) up to 30 September 2018. [NHS Dental Statistics for England - Quarter 1, 2018 to 2019](#)

25. Published on 1 November, [State of Mouth Cancer UK Report 2018/2019](#) looks at the very latest statistics for the disease. It reports that 8,300 Brits-a-year are now diagnosed with mouth cancer. The number of cases has grown by 49% in the last ten years and by 135% in the last 20 years.

Summary of media issues and coverage achieved

Profession-wide complaint handling initiative launched

26. Positive coverage of the launch of the profession-wide complaints handling initiative was seen in multiple sector titles, including [Dentistry](#), [The Dentist](#), [The Probe](#), [Dental Nursing](#), [Dental Review News](#).

EU Exit: Implications for the dental workforce

27. Following the Government's publication of a technical notice on how recognition of European professional qualifications might be handled in the event of a 'no-deal' Brexit, GDC Chief Executive and Registrar, Ian Brack, wrote an op-ed piece in [The Dentist](#) exploring the potential implications for the dental sector.

GDC Changes quality assurance for dental education and training

28. The GDC's change of approach to quality assurance of dental education and training and the introduction of thematic reviews gained coverage in a number of sector titles, including [Dentistry](#), [The Probe](#), [Dental Review News](#)

Simon Morrow Council appointment

29. Following the announcement that Simon Morrow is to join the Council, the appointment gained further coverage in [Scottish Dental Magazine](#)

External Stakeholder update

Care Quality Commission, The state of care report 2017/18

30. On 11 October the CQC published its report 'The state of health care and adult social care in England'. It details the findings of the CQC annual assessment, based on CQC inspections of a 10 per cent sample of all registered primary care dental services in England, in the year to 31 March 2018. The report identifies trends, examples of good and outstanding care, and factors that maintain high-quality care.

Practice Plan NHS Confidence Monitor Survey

31. [Practice Plan publishes the results of the sixth NHS Confidence Monitor Survey](#) at the end of October. The survey took place over a period of 11 weeks between May and July and almost 500 dental professionals took part. The survey included questions about levels of happiness across seven different areas of working life, anxiety about concerns and confidence in the future of dentistry. It was an online survey of self-selecting respondents.

32. When NHS dentists were asked about how anxious they were about their ability to meet the standards set by the GDC when working in the NHS, 48 per cent stated that they were 'very anxious', 32 per cent stated they were 'anxious', with just 20 per cent stating that they were 'not very' or 'not at all anxious'

External appointments

33. The following appointments have been announced:

- a. Lord David Prior has been appointed as Chair of the NHS England for four years from 31 October 2018.
- b. Sir David Behan has been appointed as Chair of HEE for three years from 1 December 2018.
- c. Sir Robert Francis has been appointed as Chair of Healthwatch England for three years from 1 October 2018. Healthwatch is a committee of the Car Quality Commission (CQC) and is chaired by a non-executive director of the CQC. Sir Robert's appointment as a CQC non-executive director, which was due to end on 30 June 2020, has been extended to align with this appointment.
- d. Malcolm Wright will take over as interim Chief Executive of NHS Scotland from February 2019, following the resignation of Paul Gray. The Scottish Government will undertake a competitive recruitment process to appoint a permanent replacement.

Parliamentary updates

34. The following parliamentary development have taken place:

- a. On 12 October, the Government published the technical notice for '[providing services including those of a qualified profession if there's no Brexit deal](#)'. (See above for further updates on this issue.)
- b. In answer to Parliamentary Question, on 16 October, the [government reported that 427,238 penalty charge notices were issued in 2017/18](#) to patients who had claimed free dental treatment, but where no exemption could be found following the checking process undertaken by the NHS Business Services Authority.
- c. The Health and Social Care Committee (House of Commons) took oral evidence on 16 October for its [inquiry into patient safety and gross negligence manslaughter in healthcare](#). The committee is examining the application of the law on gross negligence manslaughter following the GMC Bawa-Garba case.
- d. On 21 November, the Government published its [response to the report of the Gosport Independent Panel](#) into what happened at Gosport War Memorial Hospital. The Health and Social Care Secretary, Matt Hancock MP, [delivered a statement](#) on the publication of the report.