

## **Horizon scanning report – January 2020**

<b>Executive Director</b>	Stefan Czerniawski, Executive Director, Strategy
<b>Author(s)</b>	Lisa Bainbridge, Head of Nations and Engagement (interim) Richard Drummond, Head of Public Policy Jessica Rothnie, Policy Manager Patrick Kavanagh, Policy Manager Tom Chappell, Media Manager Caroline Conway, Communications Officer
<b>Type of business</b>	To <b>note</b> .
<b>For Council only</b>	Public session
<b>Issue</b>	This paper provides Council with an analysis of policy developments, providing an external context to support discussions and decision-making.
<b>Recommendation</b>	To <b>note</b> .

### **Contents**

This report included the following sections:

1. Professional regulation developments
2. Developments in dentistry
3. Summary of media issues and coverage achieved
4. Parliamentary updates

## 1. Developments in professional regulation

### Committee of Advertising Practice (CAP) prescription only medicines campaign

- 1.1. On 9 January the CAP and the Advertising Standards Agency (ASA) launched a campaign to curb the illegal advertising of botulinum toxin injections on social media (most commonly Botox, Vistabel, Dysport, Bocouture and Azzalure). Botulinum toxins are prescription only medicines, and therefore, cannot be advertising to the public.
- 1.2. The ASA has advised that it will be taking targeted enforcement action using monitoring technology to automatically find problem social media posts for removal from 31 January. Further, the ASA has stated that where advertisers are unwilling to comply, they may refer to the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) or the individual's professional regulator.

### Social Work England launched

- 1.3. Social Work England (SWE), the new regulator for nearly 100,000 social workers in England, went live on 2 December 2019. SWE replaces the Health and Care Professions Council.
- 1.4. Colum Conway, Chief Executive of Social Work England, said: "It's a landmark moment for the sector as our organisation takes over as regulator. We have been established under new legislation which allows us to be a modern, specialist regulator that builds and promotes confidence in the sector."

### General Medical Council (GMC) consultation on remote consultations

- 1.5. On 26 November 2019, the GMC published a consultation on [remote consultations and prescribing by telephone, video-link or online](#). They will use the submissions to determine whether they need to make any changes to their guidance for prescribing and managing medicines and devices, last updated in 2013.

### Doctors' engagement most closely linked to hearing outcomes

- 1.6. The GMC has published a [piece of academic research in the journal BMC Medicine](#) on the factors associated with the seriousness of outcomes at Medical Practitioners Tribunal Service (MPTS) hearings.
- 1.7. This research was undertaken by the GMC's Chief Statistician and has been published following peer review. It considers the outcomes of MPTS hearings. The study examined 1,049 doctors referred for hearings at the MPTS and receiving an outcome from June 2012 to May 2017. This was 0.34 % of a total of 310,659 doctors registered at any point during the period.
- 1.8. The research found that the outcome of hearings was consistently linked to doctors' engagement with the process, rather than with doctors' personal characteristics. In contrast, there was no association between the seriousness of tribunal outcomes and a doctor's age, race, sex, or whether they gained their primary medical qualification in the UK or abroad.

- 1.9. In order of increasing seriousness, the outcomes were: no impairment to practise, impairment, suspension of right to practise or erasure from the medical register.
- 1.10. The type of allegations and where a referral came from also played an important role in the outcomes. For example, allegations of performance related to less serious outcomes, whilst those of conviction led to stricter sanctions.
- 1.11. MPTS hearing outcomes were shown to be unrelated to the year when they were produced, suggesting that decisions at the MPTS have been consistent since its inception in 2012.
- 1.12. The [GMC issued press release](#) relating to the study.

## 2. Developments in dentistry

### Survey of antibiotic prescribing in dentistry

- 2.1. Six national dental organisations are encouraging dentists to participate in a new survey of antibiotic prescribing in dentistry. The group members are the Faculty of General Dental Practice UK (FGDP UK), the British Dental Association (BDA), the Association of Clinical Oral Microbiologists, the Association of Dental Hospitals, the British Association of Oral Surgeons and the dental sub-group of the Scottish Antimicrobial Prescribing Group.
- 2.2. Dr Nick Palmer, a member of the BDA's Health and Science Committee and Editor of the FGDP UK's [Antimicrobial Prescribing for General Dental Practitioners](#) guidance, commented:
- 2.3. "Dentists have a significant role to play in keeping antibiotics working by ensuring that every prescription for antibiotics is based on clinical need and national guidelines, and by educating patients to take and dispose of antibiotics responsibly. I urge colleagues to take the prescribing survey in order to support this vital work and refresh their knowledge of this important aspect of clinical practice."

### New app launched – Tooth Fairy

- 2.4. A new app, [Tooth Fairy](#) has been launched which provides a searchable list of dentists in the local area, on-demand video calls with dentists, and the option to book a follow up appointment. The BDA has expressed concern over whether a thorough examination can be conducted remotely.

### Access to dentistry – analysis of the 2019 GP patient survey

- 2.5. The [2019 GP Patient Survey](#), commissioned by NHS England, was sent out to two million people across the UK with a response of approximately 770,000 individuals.
- 2.6. The questions surrounding dentistry were analysed by the [BBC](#), who suggested that more than two million adults in England are unable to see an NHS dentist. Included in this number were an estimated 1.45 million who have tried and failed to get an NHS appointment in two years, with the rest on waiting lists or put off by cost.

### **NHS Orthodontic services in the West Midlands**

- 2.7. The tendering process for NHS orthodontic services in the West Midlands has been called into question by the [BDA](#) and Association of Dental Groups (ADG).
- 2.8. After a six-month procurement effort for the orthodontic contracts, the process has been halted, with providers raising questions over the practicality and burden of the contracts. The BDA claims that many providers have been left out of pocket as a result of bidding for the tenders.

### **Funding doubled for older people’s oral health programme in Wales**

- 2.9. Additional funding for older people’s oral health has been announced by the Welsh Government. The new funding will ensure the service can be offered to all care homes in Wales from 2020/21.
- 2.10. The Gwên am Byth (A Lasting Smile) oral health improvement programme currently runs in over 52% of care homes across the seven health boards in Wales. The new investment will mean all care homes in Wales will be invited to join the programme from next year. The additional funding will also help programme staff to explore ways to further support vulnerable older people living at home.
- 2.11. Minister for Health and Social Services, Vaughan Gething said:
- 2.12. “Looking after our teeth is something that remains a priority throughout our life. Good oral health can help people’s health and wellbeing. The further funding announced today will ensure older people from across Wales will now benefit. As a dementia friendly nation, I’m pleased to hear that the scheme is really delivering for some of the most vulnerable in our society.”

## **3. Summary of media issues and coverage achieved**

### **GDC’s use of ‘undercover’ investigators**

- 3.1. Following GDC criticism seen in relation to the use of undercover investigators in fitness to practise cases (coverage largely driven by indemnifier [Dental Protection](#)), the GDC [published a blog](#) to address some of the misconception and provide a lasting accurate picture of the GDC’s approach in these rare instances.

### **GDC publishes three-year strategy: Right time, right place, right touch**

- 3.2. The launch of the GDC corporate strategy saw coverage in [The Dentist](#) and [Dentistry](#). Head of the Dental Defence Union (DDU), John Makin, positively responded to the launch which was covered by [Dental Review](#).

### **GDC announces introduction of registration application fees**

- 3.3. The announcement of the introduction in January 2020 of registration application fees saw coverage in [The Dentist](#), [Dental Review](#), [The Probe](#) and [Dentistry](#).

### **GDC publishes the 2018/19 Patient and Public Survey**

- 3.4. The publication of the 2018/19 Patient and Public Survey was picked up by [The Probe](#), [Dental Review](#), [Dental Tribune](#) and [Dentistry](#). [MDDUS responded positively](#) to the survey and this was covered by [The Probe](#) and [Dental Review](#).

### **Fitness to practise coverage**

- 3.5. Dr Majid Mustafa's fitness to practise determination was covered by [Daily Mail](#), [Mirror](#), [BBC](#) and [Metro](#).

## **4. Parliamentary updates**

### **Dental contract prototype regulations**

- 4.1. The [regulations to the prototype agreement scheme](#) until 31 March 2022 came into effect on 9 December. Prototype practices are testing the new dental contract in England.

### **Cabinet and health ministers**

- 4.2. There has been one change to the ministerial team at the DHSC over recent months and two changes to the Cabinet following the General Election in December 2019.

- 4.3. At DHSC, Edward Argar MP (Charnwood), took up the post of Minister of State on 10 September. He replaced Chris Skidmore MP, who has moved to become the Minister of State at the Department for Education and the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, replacing Jo Johnson. The new Minister of State, Edward Argar MP, was previously Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Ministry of Justice from 14 June 2018 to 10 September 2019. Before becoming an MP in 2015, he worked as a public affairs and management consultant.

- 4.4. There are two new members of the Cabinet, these are:

4.4.1. The Rt. Hon. Thérèse Coffey MP (Suffolk Coastal) has joined the Cabinet as the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions. She has previously held junior ministerial posts at the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and was elected to the House of Commons in 2010.

4.4.2. Simon Hart MP (Carmarthen West and South Pembrokeshire) has been appointed the Secretary of State for Wales. This is his first ministerial post following his election to the House of Commons in 2010. Before becoming an MP, he was Chief Executive of the Countryside Alliance.

### **Queen's Speech 2019**

- 4.5. The opening of parliament was held on 19 December 2019, the following announcements were made:

4.5.1. The EU (Withdrawal Agreement) Bill is the priority for the new government. The bill includes an implementation period, ending on 31 December 2020 and rights for EU, EEA and Swiss citizens.

- 4.5.2. The government's programme also includes an Immigration and Social Security Co-ordination (EU Withdrawal) Bill. The Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) has been asked to consider international points-based systems, and is due to report in January 2020. There will be additional legislation to deliver exit-related priorities by the end of the implementation period, including legislation needed to implement rules for future relations with the EU.
- 4.5.3. The government will deliver the NHS Long Term Plan in England and provide a multi-year financial settlement (agreed in 2019), which will be enshrined in law to ensure the health service is fit for the future. It will be focused on the delivery of the NHS People Plan and will introduce legislation to accelerate the implementation of the NHS Long Term Plan. Plans for more staff, more hospitals, free parking (for those in the greatest need) and more GP appointments are also included in the programme.
- 4.5.4. A Medicines and Medical Devices Bill will ensure that our NHS and patients can have faster access to innovative medicines, while supporting the growth of our domestic sector.
- 4.5.5. Reforms to make the NHS safer for patients, including the Health Service Safety Investigations Body (HSSIB) Bill. The legislation will establish this new independent body, in England, to investigate patient safety concerns and share recommendations to prevent similar incidents recurring.
- 4.5.6. The government has committed to providing extra funding for social care and will urgently seek cross-party consensus for much needed long-term reform so that nobody needing care should be forced to sell their home to pay for it.
- 4.5.7. The government will continue work to modernise and reform the Mental Health Act to ensure people get the support they need, with a much greater say in their care.

Lisa Bainbridge, Head of Nations and Engagement (interim)

[lbainbridge@gdc-uk.org](mailto:lbainbridge@gdc-uk.org)

Tel: 020 7167 6384

06 January 2020