

Niall talks about our response to profile fitness to practice cases and language testing

1.36

Some of our fitness to practise cases have been very high profile, throwing the spotlight on areas of medical practice where there is understandable public concern. In one case, that of **Dr Jane Barton**, we made a public statement in which we expressed surprise at the decision of the GMC panel. We pointed out that in our role as prosecutor of the case, we had called for the doctor to be erased from the register. That caused some raised eyebrows, but it also served to underline that our panels are independent.

Following another high profile case, we announced the setting up of an independent group under Lord Justice Thorpe to look at the guidance for doctors working in child protection - another controversial and difficult area of practice. Contrary to what some have said in the past, we have never had a vendetta against paediatricians - in fact they seldom appear in our fitness to practise cases, but there has been a perception that the GMC is somehow hostile to doctors working to combat child abuse. Nothing could be further from the truth and we very much hope that clinicians will find the new guidance useful and supportive.

We have also spoken out over language testing. It cannot be right that a doctor from Germany is able to get on to our register and on to our GP register without being able to demonstrate he can speak English or practise competently. We have written to every health employer in the UK pointing out their responsibilities and making it clear that we have a gaping hole in our regulatory system. We have spoken in parliament, engaged with the commission and urged UK ministers to act. 3.11

Niall talks about our Council, and working with the new government and the European Commission.

3.11.14

We are now working with the coalition government and the European commission to find a way forward and with goodwill on all sides I believe we can provide much more protection. Earlier this month the GMC hosted a meeting of medical regulators from across the European Union with 17 nations represented - the aim was to begin the process of reviewing the directive that governs the recognition of qualifications and the free movement of labour.

Our council has met three times this year and it has agreed the way forward for equality and diversity, our European and international work , and research and development - all of which will help us deliver the corporate strategy agreed by Council last year. I think the equality and diversity work in particular has prompted a conversation throughout the organisation about how we make this aspect of our work real so that it becomes integral to everything we do.

The political landscape here at home has obviously changed. In the last few weeks the new Secretary of state announced that he wanted to extend by a year the revalidation pilots in England. Some have chosen to interpret that as a lessening of government resolve but I have to tell you that is not what I have been told either in private or in public. In our meetings with coalition ministers Peter and I have both been impressed by the commitment to revalidation and the sense among the politicians that this is part of a drive to improve quality of care.

04.44.24

Niall mentions two new initiatives to improve internal communication.

08.48.14

Finally I just want to mention 2 initiatives to encourage better internal communications which I hope you will welcome:

First we have set up a Social Committee in London and in Manchester - to enable staff to organise social events and bring people together from different departments to meet outside work - if you want to know more or have any ideas please contact your staff forum representative.

And secondly as I mentioned a moment ago we will be holding a Marketplace where different departments are being invited to display their work and share what they are up to with the rest of the organisation.

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