

## **COUNCIL**

### **Chief Executive and Registrar Report**

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**Meeting:** 11 May 2016

**Status:** for noting

**Lead responsibility:** Samantha Peters  
(Chief Executive and Registrar)

**Paper author:** Samantha Peters

### **Recommendation**

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1. Council is asked to **note** the contents of the Chief Executive's report for the period since its meeting on **10 February 2016**.

### **Chief Executive Report**

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2. We have maintained our engagement with the Department of Health on the matter of reforming healthcare regulators' legislation, since the Minister's announcement on this subject on **17 December 2015**. The Minister's priorities are better regulation, autonomy and cost-effectiveness. We understand that the intention is to consult on how these priorities can be taken forward through a White Paper in the autumn.
3. We have set up a working group to help us engage with the consultation effectively and develop a response to the Government's proposals. The group, which consists of Council representatives and members of the executive, will meet on a regular basis in the coming months. It will liaise with the Department of Health in England and the devolved administrations.
4. We continue to work with the Department of Health, the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) and the other healthcare regulators through our membership of the Alliance of UK Health Regulators on Europe (AURE) to implement the revised European Union Directive on the recognition of professional qualifications (EUPQD), which came into effect on **18 January 2016**. In this quarter, we responded to a Department of Health consultation on the regulations for the implementing the directive, and developed a policy setting out our approach to the alert mechanism.
5. Our performance against the **2015/16** budget is presented in full elsewhere (see paper **C25(16)**). In summary, the provisional out-turn figures for the last quarter show a surplus of **£402k** against a budget of **£38k**. There is an overall positive variance of **£364k** for the period ended **31 March 2016**. Our

performance indicators are green for income (since income is under budget by **2.7%** against a target of **5%**) and red for expenditure (since expenditure is under budget by **7.5%** against a target of **5%**). To date income is **£7.5m** compared to the budget of **£7.7m** (a negative variance of **£210k**), and expenditure is **£7.1m** compared to a budget of **£7.7m** (a positive variance of **£574k**). In total, underspend on the budget is accounted for by savings (4%), normal work fluctuation (2.4%), a difference between work planned and delivered (2.2%), and unrealistic budget setting (0.5%).

6. Our performance against the **2015/16** business plan is presented in full elsewhere (see paper **C26(16)**). We are meeting **three** out of **eight** performance indicators. This quarter we continued to make progress in reducing fitness to practise times. I highlight the steady improvement over the course of the year which is now clearly discernible. Following the end of the first full three year cycle of our new continued education and training scheme on **31 December 2015**, we have completed the relevant year end activity (removals, exceptional circumstances applications and so on). I highlight this as a substantial milestone for us. Naturally, we will be undertaking a lessons learned exercise to identify any areas of improvement. This quarter we also passed some important project milestones: we concluded our relocation project; we drafted our complaints strategy (see paper **C21(16)**) and our new Standards of Practice for Optometrists and Dispensing Opticians and Students came into effect on **1 April 2016**.
7. This quarter, we also reviewed and revised the business plan and budget for **2016/17** in the light of discussions at Council on **10 February 2016**. An updated business plan was approved by Council on **23 March 2016**. The revised plan includes a strategic review of education. This project was not part of the current strategic plan, but in view of its growing strategic importance, other activities have been rescheduled to free up the necessary resource to take it forward in **2016/17**. The plan was published on **5 May 2016**, and will be promoted through meetings with stakeholders and other avenues.
8. We continue to seek the views and opinions of stakeholders in line with our aspiration to develop evidence based policy. In the last quarter, we published consumer research into wearers of contact lenses (carried out to inform the work on our illegal practice). We started work on our second public perceptions survey (which will look at the views and experiences of 3,000 members of the public) and tendered for a registrant survey to gain their views and experiences of the GOC, as well as their day-to-day experiences and the challenges that they face working in clinical practice.
9. I have myself maintained contact with stakeholders on a wide range of issues. As usual, I have attended regular meetings of other healthcare regulators with

officials from the Department of Health and the Professional Standards Authority (PSA) with whom we have discussed the government's plans for legislative reform. I spoke on the subject of regulating in times of technological change at a symposia on *'The Future of Professional Regulation'* hosted by the PSA, and on the subject of flexible and agile regulation at a meeting on *'Reforming Professional Regulation'* hosted by the Department of Health.

10. Since the last Council meeting, I have had one to ones with my counterparts at the College of Optometrists (COO), the Federation of (Ophthalmic and Dispensing) Opticians (FODO), the General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC), the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC), and the General Osteopathic Council (GOsC). In conjunction with the chair, I have had meetings with our counterparts at the Association of British Dispensing Opticians (ABDO), the GPhC and the Optical Confederation (OC). I have also met with Ginny Hanrahan, Chief Executive of Coru (Health and Social Care Professionals Council), and Sarah Harrison, Chief Executive of the Gambling Commission.
11. Our rolling programme of Council, committee and panel appointments continues. During this quarter, we appointed one Investigation Committee member, and three education visitor panel members. Recruitment of a new Council member is underway with interviews planned for **June 2016**. In the last quarter, we launched online equality and diversity training for all members, held our first annual induction day for new members, and ran unconscious bias training for selection panel members. Committee management and support continued as usual. In this cycle, there were two Council meetings, two statutory advisory committee meetings, and two non-statutory advisory committee meetings.
12. **Employee turnover** has been relatively stable over the last three quarters, standing at **21 per cent** this quarter (the lowest since it peaked at **42 per cent** in the third quarter of **2014/5**). Our second staff survey went live on **8 February 2016**. Our first survey in **July 2015** indicated substantial progress since **2013**, with GOC outperforming a significant number of external benchmarks. The second survey was undertaken in February. The results will be presented to Council as a separate paper. Following on from the first survey, we are in the process of creating a staff engagement group, organising a staff away day and improving internal development opportunities.
13. We continue to develop new policies and procedures across the organisation. Our new process for the routine review of policies is being rolled out. In this quarter we developed new templates and guidance for staff to use when reviewing or developing policies, along with an integrated impact assessment tool. This will enable us to better delegate such work across the organisation, at

the same time as enhancing quality and consistency. Five policies have been reviewed in line with the new templates to ensure they are clear and consistent. In this quarter, we also published our approach to EDI monitoring policy (alongside our 2015 Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) monitoring report approved by Council in February), launched our policy on raising concerns with the GOC (whistleblowing) and developed a management of interest policy for employees and members (see paper **C27(16)**).

14. The implementation of our information governance action plan continues. Our online e-learning course for employees, launched in **April 2016**, has been well received and completed by all relevant staff (figures exclude any employee on long-term absence). It will be rolled out to members next. We continue to deliver short mandatory monthly briefings on specific areas in order to develop internal knowledge and increase compliance. On the same basis as above, employee attendance is on target for **100 per cent** by the end of **April 2016**. In this quarter, **nine** data breaches and **one** near miss were reported. **One** breach was reported to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). We are awaiting their decision. **Two** breaches were caused by other parties. We anticipate increased reporting to continue as employee awareness continues to rise.
15. This quarter we received **five** FOI requests (all answered within statutory timeframes), and **no** Subject Access Requests. We received **twelve** corporate complaints (of which **seven** were upheld, **one** was partially upheld, and **four** were not upheld). Of the **four** complaints carried over from the previous quarter **none** were upheld. An appeal which went to the Audit and Risk Committee was not upheld. Corporate complaints are now being actively reviewed on a rolling basis to identify trends and lessons learned that we can use to improve processes.