

**Health Professions Council**  
**Conduct and Competence Committee – 20th April 2006**  
**Guidance to the standards of conduct, performance and ethics**

**Executive Summary and Recommendations**

Article 21 of the Health Professions Order 2001 (“the order”) provides that the Council may produce guidance about its standards for registrants:

*‘(1) The Council shall—*

*(a) establish and keep under review the standards of conduct, performance and ethics expected of registrants and prospective registrants and give them such guidance on these matters as it sees fit; and*

*b) establish and keep under review effective arrangements to protect the public from persons whose fitness to practise is impaired.*

*(2) The Council may also from time to time give guidance to registrants, employers and such other persons as it thinks appropriate in respect of standards for the education and training, supervision and performance of persons who provide services in connection with those provided by registrants’.*

The Council is obliged to consult the Conduct and Competence and Education and Training Committees before publishing any guidance. It must also consult publicly.

The Executive suggests that it might be appropriate to produce guidance in a small number of discrete areas. These might include:

- (i) Confidentiality
- (ii) Consent
- (iii) Record keeping
- (iv) Drugs administration

The guidance would draw on queries received and fitness to practise cases (where appropriate).

**Decision**

The Committee is invited to:

- (i) discuss the desirability of producing guidance to the standards of conduct, performance and ethics; and
- (ii) indicate to the Executive the areas in which it might be desirable to produce additional guidance (such as those given above).

## **Background information**

The guidance issued by the other UK healthcare regulators to supplement their core standards documents differs in both detail and volume. Some regulators do not produce any guidance in addition to their codes of conduct and ethics, whilst others produce detailed guidance covering an extensive range of topics.

For example, the General Medical Council currently produces guidance in a number of areas, including:

- Confidentiality;
- Management;
- Research;
- Patient consent;
- Serious communicable diseases;
- Withholding and withdrawing life-prolonging treatments.

The guidance can be accessed by visiting: <http://www.gmc-uk.org/guidance/index.asp>

The General Dental Council issues guidance in the areas of patient consent and patient confidentiality. The Nursing and Midwifery Council produces guidance in a small number of areas including administration of medicines and record keeping.

## **Resource implications**

- Research and writing of guidance;
- Consultation on guidance – available online, mailing of hard copies to consultation list and to any other groups with an interest in the document's contents;
- Co-ordinating responses and reviewing document in light of responses.
- Type-setting and publication of guidance documents online and in hard copy

## **Financial implications**

The costs of the research, writing and publication of one guidance document has been included in the policy and standards work plan and budget for the financial year 2006/7.

## **Appendices**

None

## **Date of paper**

29<sup>th</sup> March 2006

<b>Date</b>	<b>Ver.</b>	<b>Dept/Cmte</b>	<b>Doc Type</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Int. Aud.</b>
2006-01-27	a	POL	PPR	Draft CCC paper - 20.04.06	Draft DD: None	Confidential RD: None



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