

19 November 2014

MPS opposes GMC plans for harsher punishments

The Medical Protection Society (MPS) opposes the GMC's proposals to change its sanctions guidance and effectively dilute the discretion of Fitness to Practise Panels¹. Some of the consultation proposals appear to represent a creeping extension of the role of the GMC and will prevent panels from using their experience and judgement to provide effective and proportionate oversight of the medical profession.

Dr Nick Clements, Head of Medical Services at MPS said:

"We think that it is misjudged to change the current GMC sanctions in this way. It is crucial that panels are able to use discretion because it allows them to consider complaints on a case-by-case basis.

"These new proposals attempt to direct panels to reach specific decisions in certain types of cases. This is restrictive and inappropriate, and will prevent panels from using their discretion to make fair, balanced and considered decisions about sanctions. It is also likely to lead to an increase in decisions being challenged, potentially prolonging the process. Instead, the guidance should set down general principles for panels, which will then allow them to consider each case on its individual facts and merits."

Dr Clements added:

"The GMC's consultation on sanctions is in addition to recent proposals to extend the GMC's powers so that it can appeal decisions of its own panels. Taken together, we think these plans will undermine proportionate and consistent oversight of healthcare professional regulation."

Ends

For further information or to interview Dr Clements, please contact Shannon Darling, Press Officer at MPS on +44 020 7399 1319 or email shannon.darling@mps.org.uk.

Notes to editors:

1. GMC's consultation on indicative sanctions guidance, apologies and warnings: <http://www.gmc-uk.org/concerns/25346.asp>
2. To read more about MPS's views on the GMC's consultation on indicative sanctions guidance, apologies and warnings: <http://www.medicalprotection.org/uk/response-document/GMC-sanctions-review>

About MPS

MPS is the world's leading protection organisation for doctors, dentists and healthcare professionals. We protect and support the professional interests of more than 290,000 members around the world. Our benefits include access to indemnity, expert advice and peace of mind. Highly qualified advisers are on hand to talk through a question or concern at any time.

Our in-house experts assist with the wide range of legal and ethical problems that arise from professional practice. This includes clinical negligence claims, complaints, medical and dental council inquiries, legal and ethical dilemmas, disciplinary procedures, inquests and fatal accident inquiries.

Our philosophy is to support safe practice in medicine and dentistry by helping to avert problems in the first place. We do this by promoting risk management through our workshops, E-learning, clinical risk assessments, publications, conferences, lectures and presentations.

MPS is not an insurance company. All the benefits of membership of MPS are discretionary as set out in the Memorandum and Articles of Association.