

31 March 2009

## GDC seeks members for its Investigating Committee

The General Dental Council has launched a recruitment campaign for a new Investigating Committee.

The Investigating Committee is part of the GDC's procedures for dealing with allegations over a dental professional's fitness to practise. The Committee considers papers prepared by Fitness to Practise caseworkers, and makes a decision on whether further action is needed.

The GDC decided the Investigating Committee should in future be independently appointed, following the Government's White Paper: Trust, Assurance and Safety – the regulation of health professionals in the 21st Century. Advertisements are now appearing in national and trade press in an effort to reach as many potential applicants as possible. We have also approached professional bodies for their help in reaching their members.

GDC Chief Executive Duncan Rudkin says:

“This is hard and largely thankless work. It's not glamorous. It's not high profile. It can be demanding and repetitive. But it is important and it is worthwhile. It's important to the patient who's summoned up the courage to make a complaint about something they feel has gone badly wrong with their dental care. It's important to the professional who feels unfairly under attack. And it's worthwhile to the public, whose safety and confidence in dental professionals may be at stake, whether or not they've heard of the GDC and its Investigating Committee.”

### How to apply

Please go to: <http://www.protecting-patients.com>

You can also call 020 7227 0890.

The closing date for applications is noon on Thursday 30 April 2009.

The General Dental Council welcomes applications made under the 'two ticks' scheme. Applicants who apply under this scheme and meet the minimum shortlisting criteria will be invited for interview.

### Ends

For media enquiries, please contact Elizabeth Curtis on 020 7009 2728 or [ecurtis@gdc-uk.org](mailto:ecurtis@gdc-uk.org)

### Notes to editors:

1. The Council has an Appointments Committee which is an independent group of members of the public and the profession (who are not members of Council). Its remit is to recruit Committee panellists and it is this committee which will carry out this recruitment exercise.
2. The White Paper Trust, Assurance and Safety – the regulation of health professionals in the 21st Century states that the investigation, prosecution and adjudication functions of UK

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Healthcare Councils should be separated, and members of a Council should act as strategic board members and not be engaged in operational matters where impartiality and independence are paramount.

3. Under the Dentists Act 1984 (as amended), the GDC has overall responsibility for dealing with allegations concerning impairment of fitness to practise against members of the dental profession. The Fitness to Practise (FtP) team is responsible for dealing with complaints and allegations, preparing matters for consideration by an Investigation Committee (IC), instructing the GDC's lawyers where cases are referred to a fitness to practise committee for a full public hearing and for ensuring all committee decisions are properly implemented.
4. The IC considers matters on the basis of documents only. Its role is to assess whether an allegation, if found proved by a Practice Committee, could amount to impairment of the registrant's fitness to practise such that their registration could be removed, suspended, made subject to conditions; or that they could be reprimanded. The IC does not decide whether or not an allegation has been proved, nor does it decide whether the registrant's fitness to practise is impaired.
5. The IC can make several decisions: refer a case to a Practice Committee for a full public hearing; adjourn to commission expert, medical or other professional reports; issue a warning or advice letter; or close a case (where no further action is required).
6. For more information about the Two Ticks scheme please log on to:  
[http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/DisabledPeople/Emplimentsupport/LookingForWork/DG\\_4000314](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/DisabledPeople/Emplimentsupport/LookingForWork/DG_4000314)