

**TITLE:** RAISING CONCERNS ABOUT PATIENT CARE TASK AND FINISH GROUP UPDATE

**To:** Council, 14 May 2015

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**Purpose:** For information

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The purpose of this paper is to update members on the progress of the task and finish group established to consider support for members raising concerns about patient care.

### **Introduction**

The following resolution was passed at the ARM on 26 June 2014.

This Meeting welcomes the announcement of the 'Freedom and Responsibility to Speak Up' review to be chaired by Sir Robert Francis QC, and:

- (i) calls upon the Secretary of State to make this a full public inquiry under the Inquiries Act 2005;
- (ii) calls upon Council to set up a working party to look at this issue of doctors raising serious concerns and determine how the Association can better support doctors and medical students who raise concerns to ensure patient safety is prioritised.

The Chair reported to Council on 16 July 2014 that a working party would be set up to look at how the BMA might better help individual members and advocate policy changes. He put the proposal for a public inquiry to the Secretary of State on 3 September 2014. Council agreed on 24 September 2014 to the establishment of a task and finish group on raising concerns about patient care.

### **The work of the group**

The first meeting of the task and finish group was due to be held on Tuesday 16 December 2014 but was postponed because of the delay in the publication of the Francis report. The report was eventually published on 11 February 2015 and the group then held meetings on 17 March 2015 and 21 April 2015.

The group focused particularly on how the BMA could improve its support for members at the point at which they initially raise their concerns, i.e. before the matter has escalated and they suffer any detriment. In the light of its discussions a proposal is being drawn up for a new service that will provide this support and will be piloted in a particular geographical area for six months. Members would ask for the service at first point of contact. The service advisor would become involved from the point at which members raise concerns with their line managers and could, for example, help them to draft letters and/or accompany them to interviews. The proposal will include details as to how the service would be marketed and evaluated.

The service would include offering advice to members on the use of language and the tone in which their concerns might be expressed. For example, members might be encouraged to frame their concerns as offering opportunities for improvement and as helping to address shared problems. This advice would be reflected in additional material on the BMA website.

The task and finish group also discussed how the BMA should respond to the Department of Health consultation on implementation of the Francis report. This discussion will inform a draft response that will be circulated for comment across the organisation.

### **Recommendation**

Council is invited to receive this report.