

This is the public version of the circular issued on 16 January 2014. All guidance to panellists is included below; only internal or administrative matters have been redacted.



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## Panellist Circular

16 January 2014

To: All Panellists  
All Legal Assessors

cc: Panel Secretaries

### Changes to the undertakings bank

Please find below details of changes to the conditions and undertakings banks.

#### *English language concerns*

Where there are concerns that a doctor's deficient performance presents a risk to patient safety or confidence in the profession, MPTS panels have the power to make an agreement (undertaking) with the doctor to limit the scope of their practice.

On 21 November 2013 the GMC Strategy and Policy Board approved a new undertaking to deal with cases where fitness to practise concerns arise from a doctor's ability to communicate in English and the undertakings bank is being updated to include this new undertaking.

The new undertaking is as follows:

'To cease medical practice until I have provided evidence which satisfies the GMC that I have undertaken the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) test and achieved the minimum acceptable level of linguistic competence in accordance with GMC policy at the time I share this information.'

This undertaking is non-confidential and will be published on the doctor's record in the online register. Information about GMC policy on acceptable levels of linguistic competence is available on the GMC website at [http://www.gmc-uk.org/doctors/registration\\_applications/13680.asp](http://www.gmc-uk.org/doctors/registration_applications/13680.asp)

Although MPTS panels have the power to agree the above undertaking with a doctor, this power does not extend to directing the same when imposing conditions on a doctor's registration. The GMC is currently seeking the necessary legislative changes to provide this power, and will update the conditions bank when appropriate.

The MPTS makes impartial decisions in doctors' fitness to practise hearings. The MPTS is part of the General Medical Council, but it is operationally separate and it is accountable to Parliament.

### *Treating psychiatrists*

Changes have also been made to conditions and undertakings requiring a doctor to remain under the care of a treating psychiatrist. This reflects changes to the way healthcare is delivered and will allow more flexibility where a doctor is discharged from the care of a mental health professional or experiences a relapse.

### *More information*

If you would like more information about these changes please contact the Panel Development Team.

Panel Development Team

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