

PRESS RELEASE



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NEW GMC ADVICE MEANS FLAGGING UP MISCONDUCT, WARNS MDDUS

Proposed changes to GMC guidance on reporting misconduct – emphasising the onus on doctors to report misdemeanours – are a timely reminder to doctors that matters of personal probity are subject to GMC scrutiny, points out the Medical and Dental Defence Union of Scotland (MDDUS) today (Friday, 20 June 2008).

The revised guidance reminds doctors of the responsibility on them to report, among other things, receiving a police caution, being warned for possessing cannabis or even getting an anti-social behaviour order, or ASBO.

“It used to be the case that if you were convicted, a court automatically notified the GMC,” says Dr George Fernie, medico-legal advisor for MDDUS. “Doctors are now being urged to report their own misconduct, no matter how slight it may seem and wherever it occurred – here or abroad. This is undoubtedly good practice – but if you are in any way concerned, consult your defence union.”

MDDUS’s files include cases where a doctor:

- punched a fellow-diner in a restaurant whom he thought was going to assault him
- threw a brick through a neighbour’s window following a dispute
- damaged another driver’s car in a “road rage” incident.

In each case, MDDUS provided advice and support when the case reached the GMC. Adds Dr Fernie: “Doctors are human like all of us, but their profession demands that they are judged to higher standards and that has consequences.”

The GMC points out that it must take “prompt and appropriate action” to protect patients when a doctor's fitness to practise is called into question.

Ends

For further information contact Mike Hutchinson on 020 7624 6257 or 07760 155216.

Notes to editors

1. MDDUS is a medical defence organisation providing access to professional indemnity and expert medicolegal advice for doctors, dentists and other healthcare professionals throughout the UK.
2. For further information on MDDUS go to www.mddus.com.

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