



New GMC expert witness guidance

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After the Chief Medical Officers' call for improved guidance for expert witnesses, the GMC has produced Acting as an Expert Witness.

In 2006 the Chief Medical Officer called on the General Medical Council (GMC) to provide more specific guidance for expert witnesses, as part of a Bearing Good Witness consultation.

The GMC launched Acting as an expert witness on 25 July 2008. The document builds on the GMC's core guidance Good Medical Practice, with information specific to those providing expert witness. It also looks at recent high profile cases.

Professor Sir Graeme Catto, GMC President said: "We hope that this new guidance will give confidence to those who take on this role, as well as providing clarification for doctors about the GMC's expectations of them when they are acting as an expert witness.

"Acting as an expert witness forms part of the GMC's wider effort to provide supplementary guidance for doctors on specific issues. This document will aid doctors in their role assisting the court and the public interest."

Launching the Bearing Good Witness proposals in 2006 the Chief Medical Officer said: Chief Medical Officer, Liam Donaldson said:

"It has become increasingly difficult for courts to find doctors willing to come forward as expert witnesses, especially where child abuse is suspected. We need to create a system that both the expert witnesses and general public can be confident is of the highest possible standard."

The guidance is available on the GMC website at:

http://www.gmcuk.org/guidance/ethical_guidance/expert_witness_guidance.asp

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