

The General Medical Council's work to tackle sexual misconduct in healthcare



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The GMC – regulator of doctors, physician associates and anaesthesia associates

- We set the values, knowledge, skills and behaviours expected of all doctors, PAs and AAs working across the UK.
- We can investigate if concerns are raised about those we regulate. We may refer a case to the Medical Practitioners Tribunal (MPTS) who make independent decisions about the cases we refer.



GMP consultation and change

- In 2023, we conducted a consultation on *Good medical practice*
- Following this updates were made that included:
 - Clear definition of sexual misconduct
 - Duty to act
 - Maintaining professional boundaries



Tackling sexual misconduct through our set of standards

57. You must not act in a sexual way towards colleagues with the **effect or purpose** of causing offence, embarrassment, humiliation or distress. What we mean by acting ‘in a sexual way’ can include – but isn’t limited to – verbal or written comments, displaying or sharing images, as well as unwelcome physical contact. You must follow our more detailed guidance on Maintaining personal and professional boundaries.

Good medical practice is not a panacea, but it is a lever for positive change

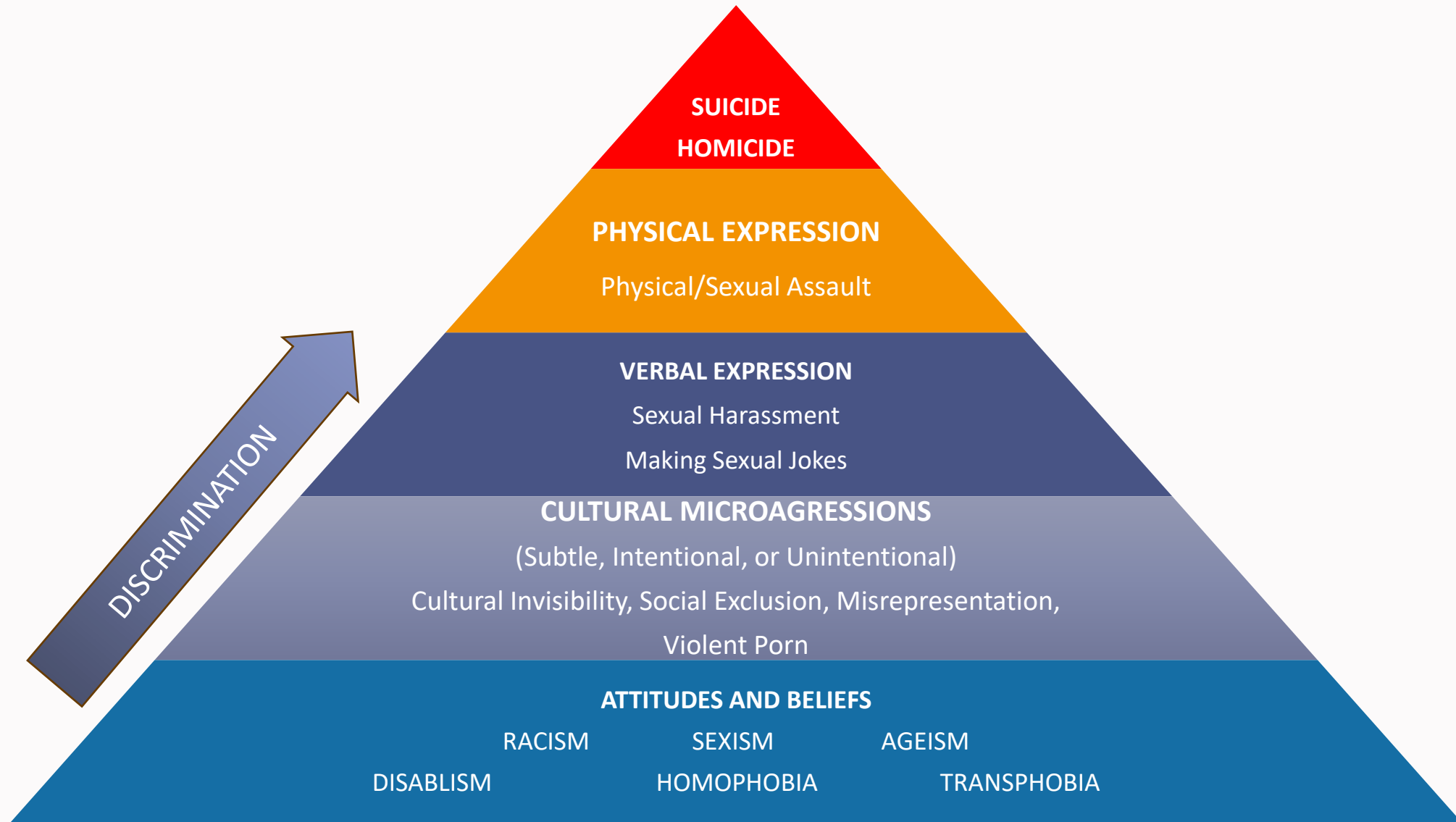


Early warning signs

- Not all sexual harassment escalates, but nearly all escalated sexual misconduct has antecedents
- GMP sets expectations for colleagues to tackle these early warning signs
- Leaders must act



Pyramid of Discrimination and Violence



Embedding the standards: supporting our registrants

- Updated guidance on our online ethical hub
- Integrated standards into training and education
- Delivering workshops and webinars
- Introduced enhanced monitoring
- Ongoing review and development



Embedding standards: working with employers

Support

Local
resolution

Effective
management

Serious
allegations

Timely
reporting





When do GMC interventions take place?

Starting
environment
and
prevention

Issue
happens

Issue
escalated

Employer
investigation

Responsible
Officer/
Employer
Liaison
Advisor
conversation

Overview of fitness to practise processes

A concern is raised with us

Triage

Investigation

Case decision

Serious cases of sexual misconduct



Wider programme to tackle sexual misconduct

Following our review of historic sexual misconduct cases in 2017, focus for action: **assurance** along with **support and raising awareness**:

Assurance

Focussed on assuring that our fitness to practise processes enable us to effectively identify, evidence, and progress cases involving sexual misconduct and sexual harassment.

Resulted in updates that include:

Guidance on interim orders

Five-year rule guidance

Use of expert reports

Supporting victims and survivors: support and raising awareness

Working with others to develop new materials for:

Responsible officers

Victims and survivors

Our registrants

What to do if you think you have been subject to sexual misconduct by a doctor: a resource for patients and colleagues

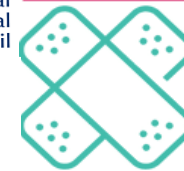
This document contains information about sexual misconduct. If you need support please find details on page 13 of this resource.

West Mercia Rape & Sexual Abuse Support Centre



VictimFocus

CHALLENGE | CHANGE | INFLUENCE



WPSMS

we want surgery to be a safe place to work

General Medical Council

General Medical Council

Allegations of sexual misconduct: support for employers and Responsible Officers

Introduction

Employers have legal responsibilities, set out in legislation and common law, to protect their employees and others from sexual misconduct in the workplace¹.

In addition, responsible officers (ROs) have key roles in identifying and tackling sexual misconduct as part of their duty to ensure a doctor's fitness to practise. Allegations of sexual misconduct perpetrated by a doctor can be in relation to two types of survivor:

- patients, their partners or family members
- colleagues, including students, and others within and outside medicine

This document focuses on sexual misconduct related to doctors' fitness to practise and is intended to support ROs in preventing, identifying, and responding to allegations both within and outside of clinical settings.

Issues related to sexual misconduct perpetrated by patients, patients' partners, or families are not addressed here.

Good medical practice

[Good medical practice](#) addresses issues relating to sexual misconduct and reminds doctors of their responsibilities in this regard in healthcare settings.



SURVIVING IN SCRUBS

Supporting GMC staff

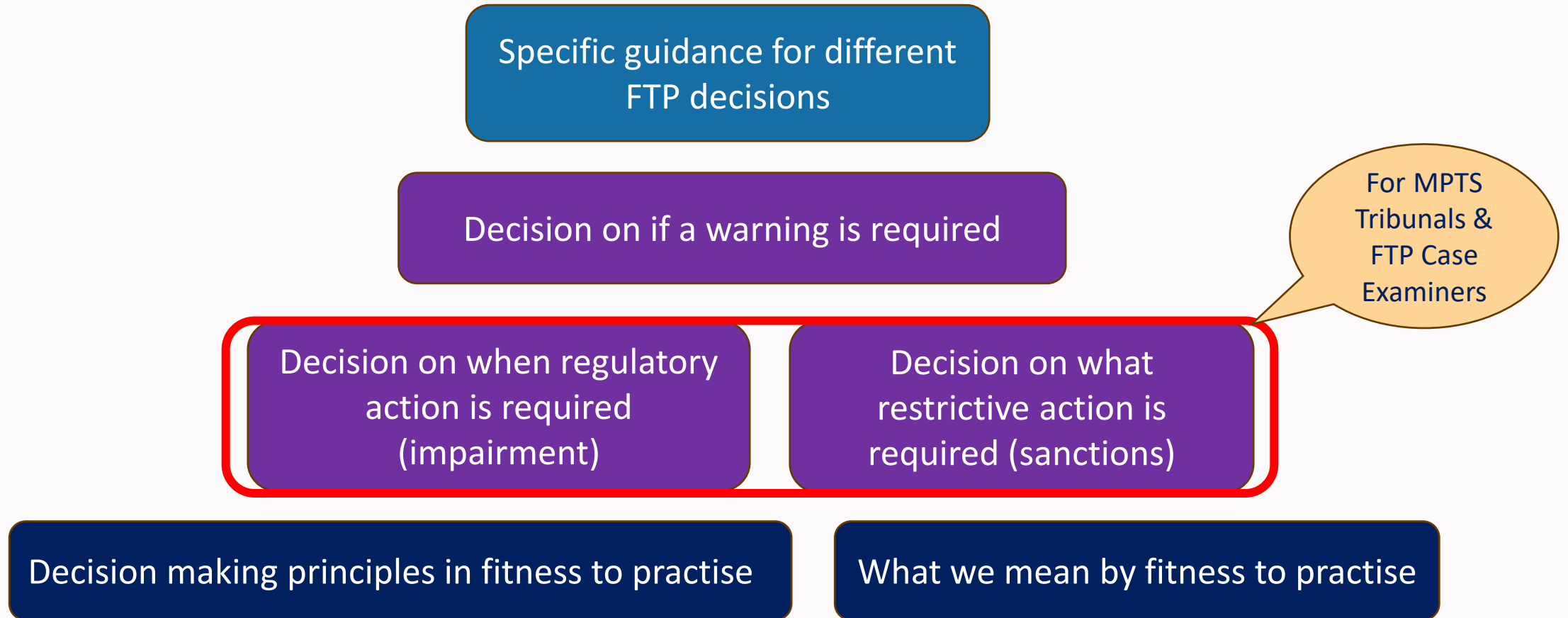
GMC staff: Worked with a specialist external training provider, to develop and deliver training.

Ongoing training and continuous improvement across key areas such as **how we support witnesses** is underway.

**West Mercia
Rape & Sexual Abuse
Support Centre**



Changes to our decision making guidance



Continuing to tackle sexual misconduct and supporting survivors, victims and witnesses

Continuing our prevention work – including embedding GMP and talking to the profession through our Outreach team

[Support for patients - Information for patients who have been subject to sexual misconduct by a doctor - GMC](#)

[Support for doctors, PAs and AAs: identifying and tackling sexual misconduct - ethical topic – GMC](#)

[Allegations of sexual misconduct: support for employers and responsible officers](#)

Call our confidential helpline on **0161 923 6399** Monday to Friday, 9am - 5pm

Thank you