



Medical Schools Council

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Unleashing Aspiration

The Medical Schools Council welcomes the report 'Unleashing Aspiration' from the Panel for Fair Access to the Professions and agrees that for the benefit of all, further efforts must be made to excite young people from all backgrounds about the rewarding challenges offered by a medical career.

Many outreach programmes already offer the opportunity to learn more about medicine and with more than one in four of all medical school applicants and acceptances from minority ethnic backgrounds in 2007, and women making up 57% of both applicants and acceptances for medical schools, the future outlook is positive. But the Medical Schools Council agrees that much more needs to be done to ensure that social class is not a barrier.

Hearing directly from a professional what a career means in practice often helps young people make the right choice about their future and Medical Schools are committed to this. The medical sector has already set up institutional and collaborative agreements that make modified offers or provide additional support for young people from underrepresented groups. The Widening Participation Group at St George's, University of London, for example, won the 2008 Guardian Public Service Awards – Innovation and Progress in Diversity and Equality. A number of Medical Schools currently offer foundation courses as an alternative route into undergraduate medicine. For example, Southampton University offers a 6 year programme, supported by targeted outreach work such as summer schemes and application support and the University of Leeds offers a Clinical Sciences programme at Bradford with the option to apply to the undergraduate Medical programme after one, two or three years on the Clinical Sciences programme.

Bristol Medical School runs a number of schemes aimed at improving its outreach to students interested in medicine from disadvantaged backgrounds. Student advisors offer applications support for low participation groups, they arrange a number of school visits by academics and clinicians and participate in medical career fairs, UCAS events and summer schools such as those run by the Sutton Trust. A number of Medical Schools, including Imperial and Brighton and Sussex, have also forged relationships with the Brightside Trust to provide an e-mentoring service.

Professor Sir John Tooke, Chair of the Medical Schools Council and the representative for Medicine and Dentistry on the Panel for Fair Access to the Professions, said 'the Medical Schools Council is committed to social mobility and is keen to build on current examples of good practice and see them extend across the sector'.

The Medical Schools Council's submission of evidence to the Panel is available on the Medical Schools Council website: www.medschools.ac.uk/news.

Notes to editors:

1. The Medical Schools Council represents the interests and ambitions of UK Medical Schools as they relate to the generation of national health, wealth and knowledge through biomedical research and the profession of medicine. For further information about the work of the Medical Schools Council please see www.medschools.ac.uk

2. The Medical Schools Council can be contacted at:

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