

## **NMC response to the GDC consultation and engagement programme of work *Shifting the balance: a better, fairer system of dental regulation***

1. The Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) is the professional regulator for nurses and midwives in the UK. We exist to protect the public by setting out professional standards for nurses and midwives, controlling access to the register and investigating allegations made that a registered nurse or midwife is not fit to practice.
2. We welcome this timely consultation and we are confident that the outcomes of the GDC's programme of work to engage with the public, healthcare professionals and regulators will lead to it being a stronger and future-focussed regulator. Rather than answer the consultation questions in the document directly, we would welcome being part of the consultation dialogue over the year and would like to use this opportunity to highlight recent NMC activity as an opener to further conversations. Four areas – using intelligence, Fitness to Practice (FtP), revalidation and education standards - highlight key activity to ensure our processes are fit for purpose and the nursing and midwifery workforce responds to changing patient needs.

### **Using data and intelligence**

3. Understanding what our own data tells us, and making good use of what others know, are core competencies for regulators. Recently we have focussed efforts on intelligence, with the aim of understanding the risk factors for poor practice and to be able to prevent and respond appropriately. Our Regulatory Intelligence Unit (RIU) was recently created to fulfil this function by using intelligence drawn from data, research and horizon-scanning to inform how we regulate. For example, we recently commissioned research into FtP allegations to enable us to analyse referrals by healthcare setting or geographical location.<sup>1</sup> Ultimately this will allow us to identify trends and anticipate and avoid poor practice impacting

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<sup>1</sup> NMC Annual Fitness to Practice Report 2015/16  
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The nursing and midwifery regulator for England,  
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Registered charity in England and Wales (1091434) and in Scotland (SC038362)

on the public. Key to the RIU is working with other healthcare regulators to provide a rich picture and greater understanding of the healthcare sector.

## **Fitness to practice**

4. We have also made progress around streamlining our FtP process. Our new approach is designed to identify, at the earliest stage, what the key allegation or issue is, so that an appropriate decision on outcomes can be made at the earliest opportunity. This ensures that practice issues can be identified rapidly and concerns escalated with minimal impact on witnesses and other participants. This more proportionate procedure not only benefits the public, but should also lead to cost savings.

## **Revalidation**

5. Since revalidation was launched in April 2016, more than 200,000 nurses and midwives have successfully revalidated. Revalidation is designed to demonstrate that individuals meet the requirements for practice hours and continuing professional development. Feedback on the process has been overwhelmingly positive, with nurses and midwives saying that it is simple, straightforward and beneficial to their practice. Last year a series of revalidation roadshows across the country were organised to engage with nurses and midwives on this issue and helped address concerns about the process.

## **Education standards**

6. Finally, so that our workforce is responsive to the health and care environment we are delivering a programme of change for education. This will ensure that education standards are fit for purpose and nurses and midwives have the right knowledge, skills and professional attributes so that they can deliver safe and effective care.

These are just a few examples of how we're making successful changes in our processes to ensure we can be a more responsive and future-proofed regulator. We would be happy to share our experiences and lessons learned as part of your ongoing consultation.