

MEETING BETWEEN THE CABINET SECRETARY FOR NHS RECOVERY, HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE AND THE GENERAL MEDICAL COUNCIL (GMC)

Meeting Info	Attendees
<p>19 September 2023 15:30 – 16:15</p> <p>MS Teams</p>	<p>Michael Matheson MSP, Cabinet Secretary for NHS Recovery, Health and Social Care Charlie Massey, Chief Executive and Registrar of the GMC Anthony Omo, General Counsel and Director of Fitness to Practise, GMC Nicola Cotter, Head of GMC Scotland</p> <p><u>Officials:</u> Nigel Robinson, Unit Head, Professional Healthcare Regulation Unit Lynsey Martin, Senior Policy Manager, Professional Healthcare Regulation Unit</p>

Summary of Discussion

- Welcome and introductions.
- **GMC** gave an update about current workstreams on Good Medical Practice (GMP), overseeing training environments and developing systems to identify issues before serious problems arise. Emphasised UK-wide role and relevance to all four nations.
- **GMC** discussed closer relationships with range of stakeholders in Scotland since the pandemic and how GMC data can give insights on shape of future workforce. GMC Edinburgh meets regularly with SG officials and shares intelligence across the wider system (other regulators/NES/HIS) in the interests of patient safety. Working with NMC on professional behaviours and patient safety, and potentially with HCPC on culture.
- **Cabinet Secretary** acknowledged that culture change can be more difficult than organisational restructuring and welcomed the Regulators efforts in addressing that challenge; recognised that current model of healthcare provision must adapt to meet new challenges, and; invited discussion on how education and regulatory models might adapt to these challenges without compromising standards.
- **GMC** Recognised complexity and noted importance of early warning systems, where data can flag potential problems for early resolution. Medium term - GMP clarifies expectations around leadership and speaking up when things go wrong. Longer term – will continue to look at adapting to meet changing circumstances. Discussed expected assumption in due course of statutory responsibility for Physician Associates and Anaesthesia Associates, and that all four countries will differ in their approach to these roles once regulated. Working with NHS Education for Scotland(NES) to consider what effective route through post-graduate training looks like in relation to service needs. Highlighted that Scotland medical workforce remains less diverse than rUK, which has more overseas registrants with numbers increasing exponentially.

- **Cabinet Secretary:** Welcomed exploration of ways to make Scotland a more attractive option for all doctors – including overseas registrants – and invited discussion of this disparity.
- **GMC** Three years ago, for the first time, more doctors joined the UK register from overseas than graduated from UK medical schools. Scotland didn't reflect this trend. Reasons may include a less ethnically diverse workforce and remote and rural practice, potentially causing concerns about career progression opportunities and comparative lack of established networks and peer support. Innovation underway in both undergraduate education and post graduate training – Scotland is ahead in broadening participation into medicine.
- **Cabinet Secretary:** Emphasised importance of exploring all opportunities for the future and the SG's commitment to increase medical student places by 500, noting importance of supervision and placements capacity keeping pace with growth.
- **GMC:** Surveys confirm the need to manage carefully to mitigate impact on trainers.
- **Cabinet Secretary:** How will GMC manage potential changes, including regulation of PAs and AAs?
- **GMC:** Was asked to regulate them. Common regulator provides parity and consistency within the working relationship with doctors. Disagree with suggestions that they are doctors on the cheap - they allow doctors to do things that only doctors can do. Ultimately, statutory regulation is about patient safety, not determining scope of practice. The AA & PA Order 2024 will regulate AAs/PAs and enable future modernisation of the regulatory bodies' legislative frameworks - particularly for the Fitness to Practise process. Regulation of non-medical managers currently under spotlight due to the Lucy Letby case, pending outcome of Inquiry.

Actions	Current progress against actions
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. GMC to follow up with officials on EDI and culture support. 2. GMC to continue to support officials in exploring potential education reform for the future. 	