

# **Understanding a doctor's registration**

## **A guide for patients and carers**

This leaflet explains why the doctor who treats you (or the person you care for) must be registered with the General Medical Council (GMC) and hold a licence to practise.

The GMC regulates doctors – this means our job is to protect, promote and maintain the health and safety of the public by ensuring proper standards in the practice of medicine. One of the ways in which we do this is by keeping a register of all doctors able to work in the UK.

Any doctor registered with the GMC must abide by the standards we set for professional practice. If a doctor does not meet these standards, we can limit a doctor's practice, ask them to undertake further training, or stop them from practising altogether.

There are a number of ways you can check whether your doctor has registration with a licence to practise:

**1. Ask your doctor.** You are entitled to ask your doctor to tell you if they are registered with a licence to practise. A doctor must tell you if they do not have a licence. They should not be treating you if they do not have one.

**2. Search the GMC's online register.** This can be found at [www.gmc-uk.org/register](http://www.gmc-uk.org/register)

**3. Telephone the GMC on 0161 923 6602.** We can tell you if your doctor has registration with a licence to practise.

## **Why only doctors with a licence to practise may treat patients**

The law requires any doctor who treats patients to be registered with the GMC with a licence to practise.

While doctors work in many different environments, only those who are registered with a licence to practise can, for example:

- work as a doctor in the NHS or in private practice
- write prescriptions
- sign death and cremation certificates.

Doctors who do not have a licence to practise are more likely to be working, for example, as lecturers in a medical school, as managers, or outside the UK.

Organisations, such as the NHS and other healthcare providers, are required to ensure that the doctors they employ have a licence to practise if their work requires them to do so.

## How you can access the medical register

Anyone can check a doctor's registration using the online List of Registered Medical Practitioners. This is always kept up to date and will provide you with the following information:

- the doctor's reference number, name, former name (if any), and gender
- the year and place the doctor was awarded their medical qualification
- the doctor's current status on the medical register (that is, whether they are registered with a licence to practise or registered without a licence to practise)
- details of any action that may have been taken against the doctor by the GMC.

The online medical register can be found at **[www.gmc-uk.org/register](http://www.gmc-uk.org/register)** or you can call us to check a doctor's registration on **0161 923 6602**.

## **More information**

More information about the GMC and the regulation of doctors can be found on our website: [www.gmc-uk.org](http://www.gmc-uk.org)

This leaflet is also available to download from our website in the following languages: Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, Gujarati, Hindi, Punjabi, Urdu and Welsh. Please visit [www.gmc-uk.org/understandingregistration](http://www.gmc-uk.org/understandingregistration)

If you would like a copy of this leaflet in a different format or language, please telephone 0161 923 6602 or email [gmc@gmc-uk.org](mailto:gmc@gmc-uk.org)

Email: [gmc@gmc-uk.org](mailto:gmc@gmc-uk.org)

Website: [www.gmc-uk.org](http://www.gmc-uk.org)

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