

## **Joint statement of the GMC and NHS Quality Improvement Scotland (NHS QIS) on the regulation of doctors providing telemedicine services to patients in the UK.**

The provision of telemedicine services raises challenges in relation to the regulation of cross-border healthcare, and patients' access to redress if treatment goes wrong.

The GMC and NHS QIS believe there should be no ambiguity as to where regulatory responsibility lies in cases of cross border healthcare. This statement sets out our jointly agreed position on where the responsibility lies in relation to patient safety in this area of medical practice.

We agree that, even though NHS service provision is a devolved matter, it is in the best interests of patients across the UK that all doctors who are delivering telemedicine services meet recognised UK standards of practice. Those who are commissioning telemedicine services from doctors based outside the UK are advised to ensure that doctors are appropriately qualified and regulated. Those non-UK doctors should demonstrate via their regulatory body / competent authority, or through other means, that they are up to date and fit to practise.

### *The role of the GMC in the regulation of doctors who practise telemedicine*

The GMC is not a regulator of medical services but of medical practitioners. The GMC regulates doctors who are on its register. It cannot require doctors practising outside the UK to register with the GMC, or to hold registration with a licence to practise with the GMC. Doctors may of course choose to hold a licence to practise even if there is no legal requirement to do so. The GMC can, and does, regulate doctors who are based outside the UK but on the GMC's register.

For doctors practising outside of the UK, the GMC can, and does, regulate doctors who are on the GMC's register.

### *The role of NHS QIS in the provision of telemedicine*

NHS QIS provides advice and guidance on effective clinical practice (including setting of national standards), supports implementation and assesses NHS performance. NHS QIS expects that all NHS providers in Scotland will ensure that any telemedicine services provided in their name from both within Scotland and outside the UK meet the relevant Scottish standards and that those providing them are appropriately qualified and regulated.

*Last updated: December 2009*