

21 February 2025

Wes Streeting MP

Secretary of State Department of Health and Social Care

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Chair
Professor Dame Carrie MacEwen

Chief Executive and Registrar
Charlie Massey

Dear Secretary of State,

We saw your comments in the media today about your expectations of the General Medical Council to provide patient transparency while maintaining the protections of the Equality Act.

The reporting suggests that we treat doctors who have changed gender differently in respect of their fitness to practise history, leaving patients at risk. I would like to reassure you that this is not the case. This is a complex area and we did not convey clearly enough the principles behind our approach to these issues. I apologise for the confusion caused.

Our current process is underpinned by a key principle that a gender change must not and will not result in the avoidance of accountability or transparency in relation to a doctor's fitness to practise history.

When a doctor transitions, they can receive a new GMC number, but their fitness to practise history and any risk they may still present to the public attaches to an individual and remains the same whether or not their gender identity changes.

We are clear that the creation of a new record cannot be used to circumvent investigation of concerns or of such history being taken into account at a potential future tribunal.

You asked that we provide reassurances about what we are doing to address matters going forward. I can readily do that and can confirm that a member of the public would be able to see the fitness to practise history of a doctor who has changed their gender for the same period of time as they would be able to see the fitness to practise history of a doctor who has not changed their gender. However, given our obligation to comply with the Gender Recognition Act 2004, we may have to make

adaptions to the precise details of what we publish so that we do not disclose protected information under the terms of that Act (for example by limited use of redaction).

In relation to all doctors who we have allowed to change their gender on our register, we can also confirm that all fitness to practise history is accurately displayed on the records of all of those doctors and no fitness to practise history has been removed or suppressed.

We remain committed to our purpose of maintaining patient safety, and ensuring doctors, physician associates and anaesthesia associates on the register have the appropriate training, skills and experience.

I recognise this is a complex area, but hope that this letter reassures you that no doctor will escape accountability or transparency about any fitness to practise history through changing their gender. I would of course be very happy to meet with you to discuss this more fully at your convenience.

I will be writing in similar terms to the Cabinet Secretaries in Scotland and Wales, and the Health Minister in Northern Ireland.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Charlie Massey". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

CHARLIE MASSEY