

## **Briefing: GMC survey of EEA doctors**

**Date: 28 February 2017**

Between Thursday 9 February and Thursday 23 February 2017, the General Medical Council ran a survey to understand the impact of Brexit on the UK medical profession.

The survey was not an independently-commissioned study and the doctors who took part were self-selecting. The survey was promoted to all GMC registrants.

A total of 3,363 doctors took part in the survey – of which 2,702 identified themselves as EEA nationals, 383 said they were UK nationals, and 209 had dual nationality.

We particularly wanted to understand the impact of Brexit on doctors who are EEA nationals actively practising in the UK.

2,115 doctors identified themselves: as an EEA national; **and** holding registration with a licence to practise; **and** currently practising in the UK. Of these doctors:

- Of 2,113 doctors 97.6% said they gained their Primary Medical Qualification (PMQ) in the EEA. 15.4% (n=325) achieved their PMQ in Germany, 13.3% (n=281) in Greece, 12.7% (n=269) in Italy, and 10% (n=212) in Spain.
- 1,886 out of 2,106 doctors (89.6%) said that their practice was *wholly* in the UK; while 10.4% (n=220) said their practise was *partly* in the UK.
- 1,880 out of 2,112 doctors (89%) said that their practice was wholly or mainly in England; while 6.1% (n=129) said Scotland, 3.3% (n=69) said Wales, and 1.6% (n=34) said Northern Ireland.
- 1,260 out of 2,115 doctors (59.6%) said they were on the GMC's Specialist Register, 13.4% (n=284) on the GP Register, and 25.1% (n=530) on neither Register.

1,280 out of 2,106 doctors (60.8%) said they were considering leaving the UK – and therefore UK practice – at some point in the future.

Are you considering leaving the UK – and therefore UK practice – at some point in the future?		
Answer Choice	Response Percent	Response Total
1   Yes	60.8%	1280
2   No	39.2%	826
<b>answered</b>		<b>2106</b>

Of those 1,280 doctors, 91% (n=1,171) said the UK’s decision to leave the European Union was playing a part in their considerations to leave the UK.

586 out of 1,280 doctors (45%) said they were considering leaving the UK in the next two years; while 24% (n=312) said they were considering leaving in the next 3-5 years. 24% (n=320) of respondents answering this question said they had not considered when they might leave the UK.

Over 1,000 doctors left comments explaining how they felt about Brexit and the impact on their practice. An analysis of those comments reveals two key themes:

- Uncertainty about their future residence status

*"The uncertainty of what will happen after Brexit makes planning for the future hard as prior to the referendum my intention was to continue living and working here. Now, I have to wait and see what conditions I have to meet to be able to continue working in UK and if it will be also acceptable for me."*

*"I am very worried about the uncertainty of my future in the UK as a medical doctor coming from the EU. Without any official reassurance that my status in this country as a EU doctor is protected I will have to consider alternative options (leaving the UK and working in another EU country) even though I feel very settled here and would like to stay."*

*"It's not only the psychological and professional impact on me personally, we are already finding it much harder to recruit, and have lost several candidates who explicitly listed Brexit as a reason not to come (or refused to come after having been recruited successfully ahead of the referendum)."*

- The emotional impact of Brexit: many doctors said they felt unwanted and demoralised

*"Felt very demoralised and 'unwanted' initially, which has now turned into uncertainty and anger."*

*"My practice will remain the same but I do not know if I can continue working in the UK. I do not feel welcome anymore and I am really worried about a clearly anti european feel in our society."*

*"Non-UK doctors who have given years of service in the NHS feel devalued with the recent Brexit plans- even if their jobs will be secured, we feel demoralised and vulnerable in a system that allows non-UK citizens to be viewed by patients and peers as second class citizens."*