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GMC statement following the publication of the independent review of gross negligence manslaughter and culpable homicide in medical practice

Charlie Massey, Chief Executive of the General Medical Council, said:

'We commissioned this independent review following the tragic death of Jack Adcock and the prosecution and conviction of Dr Hadiza Bawa-Garba for gross negligence manslaughter. The series of subsequent proceedings that followed have undoubtedly affected our relationship with the doctors we regulate.

'The report says we must rebuild trust with the profession, and we fully accept this challenge. Having reflected as an organisation, we are committed to acting on that and taking forward all the recommendations in this report directed to us.

'We share this report's desire for a just culture in healthcare, and acknowledge that we have a crucial role in making that happen. We are already making progress. Work is underway to address some of the key issues raised in this report but there is plenty more for us to do.

'One thing this report and its recommendations make clear is that a just culture requires a lot more than the actions of a single regulator.

'The independent chair Leslie Hamilton and his working group have met with many stakeholders, including representatives of patients as well as doctors, right across the country. Importantly, as this was a UK-wide review, they made a point of examining what happens in Scotland, which has its own systems and law.

'Regardless of any geographic and legal differences, there needs to be greater consistency in the response to an unexpected death. Support for, and involvement of, patients' families must be a priority before, during and even after an investigation into an unexpected death. Doctors need to feel they are part of a just culture when things go wrong.

'The report highlights the new evidence that the public are acutely aware of the pressures facing UK health systems, and that this can affect their confidence in the care doctors are able to provide.

'This reinforces why we must all do what we can to make sure doctors are training and working in safe environments, for the benefit of patients, and why the GMC must work with the system to effect change.

'The report also recognises that GMC processes are constrained by outdated and inflexible legislation, and calls on the UK government to reform the Medical Act to give us more discretion over which cases require investigation. We welcome this recommendation, and echo that call.

'The recommendations in this report will help us move towards the just culture that we all want and that will benefit healthcare.

'We fully accept the recommendations that are for the GMC, and I urge those other organisations named to carefully consider the recommendations that are for them, as they too may need to make changes.

'If we all act together, this report can be a catalyst for a step change in achieving a just culture in healthcare, and with it the fundamental improvements to the care that patients and their families expect and deserve, and that doctors strive to deliver.'

Ends