

4 August 2020

The Right Honourable

Robert Buckland QC MP

Lord Chancellor & Secretary of State for Justice

Dear Mr Buckland

### **Assaults on emergency workers consultation**

Thank you for inviting us to contribute to the consultation on doubling the maximum penalty for assaulting an emergency worker.

We have provided a brief response to the consultation below. However it may be useful for me to first outline the role of the GMC. We are an independent organisation that helps to protect patients and improve medical education and practice across the UK.

- We decide which doctors are qualified to work here and we oversee UK medical education and training.
- We set the standards that doctors need to follow, and make sure that they continue to meet these standards throughout their careers.
- We take action to prevent a doctor from putting the safety of patients, or the public's confidence in doctors, at risk.

Every patient should receive a high standard of care. Our role is to help achieve that by working closely with doctors, their employers and patients, to make sure that the trust patients have in their doctors is fully justified.

Turning to the consultation, we agree that it is essential doctors and other healthcare and emergency workers are properly supported and can work in a safe environment without fearing for their personal safety. For our part, we take action to address the concerns that have been raised with us about the environments in which doctors work, and the wider impact of systems pressures on medical practice.

We deplore attacks and abuse of any kind directed at these essential staff, especially given the challenging circumstances in which they currently work, in which they are often putting themselves at great risk to protect the public.

Therefore, whilst it is not within our remit to comment on the efficacy of existing legislation or to comment on sentencing policy, we would want to ensure that the law works to protect emergency workers and improve the safety of the environment in which they work.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard Marchant', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Richard Marchant  
Assistant Director, Regulation Policy