



Business plan 2024

Our priorities for 2024 to support our corporate strategy

Our vision is to be an effective, relevant, and compassionate regulator for patients, the public, and medical professionals. Our core role is to deliver flexible and responsive regulation that protects patients, supports professionals to deliver quality care, and meets the needs of the UK health system. To do this we:

- set the standards of patient care and professional behaviours that doctors need to meet
- make sure doctors get the education and training they need to deliver good, safe patient care
- check who is eligible to work as a doctor in the UK, and check they continue to meet the professional standards we set throughout their careers
- give guidance and advice to help doctors understand what's expected of them
- investigate where there are concerns that patient safety, or the public's confidence in doctors, may be at risk, and take action if needed.



Given the unprecedented uncertainties and challenges facing the healthcare system, and the medical profession, we'll continue to:

- listen to the experiences and needs of patients, the public, and the profession to inform our priorities
- use evidence and data to maximise the part we play in responding to those challenges.

Over the coming year we will build on the progress we've made so far and focus our efforts on our priority areas.

Compassionate regulation will continue to be a priority. And we expect to see the projects and activities we started under the *Making every interaction matter* theme start to gain momentum. Our assessment of progress shows that we've started, and in some cases completed, much of the planned work for our current corporate strategy.

However, many of the long-term outcomes and impact will only be fully realised once the current strategy has ended. This is the case for some of our large-scale change projects and ambitions, such as:

- our work on regulating physician associates (PAs) and anaesthesia associates (AAs)
- introducing the Medical Licensing Assessment (MLA)
- our equality, diversity and inclusion (ED&I) targets.

We're now in a stronger position to consider the opportunities that lie ahead, such as those provided by regulatory reform, our future role as a multiprofessional regulator, and how we can collaborate with others to make us more effective.

Delivering our statutory functions

Efficient and effective regulation

In 2024 we expect to:

- process **c.66,000** revalidation recommendations for doctors
- support **c.27,500** qualified first-time applicants to join the UK medical register (including 18,500 applications from international medical graduates and 9,000 applications from UK medical graduates)
- triage complaints of about **10,500** doctors and investigate approximately **1,500** doctors
- take further action in response to concerns in the form of running approximately **300** Medical Practitioners Tribunal Service hearings
- visit **11** new medical schools and use our proactive quality assurance process to review **15** postgraduate training organisations and **38** established medical schools (see our [quality assurance reports](#) for more information)
- review **104** postgraduate curricula and their programmes of assessment to make sure they continue to meet our standards
- respond to **c.450** ethical enquiries in relation to our standards for doctors
- host over **1,000** events, engaging with over **45,000** doctors and students
- host over **150** Welcome to UK Practice events, and in doing so support more than **12,000** international medical graduates
- approach **64,000** trainees and **53,000** trainers to understand their views on training, and on the quality of postgraduate medical education through our national training survey
- make sure at least **3,500** doctors complete the 2024 Barometer survey.



Making every interaction matter

Regulation of physician associates (PAs) and anaesthesia associates (AAs)

We'll complete our framework for regulating PAs and AAs – and subject to legislation, we expect to start registering these professionals around the end of 2024. We'll continue to engage with PAs, AAs, employers, and educators to help them prepare for regulation. And we'll support and encourage actions by partner organisations on wider issues relating to the deployment and development of PAs and AAs within the multidisciplinary team.

Sponsor: Una Lane

Regulatory Reform

We'll continue to work closely with the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) to reform our legislation. We're currently developing the new legal framework, rules, policies, and processes that will sit across all our regulatory functions – these will support the new legislation when it comes into effect. Our timeframes for when we can consult and implement these reforms are dependent on DHSC.

We'll also continue our ongoing engagement with stakeholders by sharing information about what regulatory reform will look like and taking a co-productive approach to process design where possible.

Regulatory reform will change the way we regulate and give us more flexibility to set our own rules and change the way we work in the future when evidence suggests there are improvements that can be made. This will enable us to be more supportive, inclusive, and compassionate in the way that we regulate. It will also provide greater consistency between us, and other regulators.

Sponsor: Shaun Gallagher

Transition to Welsh Language Standards

From 6 December 2023 we became subject to the Welsh Language Standards for healthcare regulators. This follows the Senedd's (the Welsh Parliament's) approval in July 2022 and receipt of our compliance notice in June 2023. We've taken the opportunity to enhance our Welsh language offer to those accessing our services. This has involved making changes to make sure we're compliant with the standards across all functions of the GMC. You can find out more at [Our commitment to Welsh language speakers](#).

Sponsor: Paul Reynolds



Developing a sustainable medical workforce

Expanding our registration pathways

We've continued to expand our registration pathways in response to the increasing demand from overseas doctors and the workforce pressures in our health service.

We're updating existing pathways as well as developing new ones, implementing further international trade deals, and responding to any changes to the post-Brexit standstill arrangements. This will make sure we're able to register skilled professionals so more doctors can work in the UK.

Sponsor: Una Lane

Introducing a Medical Licensing Assessment

We're introducing a new assessment of the core knowledge, skills, and behaviours of doctors who want to practise in the UK. Students at UK medical schools will need to pass the Medical Licensing Assessment (MLA) as part of their degrees before they can join the medical register from the academic year 2024–25 onwards. The PLAB test for international doctors will also become compliant with the MLA in 2024. As such, UK medical students and international doctors will take assessments that draw from the same topics and meet the same requirements.

Sponsor: Colin Melville

Launching our education strategy

We're launching a programme of work to develop and implement new standards, and work with others to achieve ambitious goals in medical education.

Over the next five years, we plan to:

- help create more, increasingly diverse, and better supported educators, supervisors, trainers and mentors
- ensure training can innovate to adapt to the service changes needed, while maintaining our standards, with a focus on better shared skills and measuring outcomes rather than time
- support career development and lifelong learning for all medical professionals to make sure patients' needs are better met
- support the proposed expansion of medical school training places and innovation in delivery while ensuring our standards are met.

We'll reimagine post-qualification education so it's more flexible and easier to navigate – this will involve considering the role of assessment, and encouraging generalism. And we'll secure improved career development for all by improving access, quality, and consistency in lifelong learning.

Sponsor: Colin Melville



Investing in our people to deliver our ambitions

Continuing to attract and retain talent

We strive to attract and retain diverse talent, and will continue to do so, including maintaining a competitive package for new recruits and existing staff, and building resilience for our future skills requirements.

We are also targeting the progression barriers some colleagues experience and supporting future skills needs via a comprehensive learning and organisational development (L&OD) programme. Alongside this, we are working to achieve Gold accreditation under Investors in People (IiP).

Sponsor: Neil Roberts



Enabling professionals to provide safe care

Fairer regulatory outcomes

Our corporate strategy for 2021–2025 renewed our commitment to foster a culture of ED&I in everything we do as a regulator and employer. In 2020 we set equality aspirations to highlight the need for meaningful action to address long-standing inequalities and the impacts of racial discrimination and disadvantage.

Our ED&I aspirations are to address inequalities and improve trust and confidence in the GMC. We have three projects to help us focus on making fairness central to our work.

- We have a programme of work to eliminate disproportionate referrals from employers based on ethnicity or primary medical qualification (PMQ) by 2026.

Sponsor: Anthony Omo

- We have a programme of work to eliminate discrimination, disadvantage, and unfairness in medical education and training pathways by 2031.

Sponsor: Colin Melville

- In 2022 an internal review (regulatory fairness review – RFR) was undertaken to check how the GMC monitors for and mitigates against bias in its decision making. In 2023 we began implementing the findings from this review. This programme of work is the fourth pillar of our ED&I aspirations and one that will sit alongside our other long-term commitments.

Sponsor: Shaun Gallagher

Professional standards

We'll make sure our standards for the professions we regulate reflect current patient and public expectations.

We'll maximise the relevance of our guidance to the profession and optimise how it applies to care. We will give advice on how our guidance applies in practice, and leverage opportunities to influence others to embed the guidance across UK healthcare.

Sponsor: Colin Melville

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You are welcome to contact us in Welsh. We will respond in Welsh, without this causing additional delay.

Mae croeso i chi gysylltu â ni yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ymateb yn Gymraeg, heb i hyn achosi oedi ychwanegol.

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