

UK Advisory Forums – Northern Ireland

Member's Update Paper

for meeting on

7 May 2026

Published 30 April 2026

Report title:	GMC Members' Update for UK Advisory Forum – 7 May 2026
Report by:	Claire Andrews Head of GMC Northern Ireland claire.andrews1@gmc-uk.org

- 1 This paper provides an update on our work to advance key priorities since the last UK Advisory Forum – Northern Ireland meeting, held on 6 November 2025.

New Deputy Medical Director

- 2 Professor Alan Denison joined as our new Deputy Medical Director on 2 March 2026. Prior to his appointment he worked as Dean of Postgraduate Medical Education in NHS Education for Scotland. He has worked as a consultant radiologist in Aberdeen since 2006 and has been a GMC Education Associate for eight years. He succeeds Professor Sue Carr who is retiring after six years in the role. We are very grateful to Sue for her huge contribution to the GMC during this time.

Una Lane's retirement

- 3 Our Director of Registration and Revalidation, Una Lane, has announced that she will be retiring from the GMC in October this year. Una is our senior management sponsor for our relationship with the Department of Health (Northern Ireland), supporting our Chair, our CEO and our Northern Ireland team in their engagement with senior officials around government policy. We are grateful for Una's contribution to our work in Northern Ireland, including her support for the Northern Ireland UK Advisory Forum. Over the coming months, Una will be working to enable a timely recruitment process, aiming for a successor to be appointed before she leaves.

Our Northern Ireland activity

- 4 In January 2026, Prof Push Mangat, Director of Standards and Education, and Cathy Finnegan, Assistant Director Standards, gave evidence to the Northern Ireland Assembly Health Committee to support their scrutiny of the Adult Protection Bill. The Committee published [our written evidence and correspondence](#). We have offered our support to the Department of Health (Northern Ireland)'s bill team, as they develop the accompanying statutory guidance.
- 5 In March 2026 we accepted an invitation to join the Department of Health (Northern Ireland)'s Public Health Bill Notifications Subgroup to support the development of policy proposals for a new Public Health Bill for Northern Ireland.

- 6 We co-ordinated the Northern Ireland Joint Regulators Forum drop in event for MLAs at the Northern Ireland Assembly on 3 March 2026. The event was attended the Minister for Health Mike Nesbit MLA (Ulster Unionist), Philip McGuigan MLA (Sinn Féin) Chair of the Northern Ireland Assembly Health Committee and officials.
- 7 Since May 2025 our Northern Ireland Liaison Advisers (LAs) have continued to provide learning and development opportunities to 2019 doctors and 1045 medical students. We facilitate workshops relating to GMC guidance for Health and Social Care Trusts and NIMDTA (foundation, Hospital specialty and GP trainees). This includes Raising and Acting on Concerns about patient safety, Professional Behaviours & Patient Safety, Fairer Feedback Conversations and Welcome to UK Practice.
- 8 We have introduced a programme of online regional GMC ethical guidance sessions; they are attended by on average 70 doctor from across all five Northern Ireland Health and Social Care Trusts. Topic covered have include Leadership and Management and Personal Beliefs.
- 9 Our Employer Liaison Advisers (ELAs) continue to work with Responsible Officers (ROs) providing advice to support revalidation and management of concerns at a local level. The ELAs also work with the ROs and their teams to discuss wider clinical governance matters to contribute to the development of systems that promote patient safety and support the medical and healthcare workforce.

Regulatory reform

- 10 On 24 March 2026 the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC) launched their consultation on the GMC Order, which will reform the legislation that governs how we regulate doctors. The draft legislation covers all aspects of our work, including powers and duties for registration, education and training and fitness to practise. We have called for reform for a long time and warmly welcomed this significant step towards a more responsive and flexible framework that better serves the needs of patients and the professionals we regulate.
- 11 You can read our [initial response](#) to the announcement on our website. We will now review the consultation in detail and share our position with partners in due course. We are happy to meet with stakeholders to discuss these reforms in further detail.
- 12 We continue to look ahead to planning our work to implement the reforms following the outcome of the consultation, with a focus on more detailed planning for those activities that will happen in the near term. Further information on the timeline and impact we expect the reforms to have can be found on our [dedicated webpages](#).

Our vision for the future of medical education and training

- 13 We continued to progress our *Future education and career development* programme. This long-term programme runs until 2030 and will review the standards, outcomes and guidance that underpin medical education and training across the UK. Through this work, we aim to ensure doctors, physician associates (PAs) and anaesthesia associates (AAs) are equipped to meet patient needs in a system that is flexible, fair and innovative.
- 14 We are currently in the listening phase of the programme. So far, we've heard a clear need for stronger generalist skills, more care delivered in the community, and more multidisciplinary working. We are also considering emerging strategies and programmes of work across the UK, including the four-nation second part of the Medical Training Review.

Survey of specialty, associate specialist, specialist (SAS) and locally employed (LE) doctors

- 15 SAS and LE doctors both make a hugely valuable contribution to UK health services, and we want to better understand their views. Until Tuesday 2 June we are running a dedicated [survey](#) that explores SAS and LE doctors' unique workplace experience. We are asking about their roles and responsibilities. And we explore topics such as workloads, wellbeing and opportunities for learning and development.

Reviewing our Personal Belief guidance

- 16 In March, we launched a [public consultation](#) on proposed updates to guidance that supports registrants to provide good, safe care while taking account of their own beliefs and those of their patients. The guidance focuses on personal beliefs in professional practice. It doesn't cover beliefs expressed outside work, or how we consider concerns that may be raised with the GMC. The consultation is open until 11 June 2026.

Equality, diversity and inclusion

- 17 We published our latest ED&I annual report on 15 January 2026, which provides an update on progress against our ED&I targets. In terms of eliminating disproportionality in referrals, employer referral gaps are closing – fewer designated bodies are showing disproportionality, and we remain on course to meet our 2026 target, taking us a step closer to a system in which every doctor stands on equal ground. Education and training shows a mixed picture: gains in specialty outcomes – particularly for non-UK graduates – are not matched earlier on, where medical school and F1 measures have stalled. Continued, system-wide action is critical if we are to secure fairer cultures at every stage of the education and training pathway.
- 18 In Northern Ireland we continue to work with NIMDTA and Health and Social Care Trusts to embed professional behaviours and fairness to support the increasingly diverse medical

workforce. Annually we attend NIMDTA's clinical education day to deliver ED&I focused workshops to medical educators from across Northern Ireland.