

UK Advisory Forums - Scotland

Member's Update Paper

for meeting on

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- 1 This paper provides an update on our work to advance key priorities since the last UK Advisory Forum – Scotland meeting, held on 8 May 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.

Our Scotland activity

- 3 We hosted our Council in Scotland on 1st October 2025, the day following our last UKAF meeting. The meeting in Glasgow marked their first here since 2022, following meetings in Northern Ireland and Wales. The Scotland team held a successful seminar with them the prior evening, discussing the healthcare system in Scotland and how GMC Scotland works with partners within it.
- 4 Since April 2025 our Scotland Liaison Advisers (LAs) have provided learning and development opportunities for 1831 doctors and 2450 students over 101 interactive workshops. These sessions have covered a range of topics including our core guidance workshops, professional behaviours, team working, and induction.
- 5 We have continued to prioritise the roll-out of our *Caring for a workforce under pressure* workshop following overwhelmingly positive evaluations. It considers wellbeing and how individuals have the potential to make a positive difference, encouraging them to leave with ideas they can put into practice in their workplaces. Since January 2026 our Outreach team have introduced sessions on *End of life care* aimed specifically at International Medical Graduates (IMGs). This supplements existing *Thriving in UK Practice sessions* for IMGs and we are continuing our support for IMG supervisors through a range of sessions.
- 6 Our student pilot workshop, aimed at improving student perceptions and understanding of the GMC and fitness to practise, is now being rolled-out to all medical schools in Scotland as business as usual. The session is aimed at 3rd year medical students and uses anonymised examples of Fitness to Practise case studies, which students work through in small groups.

- 7 Our Employer Liaison Adviser (ELA) continues to support Responsible Officers (ROs) with advice on medical regulation, clinical governance, revalidation, and issues relating to medical professionals, primarily through regular meetings and ad hoc guidance. He works with ROs to identify opportunities for Liaison Advisers to deliver sessions on GMC guidance and processes.
- 8 He also encourages ROs to embed recommendations from *Fair to refer?* and update on the implementation of anti-racism strategies, supporting our aim to eliminate disproportionate referrals by health boards by the end of 2026. Building trust in the GMC's fitness to practise (FtP) processes remains a priority, including ensuring accurate messaging to doctors, and that referred professionals have access to appropriate support from MDO representatives.
- 9 Professor Emma Watson now chairs meetings of the Scottish RO Network and our ELA has been working with the Head of GMC Scotland to help shape the agenda of RO meetings with Professor Watson. A key outcome of this collaboration has been the organising of a training day for ROs and their deputies in Scotland during the summer of 2026.
- 10 We continue to collaborate with stakeholders through the Medical Workforce Wellbeing Stakeholder Group, and the Fairer Working Cultures Group, to support the realisation of fairer and more supportive cultures within NHS Scotland.
- 11 We supported the Scottish Government's Future Medical Workforce (FMW) programme. As a member of the programme's Research Advisory Group, we shared our data and insights, and participated in stakeholder roundtables. The Scottish Government subsequently published its phase 1 report in December 2025. We remain committed to supporting this important project as it continues to develop, considering any links to our own *Future education and career development* programme. In particular we are grateful to the Scottish Government for their invitation to join their Strategic Delivery Group which will provide expert input and strategic oversight to the second phase of the FMW project.
- 12 Whilst the GMC was not included in the terms of reference for the Eljamel Inquiry (due to professional regulation being a power reserved to Westminster), we have proactively engaged with the inquiry team and offered our ongoing support. At the start of the year we submitted our initial witness statement to inform its hearings.

Regulatory reform

- 13 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.

- 14 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.
- 15 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

- 16 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.
- 17 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. These priorities align closely with Scotland's direction of travel. We are also considering emerging strategies and programmes of work across the UK, including the Scottish Government's Future Medical Workforce Project and the four-nation second part of the Medical Training Review. Insight from Scotland is already shaping the foundations for our ongoing engagement and future consultation.

Reviewing our Personal Beliefs guidance

- 18 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

- 19 We continue to collaborate with members of the Fairer Working Cultures Group, to support the realisation of fairer cultures within NHS Scotland. Following a refresh of priorities and actions, the group is now starting to make progress on "quick wins" in areas including improving induction, educational and clinical supervision, and speaking up. Meanwhile we were pleased to support the Medical and Dental Defence Union of Scotland's IMG

Conference, which brought together leaders from various organisations for a strategic discussion on how we can further support internationally-qualified doctors in Scotland. Talks with MDDUS – along with NES and RCGP Scotland, who also supported the event – are ongoing about how we will take forward our collaboration on ED&I in 2026.

- 20 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.