



DHSC consultation on proposals to reform regulation of healthcare professionals

The Department for Health and Social Care is currently consulting on proposals to reform the regulation of healthcare professionals. In general terms there are a number of positive proposals, particularly in relation to the proposed changes to the fitness to practise procedures.

The consultation document covers four key areas:

Governance and operating framework: which includes proposals to devolve matters relating to governance and operating structure to the individual regulator; new obligation for regulators to provide annual reports to Government; proposals to strengthen the duties to collaborate; and proposals in relation to keeping registrant fees consistent and to a minimum.

Education and training: which includes proposals that regulators have much wider powers in relation to setting training and educational standards; and gives regulators the power to approve and provide ongoing quality assurance for specific training programmes and courses (and apply conditions and/or warnings when standards are not adhered to).

Registration: which proposes allowing the annotation of entries on the register to reflect the fact that a registrant may have successfully completed approved training courses; the removal of GP and Specialist registers; that the emergency registration powers introduced by the Coronavirus Act (2020) are made permanent; that fraudulent use of a protected title is moved from a strict liability offence to an offence that mandates consideration of intent; that new minimum requirements (including English language standards) for prospective overseas registrants are specified in the legislation; and that regulators will have a new power to suspend registrants for administrative reasons (for example – payment arrears, a failure to provide current contact details etc), the current position being that regulators only option is to remove such registrants from the register.

Fitness to practise: which proposes that a three stage procedure is introduced, which includes an initial assessment stage, a case examiner stage and a fitness to practise panel stage –mirroring current GMC; it also proposes that the grounds for action are reduced to Lack of competence and Misconduct; and that where a registrant is convicted of a listed offence (based on the list in Schedule 3 of the Social Work Regulations), they can be automatically removed from the register; that the 5 year rule is waived; that regulators have greater flexibility to deal with multiple concerns as a single case rather than having several different cases; that case examiners have the power to impose interim measures; and that changes are made to the process by which MPT (fitness to practice panel equivalent) decisions are reviewed.

The consultation document, which includes a link to submit a response, and our response can be found here:

Open consultation - Regulating healthcare professionals, protecting the public

Londonwide LMCs Regulation Consultation Response

The consultation closes on 16 June 2021 (at 12.15 pm)