

WRITTEN MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

NMC strategic review and constitution order

Thursday 26 January 2012

The Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Department of Health (Anne Milton): Today, I have asked the Council for Healthcare Regulatory Excellence (CHRE) to undertake a strategic review of the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC).

With a view to further strengthening the NMC's leadership and governance, the Department also plans to consult on re-constituting the NMC's council to reduce its size. This is in line with a recommendation by the CHRE. The Department believes that this option now warrants consideration for the NMC.

On 11 March 2008, a debate took place in the House of Commons that raised concerns about the NMC and its performance, *Official Report, cols 46-51WH*. In response, the previous government asked that the CHRE expedite its annual performance review of the body. The report found that the NMC was performing its statutory duties, but not to the standard that the public had the right to expect.

Following that report, the NMC agreed an action plan to address the concerns. A new Council, made up of equal lay and registrant members was independently appointed from 1 January 2009. A new Chair was appointed on the same date and a new Chief Executive took office later that year.

Subsequent reports by the CHRE have found some areas in which the NMC is improving. Regrettably, however, their most recent report on fitness to practise, published in November 2011, shows that the rate of improvement in this area falls below the standard that the public and registrants have the right to expect. That is why I have taken the decisions to commission the CHRE to conduct a wide-ranging review and to undertake a consultation on the constitution of the council.

The review will look at the NMC's organisational structure, resource allocation and operational management. It will establish what further action is needed to ensure that the NMC is effectively carrying out its statutory duties to promote high standards of conduct and practice in order to protect the public. The NMC supports the review, which will report to Ministers by early summer.

How the NMC council might best be constituted to provide strong, strategic oversight will be the subject of a public consultation and views from all stakeholders will be welcomed and taken into account.