

Nursing & Midwifery Council (NMC) Independent Oversight Group

Summary of Meeting held on 9 September 2024

1. Welcome and Introductions

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed all members to the NMC Independent Oversight Group.
- 1.2 The Chair set out the reasons why the Group had been established, following the publication of the Independent Culture Review by Nazir Afzal OBE and Rise Associates, and the forthcoming publication of the Ijeoma Omambala KC reviews into fitness to practise case handling and the NMC's handling of whistleblowing disclosures.
- 1.3 The Group will review, scrutinise and provide constructive challenge on the NMC's action plan to address the recommendations and areas of risk, providing feedback on timings, actions planned and expected impacts.
- 1.4 All attendees introduced themselves, their roles and their respective organisations, and declared any conflicts of interest.

2. Terms of Reference discussion and approval

- 2.1 The Group considered the draft Terms of Reference in detail.
- 2.2 The Group agreed to include a line documenting the need to ensure the NMC addresses concerns identified in the Culture Review regarding equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI), both as an employer and a regulator. The Group also recognised the importance of having a diverse range of views feeding into the work of the Group.
- 2.3 The Group discussed governance, and considered the escalation measures it should have if it collectively considers that the NMC is failing to appropriately respond to the concerns raised in the Culture Review or the findings of the forthcoming Omambala reviews.
- 2.4 The Chair of the NMC agreed with the Group's direction on the importance of having clear routes of escalation and governance. The Chair of the NMC noted that the NMC Council is accountable to Parliament via the Health and Social Care (Commons Select) Committee, and therefore the Group should be mindful of cutting across this chain of accountability.
- 2.5 The Group noted the impact of ongoing issues at the NMC regarding internal culture and fitness to practise, and all members recognised the impact this is having on the public, registrants and NMC employees.
- 2.6 The Group noted that it will need prompt and transparent reporting from the NMC. The Group recognised the risk that demands for information and evidence could have the effect of inhibiting the work the NMC is doing to implement the recommendations.

- 2.7 A majority of the Group agreed that meetings should be held at least every six weeks, with consideration given to the urgency and importance of the issues at hand. The NMC Chair and Acting Chief Executive expressed their concern that six-weekly meetings would put a significant strain on support streams within the NMC who are working to respond to the recommendations of the Culture Review. They felt that six-weekly meetings would result in a significant increase in workloads and pressure on NMC staff. The Chair of the NMC and the Acting Chief Executive both acknowledged and accepted the Group's majority view that six-weekly meetings were necessary given the nature and urgency of the concerns. The Group agreed by majority to hold meetings every six weeks, for the first six months.
- 2.8 The Group discussed the timing of meetings and whether it is possible to sequence these in line with NMC Council meetings. The Chair of the NMC noted that the Council is the decision-making body, and the views of the Group therefore need to be fed back to Council.
- 2.9 The Group agreed to finalise the first version of the Terms of Reference by email, subject to further discussion if required.

ACTION: Secretariat to circulate new version of Terms of Reference for agreement outside meeting by 13 September 2024.

3. Review of membership to include suggestions for and discussion of experts, experts by experience and patient groups

- 3.1 The Group is seeking to appoint patient groups, experts by experience and experts in EDI and organisational culture to provide insight and advice to the Group.
- 3.2 The Chair thanked members who had sent their suggestions for experts in advance of the meeting. The Professional Standards Authority (PSA) has internally compiled a draft list, and the Chair asked that members send any further suggestions to the PSA. The PSA will compile a final list, with a view to seeking expressions of interest from potential expert members in mid-September.

ACTION: Members to submit suggestions to the PSA by 16 September 2024.

ACTION: PSA to seek expressions of interest from potential expert members by 19 September 2024.

4. Next meeting – dates and agenda items

- 4.1 The Group intended to meet as soon as possible to review a version of the NMC's action plan and provide feedback on this. The NMC confirmed that the action plan will be published and made public, including to the Group. The Group agreed that it would be beneficial if it received a draft of the action plan to allow it to provide feedback before it is presented to the NMC Council for approval. The Acting Chief Executive emphasised the need to be agile and flexible in responding to feedback and learnings from the Group.

ACTION: NMC to provide a copy of the action plan to the Group as soon as possible.

5. AOB

5.1 None.

Annex 1: Attendee list

Organisation/Role	Name
Chief Nurse for Adult Social Care, DHSC	Deborah Sturdy
CMO England	Kate Brintworth
CMO NI	Caroline Keown
CMO Scotland	Justine Craig
CMO Wales	Karen Jewell
CNO England	Duncan Burton
CNO NI	Maria McIlgorm
CNO Scotland	Anne Armstrong
CNO Wales	Sue Tranka
DHSC	Phil Harper
DoH NI	Peter Barbour
NMC Acting Chief Executive and Registrar	Helen Herniman
NMC Chair	Sir David Warren
NMC Employee Forum Co-Chair	Colette Howarth
PSA Chief Executive	Alan Clamp
PSA Director of Regulation and Accreditation	Graham Mockler
RCN	Nicola Ranger
Scottish Government	Donna O'Boyle
Unison	Gail Adams
Unite the union	Dave Munday
Welsh Government	Ian Owen

Annex 2: Action Log

On track (including not started) Delayed (or medium risk of delay for projects) Overdue (or high risk of delay for projects) Complete

Mtg. Date	Item No.	Action point	Owner	Date required	Action progress	Status
9 September 2024	2.9	Circulate new version of Terms of Reference to the Group for agreement	PSA Secretariat	13 September 2024	Complete (13 September 2024).	
9 September 2024	3.2	Members to send suggestions for experts to the PSA	All members	16 September 2024	Complete (16 September 2024).	
9 September 2024	3.2	Experts: compile list of suggestions and seek expressions of interest	PSA Secretariat	19 September 2024	Complete (20 September 2024).	
9 September 2024	4.1	NMC to share a version of the action plan with the Group	NMC	As soon as possible (date TBC)	Complete (20 September 2024). The NMC made the action plan materials going to Council available in parallel with the publication of Council papers, making clear that Council would be approving the plan in principle but that the document would be liable to further adjustment and refinement in the light of the Group's comments and wider discussion	