

Nursing and Midwifery Council Circular

Index Number: NMC Circular 29/2007
Issue Date: 4 October 2007
Review Date: 4 October 2008
Replaces: Does not replace any existing circular
Category: Nursing General – Independent Prescribers
Status: Action

Title:

Strengthened requirements on Criminal Records Bureau checks for eligibility to undertake preparation to prescribe as a Nurse Independent Prescriber

For Action by: Higher Education Institutes
Student Nurses
Nurse Preceptors

For Information to: Directors of Nursing

NMC Contact: Nursing and Midwifery Council
23 Portland Place
London
W1B 1PZ

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Summary

- The NMC has a statutory responsibility to set standards for practice and to ensure protection of the public. This circular strengthens the protection to the public
- This Circular comes about as a result of the work undertaken on the Standards of Proficiency for nurse / midwifery independent prescribers. Although Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks are undertaken when registrants commence new employment, many of the registrants who undertake prescribing programme of preparation have been in their current roles for many years and many have never had a CRB undertaken. This Circular ensures that all registrants are required to have an up-to-date CRB check prior to commencement of their prescribing practice.
- It does not replace any previous circular.
- This circular should be read in conjunction with Standards of Proficiency for Nurse Midwife prescribers.

Strengthened requirements on Criminal Records Bureau checks for eligibility to undertake preparation to prescribe as a Nurse Independent Prescriber.

The content of this circular is intended for those who:

- commission and deliver nurse independent prescribing programmes
- sponsor registrants to undertake the programmes
- Strategic Health Authority Prescribing Leads

The NMC 'Standards of Proficiency for Nurse Independent/Supplementary prescribing were published in May 2006, the guidance supporting Standard 1 states:

'The NMC requires employers to undertake an appraisal of a registrant's suitability to prescribe before they apply for a training place. Employers must also have the necessary clinical governance infrastructure in place (including a Criminal Records Bureau check) to enable the registrant to prescribe once they are qualified to do so'

In order to protect the public the NMC require that all registrants must have an up-to-date Criminal Records Bureau check i.e. within last three years, before they commence educational preparation to prescribe as a Nurse Independent Prescriber. Registrants should provide evidence to the Higher Education Institution on application to the educational programme.

On application to renew registration all registrants are required to make a declaration of good health and good character, they must declare that they are of sufficiently good health and good character to be capable of safe and effective practice. The registrant must declare:

- she has no known ill health condition; or
- in spite of suffering from ill health, it does not affect her ability to practise safely and effectively;
- she intends to comply with the Code;
- she has no relevant convictions or formal cautions issued by the police;

- she has not been found guilty of misconduct or lack of fitness to practise by another regulatory body and is not subject to a determination by a licensing body elsewhere to the same effect; and
- she is not currently suspended by another regulatory body or licensing body.

This requirement will come into effect for all new applicants to the Nurse Independent prescribing programmes forthwith and will not be applied retrospectively.

Action Required

- Set out clearly what actions the NMC requires from the recipients of the circular

This circular may be reproduced by all to whom it is addressed

This circular has been issued by:

Sarah Thewlis

Sarah Thewlis
Chief Executive and Registrar
Nursing and Midwifery Council