

NMC response: Care Quality Commission's consultation 3 - our next phase of regulation

Introduction

- 1 We exist to protect the public by regulating nurses and midwives in the UK. We do this by setting standards of education, training, practice and behaviour so that nurses and midwives can deliver high quality healthcare throughout their careers.
- 2 We maintain a register of nurses and midwives who meet these standards, and we have clear and transparent processes to investigate nurses and midwives who fall short of our standards. From 2019, we will also regulate the new profession of nursing associate.
- 3 We welcome the opportunity to respond to this consultation and the approach to align the regulation of independent providers with that applied to the NHS, since the same standards of safety and quality apply.
- 4 Given our regulatory remit, our response focuses on two main points. Firstly, that all nurses and midwives, including those practising in independent healthcare settings, are required to comply with our Code, and secondly the information sharing and collaborate working dimensions set out in section 1.2 of the consultation document. Our comments follow on from our responses to consultation 1 and 2 on the Care Quality Commission's (CQC) next phase of regulation series.

Our response

The NMC Code

- 5 Central to our regulatory approach is the Code¹, which sets out the professional standards that nurses and midwives must uphold in order to be registered to practice in the UK. It is structured around four themes – prioritise people, practise effectively, preserve safety and promote professionalism and trust. All nurses and midwives, including the nurses and midwives practicing in independent healthcare settings are required to comply with the Code. This means that the overall outcome should remain the same, irrespective of where in the social or healthcare system nurses and midwives work.

Sharing information

- 6 We are supportive of the CQC's ambition to strengthen relationships with local and national organisations to support more effective regulation, and for this to enable better information sharing (p.10 of the consultation document).
- 7 The professional regulators, including the NMC, are specifically mentioned as such UK wide organisations. We believe that this is correct and the NMC already has a strong working relationship with the CQC and we hold regular meetings to review our work and share intelligence.

¹ <https://www.nmc.org.uk/standards/code/>

- 8 In addition to this we have a memorandum of understanding and a joint working protocol², which outlines the process, and circumstances where information will be shared. In order to protect the public and improve services it is vital that regulators continue to conduct investigations at the individual and service level and share this data appropriately.
- 9 We are keen to continue to work closely with the CQC and will continue to improve the capture and sharing of data at the systematic and individual practitioner level. If there are new ways of working together and sharing information, for example via the CQC Insight tool, we are supportive of exploring those.

² <https://www.nmc.org.uk/globalassets/sitedocuments/regulators/mou-nmc-and-cqc.pdf>