



Between 2010 and 2020, the Authority has published a series of thought-papers on regulatory reform using right-touch principles, you can find them all on [our website here](#).

The road to regulatory reform

Regulation of professions as we know it has evolved in a piecemeal fashion over the past 150 years. From medieval guilds to the emergence of Victorian-era professional bodies focusing as much on the interests of the trade as on the quality of the service, there have been many changes. See below for some of the key milestones:

1998-2004

Into the modern era: the Kennedy reforms

Alongside other key events during this period, the Kennedy Report into failings in children's heart surgery at Bristol Royal Infirmary led to significant reforms. This included the creation of the Council for the Regulation of Health Professionals (predecessor body to the Authority), to coordinate the regulators and ensure greater focus on the public interest. The report also recommended a duty of candour for professionals.

2004-2010

From self-regulation to shared regulation: post-Shipman reforms

Strong criticism of regulation arising from the report into Harold Shipman's crimes established the importance of lay involvement in the fitness to practise process, the separation of investigation and adjudication and the need for ongoing competence checks which lead to the introduction of revalidation for doctors.

2010-2015

NHS is redesigned, but regulatory reform stalls

Government White Paper *Enabling Excellence* is published drawing on right-touch regulation principles (influenced by the Better Regulation agenda) and leading to the creation of the Accredited registers. Structural change to the NHS occurs, however, the Law Commissions' Bill to simplify professional regulation is not taken forward. The Francis Report into the failings at Mid-Staffs criticises the fragmented nature of the regulatory system and leads to the introduction of the duty of candour.

2015-2020

Rethinking regulation

The Authority and all regulators are given the overarching objective of public protection. Government announces reforms based on *Rethinking regulation* and the Law Commissions' proposals. The Government response to the reform consultation is published in 2019 outlining reforms to regulators' fitness to practise processes, governance and rulemaking powers.

2020...

To be continued

Work on proposals for regulatory reform continues with the background of the Covid-19 pandemic. The Paterson and Cumberlege reports both describe a fragmented regulatory system with patient safety concerns falling through the gaps and the patient voice being lost.

You can read our full summary of developments in professional regulation in *Learning from the past: two decades of regulatory reform in health and care professional regulation*.