

NMC Independent Oversight Group

Summary of Meeting held on 6 May 2026

1. Welcome

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and noted apologies.

2. Culture Update (NMC)

- 2.1 The NMC provided an update to the group on the implementation status of the 37 recommendations from the Independent Culture Review (ICR), highlighting 24 as implemented, seven as initiated, and six recently moved to implemented, with detailed explanations of the processes, definitions, and ongoing monitoring.
- 2.2 The NMC explained that 'implemented' means interventions are fully embedded as business as usual, subject to ongoing monitoring and review, and that the status of recommendations can be downgraded if sustainability is not achieved. The group uses quarterly data to assess progress, and council committees conduct deep dives to scrutinise the evidence for implementation.
- 2.3 The NMC advised that the 24 implemented recommendations cover areas such as embedding new organisational values, strengthening performance management, improving psychological safety, enhancing EDI (Equality, Diversity and Inclusion), and operationalising safeguarding. The NMC described the introduction of a values framework, high appraisal completion rates, and the establishment of staff networks and reasonable adjustments.
- 2.4 Seven recommendations remain at the initiated stage, including those related to fitness to practise (FTP) quality assurance, leadership and management capability, estates strategy, legal services review, data-driven operations, reverse mentoring, and FTP timelines and backlogs. The NMC outlined the specific challenges and ongoing work for each, such as capacity constraints and the need for further system changes.
- 2.5 The NMC advised that six recommendations have recently moved from initiated to implemented, including improvements in criminal case pathways, safeguarding hub operations, professional regulation structure, regulatory focus, revalidation audit transparency, and panel diversity. The NMC provided data on increased diversity among panel members and described the operational changes supporting these shifts.

- 2.6 The group discussed the persistent challenges in FTP backlogs, the impact of rising referrals, resource constraints, and the need for systematic solutions, with offers for further deep-dive meetings and collaborative problem-solving.
- 2.7 The NMC reported a steady increase in FTP referrals, with 13% annual growth in recent years. The NMC also noted that the lack of registration fee increases over the past 11 years has resulted in significant lost income, limiting the organisation's ability to address FTP backlogs.
- 2.8 One group member emphasised the need to separate reporting on screening from other FTP stages, noting that while screening has improved, investigation and case examiner backlogs have worsened due to resource reallocation. They called for simultaneous attention to all FTP stages and suggested a systematic approach, including more case examiners and better hearing preparedness.
- 2.9 The NMC described the introduction of quality thresholds for hearings and plans to use case management hearings to improve efficiency. It also discussed efforts to engage employers to ensure appropriate referrals and support for unrepresented registrants. The NMC welcomed further engagement with union representatives and stakeholders to share learning and develop solutions.
- 2.10 The group discussed the importance of accessible data for monitoring FTP performance. The group agreed to including this in a future agenda to address FTP challenges in detail.
- 2.11 The group discussed the establishment and impact of the safeguarding hub, the rollout of safeguarding SOPs and training, and the positive outcomes of the health case management pilot, with plans to evaluate and potentially sustain the pilot.
- 2.12 One group member enquired about the status of the health case management pilot for FTP cases involving health concerns. The NMC confirmed the pilot's positive impact and ongoing casework, with a formal evaluation pending to determine future plans.
- 2.13 The NMC provided an update on the safeguarding hub, including recruitment of key roles, and high compliance with mandatory safeguarding training. The hub has delivered over 30 sessions to more than 500 colleagues, and panel member e-learning has been launched.
- 2.14 One group member described the development of a protocol for managing FTP cases involving domestic abuse, enabling escalation to the safeguarding hub and improved support for affected professionals. They noted ongoing work to improve communication with referrers in such cases.
- 2.15 The group clarified the processes for council member recruitment and appraisal, and noted the recent increases in diversity of the pool of panel members, with ongoing efforts to further improve representation.

- 2.16 The NMC explained that council members undergo a separate appraisal process led by the chair, with trends analysed to inform council development programmes.
- 2.17 The NMC confirmed that recruitment for council members follows rigorous standards, with upcoming vacancies due to natural term completions. Recent changes in recruitment processes and targeted outreach have led to increases in Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic representation among both lay and registrant panel members.
- 2.18 The NMC provided current figures, stating that 26% of lay panel members and 24% of registrant panel members are from Black, Asian, or Minority Ethnic backgrounds, an increase from previous years.
- 2.19 The group discussed staff surveys, exit interviews, and organisational feedback. The NMC discussed the timing and role of staff surveys, the use of exit interviews for organisational learning, and the importance of increasing participation rates to inform ongoing cultural improvements.
- 2.20 The NMC confirmed that the staff survey is conducted annually, with the next scheduled for September 2026. The survey is used as one of several indicators to measure organisational progress, and participation rates have increased following targeted campaigns.
- 2.21 One group member asked about findings from exit interviews. The NMC advised that no patterns had emerged, with recent exits largely due to redundancies. One group member noted that only about a third of staff complete exit surveys. The NMC stated that efforts are ongoing to increase this rate for richer feedback.
- 2.22 The group emphasised the importance of using staff and exit survey feedback to inform cultural and operational improvements, with council involvement in reviewing findings and shaping organisational responses.
- 2.23 The NMC will arrange a follow-up meeting with relevant stakeholders to conduct a deep dive into recommendation 6 (fitness to practise timelines and backlogs), including discussion of systematic solutions across screening, investigation, case examiners, and adjudication.
- 2.24 The NMC committed to confirming the status and outcome of the health pilot for managing fitness to practise cases with known health concerns, including whether it will be permanently established, and communicate this to the relevant stakeholders.

3. AOB

- 3.1 None

Annex 1: Attendee list

Organisation/Role	Name
DHSC	Jonathan Stones
Welsh Government	Rhiannon Jones
Scottish Government	Rebecca Wright
Northern Ireland Government	Aislinn McAlister (representing Chris Wilkinson)
Deputy Chief Midwifery Officer - England	Alison Talbot (representing Kate Brintworth)
Chief Nursing Officer Scotland	Jason Birch (representing Aisha Holloway)
NMC Chief Executive and Registrar	Paul Rees
NMC Executive Director of Professional Regulation	Lesley Maslen
NMC Safeguarding Lead	Raynor Griffiths
NMC Head of External Affairs	Nick Medhurst
NMC Deputy Chief of Staff	Kirsten van Balen
NMC Co-Chair of the staff network	Niamh Fleming
NMC Interim Director of Transformation and Technology Services	Richard Cartland
PSA Chief Executive	Alan Clamp
PSA Director of Regulation and Accreditation	Graham Mocker
Unite	Dave Munday
UNISON registrants' representation	Gail Adams
Expert - NHS England, National Maternity Lead for Equality	Wendy Olayiwola

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.	

2 October 2024	2.2	NMC to share the detailed version of the fitness to practise improvement plan with the group in advance of the meeting on 18 October 2024	NMC	TBC	Complete (16 October 2024)
2 October 2024	2.14	PSA secretariat to include an agenda item on the NMC's governance structure and assurance framework at the IOG meeting in November	PSA secretariat	1 week in advance of the IOG meeting in November (date TBC)	Complete (20 November 2024)
2 October 2024	3.1	PSA secretariat to share a list of experts who have expressed an interest in joining the group	PSA secretariat	3 October 2024	Complete (3 October 2024)
2 October 2024	3.1	PSA secretariat to review expressions of interest from experts and make a recommendation to the group	PSA secretariat	11 October 2024	Complete (9 October 2024)
18 October 2024	3.1	PSA secretariat to arrange the next meeting as soon as possible.	PSA secretariat	TBC (November)	Complete (25 October 2024)
28 November 2024	2.23	PSA secretariat to include an agenda item on the NMC's fitness to practise performance at the next meeting	PSA secretariat	31 January 2025	Complete (31 January 2025)
28 November 2024	2.23	NMC to provide EDI data on the FTP caseload at the next meeting	NMC	31 January 2025	Complete (31 January 2025)

28 November 2024	3.1	PSA secretariat to arrange the group's next meeting in the week ending 24 January or 31 January	PSA secretariat	31 January 2025	Complete – meeting scheduled for 31 January 2025	
31 January 2025	3.8	PSA secretariat to include an agenda item for an update on the Ijeoma Omambala KC reports at the next meeting	PSA secretariat	12 March 2025	Complete (12 March 2025)	
31 January 2025	4.10	NMC to provide the group with insights from its data cleansing work at a future meeting	NMC	12 March 2025	Complete (12 March 2025)	
31 January 2025	4.10	NMC to provide the group with FTP scorecard data at future meetings	NMC	12 March 2025	Complete (12 March 2025)	
12 March 2025	2.5	PSA secretariat to include an item on the FTP dashboard data at the next meeting covering FTP as a substantive item	PSA secretariat	6 August 2025	Complete (6 August 2025)	
12 March 2025	3.7	NMC to share its paper on safeguarding with the group	NMC	29 April 2025	Complete (29 April 2025)	
12 March 2025	5.5	NMC to notify the group when it receives the Omambala reports	NMC	TBC	Complete (15 September 2025)	
12 March 2025	8.5	PSA secretariat to include an item on frequency of meetings at the June meeting	PSA secretariat	25 June 2025	Complete (25 June 2025)	

29 April 2025	2.6	NMC to notify the group as soon as possible when it has an indication of Ijeoma Omambala KC's estimated timetable for the reports' publication	NMC	TBC	Complete (6 August 2025)
29 April 2025	4.1	NMC to present an update, including detailed data, on its oldest FTP cases at a future meeting	NMC	6 August 2025	Complete (6 August 2025)
29 April 2025	4.6	NMC to present its revised FTP improvement plan to the group when approved by Council	NMC	TBC	Complete (12 January 2026)
25 June 2025	2.6	NMC to refrain from using acronyms without first explaining their meaning at future meetings	NMC	TBC	Complete (25 June 2025)
6 August 2025	3.10	NMC to update the group when it has been informed that all information has been shared from Ijeoma Omambala KC to the newly commissioned lawyers	NMC	15 September 2025	Complete (15 September 2025)
6 August 2025	4.18	PSA Secretariat to include an agenda item to consider the effectiveness of the NMC Council, with the Chair of the NMC in attendance, at a future meeting	PSA Secretariat	TBC	Complete (3 November 2025)

15 September 2025	1.4	NMC to notify the group when the independent investigations into FTP and whistleblowing will be published	NMC	TBC	Complete	
15 September 2025	3.9	NMC to include graphs showing the age profile of caseload over time and by stage in the dataset for all meetings covering FTP	NMC	TBC	Complete (6 May 2026)	
3 November 2025	2.5	NMC to present its plan in response to the reports' recommendations to the group at a future meeting	NMC	TBC		
3 November 2025	7.1	PSA secretariat to share the latest FTP dataset with the group	PSA secretariat	3 November 2025	Complete (3 November 2025)	
6 May 2026	7.2	The NMC to confirm whether the impact of the registration fee freeze on the NMC's ability to progress fitness to practise cases is specifically recorded as a risk on the NMC risk register and report back to the group.	NMC	TBC		