

NMC Press Release

Successful opening of new NMC register

After two years of planning, three extensive consultations, months of legal discussion and due parliamentary process, the Nursing and Midwifery Council register opened on 1 August as planned.

All 655,000 health professionals on the old 15-part NMC register were transferred to the new three-part register on 1 August without having to take any action themselves. The new register has parts for nurses, midwives and specialist community public health nurses. They will be notified about their new position on the register when they renew their registration with the NMC.

The specialist community public health nurses' part of the register has, initially, only health visitors, but they will shortly be joined by occupational health nurses, school nurses and family health nurses in Scotland. Other practitioners may apply to join this part of the register in time. This new part of the register reflects the growing importance of public health in modern health care. Practitioners have to be either on the nurses' or midwives' part of the register before they can go onto the part for specialist community public health nurses.

With the opening of the new register, members of the public will for the first time be able to check that registrants are whom they say they are and whether they have any cautions or, in due course, other NMC sanctions other than removal from the register against their name. Those who have been struck off the register will not be shown on it. This published register will be available on-line (www.nmc-uk.org) but will not reveal personal information such as home addresses.

Also, for the first time, nurses and midwives coming onto the register or renewing their registration will have to sign a declaration of good health and good character. For newcomers to the register, this will have to be supported by a third-party declaration.

Alongside the new register are new rules and standards for midwives and new rules and processes for fitness to practise complaints. For the first time, the NMC has a duty to investigate allegations of lack of competence against those on the register. Hitherto, complaints have only been about alleged misconduct. This is expected to increase substantially the number of complaints received and investigated by the NMC.

Sarah Thewlis, NMC Chief Executive and Registrar, said:
"The new register is simpler and more accessible than the previous register for both practitioners and the public. The register is the key element in how we fulfil our public protection role. The public can be confident that the registered nurses and midwives who care for them are properly qualified and fit for practice."

ENDS

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