

Nursing and Midwifery Council consultation on registration fees: Glossary of terms and explanations

Fitness to practise The NMC is required to consider allegations relating to the fitness to practise of nurses and midwives. The investigations that we consider fall into four broad categories: misconduct; lack of competence; character issues; and serious ill health. The outcomes of an investigation may vary from there being found with no case to answer, to sanctions being applied, to a nurse or midwife being struck off the register.

Hearings Panels of the Conduct and Competence Committee and Health Committee hold hearings to decide whether a nurse or midwife's fitness to practise is impaired and, if so, to take appropriate action. At a hearing the parties are entitled to be present and represented, to make submissions, to give and call evidence, and to challenge the evidence called by the other party. The panel then makes decisions based on the evidence it has heard.

Quality assurance of education We quality assure all NMC approved programmes of education through robust processes of approval and annual monitoring. This means all programmes leading to registration or a mark on the register, and programmes of preparation for individuals supporting learning and assessment in practice. Quality assurance covers approval of new programmes, re-approval and modifications of existing programmes. We also monitor approved education institutions and their practice partners on an annual basis.

Referrals The word 'referral' is sometimes used as a general term to mean the initial complaint or allegation received by the NMC about a nurse or midwife who is believed to be putting the safety of patients or the public at risk. The word 'referral' is also used in the fitness to practise rules to mean the process of sending an allegation (or case) to a Practice Committee for consideration

Register The NMC register is a public record of all nurses and midwives who have met our registration requirements and are therefore entitled to practise in the UK. In order to remain on the register, nurses and midwives must follow the standards and guidance we set which helps to ensure they practise safely and effectively.

Reserves These are the general funds on our balance sheet (excluding fixed assets) available for use at the trustees' discretion in the running of the organisation.

Statutory supervision of midwives The NMC is required to set rules for the practice of midwifery and the Local Supervisory Authorities who are responsible for the function of statutory supervision of midwives. Statutory supervision of midwives supports protection of the public by promoting best practice, preventing poor practice and intervening in unacceptable practice, and is a mechanism that is independent of employment and employers.

The order The NMC is governed by the Nursing and Midwifery order (the order, statutory instrument 2002/253), as amended from time to time. The order requires us to produce various items of supporting documentation such as rules, standards, guidance, and advice.