

Steve Brine MP
Chair, Health and Social Care Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Via email to: hscocom@parliament.uk

17 July 2023

Dear Mr Brine,

Nursing and Midwifery Council: Working together for kind, safe and effective care

Today we have published our Annual Report and Accounts for 2022-2023 and our annual Fitness to Practise report for 2022-2023. These reports include a summary of the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC)'s work across the United Kingdom over the last year.

2022–2023 was an immensely challenging year for health and social care across the four countries of the UK. We therefore focused on delivering key actions that would have the most impact for people who use services and professionals delivering care for people and communities during these difficult times.

The reports, including Welsh language and easy read versions, are now available on our website: <https://www.nmc.org.uk/about-us/reports-and-accounts>.

Reducing the Fitness to Practise caseload

Our top organisational priority remains to reduce swiftly and safely the number of open fitness to practise cases. We understand that delays cause distress to professionals, people and families affected by the concerns that have been raised. We are working hard to reduce our caseload and to reach decisions quickly and fairly with a person-centred approach. This is focused on safeguarding and considering the wellbeing of everyone involved, while fulfilling our role of protecting the public.

We reduced our caseload from 6,469 cases as of 31 March 2022 to 5,577 cases by the end of March 2023. Although short of our target of a 5,000-caseload total by March 2023, this represents a decrease of 14 percent, and we are confident of continuing this downward trend into 2023-2024. By 31 March 2024, we will reduce our caseload to 4,000 cases.

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We're the independent regulator for nurses and midwives in the UK, and nursing associates in England. Our vision is safe, effective and kind nursing and midwifery practice that improves everyone's health and wellbeing.

Registered charity in England and Wales (1091434) and in Scotland (SC038362)

Supporting nursing and midwifery professionals

We continued to play our part in easing workforce pressures and supporting nursing and midwifery professionals to deliver safe, effective and kind care for people and communities.

We revised our English language requirements to make sure that every nurse, midwife, and nursing associate can demonstrate good English language skills so that members of the public can have confidence that they will receive the person-centred care that meets their needs.

We expanded the number of objective structured clinical examination (OSCE) centres, significantly increasing test capacity to meet increased demand and help more professionals join our register quickly and safely.

We set new forward-looking standards for post-registration qualifications to reflect the growing responsibility and ambition of specialist community public health nurses and other specialist community nurses like district nurses, enabling professionals to deliver expert clinical care. We also made changes to our education programme standards following the UK's exit from the EU giving educators the flexibility to deliver courses at the cutting edge of nursing and midwifery education to a broader range of students.

We continue to maintain the Covid-19 temporary register after the UK Government asked us to keep it open for a further two years to ensure continued support for health and care services.

Monitoring the quality of nursing and midwifery higher education

We monitored the quality of nursing and midwifery higher education courses to ensure students gain the skills and expertise needed to deliver the safe, effective and kind care that the public have a right to expect.

We focused on carrying out approvals of pre-registration midwifery programmes against our new education standards. Due to the number and serious nature of concerns identified, Canterbury Christ Church University's midwifery programme was refused approval. We understand the impact of this decision and have worked closely with NHS England Workforce, Training and Education (NHSE WTE) to support the university and the students affected. We have met the UK Minister for Mental Health and Women's Health Strategy on this matter and have kept local MPs and key regional stakeholders regularly updated.

Improving maternity safety

During 2022, the Donna Ockenden Shrewsbury and Telford review and Dr Bill Kirkup's East Kent report set out appalling, tragic and long-standing failings in maternity

services. Our thoughts continue to be with the women, babies and families who have suffered as a result. We have been working together with trusts, higher education institutions, and other regulators to address concerns about the safety of maternity services in England and to deliver sustainable improvements across all four nations.

Addressing legal barriers so we can be more effective

We continue to work with the UK Government to develop a new legal framework that will modernise how we regulate, benefitting people and communities who receive care. We [responded](#) to the UK Government's consultation on the regulation of anaesthesia associates and physician associates in June 2023.

Making our processes fair for everyone

We have a responsibility as a regulator and an employer to do everything we can to tackle discrimination and inequality and to promote diversity and inclusion.

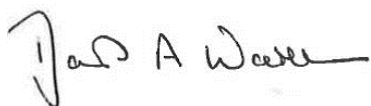
Last year we took steps to move forward more significantly on equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) within our own organisation, including publishing our [EDI plan](#) and [Ambitious for Change research](#). We also published an [anti-racism resource](#) with NHS England and NHS Confederation that supports nursing and midwifery professionals working in the NHS to combat racism.

By addressing these challenges internally, we are better able to use our leadership role and regulatory powers to tackle discrimination and inequality in the health and social care workforce which in turn negatively affect the health outcomes and people and communities.

Conclusion

It's very important to us that our key partners are part of the NMC's journey, understanding where we are today and where we are going in the future. As ever, if you have questions about these reports or any of our other work then we would be very happy to provide further detail, and of course to meet if it would be helpful. We look forward to working with the committee going forward.

Yours sincerely,



Sir David Warren
Chair



Andrea Sutcliffe CBE
Chief Executive and Registrar

Recipients:

- *Steve Brine MP, Chair, Health and Social Care Committee, UK Parliament*
- *Joanna Dodd, Clerk, Health and Social Care Committee, UK Parliament*