

From the Chief Executive and Registrar



Layla Moran MP
Chair
Health and Social Care Committee

By email: hscocom@parliament.uk

28 April 2026

Dear Layla

NMC decision to increase to registration fees and change Fitness to Practise rules

Following our previous letter on 3 November 2025 and our 12-week public consultation from 3 November 2025 to 26 January 2026, NMC Council has agreed that the annual registration fees should increase for the first time in 11 years – with the main fee increasing by the equivalent of £1.92 per month or from £120 to £143 annually.

Council also agreed we should proceed with improvements to our Fitness to Practise rules – to help make our regulatory process faster and fairer.

Both decisions are subject to Parliamentary approval.

As a reminder, the detail of the consultations and the reasons for our recommendations are set out below.

Increasing our registration fees

For more than a decade, the NMC has not increased its registration fees, keeping the main fee at £120 since 2015 to avoid placing additional financial pressure on nurses, midwives and nursing associates.

However, holding the fees at the same level for over a decade has had consequences – inflation has reduced the real value of the registration fees by around

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28.8%, representing approximately £186 million in lost income compared with what the NMC would have received if the fees had kept pace with inflation.

This means that we are now posting substantial deficits on an annual basis. Our reserves have fallen from £101m in March 2024 to around £49.6m now and are projected to fall to £15.9m in March 2027 if there is no increase in the fee.

The responses to our consultation told us that many professionals continue to feel the effects of the cost-of-living crisis. Council understands this, however it could not ignore that we are now posting substantial deficits on an annual basis.

Council agrees that an increase in the main fee by the equivalent of £1.92 per month is fair and proportionate. For those who claim tax relief, the effective increase will be lower, and the option to pay quarterly remains available to help spread the cost.

Having a strong, independent regulator – one that can act quickly, fairly and effectively to protect the public and support confidence in the professions – matters.

That is what this decision is ultimately about.

Over the past 11 years, the scale and complexity of regulation have grown significantly.

The NMC now regulates 867,935 nurses, midwives and nursing associates – around one in 50 of the working-age population.

This has increased demand on regulatory services including Registration and Revalidation, while Fitness to Practise referrals have increased by around 21% – and rising – since 2015, reflecting both workforce growth and the increasing complexity of modern healthcare.

The NMC is now regulating many more professionals, in a more demanding environment, while operating with fees that have steadily reduced in value for 11 years.

Council also noted that, while most respondents to the NMC's consultation opposed an increase in the fees, they also agreed that the regulator should continue to invest in improvements:

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- Better education quality assurance, ensuring new professionals are well prepared
- Stronger and clearer professional standards, reflecting modern practice
- Faster, fairer Fitness to Practise processes, reducing stress and delay
- Regulatory fairness, embedding equity diversity and inclusion to eliminate bias
- Modern digital services, making it easier to interact with the NMC.

We also recognise that if registrants are asked to contribute more, the organisation must take responsibility for controlling its own costs.

That is why we have taken significant steps to reduce expenditure, including:

- reducing the NMC workforce by around 10% (137 roles)
- cutting £3.1 million in non-staff spending each year
- strengthening financial controls and prioritisation.

As 97% of our income comes directly from registrants, and we are committed to ensuring that every pound is used responsibly and delivers value.

We have worked hard to ensure that this increase is fair and proportionate.

The main fee will be £143 per year, an increase of £1.92 per month or £23 per year.

If the fee had increased in line with inflation over the past decade, it would now be around £168 per year, so the increase has been kept below that level.

We have also taken steps to reduce the impact:

- Tax relief could help reduce the fee further
- Quarterly payments allow the cost to be spread across the year.

This decision is about ensuring the NMC can become the strong and independent regulator that everyone wants to see.

Every year, nurses and midwives care for millions of people across the UK – from the 650,000 babies born each year, to the many million people admitted to hospital, to the hundreds of thousands of those receiving care in their homes and communities.

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Behind that care must sit a regulator that is strong, fair and trusted.

This change ensures we can continue to play that role – not just today, but for the future.

Improvements to our Fitness to Practise rules

NMC Council has also approved changes to the rules governing our Fitness to Practise process – as part of ongoing efforts to deliver a process that is faster, fairer and more compassionate for the people involved.

The changes will mean we can:

- Appoint Legally Qualified Chairs (LQCs) to Practice Committee panels, which preside over hearings.
- Strengthen our case management powers, to enable more proactive case management, with parties given clear expectations on how the hearing will run and specific instructions on how they should prepare.
- Share information via a digital platform or online account - where the nurse, midwife or nursing associate agrees.
- Create flexibility in our process, for when the regulator invites representations and the timescales for these, and how much notice it gives of meetings and hearings.
- Provide better support for witnesses, enabling more people to give their evidence as effectively as possible.

These changes will help us to:

- Remove unnecessary process delays
- Free up capacity at the adjudication stage of the process
- Improve the efficiency of hearings, with fewer delays and adjournments leading to timelier outcomes
- Be more person-focused by recognising and putting people's needs at the centre of what can be a distressing process.

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Feedback showed high levels of support for the proposed changes – recognising that they would help make the process faster, fairer and less stressful for everyone involved, including registrants, witnesses and the public.

The responses also identified risks which we will mitigate through careful implementation to support people with specific and additional needs.

Next steps

These changes will be subject to Parliamentary approval – going to the Privy Council for approval and being laid in Parliament before the summer recess on 16 July. The changes would then take effect from 1 October 2026.

Please do get in touch if you have any questions.

Yours sincerely

Paul Rees MBE
Chief Executive and Registrar

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