

WRITTEN MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Medical Revalidation

Friday 19 October 2012

The Secretary of State for Health (Mr Jeremy Hunt): Today, I am announcing that from 3 December 2012, revalidation of doctors in the UK will commence.

This announcement follows the October 2010 commitment by the General Medical Council (GMC) and Department of Health to deliver a streamlined system of revalidation that provides assurance to the public and adds value for both patients and doctors. The tests of readiness for revalidation, as set out in that commitment, have now been met and I have received sufficient evidence from the UK Revalidation Programme Board that all four UK countries are suitably prepared to proceed with implementation.

Revalidation is a way of regulating licensed doctors. It is a five yearly process which gives doctors a clear framework to reflect on and improve their quality of care as well as ensuring that a doctor's practice is systematically evaluated on an ongoing basis.

Through revalidation, doctors are required to demonstrate, via their annual appraisal, that they are working in a way that meets the values and principles set out in Good Medical Practice, the GMC guidance which sets out the principles and values on which good practice is founded, in order to renew their licence to practice. The evidence that doctors will bring to support revalidation will include participation in a process of annual appraisal, feedback from patients and colleagues, evidence of continuing professional development, reviews of complaints and information about clinical outcomes, where appropriate.

The new system will apply to all doctors in all settings in the UK.

For the small proportion of doctors about whom there are concerns, the strengthening of local clinical governance, together with a system of annual appraisal, provides the means for identifying problems earlier and putting in place appropriate arrangements to respond to any such concerns.

Medical revalidation will help doctors keep up to the standard expected of them by ensuring they stay up to date with the latest techniques, technologies and research. This will be key in making improvements in early diagnosis, such as with dementia and cancer – which is particularly important in bringing down mortality rates – and in helping people with long term conditions manage them better.

Revalidation will also require a doctor to tackle any concerns with important skills such as bedside manner and maintaining trust with patients – particularly important when caring for the increasing number of older patients that the NHS treats.

As well as improving patient safety and quality of care, revalidation will improve public confidence that the doctors who are providing care and treatment to patients in the UK are up to date and fit to practise.

I would like to thank the GMC, the NHS Revalidation Support Team, the Independent Healthcare Advisory Services, the British Medical Association, the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges, NHS Employers, colleagues in the devolved administrations, the NHS Confederation and UK Patient organisations for the considerable amount of work they have undertaken in preparation for the commencement of revalidation. In summary, revalidation represents a world leading initiative that will increase the quality and safety of healthcare across all sectors.