

NMC Independent Oversight Group

Summary of Meeting held on 4 March 2026

1. Welcome

1.1. The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and noted apologies.

2. Safeguarding update (NMC)

- 2.1. The NMC provided an update on its safeguarding activity. The NMC has strengthened its safeguarding team, including by appointing an Associate Director of Safeguarding, a Head of Safeguarding and a Safeguarding Manager to oversee the safeguarding advisors. The NMC said this has ensured safeguarding is now on a substantive footing.
- 2.2. The NMC noted that, in March 2024, safeguarding was its highest rated strategic risk. This risk rating has now reduced significantly¹, owing to a range of actions contained in the safeguarding plan since September 2024, including the establishment of the safeguarding hub. The NMC also noted that safeguarding is an inherent risk, and that it considers this to be the target risk level.
- 2.3. The Chair asked whether a risk rating of 12 should be recorded as Green (on a RAG rating). The NMC said this is in recognition of safeguarding always being an inherent risk because the impact is always going to be very high, regardless of when or where it occurs. The NMC added that the likelihood has reduced, owing to the controls and processes put in place over the last year.
- 2.4. The NMC has implemented a new safeguarding handbook, which is available to all staff. This includes a decision tree which shows pathways for safeguarding and wellbeing issues, which the NMC said will aid decision-making. The NMC has also launched an emergency line for direct access to the safeguarding team, who are able to offer urgent support.
- 2.5. The NMC undertook a review of its safeguarding hub in September 2025, after one year of the hub being established. This review recommended that the NMC roll out safeguarding level one training to all staff, which the NMC has now mandated and 93% of staff have completed. The NMC described this training as comprehensive, covering safeguarding of both adults and children.

¹ To a score of 12, from 25 (the highest possible rating).

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- 2.6. In November 2025, the NMC rolled out a new Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for safeguarding, which applies to all FTP staff. The NMC said this focuses on the roles and responsibilities of safeguarding within FTP, which it said is where the greatest risk lies. The NMC engaged with staff across all stages of the FTP process to ensure the SOP is relevant to each part of the process. The NMC recognised that panels and hearings are a high risk space for safeguarding issues, and that it is looking at what work it can do to support panel members to better manage safeguarding issues. Safeguarding training has been delivered to panel members and legal assessors, whilst the NMC is looking at what more it can do in this area.
 - 2.7. The NMC has delivered a safeguarding essentials course, which is part of the next phase of the mandatory training for FTP staff. This was rolled out in October 2025, with 70% of FTP staff completing the training to date (446 people). A number of further sessions are scheduled for delivery in March 2026 for staff who were unable to complete the training last year.
 - 2.8. The NMC reported that it has seen an increase in the number of internal referrals made to its safeguarding team, a number of which were identified as high risk cases. The NMC said this is evidence of its actions creating greater awareness of safeguarding issues.
 - 2.9. The NMC's safeguarding team sought feedback from teams who completed the training, with a 94% approval rate. The next phase of the training programme has begun rolling out. The NMC said this has been tailored to the needs of the organisation, for example it includes training on managing risk over the phone and in-person. The NMC is developing an outcome framework to monitor the impact of this training.
 - 2.10. The NMC has created a safeguarding champions programme, with 40 staff members now designated as a safeguarding champion. The NMC said these champions are in place to support better identification and reporting of safeguarding concerns.
 - 2.11. The NMC has developed a self-harm and suicide protocol following engagement with its mental health practitioner within the safeguarding hub. The NMC has also incorporated its death notification process into the scope of safeguarding, in order to identify any learning through action reviews. The NMC said in cases of death by suicide, it will review all cases and coroner reports to identify learning.
 - 2.12. One group member asked if there is Council oversight of deaths by suicide, and if this is reported publicly. The NMC confirmed that two of its Council members are responsible for overseeing work related to deaths by suicide, and emphasised that its suicide protocol is concerned with managing immediate risk.
 - 2.13. All safeguarding incidents are reported through the NMC's log and learn process, and these are reviewed fortnightly by the safeguarding working group, with high risk cases escalated to the safeguarding board.
 - 2.14. The NMC acknowledged that its focus has been on safeguarding in FTP, and that this needs to be further considered in the context of education and students. The NMC has completed a mapping of this, and has produced an action plan for implementation.

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- 2.15. One group member commented that there has been a trend of FTP referrals involving domestic abuse, including where the perpetrator is making a referral as a means of exerting control and coercion over a registrant. This group member recognised the effort the NMC has exerted in strengthening its safeguarding function, and particularly welcomed the NMC escalating cases involving registrants with mental health issues at Interim Order hearings. This group member said this is evidence of real progress.
 - 2.16. One group member asked if the NMC has undertaken an evaluation of its emergency helpline, and whether there is any demographic data on this. The NMC said that it has not done so yet, because the numbers are very small. Another group member asked about the sustainability of this progress, to which the NMC asserted that it is, owing to the level of resource in the team in conjunction with improved governance processes.
 - 2.17. The NMC presented its latest data on safeguarding referrals, which showed a significant increase. The NMC said that the safeguarding team has been responding to the majority of these referrals; however it wants to reach a point where safeguarding is embedded in the organisation, and the safeguarding team is reviewing only the highest risk cases.
 - 2.18. The NMC said this requires clear pathways distinguishing between safeguarding and wellbeing, and that this is reflected in the safeguarding quality assurance framework. The NMC emphasised the need to distinguish between safeguarding and wellbeing issues, but acknowledged that wellbeing issues can escalate to a safeguarding concern.
 - 2.19. The NMC has undertaken diagnostic work into wellbeing issues, noting that this prevalent for registrants in the FTP process. The NMC acknowledged the impact that a referral has on a registrant, and said that its health² and first contact³ pilots are both focused on reducing this impact. These pilots have now concluded and the NMC is in the process of evaluating these. The NMC is also in the process of procuring a partner to provide a support line for all case parties (registrants, witnesses and referrers).
 - 2.20. One group member commented that the quantitative data from the health pilot is relatively small, and suggested that the NMC seek qualitative data to support its evaluation of this. The NMC acknowledged this, and said that it will report on the outcomes of this evaluation in April 2026. This group member also encouraged the NMC to adopt this pilot as a permanent presence in its FTP process, having seen an improvement in the handling of these cases.

² In January 2025, the NMC established a pilot multi-disciplinary team, including clinical and safeguarding advisers, with the aim of identifying registrants' health needs earlier in the FTP process.

³ In October 2025, the NMC launched a pilot whereby registrants referred to the NMC are first contacted by email and notified that the NMC has correspondence to share with them, and a suitable time to phone is arranged. During this call, the NMC notifies the registrant about the referral but not the concern itself. This phone call allows the NMC to identify any support needs, such as reasonable adjustments, or communication preferences before sending documents pertaining to the referral.

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- 2.21. The NMC said that it will seek to identify wellbeing concerns at an early stage and signpost individuals to an appropriate support provider, whilst ensuring that this does not extend to therapeutic interventions. The NMC said that it is not responsible for delivering health and wellbeing support directly to individuals, but it is responsible for identifying this and doing everything possible to support them. The NMC confirmed that it is developing governance and accountability structures for wellbeing issues.
 - 2.22. The NMC plans to prepare quarterly safeguarding reports for Chief Nursing and Midwifery Officers across the four nations, with themes and trends for each nation.
 - 2.23. The group discussed the implications of health and wellbeing concerns in the context of agreed removals. The NMC said that it plans to evaluate agreed removals internally in the near future, and will liaise with the PSA on this.

3. AOB

- 3.1. None.

Annex 1: Attendee list

Organisation/Role	Name
DHSC	Jonathan Stones
Welsh Government	Ian Owen
Scottish Government	Claire McGuinness
NMC Chief Executive and Registrar	Paul Rees
NMC Executive Director of Professional Practice	Professor Donna O'Boyle
NMC Executive Director of Professional Regulation	Lesley Maslen
NMC Associate Director of Safeguarding	Nicola Burns-Muir
NMC Safeguarding Lead	Raynor Griffiths
NMC Head of External Affairs	Nick Medhurst
NMC Deputy Chief of Staff	Kirsten van Balen
NMC Co-Chair of the staff network	Niamh Fleming
NMC	Silvia Dominici
PSA Chief Executive	Alan Clamp
PSA Interim Director of Regulation and Accreditation	Amanda Partington-Todd
Unite	Dave Munday
UNISON registrants representation	Gail Adams
Expert – National Guardian's Office	Jenni Fellows
Expert - NHS England, National Maternity Lead for Equality	Wendy Olayiwola

Annex 2: Action Log

On track (including not started) Delayed (or medium risk of delay for projects) Overdue (or high risk of delay for projects) Complete

Mtg. Date	Item No.	Action point	Owner	Date required	Action progress	Status
9 September 2024	2.9	Circulate new version of Terms of Reference to the Group for agreement	PSA Secretariat	13 September 2024	Complete (13 September 2024).	
9 September 2024	3.2	Members to send suggestions for experts to the PSA	All members	16 September 2024	Complete (16 September 2024).	
9 September 2024	3.2	Experts: compile list of suggestions and seek expressions of interest	PSA Secretariat	19 September 2024	Complete (20 September 2024).	
9 September 2024	4.1	NMC to share a version of the action plan with the Group	NMC	As soon as possible (date TBC)	Complete (20 September 2024). The NMC made the action plan materials going to Council available in parallel with the publication of Council papers, making clear that Council would be approving the plan in principle but that the document would be liable to further adjustment and refinement in the light of the Group's comments and wider discussion	

2 October 2024	2.2	NMC to share the detailed version of the fitness to practise improvement plan with the group in advance of the meeting on 18 October 2024	NMC	TBC	Complete (16 October 2024)	
2 October 2024	2.14	PSA secretariat to include an agenda item on the NMC's governance structure and assurance framework at the IOG meeting in November	PSA secretariat	1 week in advance of the IOG meeting in November (date TBC)	Complete (20 November 2024)	
2 October 2024	3.1	PSA secretariat to share a list of experts who have expressed an interest in joining the group	PSA secretariat	3 October 2024	Complete (3 October 2024)	
2 October 2024	3.1	PSA secretariat to review expressions of interest from experts and make a recommendation to the group	PSA secretariat	11 October 2024	Complete (9 October 2024)	
18 October 2024	3.1	PSA secretariat to arrange the next meeting as soon as possible.	PSA secretariat	TBC (November)	Complete (25 October 2024)	
28 November 2024	2.23	PSA secretariat to include an agenda item on the NMC's fitness to practise performance at the next meeting	PSA secretariat	31 January 2025	Complete (31 January 2025)	
28 November 2024	2.23	NMC to provide EDI data on the FTP caseload at the next meeting	NMC	31 January 2025	Complete (31 January 2025)	
28 November 2024	3.1	PSA secretariat to arrange the group's next meeting in the week ending 24 January or 31 January	PSA secretariat	31 January 2025	Complete – meeting scheduled for 31 January 2025	
31 January 2025	3.8	PSA secretariat to include an agenda item for an update on the Ijeoma Omambala KC reports at the next meeting	PSA secretariat	12 March 2025	Complete (12 March 2025)	

31 January 2025	4.10	NMC to provide the group with insights from its data cleansing work at a future meeting	NMC	12 March 2025	Complete (12 March 2025)	
31 January 2025	4.10	NMC to provide the group with FTP scorecard data at future meetings	NMC	12 March 2025	Complete (12 March 2025)	
12 March 2025	2.5	PSA secretariat to include an item on the FTP dashboard data at the next meeting covering FTP as a substantive item	PSA secretariat	6 August 2025	Complete (6 August 2025)	
12 March 2025	3.7	NMC to share its paper on safeguarding with the group	NMC	29 April 2025	Complete (29 April 2025)	
12 March 2025	5.5	NMC to notify the group when it receives the Omambala reports	NMC	TBC	Complete (15 September 2025)	
12 March 2025	8.5	PSA secretariat to include an item on frequency of meetings at the June meeting	PSA secretariat	25 June 2025	Complete (25 June 2025)	
29 April 2025	2.6	NMC to notify the group as soon as possible when it has an indication of Ijeoma Omambala KC's estimated timetable for the reports' publication	NMC	TBC	Complete (6 August 2025)	
29 April 2025	4.1	NMC to present an update, including detailed data, on its oldest FTP cases at a future meeting	NMC	6 August 2025	Complete (6 August 2025)	
29 April 2025	4.6	NMC to present its revised FTP improvement plan to the group when approved by Council	NMC	TBC		
25 June 2025	2.6	NMC to refrain from using acronyms without first explaining their meaning at future meetings	NMC	TBC		
6 August 2025	3.10	NMC to update the group when it has been informed that all information has been shared from Ijeoma Omambala KC to the newly commissioned lawyers	NMC	15 September 2025	Complete (15 September 2025)	

6 August 2025	4.18	PSA Secretariat to include an agenda item to consider the effectiveness of the NMC Council, with the Chair of the NMC in attendance, at a future meeting	PSA Secretariat	TBC	Complete (3 November 2025)	
15 September 2025	1.4	NMC to notify the group when the independent investigations into FTP and whistleblowing will be published	NMC	TBC	Complete	
15 September 2025	3.9	NMC to include graphs showing the age profile of caseload over time and by stage in the dataset for all meetings covering FTP	NMC	TBC		
3 November 2025	2.5	NMC to present its plan in response to the reports' recommendations to the group at a future meeting	NMC	TBC		
3 November 2025	7.1	PSA secretariat to share the latest FTP dataset with the group	PSA secretariat	3 November 2025	Complete (3 November 2025)	