

Medical leaders join forces in concern over broken government promise to reform GMC

Medical leaders have written to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care over delays to GMC reforms.

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A group of senior medical leaders have reacted with frustration to the news that the government is to once again delay long-promised plans to reform the General Medical Council (GMC). Legislation to [reshape the GMC had been expected this year](#), but the government has now announced it will not take place until 2024/25.

The Medical Defence Union (MDU) has coordinated a letter to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, Steve Barclay MP, which is signed by representatives of doctors' trade unions and medical royal colleges.

[You can read the full letter here](#) (PDF).

The letter's signatories include the MDU, the British Medical Association (BMA), the Royal College of Anaesthetists and the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists.

In urging the government to reconsider the timetable for reform, the medical leaders said that doctors would see a failure to reform their regulator this year as a broken promise.

Legislation to bring physician associates (PAs) and anaesthesia associates (AAs) into statutory regulation regime will happen in 2023 - meaning these professionals will be regulated differently by the GMC, with a much more modern regulatory regime.

Dr Matthew Lee, MDU chief executive, said:

"The news that the government has shelved long awaited reforms of the GMC until 2024/25 is disappointing, frustrating and surprising. Doctors across the UK have waited a long time to see their regulator reformed. This was promised for this year and it is a promise that must be honoured.

"A fitness to practise process is one of the most stressful experiences a doctor can have in their career, and current legislation is crying out for change.

"Doctors deserve a fitness to practise process that is modern, proportionate, timely and above all, fair. Currently, the GMC is operating under outdated legislation that disadvantages the profession, patients and the GMC itself.

"As my colleagues and I from across the healthcare community say in our letter to the Secretary of State, we all stand ready to work with the Department of Health and Social Care over the coming months to ensure the legislation can be published by the end of the year.

"It is time to move forward and deliver an up-to-date regulatory system. Regulation needs to deliver for doctors, so they can deliver for patients."

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