



po box 188
chichester
west sussex
po19 1fp

fax/voicemail 01243 536428
info@nasgp.org.uk
www.nasgp.org.uk

Professor Sir Graeme Catto MD
General Medical Council
Regent's Place
350 Euston Road
London
NW1 3JN

16th September 2005

Dear Sir Graeme,

GMC risk-based approach to regulation and Sessional GPs

We have heard with interest the news that the GMC are considering plans to collate information from doctors to support a risk-based approach to regulation, with the focus on doctors working outside a GMC 'approved environment' who do not have an employer, or who are employed but their employer does not have systems in place capable of providing assurance to the GMC about their fitness to practise. There are two points that strike us about these proposals.

The first is that this makes perfect sense; working in this way would necessarily involve increased 'risk' and, although one cannot assume for one second that such doctors, working outside managed organisations, pose any greater threat to their patients, it is obvious that any evidence required for a revalidation process must be robust and therefore such doctors will find it more difficult to provide such evidence.

The second is that the greatest burden for providing such evidence will fall upon Freelance GPs. And with estimated numbers of such GPs being in the region of 7,000 across the UK, not only are these proposals going to cause unnecessary angst to a lot of GPs, it is also going to be an expensive and logistical nightmare for the medical profession. But rather than find expensive ways to *measure* this risk, we believe it should instead be *reduced* i.e. our profession should adopt a proactive, rather than a bureaucratic, approach.

The NASGP has developed such a model (The Sessional GP Support Team concept) within which Freelance GPs can thrive in a risk-light environment – we can give working examples of where this model is thriving.

Before the GMC embarks on setting up expensive, time-consuming and possibly demoralising processes that would ostracise Freelance GPs, may we suggest that you consider these other options, rather than merely looking at expensive ways of allowing those that can to try to prove that they don't.

I would be delighted to meet you to discuss how the GMC, in conjunction with other medical organisations such as the RCGP and BMA, can promote the creation of attractive working environments within which Freelance GPs can provide services of exceptional quality at reduced risk.

Best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Richard Fieldhouse", followed by a vertical red line.

Dr Richard Fieldhouse
CEO NASGP