

NHS North West London
15 Marylebone Road
London NW1 5JD

Email: nhsnwl.pcquality@nhs.net

9 February 2026

To all North West London General Practices

Call to Strengthen Recruitment Governance and Professional Standards in Primary Care

Dear Colleagues,

As part of our ongoing commitment to delivering safe, high-quality care in general practice, recent reviews have uncovered serious challenges in workforce governance and recruitment that require urgent, coordinated regional action.

The NHSE Primary Care Nursing Clinical Reference Group, in collaboration with London Integrated Care Boards, received a presentation highlighting a series of themed incidents reported through a local training hub. Further incidents were also identified during primary care site visits, suggesting that the concerns extend beyond the initial reporting setting.

The issues raised include serious concerns around recruitment practices, such as the lack of essential pre-employment checks — including verification of professional registration (e.g. GMC/NMC), Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks, identity verification, references, and immunisation records. Additionally, instances were noted where formal employment contracts were not in place.

All reported incidents are being managed in accordance with the approved Primary Care Quality Incident Management Framework, ensuring that harm reviews are carried out where appropriate to assess actual or potential impact on patients and staff. The issues are being addressed through formal contractual mechanisms to ensure provider accountability, with structured follow-up and oversight through established commissioning and governance arrangements.

Importantly, these incidents have also been recorded through the Learn from Patient Safety Events (LFPSE) service, which plays a critical role in identifying patterns of recurring issues across the system. LFPSE enables the sharing of learning at local, regional, and national levels, supporting continuous improvement in patient safety. By contributing to LFPSE, these reports help inform wider system learning and guide the development of targeted interventions to prevent recurrence and support safer recruitment and employment practices across primary care.

While these incidents originated locally, the issues raised have widespread relevance across the system, highlighting significant risks to patient safety and professional standards. This presentation sparked important discussions focused on sharing learning and reinforcing the adoption of robust, consistent recruitment practices across London, with the aim of embedding these improvements to safeguard care quality and workforce governance.

Among the concerns identified are informal recruitment practices such as hiring clinical staff through WhatsApp messages without formal contracts or documented verification of Nursing

and Midwifery Council (NMC) registration. In one instance, a General Practice Nurse (GPN) was recruited under the title of Nursing Associate leading to misalignment between their actual duties and contractual obligations. Another example involved a midwife employed as a GPN and assigned nursing tasks outside their professional remit, raising regulatory and safety concerns. Additionally, some practices assumed internally trained nurses held full NMC registration without appropriate validation, exposing patients and organisations to clinical and legal risks.

These cases highlight a critical lack of understanding around the distinct NMC registrant groups and their scopes of practice, as well as inconsistencies in verifying registration status across permanent, fixed-term, and flexible contracts. It is equally essential that all NMC registrants are fully aware of their roles, responsibilities, and expectations to uphold their professional Code and deliver safe, effective care.

It is vital that all recruitment into clinical roles follows formal, transparent, and compliant procedures. Verification of professional registration must be mandatory prior to appointment, regardless of contract type, and staff involved in recruitment must be equipped with up-to-date knowledge of regulatory standards. We strongly recommend that all recruiting practices and workforce leads refer to the NMC registration portal [Search the register - The Nursing and Midwifery Council](#) to confirm current registration status, registrant type, and any annotations or restrictions. The NMC sets out clear requirements and professional expectations for those entering and maintaining registration, which must be adhered to without exception. Internal training pathways should never be mistaken for formal registration unless confirmed by the NMC.

A strategic priority is fostering a culture of openness and learning where queries or concerns about role suitability and registration status can be raised freely and escalated to Training Hubs or the Nursing Quality Directorate for timely resolution. This approach supports moving away from a blame culture towards one of system learning and continuous improvement. The system learning from these incidents presents a clear national imperative to align recruitment governance with our shared commitment to patient safety, professional integrity, and equitable care. We urge all primary care systems to urgently review their recruitment policies, reinforce validation procedures, and cascade these standards to all relevant teams. Safeguarding public confidence and ensuring safe, competent care depends on our collective actions now.

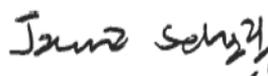
The below framework sets out a suggested best-practice approach to recruitment, selection, supervision, and appraisal in Primary Care. It demonstrates how recruitment checks are used as quality improvement checkpoints to strengthen patient safety, workforce governance, and continuous improvement in line with regulatory expectations.

If you have any questions or would like support, please contact our quality team nhsnwl.pcquality@nhs.net Thank you for your continued leadership and dedication to upholding the highest professional standards.

Kind regards,



Temi Magbagbeola
Director of Nursing Primary Care
North West London ICB



Javina Sehgal
Director of Primary Care
North West London ICB

5

5 Best Practices in Recruitment, Selection & Primary Care



Best Practice Framework

Safe & Robust Recruitment



- Verify identity and right to work
- Enhanced DBS, GMC, NMC, GDC, HCPC, GOC, GPhC checks
- Review employment history and professional registration

➔ Ensures patient safety and regulatory compliance

Effective Selection & Referencing

- Structured, values-based interviews
- Minimum of two verified professional references
- Explore safeguarding, conduct & professionalism



➔ Selects values-driven, safe, high-quality staff

Safeguarding, Patient Safety & Clinical Governance



- Assess safeguarding for vulnerable groups
- Confirm infection control, confidentiality & duty of care
- Clear escalation & reporting pathways

➔ Safety and governance core to hiring decisions

Structured Induction, Development & Clinical Supervision

- Clear role expectations and accountability
- Supervised probation where appropriate
- Regular 1:1 clinical supervision (supportive, practice-focused)



➔ Clinical supervision supports safe practice and patient care

Appraisal, Performance & Ongoing Development

- Annual 1:1 appraisal
- Reflective review of performance, wellbeing & objectives
- Link appraisal outcomes to CPD, training & progression



Safe recruitment • Strong governance • Continuous development

Uses recruitment checkpoints as part of continuous quality improvement.