

Joint Statement of Professional Values

Nursing and Midwifery Council and General Medical Council

Healthcare staff work to the highest standards to deliver safe high quality care for patients. However, there have been recent high profile examples of patients, particularly older people and those with learning disabilities being neglected and abused. While these undoubtedly represent a small minority of patient experiences with healthcare staff, they demonstrate the need for a constant commitment to quality and patient safety from all health professionals, and a willingness to uphold high standards and to raise concerns and challenge those responsible for poor practice. This statement, issued jointly by the GMC and NMC, is designed to remind registrants of their professional values.

Delivering high quality, safe patient focussed care does not rely solely on the clinical skill of those who are treating and caring for patients. High quality, safe patient focussed care also involves teamwork, communication, leadership and a culture where health professionals can discuss any issues openly with all those involved in a patient's care, including the patients themselves. Anyone who accesses care needs the support of professionals who can empathise and display humanity. These are central tenets to good nursing and midwifery and good medicine.

The good doctor, midwife and nurse must consider the needs of each patient as an individual to ensure that a patients' dignity is maintained throughout their treatment and care. Ensuring that a patient's needs are met is a key responsibility of doctor, midwife and nurse and includes making sure that the patient's basic need for food and drink, personal care, and relief from pain and other distressing symptoms are met.

Health professionals need to be compassionate and kind, as well as demonstrating knowledge and skills. They have a duty to put patients first at all times and to raise concerns as soon as they believe patients are at risk.

Doctors, midwives and nurses in senior positions are uniquely placed to demonstrate leadership in these areas and encourage partnership working across professional boundaries. The GMC and the NMC expect senior consultants and senior midwife/nurse managers to lead from the front, to act as positive role models for junior staff and ensure that their teams are focused on delivering positive, effective and compassionate care for patients.

Doctors, midwives and nurses share professional values. These are set out in the NMC's *code: Standards of conduct, performance and ethics for nurses and midwives* and in the GMC's *Duties of a Doctor*.

Doctors, midwives and nurses agree to:

- Make the care of people their first concern
- Treat people as individuals and respect their dignity.

- Act without delay if they believe that they, or a colleague, or the environment in which they are providing care, is putting someone at risk.

Further guidance from NMC and GMC explain how these principles apply in the different roles they play in providing care. (Links to relevant guidance).

Doctors, midwives and nurses are expected to:

- Be compassionate and considerate to those for whom they provide care, and to their carers and families
- Listen to, and work in partnership with those for whom they provide care
- Work constructively with colleagues to provide patient-centred care, recognising that multi-disciplinary teamwork, encouraging constructive challenge from all team members, safety-focused leadership and a culture based on openness and learning when things go wrong are fundamental to achieve high quality care..
- Follow their employing or contracting bodies' procedures when they have concerns about the safety or dignity of people receiving care
- Be open and honest with people receiving care if something goes wrong.

The challenges facing doctors, midwives and nurses today are very different from those faced by their predecessors but the human values which underpin these professions remain constant and those values underpin the trust which lies at the heart of the doctor-patient, midwife-woman, nurse-patient relationship.