ENHANCING THE MEDICAL STUDENT REGISTRATION PROCESS USING GOV.UK VERIFY

General Medical Council

Cabinet Office

Discovery Project Report

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Executive Summary

In order to practice medicine in the UK, doctors must be registered with a licence to practise with the General Medical Council (GMC) which is the independent organisation that helps to protect patients and improve medical education and practice across the UK. Each year the GMC provisionally registers around 7500 students who are about to start the first year of their foundation programme which allows them to take supervised responsibility of patient care. Final year medical students need to register with the GMC online, and apply for the licence to practice. This is done in three parts- an online activation of their account, an in-person identity check event and then an online application. Students usually activate their online GMC account 1-2 months before the event. The in-person identity check event is then held at their medical school.

The GMC has acknowledged that there may be a better, easier and more secure way to check the ID of medical students than doing this in person. It is noted that even those professionals who are highly trained in ID checking, are still subject to human error. The current ID checks involve a minimum of 2 staff members (up to 4 staff for larger medical schools), and can take up to a maximum of 6 hours to run these events, so are time and labour intensive. The students also need to spend a total of up to 2 hours at an event (with queuing for the ID check taking up to 1.5 hours).

In order to explore alternative options for this part of the process, the GMC decided to investigate if a digital identity with GOV.UK Verify could replace this. Two days of user testing with medical students was undertaken to determine if a digital identity service could provide an easier registration journey and whether they would be comfortable to use it.

The research concluded that medical students would be comfortable to use GOV.UK Verify to replace physical ID checks as part of the GMC registration process. Many of the students felt that the use of GOV.UK Verify to replace physical ID checks would be a time-saving, easier and more efficient way of completing identity verification. It is recommended that an alpha project should be the next step for the GMC to further design a prototype service that integrates the online registration process with a digital identity using GOV.UK Verify for a more streamlined and user-friendly process.

Introduction

The General Medical Council (GMC) is an independent organisation that helps to protect patients and improve medical education and practice across the UK. They decide which doctors are qualified to work in the UK and oversee UK medical education and training. The GMC sets the standards that doctors need to follow, and makes sure that they continue to meet these standards throughout their careers. They are also able to take action to prevent a doctor from putting the safety of patients, or the public's confidence in doctors, at risk.

There are 280 000 doctors in the UK currently registered with the GMC. Doctors must be registered with a licence to practise with the GMC, to practise medicine in the UK. Students wanting to become medical professionals on average spend 5 years undertaking study in order to qualify as junior doctors. [1] For the traditional courses of study, students begin their training with two years of 'pre-clinical' work, involving study of the basic medical sciences. This is followed by the 'clinical' course of approximately three years, during which they work in hospital wards under the supervision of consultants. Throughout these final three years they also attend lectures on all aspects of medical practice.

Each year the GMC provisionally registers around 7500 students who are about to start their F1 posts (first year of the foundation programme). Foundation year 1 (F1) enables medical graduates to begin to take supervised responsibility for patient care and consolidate the skills that they have learned at medical school. Satisfactory completion of F1 allows the relevant university to recommend to the GMC that the foundation doctor can be granted full registration. [2]

Current medical student process to provisionally register with the GMC

Final year medical students need to register with the GMC online, and apply for the licence to practice. This is done in three parts- an online activation of their account, an in-person identity check event and then they apply online. Students are sent an email around 2 months before the event to activate their online GMC account. The in-person identity check event is then held at their medical school and most events are held between September and March.

The first part of the event is a seminar run by GMC staff who inform the medical students on the role of the GMC and how it can support them, an overview of the provisional registration process, the importance of being open and honest, and advising students to apply early if they have a fitness to practise issue to disclose. Once they have attended this session, they are then asked to queue up and produce a UK passport, non-UK passport or UK drivers licence to confirm their identity. Queuing up to prove their identity can take anything from 5 minutes (for those who are at the front of the queue) to an hour (for those who are at the

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[1] http://www.medschools.ac.uk/STUDENTS/CAREERS/Pages/Career-Pathway.aspx

[2] http://www.foundationprogramme.nhs.uk/pages/home/about-the-foundation-programme

back of the queue). If a student is unable to attend the ID check event, the GMC will arrange for them to attend one of the other upcoming events or will advise them to log into their GMC Online account and make an ID check appointment at either the GMC's London or Manchester offices.

The GMC acknowledged that there might be a better, easier and more secure way to check the ID of medical students than doing this in person. It is noted that even those professionals who are highly trained in ID checking, are still subject to human error. The current ID checks involve a minimum of 2 staff members for small events of around 120 students, up to 4 staff members for larger medical schools, and can take a minimum of 8 hours up to a maximum of 2 days to run these events, and so are time and labour intensive. The students also need to spend a total of up to 2 hours at an event (with the ID check portion taking up to 1.5 hours). In order to explore alternative options for this part of the process, the GMC decided to investigate if a digital identity with GOV.UK Verify could replace this.

Methodology

Project hypothesis tested
- Medical students would be comfortable to use GOV.UK Verify to replace physical ID checks as part of the GMC registration process.
- The use of GOV.UK Verify to replace physical ID checks would result in a smoother, easier and more secure registration journey for the medical students.

Project objectives
- Establish whether students see benefit in using GOV.UK Verify compared to the current identity verification approach.
- Identify the likely change in perception of the GMC from the introduction of GOV.UK Verify.
- Identify how GOV.UK Verify would improve the relationships the GMC has with the students.
- Establish the feasible cost reductions for all parties that could be achieved from introduction of GOV.UK Verify.
- Identify the technical architecture through which GOV.UK Verify would be adopted and the estimated cost of change.
- Consider how the use of digital identity could be used in other areas: European Economic Area & International Medical Graduates registration (doctors inside and outside the EU), Fitness to Practice and Complaints.

The project involved collaboration between the GMC and GOV.UK Verify. Snook, a design agency, undertook the user research while the GMC provided wireframes for their registration system.

Ten current medical students were involved in user testing. Potential research participants were first contacted through the GMC and their university to allow them to sign up and be

part of the research process. Snook then contacted them with further details and to arrange logistics. All research participants were paid an incentive for their involvement.

Key user research methods used in the research:

- Observation
- Usability testing
- Filming facial reactions
- Face-to-face interviews

Usability testing of the proposed service with GOV.UK Verify

Usability testing enabled Snook to identify possible challenges in the existing or new service and determine the thoughts and feelings of users towards the new service and the service provider. The usability testing required participants to activate a GMC online account (test system) and to undertake an online ID verification with GOV.UK Verify (the current live service). A user researcher from Snook observed, listened and took notes, as well as audio- and video recorded the session. Next, an interview took place to further understand the participants' thoughts and feelings towards the service process. The aim is to identify any initial usability problems, collect qualitative and quantitative data, and determine the participants' satisfaction with the proposed new service.

The initial usability testing within the discovery phase of this project helped identify problems and opportunity areas should the service progress to an alpha stage.

Key aims of usability testing:

- Learn if participants are able to complete specified tasks successfully
- Identify how long it takes to complete specified tasks
- Find out how satisfied participants are with the current and the proposed online ID check
- Identify changes required to improve user performance and -satisfaction
- Analyse the performance of the service, both current and proposed

User journeys

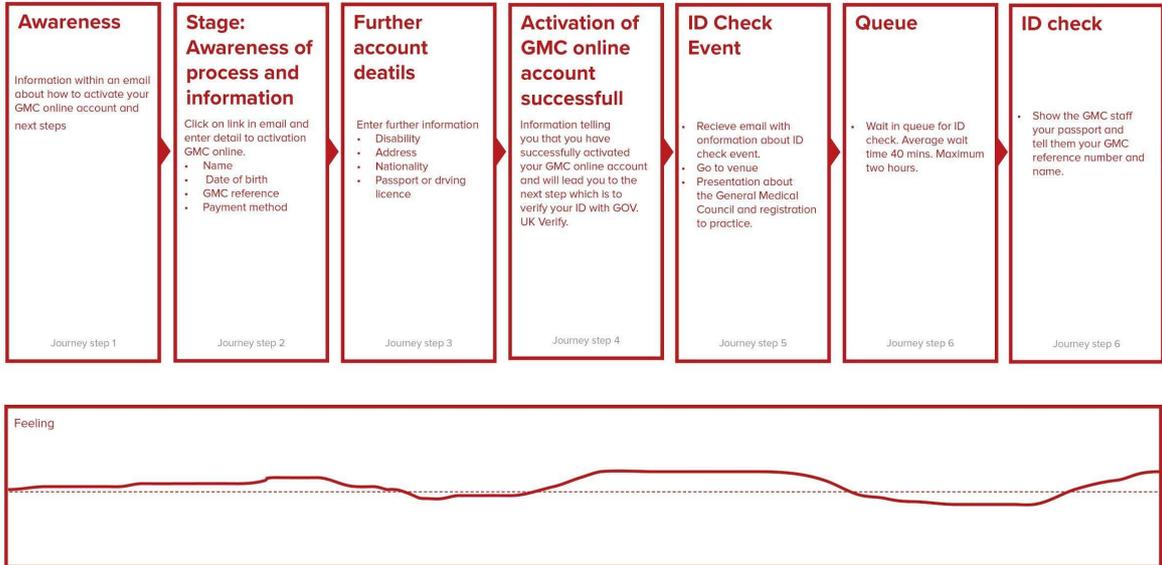The top section of the following diagrams show the current and proposed processes that the student can go through to register with the GMC online and then complete the identity check. The 'Feeling' bar underneath this shows the students' emotional responses throughout each part of these journeys- how satisfied (above the dotted line) or dissatisfied (below the dotted line) they felt as they worked through them.

The current face-to-face service

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User journey map of current face-to-face service

Awareness	**Stage: Awareness of process and information**	**Further account deatils**	**Activation of GMC online account successfull**	**ID Check Event**	**Queue**	**ID check**
Information within an email about how to activate your GMC online account and next steps	Click on link in email and enter detail to activation GMC online. • Name • Date of birth • GMC reference • Payment method	Enter further information • Disability • Address • Nationality • Passport or drving licence	Information telling you that you have successfully activated your GMC online account and will lead you to the next step which is to verify your ID with GOV. UK Verify.	• Recieve email with onformation about ID check event. • Go to venue • Presentation about the General Medical Council and registration to practice.	• Wait in queue for ID check. Average wait time 40 mins. Maximum two hours.	• Show the GMC staff your passport and tell them your GMC reference number and name.
Journey step 1	Journey step 2	Journey step 3	Journey step 4	Journey step 5	Journey step 6	Journey step 6

Feeling

The proposed digital service

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User journey map of digital service with GOV.UK Verify

Awareness	**Step one: Activation of GMC online account**	**Further account deatils**	**Activation of GMC online account successfull**	**Step two: Create digital identity with GOV.UK Verify**	**Successfully created digital identity with GOV.UK Verify**	**Next steps**
Information within an email about how to activate your GMC online account and how to carry out your ID check with GOV.UK Verify	Click on link in email and enter detail to activation GMC online. • Name • D.O.B • GMC reference • Payment method	Enter further information • Disability • Address • Nationality • Passport or drving licence	Information telling you that you have successfully activated your GMC online account.	• Answer questions to verify identity • Are you age 20 or over? • Have you lived in the uk for the last 12 months? • Indication of what documnets your have ready • Do you have a mobile phone or tablet? • Personal information passport details	• Information telling you that you have successfully created a digital identity	• Information regarding next steps :You will now have to attend an ID event where there will be a short presentation to tell you about your next steps. Thank you for completing your GMC account activation and for creating a digital identity.
Journey step 1	Journey step 2	Journey step 3	Journey step 4	Journey step 5	Journey step 6	Journey step 6

Feeling

The proposed service stages

The following stages present the research participant user experience as well as the prompts that were used by the user researcher to ensure a smooth prototype service experience.

Stage 1: Awareness of process and information
The user researcher explained:

"We are now going to start the service process; I am going to show you an email that indicates the start of this process. I will be here to walk you through the service should you need assistance. When you are inputting live data I will ensure that I cannot see the screen. Please ask any questions and let me know if you are confused or stuck at any point."

Stage 2: Activation of GMC Online
The following email was then shown on screen and read by the research participant. The participant clicked the link within the email and started the GMC online activation.
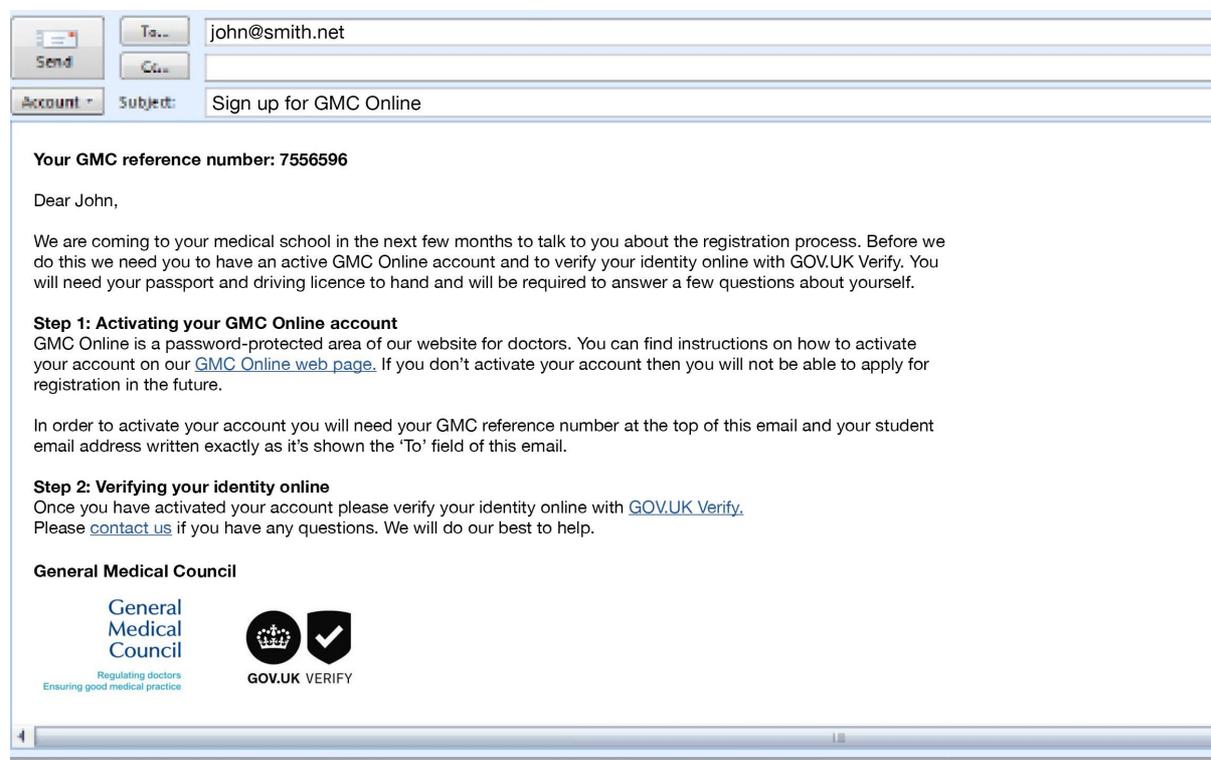
Stage 3: Successfully activated GMC online account
GMC Online informed the participant when they had successfully activated their GMC online account. When this was completed the participant made their way back to the email to access GOV.UK Verify. If the participant struggled, GOV.UK Verify was clicked on by the user researcher.

Stage 4: Creating an online ID with GOV.UK Verify
The participant went through the process of creating a digital identity with GOV.UK Verify.

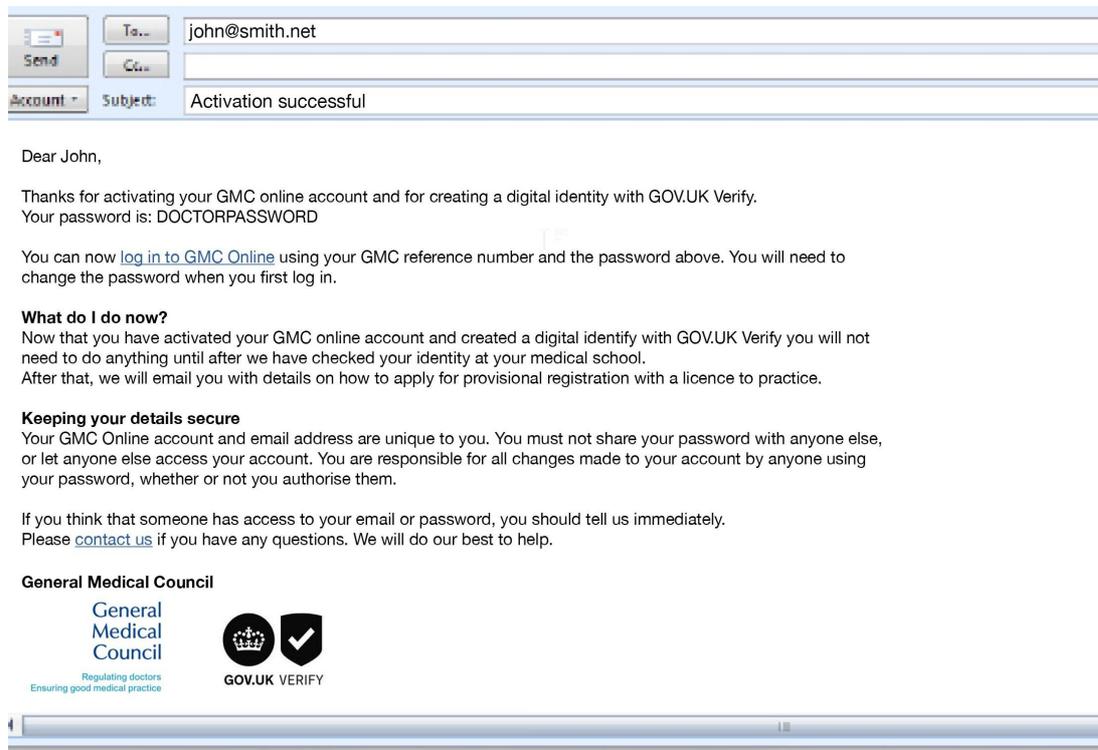## Stage 5: Successfully created an online ID with GOV.UK Verify
GOV.UK Verify informed the participant when they had successfully created a digital identity.

Stage 6: Next steps
The user researcher explained:
"I am now going to show you your confirmation email."

The participant was shown an email by the user researcher informing the user that they had successfully completed these two parts of the process and the next steps towards getting their licence to practice.

	To...	john@smith.net
Send	Cc...	
Account ▾	Subject:	Activation successful

Dear John,

Thanks for activating your GMC online account and for creating a digital identity with GOV.UK Verify.
Your password is: DOCTORPASSWORD

You can now log in to GMC Online using your GMC reference number and the password above. You will need to change the password when you first log in.

What do I do now?
Now that you have activated your GMC online account and created a digital identify with GOV.UK Verify you will not need to do anything until after we have checked your identity at your medical school.
After that, we will email you with details on how to apply for provisional registration with a licence to practice.

Keeping your details secure
Your GMC Online account and email address are unique to you. You must not share your password with anyone else, or let anyone else access your account. You are responsible for all changes made to your account by anyone using your password, whether or not you authorise them.

If you think that someone has access to your email or password, you should tell us immediately.
Please contact us if you have any questions. We will do our best to help.

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Research findings

Key findings

- Overall users prefer the digital service
- Five users preferred the digital version and found it simple and easy to use
- Two users were indifferent but both still edging more towards the online element as it was quicker and more convenient
- Three users did not manage to complete the process to be verified by GOV.UK Verify
- One out of two users with Non-UK passports was successfully verified
- Three users said they preferred the face-to-face process as it was easier; many users did not mind the waiting period as they could chat with friends

Digital identity verification results

The user experience of identity verification with GOV.UK Verify

GOV.UK Verify enables users to verify their identity online through checking the documents and details users provide against the documents and details the service has access to.

"It's just a method of being able to securely identify someone. It's a good identification process and it's trusted so the GMC uses it to verify medical student identities" - Kim

Currently the face-to-face identity check requires users to bring along their licence or passport which they show the GMC staff, who then check this against the medical school records. To successfully complete the GOV.UK Verify service users may need to provide their passport, driving licence, bank details, personal details and address details. Users do not always have to provide all of these items, however; sometimes users are required to provide further items like a picture of their face or a scan of their passport.

"GOV.UK is an easy system and you could do it anywhere, I have most of the details in my head." - Alexander

"You could do it at your own leisure, if you had any questions that would be slightly more tricky as you don't have anyone to ask, but the process is straightforward so no problems would really arise." - Sarah

Six users wanted some guidance on what Identity Provider to choose when presented with a choice; users normally select the brand that they are familiar with if they are unsure. Students often chose to use Royal Mail, Post Office and Barclays as they are most familiar with these brands. Users may benefit from having a smaller choice or a recommendation by the GMC. This would help them feel reassured as they feel like it's an important decision to

make.

Medical students are more likely to struggle with verification than other user groups
Through this research and previous GOV.UK Verify research, it is clear that students may struggle slightly more in verifying themselves online than other users. Although this could be due to a myriad of reasons, two in particular stand out. Firstly, the user does not have a wide enough digital footprint for an Identity Provider to give a level of assurance. Secondly, the user may struggle with providing previous address information due to the nature of being a medical student which involves moving every year for the last five years of medical school. GOV.UK Verify are aware of these issues and are currently undertaking other work streams to improve the rate of verification for younger users who lack a large digital footprint.

"Not everyone does have a driving license. Utility bills can be hard to find as we are often sharing houses, it can be a phaff to show something that means you live there. I am lucky to know and have my parents address as some people don't have an address that they will be in next year yet." - Nina

The introduction of GOV.UK Verify would not affect medical student perceptions of the GMC

There was an overwhelming sense that the introduction of GOV.UK Verify would not have much of an impact on how the GMC was viewed by medical students, as they would still get the same face-to-face contact with the GMC during lectures. The introduction of GOV.UK Verify was not seen in a negative way and could only be seen as a positive, but as mentioned above most users felt it did not alter their opinion of the GMC particularly.

"GMC is an organisation that I trust as a medical student and am happy to approach if I needed help or advice at any point." - Bethan

"It's good in a way as they are trying to find more secure ways to do things, it seems more secure by having lots of different pins and password things" - Tabitha

Users understood the two-stage process and felt comfortable

Users often found the two-step process of registering with the GMC easy to follow, however; two out of ten users did forget that there was a second step. This could be made clearer by including a further prompt in the 'successful GMC online account' email. It was evident to users why they needed to activate their GMC online account and then use GOV.UK Verify to verify their identity, and they understood the two parts to the process.

"Step by step and links to follow, quite a lot of systems run like that, I feel like I've done it before." - Nina

"I think because I took so long activating I forgot there was a second step. In that second email there should be another warning." - Bethan

Many users found the fact that the GMC reference number was at the top of the email very useful

They would often copy this to paste it into the GMC online registration form.

"Useful having it separated into step one and step two, good having the links. Also with the GMC number there." - Nina

Users want to be kept aware of their progress throughout the service

All users expected the process to take approximately 15 - 20 minutes. None of the users knew how long the full process would take, although a few users did pick up on the fact that GOV.UK Verify warned them that the process would take 15 minutes. It is clear that users would like to know in advance how long the process will take as well as have a progress bar, or something similar, in order to know where they are in the process and how much longer to expect.

"It would be useful to know how far through I was, as I didn't know until I actually finished." - Benjamin

"The process finished abruptly on the GOV.UK bit, I was expecting it to take longer and equally the GMC section was also very quick. The Royal Mail bit had a progress bar at the top, it's good to gauge how far along the process you are and how long it is taking." - Alexander

The duplication of information with GMC Online and GOV.UK Verify is unsettling for users

The service prototype took users through the GMC Online activation form and the GOV.UK Verify service. There was some duplication of information required by these two services which users found unsettling.

"Entering it multiple times is a bit strange, the more times you enter it the more you think: is this risky?" - Tabitha

"It did seem like I was putting the same information in over and over again but I understand that they are separate services so you need to do that - like name, DOB.." - Benjamin

Users are comfortable with providing the information required, but less comfortable with financial information than other details

Many users understood the need for a passport and/or driving license as part of the digital verification process. However, users often felt somewhat uncomfortable with providing bank details and frequently struggled with recalling address details.

"Relating this back to the GMC question I would be wondering why they need to know my overdraft; bank account details are personal and now it's asking for my account details. I don't know what information is shared between GOV.UK Verify and the GMC

Four users queried the need of the disability, nationality and ethnicity questions in the GMC online account activation form. They were confused as to why the GMC needed this information but all were happy to provide it as they felt they needed too.

Users who are unsuccessful are determined to be verified

When users who did not manage to be successfully verified were told that they were unsuccessful, the initial reaction from all users was to try again. A personality trait that was common across the medical students spoken to was determination. Due to the nature of their course, the determination of medical students will increase the rate of verification, as they will often try with other identity providers until they are verified.

"I would have a few more goes at it as my perception is that it would be quicker. If I have exhausted all options then I would email or call the GMC." - Jack

"They can't seem to find me or the details don't match. It would not be as worrying if I have a UK passport, it is worrying as I am not a UK passport holder." - Ganesh

Non-UK passport holders expect to have more issues than UK passport holders

Out of two users with a non-UK passport one was successful. The two users did expect to possibly have more of an issue being verified than a user with a UK passport. Non-UK passport holders will normally be asked to provide more information and they are often prepared for this.

"I don't think it's too much for me as a British citizen but I don't know what it would mean for people who are not, I don't know how well it would work for international students. People that don't have a UK bank account." - Alexander

Most users knew where to go at a point of difficulty

Seven users said that they would call GOV.UK Verify if they had any issues with the verification part of the service and with any other queries, they would call the GMC. Three users felt that it would be easier to contact the GMC as they would be aware of the situation and GOV.UK Verify would not be as able to help.

"There was a helpline email at the bottom of the Royal Mail bit with details of who to call if you are struggling a bit. In the GOV.UK Verify bit it might not be as easy to speak to someone. I didn't look for a helpline with GMC but presumably there are contact details for a help line, if I needed it I would have searched, I would look at the bottom of the online form and otherwise I would go to the GMC website and find a general phone number." - Alexander

Three users could see the benefit of having a GOV.UK Verify account

Some users did see the benefit of having a GOV.UK Verify account at the end of the

proposed service prototype but many did not yet know what it could be used for.

"You only have to do it once and going forward people may have signed up for another purpose when it becomes more well known. The GOV.UK thing is only as strong as how many things you can use it for. If it works I think it would be great for the GMC to adopt but otherwise it could flop if no one else adopts it." - Rory

"I suppose it's useful but I don't know what else you can use it for, so I don't think it is something I would think about." - Benjamin

Users did not know when the deadline for identity verification would be with this proposed service

None of the users knew the exact deadline for the completion of stage one and stage two, however; they would have completed it as soon as possible as it is of high importance to them. Deadlines and timelines could be made clearer at the start of the process.

"I did not get the feel of urgency but one would not delay in doing this either. I would do it same day; I am efficient with my emails, I do have friends who are not. If I was at home and had time I would do there and then." - Alexander

Often users do not understand the need for identity verification as part of the registration for licence to practice

Users saw the importance in having to be verified, but thought that this could happen through using the information provided from the medical school and university loans. Users wanted an explanation as to why this step was required of them.

"It does seem like a lot of proving identity, having done six years of study and then prove you are who you say you are. It might have been good to do it before you are accepted to medical school. It would be devastating if you got to this point and then could not work." - Alexander

"It emphasises GMC's lack of trust of whether we are who we say we are. Even when we reach the hospital with our first job we will have to prove ourselves again so I feel like it's done a million times." - Nina

Reasons for digital preference

- Time
- Convenience
- Feels more official online
- Feels more secure and thorough online
- Location
- Control
- Trust in GOV.UK Verify

Face-to-face identity verification results

After medical students have activated their GMC online account they are required to attend an ID event at their university. The current identity check often takes place in a lecture hall at the university and medical students are required to be there for approximately two hours. The first half hour consists of a lecture about the GMC including advice for the students and a Q&A about their registration to practice and working as a doctor.

The ID check starts after the lecture; students are asked to queue up, normally in two queues as there are often two GMC staff performing the ID checks. The larger the medical school, the more members of staff checking identification there will be. Students have to wait for up to two hours but most commonly 30 - 60 minutes.

"I hand over my passport and she looked at me as I was signing and then she handed it back and then it was all over 30 seconds… I found the digital version easy when I was here but the one at the medical school was even easier, hanging around doesn't matter as there are revision apps on the phone and you can get a coffee, and people are trying to sell you medical indemnity so they provide free doughnuts." - Alexander

"You give across the passport, they didn't look at it for very long at all, just looking at names and image, they were keen to make us realise they would not use the signature." - Rory

Reasons for face-to-face preference

- Easier
- Less information and documentation shown
- Can speak to friends
- Can ask questions right there and then
- Speed
- Handholding
- A distrust of digital

"Face-to-face is easier, one form of ID and it felt really easy and quick. Just showing ID and that was it – done, they did all the registration for us." - Benjamin

"I think I prefer the face-to-face one, probably because it was combined with doing other things and seeing other people and the talk proceeding it felt like a unifying factor bringing it together and explaining the process. The online systems was equally fine and I didn't have any problems with it but I prefer the face-to-face

Overall findings

Users want to have their hand held

Some users preferred the face-to-face service due to the service not requiring much from them and they could be very passive during the process. There is also an element of hand-holding that some students prefer as this is a high-importance activity to many students and they can get nervous about doing something wrong. Having someone with you face-to-face helps users feel calmer.

"You feel a bit nervous because you are doing it by yourself and you don't want to mess up." - Ganesh

Less documentation required is easier for the user

Users often felt that the actual ID check of the face-to-face service was far quicker. Users mentioned that it takes 30 seconds while the digital verification takes 15 minutes.

"Face-to-face is easier, one form of ID and it felt really easy and quick. Just showing ID and that was it - done, they did all the registration for us." - Benjamin

Time and convenience are important to the user but so is ease

The digital verification- and registration process took on average 21 - 30 minutes. The quickest successful completion took 21 minutes and the longest, with two attempts of verification, took approximately 50 minutes. If a student is at the front of the face-to-face verification queue, they could attend the lecture and be verified within 40 minutes. However if they are at the back of the queue they may have to wait up to an hour and a half to be verified; students are often told to go away for half an hour and come back so not all that time is seen as wasted.

"I do think this is more convenient, you can do this on the computer and you are not told a set day that you have to do it on." - Ganesh

"Not sure if the digital version is quicker than the main service, but if it was an electronic service I wouldn't have to go into the meeting and have more time." - Jack

Users questioned the security and thoroughness of the face-to face ID check compared to the digital verification

Four users questioned the security of the face-to-face compared to the thoroughness of GOV.UK Verify. Although users thought the online service was more invasive, they felt that it may be more secure as a result. There is high chance of human error even with highly trained staff when checking identification documents. It is important to medical students that this process is secure as they have trained for five years to get to this point and it would be worrying if there was any chance a fraudulent identity verification was to occur.

"More reassuring being face-to-face, but I do think that this way (using GOV.UK Verify) would be safer due to the extra security with the pins and passwords and verifications." - Tabitha

"Digital/online felt safe and trusted, because of the reputation of GOV.UK. It felt like a better way to check a real document, making a cross-check through document history." - Sarah

"I see it as you're registering to be a medical practitioner with the government and the GMC and it's important to me in a wider sense that it has good practice and reduces fraudulence." – Jack

Trust and formality

All users had trust in GOV.UK Verify. Eight users had complete trust with the GMC, however; some felt that they had to trust them as it is the only way to become a doctor.

"I 100% trust the GOV.UK Verify site and I very close to 100% trust the GMC ID check in person just due to human error." - Kim

"Informal service because it is done at your computer at home, it feels informal yet official, it's not pressurised or in a formal setting, I think this is good." - Alexander

Next steps in the registration process

It was clear that many users were not completely sure about the next steps in the process. Users would prefer to have an overview timeline of the whole service so they can understand not just which stage they are at in the ID verification stage but also what is required from them down the line.

"They told us about a process in April that must be completed before July, for work, but I am not sure what that is, I still feel like I need clarification. Not sure at all. This is the same with this whole process, I would like more clarification." - Sarah

"At this stage happy with all information. Might be nice to have the outline of whole process, a vague outline." - Benjamin

Seven users would prefer to be able to be verified in the comfort of their own home

Users would rather not have to attend an event in person if possible as this would save them time.

"I would choose to register at home because with details like that and sensitive information you would want to do it at home or in the medical library, but it could be done anywhere." - Alexander

"I think it's great that you can do it in the comfort of your own home in your own time with a cup of tea if you want." **– Rory**

There are potential benefits of using GOV.UK Verify for users and wider services

Five users preferred to use the digital verification service and three users preferred the face-to-face identity verification service, however; the benefits for wider services and the GMC are many. The two main benefits are, firstly, a lower cost of service, as less staff and time will be needed to run the ID check events. Secondly, that GOV.UK Verify could also be used throughout doctor's' lives to verify them in upcoming roles, which would save time for the individual as well as other companies and services.

"I would find it hard to choose between the two with the set-up we have at Brighton as the location is easy, the talk is helpful and the ID check at least gets people to the talk. The online service was easy and I didn't struggle with it. I don't actually have much preference between the two." **- Rory**

"I think it has its advantages, you can do it when you wanted, reliable and trusted it and I think that it saves time in terms of going to an ID check in person. But as we were getting the lecture in person anyway the ID check added on an hour really so it's only half an hour extra in person than online." **- Kim**

Expectations and feelings towards to overall experience of getting your licence to practice

Many users found the overall service exciting but intimidating, as it is very important that they get their licence to practice when they have been studying for five years to become a doctor. This means that users are highly motivated to complete this stage of the process and it is of high emotional importance to them, which leads to an increase in nervousness about the overall service.

"It makes it feel real that you are moving from student to doctor, that number means responsibility to me and being able to actually practice what I have studied for five years." **- Tabitha**

"I think it is seen as something good but also then there is a feeling of much more responsibility." **– Benjamin**

Conclusion and recommendations

The research concluded that medical students would be comfortable to use GOV.UK Verify to replace physical ID checks as part of the GMC registration process. Many of the students felt that the use of GOV.UK Verify to replace physical ID checks would be a time-saving and easier way of completing identity verification, and that it would be a more efficient way for the identity verification to take place.

Recommendations

The overall recommendation deriving from this user research is to establish a digital service. It is anticipated that in order to progress this, an alpha project should be conducted to further investigate the technical aspects and design of a future service. The below recommendations are to be taken into account for when this service is designed.

- **A further streamlined service**

Combining the GMC online activation form and the GOV.UK Verify form into a more seamless transaction will ensure maximum ease-of-use.

- **Trust**

Users have a large amount of trust in both the GMC and GOV.UK Verify. However, users understand more of why GOV.UK Verify requires personal information and financial information than why the GMC need it. The reasons for this personal information being needed and how it is used within an integrated service should be communicated better and will be very important to ensure that users' trust is kept.

- **Progress of process**

When users have activated their GMC online account they should receive an email confirmation that leads them to the second stage of the process, verifying their identity with GOV.UK Verify, to ensure that the process is clear and easy.

- **Next steps list for students**

Having a list, like the two-step process in the activation email, would be useful for users in order to remember what information is important and what the full timeline of the service looks like.

- **Managing expectations**

Users would like to be made aware of how much time each stage of the process will take. Users would like a list of all information that could possibly be required and further information that may be required so that they can be prepared.

Appendix A: Findings outside of the scope

The lecture

Most users found the lecture before the ID check event useful and think that this information should be derived in a face-to-face environment as being able to ask questions is reassuring. Users did mention that they often did not know what to expect from the lecture as there was not clear information given beforehand as to what would be covered.

"Face to face is best for the lecture info, useful to have it written also but I am sure it is available. Having it explained to you face-to-face and having questions answered on the spot, I don't think that having a pack to read or watching a video online would be as effective as people won't do it." **- Alexander**

There is also a sense that the lecture is one of the last times all of the medical students will be together and therefore it is an important time to catch up with people.

"It's one of the last occasions when you can guarantee we will be together in one place as the GMC want us to be in one place. It's a strange one as you know everyone in your year and there is a sense of community and it's sad to know everyone will be disappearing." **- Rory**

"You could have an email or written info but you might not look at it or the right things might not be highlighted, it is nice to have someone explain it, you can ask questions and get instant feedback and I suppose a person can put a particular tone to it, she mentioned about fixed penalty notices and you always get a few people who pee in public and this made it funny." **- Jack**

A few users also mentioned that without the ID check there might be a tendency for students to not attend the lecture.

"I think you run the risk that a lot of people wouldn't come to the lecture if it was not a face-to-face ID check as it was not clear what the lecture was about." **- Rory**