

How to make a referral

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If you decide that you need to make a referral (or have consulted our advice line and been advised to refer), [take a look at our guidance](#). This explains how to complete our online referral form.

We can only investigate and reach a decision in a case if we have sufficient evidence of the concerns. You'll need to submit all relevant information when you make the referral.

This may include unredacted care records, investigation reports complete with all appendices, decision letters and any action plans put in place for the professional. Providing as much information as possible from the outset will help avoid delays and will reduce the need for us to repeatedly seek further information from you.

When conducting a local investigation, you should make sure all evidence and decisions are well-documented. If a referral is made, this documentation will be important information for us to consider.

We have powers under [Article 25\(1\) of the Nursing and Midwifery Order 2001](#) to require employers to provide information and documents which appear relevant to our investigation.

If we do ask you for further information, we may ask you to provide this quickly, particularly if we need to seek an interim order to prevent any immediate risks to people who use services.

Your swift response will enable us to reach a decision as quickly as possible for the professional and all others involved in the fitness to practise process.

Our [Employer Link Service](#) is available to help you decide whether to make a referral and provide further guidance about what you need to submit.

When a concern is raised about a professional's practice, it's important for you to respond in a way that promotes learning and openness. We know that fear of being blamed or punished can stop people from speaking up and learning from mistakes.

Professionals will value being treated fairly and being supported to put things right. And people who use services will value being listened to and having open and honest communication.

We recognise that your approach to local investigations is an important part of establishing a just and learning culture in your organisation. We believe that being fair balances fairness, learning, and accountability. It also makes sure that all nursing and midwifery colleagues are treated equally.

Based on our collaboration with employers, professionals, our regulatory partners and representatives of people who use services across the UK, and drawing on our own experiences in fitness to practise cases, we've set out things we think are important for you to consider when conducting a local investigation into concerns about a professional's practice.

They're also based on our work with wider professionals, partners and representatives of people who use services to identify best practice. We thought you might find it helpful to have some principles to support you in managing concerns about agency and bank staff, so we've included some information on that.

This isn't a guide about how to do an investigation. Instead, it sets out high level principles that you might want to consider alongside your own local processes and policies, or national requirements (including any relevant requirements under employment or data protection laws).

Using this resource will help you give us relevant information if you need to make a referral. It will also help us to respond quickly and proportionately.