

## Support staff and encourage openness without blame

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The Code is clear that nursing and midwifery professionals must raise and, if necessary, escalate any concerns they may have about public safety, or the level of care people are receiving.

It's supportive to reassure anyone raising concerns that they'll be taken seriously and treated fairly, and that their concerns will be escalated appropriately. This includes keeping them up to date about how you're responding to their concerns.

If there are concerns about an professional's practice, let them know as soon as possible (unless this wouldn't be appropriate, for example if police advise against it).

The professional will need a clear explanation of the concerns and the next steps. They'll also need the chance to give an open and honest account of their actions. A person-centred approach will help make sure they're treated with respect and dignity throughout the process.

If you decide an investigation is needed, you might consider giving the professional a single point of contact to liaise with the investigation.

Health problems can sometimes appear to have caused the concerns about a nursing or midwifery professional's practice. If so, it will be important to document when you became aware of the health issues, your understanding of the issues, what actions you took to support your employee and keep their practice safe, and how they responded or engaged with that support.

When you're investigating concerns about professionals, they can feel vulnerable, stressed and in need of support and reassurance.

Discuss with the professional how you can support them throughout the process. This may include professional support, emotional support, or support for their physical health and wellbeing. It may be helpful to encourage staff to find support outside work, for example from friends or family.

We recognise that both trade unions and professional associations play a vital role in offering local support, representation and guidance to staff.

When concerns arise in relation to a nurse, midwife or nursing associate's practice, we would encourage you to work with any elected representatives to ensure that staff are fully supported.

[\*\*Find out more about supporting your employee.\*\*](#)