

## Referrers that wish to remain anonymous

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Sometimes referrers ask us not to disclose their identity to the nurse, midwife or nursing associate who is the subject of the concern.

In many cases, it won't be necessary for us to disclose the referrer's identity to refer a matter to the Case Examiners or the Fitness to Practise Committee. As long as the referral meets our screening requirements, then we have the power to investigate and refer a case for further consideration ourselves.<sup>1</sup>

We'll always seek to address any concerns that referrers have about taking part in our fitness to practise process. We'll engage our specialist Public Support Service for advice and support to help explain our process and the additional measures we can offer to help referrers and witnesses through it.

Our core function is to protect members of the public who rely on the services of nurses, midwives and nursing associates. For this reason, where a concern amounts to an allegation of impaired fitness to practise, we have to refer the concern to the Case Examiners or Fitness to Practise Committee.

We recognise that it is best practice to maintain confidentiality unless we are required by law to make a disclosure. Where the law requires us to make a disclosure, we don't require the referrer's consent to disclose their details. But disclosure without consent is an unusual step for us to take and we'll always give referrers the opportunity to explain to us any reasons why their details should not be shared, for example if they are a **whistleblower**.

<sup>1</sup> Article 22(6) of the Nursing and Midwifery Order and Rule 2(A)(4) of the Fitness to Practise Rules.