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Managing concerns locally

Last Updated: 12/12/2024

If your local investigation finds that a professional's practice or behaviour are a risk to public safety, you'll usually be best placed to manage concerns and lessen that risk.

You can often address public safety risks by supporting the professional to make any necessary changes or improvements.

Deciding the best approach

There are many ways that concerns can be managed. Deciding on the best approach will depend on the nature of the concerns, the local context, and the available options for managing concerns.
As an employer, consider:

- What are the main concerns?
- Are they related to clinical competencies?
- Are they related to the professional's health or wellbeing?
- Are they related to professional behaviours?
- Is there a risk to people who use services if the person continues to practise as they are now?
- What actions can eliminate the risk to people who use services, while giving the professional the chance to reflect on the issues, and show that they understand the concerns and are both willing and able to improve?

The answers should lead you to a plan for managing any concerns.

In some cases, your investigation into concerns about a person may also reveal wider cultural or behavioural issues in a team. You might need to consider how to address these issues, using an approach that encourages change through openness and learning.

Some of the steps you might consider include:

- coaching, mentoring, or regular supportive conversations
- reflective practice, such as journalling and/or review of relevant local policies and procedures
- performance management and objectives
- revisiting The Code and relevant Acts and Regulations
- competence assessments
- referral to occupational health or another healthcare professional
- formal training or retraining
- role changes
- supervision of practice or elements of clinical practice
- supernumerary practice
- in rare cases, where people who use services can't be kept safe using other steps, suspension.

Some options may be challenging to put in place depending on the resources available. That's why it helps to develop a well-documented plan to address the risks that's realistic and achievable, both for the professional and for your service. You'll also want to clearly document all of the steps a person has taken to address the concerns about their practice.

Ultimately, if we do become involved, we'll want to see all of this detailed information so that we're clear about the steps that have been taken to address any concerns before any referral to us.

Considering insight

It will also be important for you to encourage reflection and document any insight the professional gives about the concerns, or any other responses they give during this process. You might need to give someone time and space to think things through.

When you evaluate the strength of their insight, you'll want to consider:

- Does the professional recognise what went wrong or why their actions, behaviour, or decisions are concerning?
- Do they recognise potential public safety risks?
- Have they fully engaged with the investigation process, and the action plan, including completing a reflective statement?

f you subsequently refer a professional to us, information about their level of insight and engagement will help us lecide on the right course of action.

Making a referral to us

You may need to make a referral to us if your local action can't effectively manage any ongoing risks to people who use services.

Find out more about when to make a referral to us

Working with us when managing concerns

Last Updated: 12/12/2024

We want to work more closely with you to help resolve as many issues as possible locally, quickly and effectively.

Get advice

Please get in touch with us by either calling on 020 7462 8850 (phone line open between: 9:00 - 17:00) or by email.

Our Employer Link Service also offer inductions about fitness to practise, these are for senior members of your nursing and midwifery teams, such as Chief Nurses, or Directors or Heads of nursing and midwifery.

We can provide group learning sessions about fitness to practise and our other core regulatory functions, including the Code and our education standards.
To find out more, please get in touch by emailing us.

Engaging with us

As the professional regulator for nurses and midwives and nursing associates we must respond to concerns brought to our attention which fall within our remit regarding:

- the practice or conduct of any of the professionals on our register
- any concerns about the safety, quality or suitability of practice learning environments for students
- issues relating to registration, such as people practising while not on the register, without indemnity or having joined the register without meeting our registration requirements.

If you have any concerns or any concerns are raised with you about any of the above, it's your responsibility as an employer to be open and proactive in your response to concerns and to decide whether to refer professionals on our register to us.

Our employer resource has been developed to support you to effectively respond to concerns about a professional's conduct or practice. We would also encourage you to speak with our Employer Link Service for advice on making a referral, if necessary.

Where we become aware of the types of concerns raised above, we may contact you to request information. In that event, we ask you to respond to our enquiries as quickly as possible so that we can make decisions without delay.

We always welcome proactive communication from employers at the earliest stage that concerns arise so that we can decide the most appropriate steps to address any concerns.