

Guidance on Whistleblowing to the NMC

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We recognise that nurses, midwives, students or other members of staff may identify risks or malpractice within the workplace that you wish to raise with us. This could be an issue that affects patients, the public, your colleagues or the organisation that you work for.

Whistleblowing and speaking up is important as a way of shining a light on concerns. It helps a workplace to be open, transparent and accountable, to be able to learn from events, prevent future concerns and therefore protect the public.

Healthcare has seen a particular focus on whistleblowing as a force for change. It was a whistleblower's concerns that led to the Francis inquiry and a number of changes across the healthcare sector.

Whistleblowers are afforded certain legal protections such as protection from being dismissed or penalised by their employer because of their disclosure.

Who can raise a whistleblowing concern?

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A worker – someone who works or worked under a contract. This includes employees, agency workers, trainees, volunteers, student nurses and student midwives.

If you're a member of the public (not a nurse, midwife, nursing associate, student or employer), and you'd like to raise a concern about someone on our register, call 020 3307 6802.

What is 'whistleblowing'?

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Whistleblowing is when a worker, including a student nurse or student midwife, raises a concern about wrongdoing in the public interest. Whistleblowing can take place within an organisation or, if the worker feels they are unable to do this, to a third person known as a 'prescribed person'. The NMC is named as a prescribed person in the law.

There is a difference between raising concerns and whistleblowing. The law sets out several criteria that must be met for raising concerns to qualify as whistleblowing.

If all of the conditions set out in the law are met, the person who is blowing the whistle has legal protections to stop them suffering any disadvantage from their employer because of what they have done.

What is the law for whistleblowers?

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The law sets out six criteria that have to be met for us to consider that a whistleblowing concern has been raised:

- The person raising the concern to us is a 'worker' – someone who works or worked under a contract. This extends beyond formal contracts of employment and includes employees, agency workers, trainees, volunteers, student nurses and student midwives.
- The person raising the concern must believe they are acting in the public interest. This means that a number of people stand to benefit if action is taken on the concern, and it is not solely for personal gain. Personal grievances and complaints are therefore not

usually whistleblowing, unless your particular case is in the public interest. These should be reported under your employer's own grievance policy. You may also wish to seek advice from the [Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service](#) about a workplace dispute.

- The person raising the concern must believe that it shows past, present or likely future wrongdoing in one or more of the following categories:
 - that a criminal offence has been committed, is being committed or is likely to be committed. This may be within or outside the UK.
 - that a person has failed, is failing or is likely to fail to comply with a legal obligation.
 - that a miscarriage of justice has occurred, is occurring or is likely to occur.
 - that the health or safety of any individual has been, is being or is likely to be endangered.
 - that the environment has been, is being or is likely to be damaged.
 - that sexual harassment has occurred, is occurring, or is likely to occur.
 - that information showing one or more of these criteria has been, is being or is likely to be deliberately concealed.
- The person raising the concern must believe that the matter falls within our regulatory remit.
- The person raising the concern must believe that the information they disclose is true.
- In raising the concern, the individual must not themselves be committing an offence.

Whistleblowing concerns that could be raised to the NMC

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Examples of whistleblower concerns that could be raised to us could include, for example:

- The [education](#) of those wishing to gain a pre or post registration nursing or midwifery qualification;
- The [registration](#) or [revalidation](#) of nurses and midwives;
- The [fitness to practise](#) of nurses and midwives; or
- Non-compliance with, or concerns about our [legislation](#), policies, [standards](#) (such as the [Code](#)), guidance or processes.

Our role is to decide whether we believe a concern raised to us constitutes whistleblowing, and to take appropriate action. Our role is not to decide whether the person blowing the whistle to us qualifies for legal protection.

It is for the individual, not the NMC, to enforce their legal protections through an employment tribunal.

How to raise a whistleblowing concern with the NMC

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If you believe you have a concern that meets these criteria and you wish to raise it with us, we ask that you email us on whistleblowing@nmc-uk.org. Please set out what the concern is, and how each of the six criteria are met. If you are worried about raising concerns or wish to talk through the process and what is involved, please call us on 020 7637 7181 for advice.

You can also raise concerns through our [fitness to practise referral](#) process.

We will treat the information you provide as confidential and won't disclose it without lawful authority. However, to look into a matter properly, we will usually need to disclose some information to the organisation concerned.

You can raise your concern anonymously if you prefer. This can be done by:

- Phoning us and withholding your number.
- Communicating with us via an anonymised email address.

However, please be aware that our ability to ask follow up questions and provide feedback will be limited if you cannot be contacted. Also, if you make an anonymous disclosure it can be more difficult for you to qualify for protections as a whistleblower. This is because there would be no documentary evidence linking you to the disclosure.

What will happen to my information?

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We will always acknowledge receipt of your protected disclosure.

We will assess a concern raised to us as whistleblowing against the six criteria to determine whether we reasonably believe it is a whistleblowing concern. We may need to contact the person raising the concern for further information in order to do so.

If we can, we will inform the person raising the concern with us of our decision, our reasons, and our next steps and provide an indication of timeframes.

We will take action in line with our [existing approaches](#).

If the concern is not for us, but we believe it could be for another person or organisation, we may share the concern through our [memoranda of understanding](#).

Where can I get advice?

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If you wish to get further advice about your position, you can seek independent advice from:

- your Trade Union
- the whistleblowing charity [Protect](#)
- [Freedom to Speak Up Guardian](#) in England
- [Independent National Whistleblowing Officer](#) in Scotland
- [Labour Relations Agency](#) in Northern Ireland

Annual whistleblowing report

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We have a [legal duty](#) to publish an annual report on the whistleblowing disclosures made to us.

We've published a joint report with other healthcare professional regulators to show the action we've taken and how we work together in handling the serious issues raised to us.

We do not share personal details in this report.

- [2026 whistleblowing disclosures report](#)
- [2025 whistleblowing disclosures report](#)
- [2024 whistleblowing disclosures report](#)
- [2023 whistleblowing disclosures report](#)
- [2022 whistleblowing disclosures report](#)
- [2021 whistleblowing disclosures report](#)
- [2020 whistleblowing disclosures report](#)
- [2019 whistleblowing disclosures report](#)
- [2018 whistleblowing disclosures report](#)

Further information

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The government has produced [detailed guidance on whistleblowing](#) which provides further information.