

# About fitness to practise

Dealing effectively with fitness to practise concerns is at the heart of our commitment to protecting patients and the public, and maintaining public confidence in pharmacists and pharmacy technicians.

We describe fitness to practise (FtP) as a person's suitability to be on our register without restrictions.

In practical terms, this means maintaining appropriate standards of proficiency, being of good health and good character, and adhering to principles of good practice as set out in our standards and guidance, and other relevant best practice advice.

## How do those concerns come to us?

### They come from:

- a member of the public (more than half of our complaints come from the public)
- public bodies such as NHS organisations and other regulators
- law enforcement agencies such as the police or local authorities
- colleagues of a pharmacist or pharmacy technician
- one of our inspectors, following a routine inspection

## How we deal with concerns

Concerns are initially reviewed by one of our case workers, who makes a recommendation on how to proceed. This may include referring the matter to an investigating committee (IC), which meets in private.

That investigating committee may take a decision in its own right to go no further or issue a warning or letter of advice, or refer the case to a fitness to practise committee (FtPC) for hearing, which is conducted by an independent panel, usually made up of three members.

The registrar has powers to refer cases directly to the fitness to practise committee in certain circumstances.

And we can seek interim orders, where registration can be suspended or conditions imposed on someone's pharmacy practice while a matter is being investigated. This might happen, for instance, in a case where a registered pharmacy professional is being investigated by the police for a serious offence or where there is a serious ongoing risk to patient safety.

The High Court has said that fitness to practise is not about punishing past conduct. Rather, we consider whether a pharmacist or pharmacy technician is exactly that - fit to practise.

## What happens if a pharmacy professional's fitness to practise is found to be impaired?

If a pharmacy professional's fitness to practise is found to be impaired, the fitness to practise committee can:

- issue a warning
- impose conditions on his or her practice
- suspend them from practising
- remove them from the register and stop them from practising

Even if we don't find a professional's fitness to practise impaired, we can give advice to the professional to improve their practice or another person or organisation involved.

### How do I find out what is happening?

Fitness to practise committee hearings are usually held in public and members of the public are welcome to attend. We publish details of upcoming hearings at: [www.pharmacyregulation.org/raising-concerns/hearings/hearings-schedule](http://www.pharmacyregulation.org/raising-concerns/hearings/hearings-schedule)

Some fitness to practise committee hearings are held in private if, for example, there are matters involving a registrant's health.

We publish decisions of the fitness to practise committee on the register at:  
[www.pharmacyregulation.org/search/search\\_decisions](http://www.pharmacyregulation.org/search/search_decisions)

#### For further information

If you would like further information on the GPhC you can contact us at:

**Post** 129 Lambeth Road, London SE1 1BT  
**Phone** 020 3365 3400

**Web** [pharmacyregulation.org](http://pharmacyregulation.org)  
**Email** [info@pharmacyregulation.org](mailto:info@pharmacyregulation.org)  
**Twitter** @TheGPhC  
**Facebook** [.com/TheGPhC](https://www.facebook.com/TheGPhC)  
**LinkedIn** [.com/company/general-pharmaceutical-council](https://www.linkedin.com/company/general-pharmaceutical-council)