

# Advice and support for pharmacy professionals involved in the FtP process

## Overview

We investigate concerns raised with us about pharmacy professionals' performance, behaviour or health. Once we receive a concern, we will notify the pharmacy professional that a concern has been raised about them.

Some concerns are more serious than others. The most serious concerns could result in a direct referral to a fitness to practise (FtP) committee or an interim order (which could restrict or remove the pharmacy professional's ability to practise while the investigation progresses).

If you are involved in FtP proceedings, this can be stressful and worrying. It can be helpful to understand more about the process as a whole and the support available to you, if you are under investigation or if you are asked to attend a hearing.

While we aren't able to provide individual support, we have published guidance documents to help you understand the various stages of the FtP process, including how and when decisions are made, and the possible outcomes at each stage.

## The FtP process

- Find out more about the FtP process at: [www.pharmacyregulation.org/raising-concerns](http://www.pharmacyregulation.org/raising-concerns)
- ***Good decision-making: investigations and threshold criteria guidance*** - what you should expect to happen during an investigation, and the information we collect
- ***Good decision-making: hearings and outcomes guidance*** - the role of the investigating committee, how they make decisions and the outcomes they can give
- ***Good decision-making: hearings and sanctions guidance*** - what you should expect to happen at a hearing
- ***Guidance for witnesses*** - includes information on attending a hearing, and what to expect on the day

There is a list of other organisations which may also be able provide support and advice to you during the FtP process in the useful contact section of this factsheet.

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### Support during an FtP investigation

During an investigation, you will need to answer formal questions and provide information to us. You can choose to do this directly- to 'represent' yourself. You can also choose someone else to formally represent you. This could be a legally qualified person- for example a solicitor, legal executive or barrister (or an advocate in Scotland). It could also be a representative from a professional organisation, if you are a member.

You may also want to get advice from a charity such as Pharmacist Support. It is a good idea to get advice even if you don't intend to be formally represented by someone else throughout the process.

If you are under investigation, it is up to you to decide what support you want or need. We recommend that you consider what advice or support is available and decide what you need, according to your individual circumstances. You can access support throughout the investigation process.

Some law firms or advice centres may provide initial assistance for free. There are also agencies that offer free representation for people that either can't afford to be represented or who need initial assistance. This is called 'pro bono' work. See the useful contacts section for more information.

### Support at an FtP hearing

As a pharmacy professional, you have the right to represent yourself, or to be represented by someone else at a fitness to practise hearing. It is up to you to decide your representation

arrangements. It may be helpful to get advice from the organisations listed in the contacts section.

In most cases, pharmacy professionals choose someone else to represent or advise them at an FtP hearing.

If you choose to be represented by someone else, this could be a legally qualified person- for example a solicitor, legal executive or barrister (or advocate in Scotland). It could also be a representative from an organisation such as a union, if you are a member.

A friend or relative who is not legally qualified can accompany you and advise you during a hearing. You will need to ask for the permission of the committee chair if you want them to address the committee on your behalf.

If you choose not to be represented by someone else, we are not able to help you in preparing your case for a hearing.

### Useful contacts

You may be able to find support and legal advice from:

- your indemnity insurance provider
- your household insurance policy, which may provide legal advice or assistance

We have also included below details of other organisations that you may wish to contact.

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### Association of Pharmacy Technicians (UK)

The Association of Pharmacy Technicians United Kingdom (APTUK) is the national professional leadership body for pharmacy technicians working in all pharmacy sectors across all countries in the UK.

<https://www.aptuk.org/membership@aptuk.org>  
**0121 632 2025**

### Bar Pro Bono Unit

The Bar Pro Bono Unit is a charity which helps to find pro bono (free) legal assistance from volunteer barristers.

<https://www.barprobono.org.uk/enquiries@barprobono.org.uk>  
**020 7092 3960**

### Citizen's Advice

Citizens Advice helps people with their legal, money and other problems by providing free, independent and confidential advice. You can get advice online, by web chat, by phone, or by visiting your local Citizen's Advice. Find out more on their website.

<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/>

### Free Representation Unit

The Free Representation Unit provides free legal advice on employment and social security hearings for people who are not eligible for legal aid and cannot afford a lawyer.

[www.thefru.org.uk](http://www.thefru.org.uk)  
[NLS.lawclinic@ntu.ac.uk](mailto:NLS.lawclinic@ntu.ac.uk)  
**01158 484 262 (Nottingham office)**  
**020 7611 9555**

### Law Centres Federation

Law Centres defend the legal rights of people who cannot afford a lawyer. You can use their website to find your local Law Centre.

<http://www.lawcentres.org.uk/>

### Law Society

The Law Society is the independent professional body for solicitors. You can use their website to search for a local solicitor.

[www.law.society.org.uk](http://www.law.society.org.uk)  
**0870 606 2555**

### Mind

Mind provide advice and support to empower anyone experiencing a mental health problem. They also provide legal information and general advice on mental health related law.

<https://www.mind.org.uk/legal@mind.org.uk>  
**0300 466 6463**

### Pharmacist Support

Pharmacist Support is an independent charity working for pharmacists and their families, former pharmacists and pharmacy students to provide help and support in times of need.

<https://pharmacistsupport.org/info@pharmacistsupport.org>  
**0808 168 2233**

### The Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS)

The RPS is the professional membership body for pharmacists and pharmacy in Great Britain. They run a professional support service.

<https://www.rpharms.com/support@rpharms.com>  
**0845 257 2570**

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**General Pharmaceutical Council**  
25 Canada Square, London E14 5LQ  
T 020 3713 8000  
E [info@pharmacyregulation.org](mailto:info@pharmacyregulation.org)

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 [/company/general-pharmaceutical-council](https://www.linkedin.com/company/general-pharmaceutical-council)  
[www.pharmacyregulation.org](http://www.pharmacyregulation.org)