

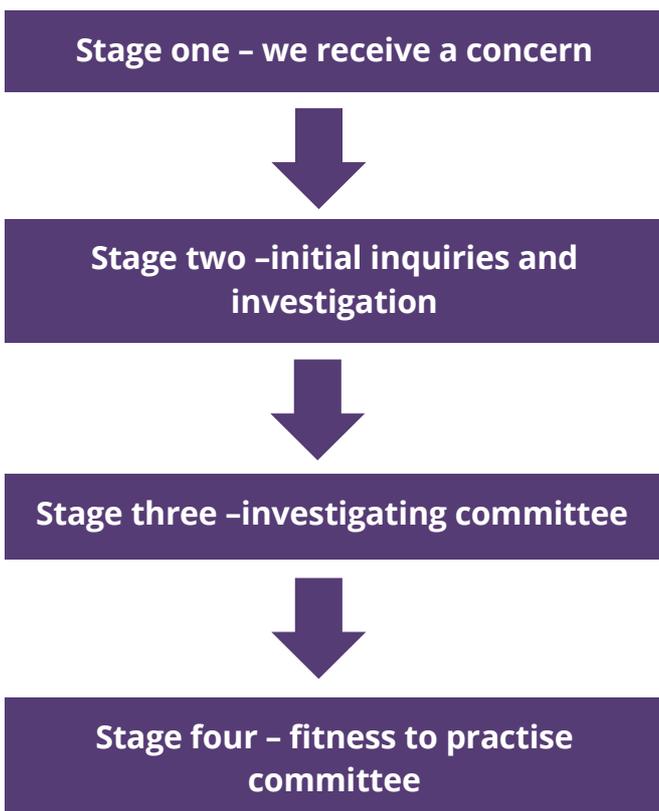
# I've raised a concern – what happens next?

This guide tells you what happens once you have raised a concern with us about a pharmacist, pharmacy technician or pharmacy. It explains what you can expect from us, and what we may ask you to do if we decide to investigate.

Whatever happens with your concern, we will contact you and explain what we have done and why. If you need help to understand this information, or would like it in a different format, please let us know.

## What happens when we receive your concern?

When we receive a concern about a pharmacist, pharmacy technician or pharmacy, this is what we will do.



### Stage one - we receive a concern

We decide whether we are the right organisation to look into this concern and whether we should investigate it.

### Stage two - initial inquiries and investigation

We will make inquiries into the concern. This may mean we have to ask you for more information, and we may need to contact the person or pharmacy concerned.

We will then start a full investigation if we decide that:

- there could be a risk to patient safety, or
- what has happened could affect public confidence in pharmacy professionals

After the investigation – depending on what we find – we may decide to close the case or to show the evidence to the investigating committee.

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### Stage three – investigating committee

The investigating committee considers the evidence from the investigation. At this point it can decide to:

- close the case
- give advice or a warning to the pharmacy professional, or
- refer more serious concerns to a fitness to practise committee for a hearing

### Stage four – fitness to practise committee

A fitness to practise (FtP) committee considers the evidence and decides if a pharmacy professional is able to do their job safely and effectively. This usually involves holding a hearing in public.

The committee can give the pharmacy professional a warning. If it decides that they are not fit to practise it can:

- set conditions that limit how they can work, or
- stop them from working as a pharmacy professional (this is called 'removal from the register')

**Most cases are dealt with during the first two stages.**

**You can find out more about each stage on our website at [www.pharmacyregulation.org/raising-concerns](http://www.pharmacyregulation.org/raising-concerns)**

### What happens if my concern is investigated?

A GPhC case officer will gather evidence about what has happened. They will get in touch with you about the investigation and you can ask them any questions you have.

Usually an investigation will include:

- talking to you and any other witnesses about what happened and asking you to make a 'witness statement'
- talking to the pharmacy professional involved

A GPhC inspector may also visit the registered pharmacy premises where an alleged incident or incidents took place.

### How long does it take to investigate a concern?

We aim to finish our investigations within three to nine months of receiving your concern. And we aim to give you an update on the progress of our investigation at least every two months. You can contact our case officer at any time to find out what's going on.

### Why do I have to make a witness statement?

We can only take action if we have information about what happened, so what you tell us is vital. We need to have a formal, truthful, written record of what you tell us in case the concern goes to the investigating committee. We call this formal record a 'witness statement'. The witness statement would also be important if the concern went to a fitness to practise committee.

We understand that making a statement may seem very formal or unfamiliar.

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We want to make sure that you can tell us about what happened in a way that is as quick and easy for you as possible. We will support you to do this and your case officer will tell you more about how we can help.

We want to make sure that people receive safe and effective pharmacy care. If you have any information about a time when this may not have happened, it's important that you tell us about it. This will help us make sure that other people are not put at risk unnecessarily.

### How do I make a statement?

Your case officer will contact you and arrange a time to talk to you on the phone. Or they may arrange to meet with you in person. We can make sure you feel comfortable about doing this, and you can choose to have someone with you (as long as they are not involved in what happened).

The case officer will ask you some questions about what happened. This usually takes around an hour or so, but it can depend on how much information we need to ask you for. We may need to talk to you more than once.

They may ask for pieces of evidence – such as documents or receipts – so please keep any evidence you may have about what happened.

The case officer will type up your statement and send it to you, with copies of any evidence you have given us. You can make changes to the statement if you don't think it's right. You will need to sign the statement when you are happy that it's accurate, and then send it back to us.

### Will I need to do anything else?

We deal with most cases and close them during the first two stages of our concerns process. But if we find that the concern is more serious we may need you to take part in a formal meeting, called a 'hearing'.

This means that you will be asked to come to our offices in London. You will take part in the hearing and be asked questions about your statement by an independent panel.

If we need to ask you to come to a hearing, we will let you know in advance. We can help to make arrangements for you to attend, and cover reasonable costs for your travel and other expenses you may have. Your case officer can tell you more about hearings, if you have any questions.

### What if I am unhappy with the way my concern is handled?

We will keep you up to date about any action we are taking on your concern and explain our decisions clearly. If you are not happy with the way we have investigated your concern, please write to the person at the GPhC who first got in touch with you about it.

If you are not satisfied with their response, ask to speak to their manager or email [\*\*info@pharmacyregulation.org\*\*](mailto:info@pharmacyregulation.org)

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