



Liaising with patients during a fitness to practise investigation

Working with doctors Working for patients

General
Medical
Council

What is the Patient Liaison Service?

The Patient Liaison Service improves the way we communicate with patients, their relatives and members of the public who have raised concerns about a doctor. We launched this service at the start of 2015 following a successful pilot.

Who is the service for?

It is for anyone who is a patient, a relative of a patient or a member of the public who has raised concerns about whether a doctor is fit to work and we have decided to investigate those concerns.

Meeting us after you have complained about a doctor

A patient liaison officer will offer to meet with you to answer any questions about what happens when we investigate a doctor and how we decide the outcome. It also gives us the chance to clarify if there is anything about your concerns that we don't fully understand.

Explaining the outcome of our investigation to you

A patient liaison officer will offer to meet with you again after we have decided whether we need to take action to protect the public – either at the end of an investigation or after a medical practitioners tribunal hearing. The patient liaison officer will explain the steps that have been taken to investigate the concerns. They will also be able to provide details of other organisations that can offer further help.

You can bring one friend, family member or supporter to meet with us.

Where are the meetings held?

We have offices in Belfast, Cardiff, Edinburgh, London and Manchester – a patient liaison officer can offer to meet you at one of these locations. We will reimburse reasonable travel costs for you, and one friend, family member or supporter who you may wish to bring with you.

We can offer a telephone meeting if you are not able to travel to our offices.

Your contacts at the General Medical Council (GMC)

What does the patient liaison officer do?

- Ensures we understand your concerns, and explains the investigation process and the outcomes available at the end of our investigation.
- Makes sure you understand what the GMC does.
- Signposts you to other organisations that may be able to help where we can't.
- Offers to meet you at the end of the investigation to make sure you understand the reason for our decision.

What do investigation officers and investigation advisers do?

- Handles the investigation from start to finish.
- Is your main point of contact throughout the investigation.
- Collects and shares information and evidence to support the investigation.
- Gives regular updates on our investigation and tells you the outcome.

Support available to you

Raising concerns about a doctor can be a stressful experience for some people. If you feel that you would like support, you might wish to speak to someone who is independent of the GMC.

Our witness service provides dedicated support for people who have made a complaint to the GMC. This service is free and confidential, and is run by volunteers from the charity Victim Support.

You can access support from the service at any time. But please remember that while volunteers are able to provide emotional support and practical help, they are not qualified to provide professional counselling or legal advice. They are also not allowed to discuss the details of our investigation.

You can contact Victim Support by calling **0161 200 1956** or emailing **witnesssupport@gmc-uk.org**.

Email: **pls@gmc-uk.org**

Website: **www.gmc-uk.org/ftpreforms**

Telephone: **0161 250 6880**

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