

Doctors with restricted GMC registration – advice for the workplace reporter

This leaflet explains what information the GMC needs from employers or contracting bodies who provide services which are delivered by doctors with Fitness to Practise (FtP) restrictions. Whilst the leaflet is designed primarily for NHS organisations who employ or contract with doctors it is relevant for any organisation which directly employs, or commissions the services of, a doctor with FtP restrictions.

The GMC

The purpose of the General Medical Council (GMC) is to protect, promote and maintain the health and safety of the public by ensuring proper standards in the practice of medicine. We maintain a register of medical practitioners, and doctors must be registered with the GMC to practise medicine in the UK. Our FtP procedures allow us to place a warning on a doctor's registration, restrict their registration or to remove the doctor from the register entirely. Full details of our FtP procedures, along with on-line access to our register, can be found at our website www.gmc-uk.org.

Fitness to Practise restrictions

Doctors working with current FtP restrictions will be subject either to undertakings or conditions. Undertakings are voluntary restrictions agreed with the doctor following a GMC investigation but where it has not been necessary to refer the doctor to a FtP Panel hearing. Conditions are restrictions imposed by a FtP Panel following a hearing. Both these types of restriction are linked to the doctors register entry and are

accessible to any enquirer who has the doctor's GMC identification number via our website. The only exceptions to this are any restrictions which apply solely to the doctor's health – these are not disclosed by us to any enquirer without the doctor's written consent.

Restrictions on a doctor's registration following a finding of impaired FtP in order to ensure patient safety. For this reason, it is extremely important that we remain aware of a doctor's work activity and performance throughout a period of restricted registration. We therefore seek to engage regularly with the doctor's employer or contracting body to ascertain whether continuing concern remains or new concerns arise. For GPs and some other doctors we may also seek to engage directly with a contact at the doctor's place of work.

Workplace reporting – how it works

At the outset of a period of restriction we will write to the Medical Director of the employer or contracting organisation setting out the restrictions which apply to the doctor. We will ask the Medical Director to nominate a

workplace reporter, based within his or her organisation, to liaise with the GMC in respect of the doctor for the duration of the restrictions. It is important to note that the reporter role is only to oversee the doctor's performance in the workplace and to act as a point of contact for the GMC. The workplace reporter is not expected to provide clinical supervision. If supervision is required, this will be addressed separately within the restrictions.

Following the nomination of the workplace reporter, a named GMC caseworker will contact him or her by telephone and explain the restrictions that apply to the doctor. This will include an explanation of the reporting role and how this may link into any additional supervision. It is also an opportunity to clarify any uncertainties on the part of the reporter.

The caseworker will then seek information regularly, usually every 3, 4 or 6 months, using a prescribed format which has been designed to make reporting to the GMC as easy and quick as possible. If there are no concerns about the doctor then completion of the relevant documents will take just a few minutes. Where the reporter does alert us to concerns we will follow this up quickly by email or telephone and take whatever action is necessary once we fully understand the nature of the new concerns.

Where new concerns do arise, or where there is a significant change in circumstances (for example where the doctor is absent through ill health for a significant period of time, or hands in their notice or becomes subject to a local disciplinary procedure), we ask that the workplace reporter contacts the GMC caseworker by telephone in the first instance.

What you can expect from the GMC

You will have access to a named member of GMC staff (the caseworker) who has personal knowledge of the issues faced by the doctor and the restrictions on their registration. This caseworker will also be the point of contact for the doctor, the medical, clinical or educational supervisors and any other third parties with a legitimate involvement – for example the Postgraduate Dean.

We will inform you promptly if restrictions on the doctor's practice change, or if we become aware of further information that affects the doctor's ability to practise safely, and will keep in regular contact with the workplace reporter throughout the period of restricted registration.

If you have questions arising from this leaflet please raise them with the caseworker or Blake Dobson, Head of Case Review (bdobson@gmc-uk.org).

If you have any queries in relation to a specific case, please contact the named caseworker in the first instance with the contact details supplied on their letters to you.

All other enquires should be directed to the Case Review Team on **0161 923 6407**
3 Hardman Street, Manchester M3 3AW

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