

Giving your doctor feedback

Why have I been asked to give feedback on my doctor?

Doctors must regularly show the GMC that they're giving good care to patients and keeping up to date. This process is called 'revalidation' and it's how doctors keep their licence to work in the UK.

An important part of this is checking what their patients think about the care they give by asking for your feedback.

How will my feedback be used?

Every year, doctors review and discuss their work with a specially trained person (called an appraiser). They talk about feedback they've received from patients and what it tells them about the way they work. They use it to identify things they're doing well and how they can improve the care they give to patients.

Will my doctor know the feedback is from me?

No. The doctor won't see feedback from individual patients. Feedback is collected independently, and doctors are given a summary of anonymised feedback from all patients who took part.

What happens if I give negative feedback?

We know it can be difficult to give negative or critical feedback, but feedback is only helpful if it's honest. If you give negative feedback, try to explain what the doctor did or said that you think they could do better. This helps them understand your feedback and how to improve the care they give to patients. Doctors are used to receiving all types of feedback on their work.

Is positive feedback helpful?

Yes. Positive feedback helps doctors understand what they do well, so they can keep doing it. When giving this try to explain what it was that they did or said that was helpful.

Why have I been asked to give personal information?

When you give feedback, you might be asked to give personal information (such as your age, gender and ethnicity). This allows those seeking feedback to understand if groups of

patients are feeding back certain issues they need to look at. And to check that patients from a range of groups are able to give feedback. This information is confidential and will be held securely.

You don't have to give this information if you don't want to.

How is this different from other feedback I'm asked for after visiting a doctor?

Patients are often asked for feedback on how they found a service they received from a healthcare organisation. This is different as it's asking for your feedback on the care you received from a specific doctor, such as did they listen to you and explain things clearly.

I'm the patient's carer. Can I give feedback on their behalf?

Yes. If a patient can't give feedback themselves, you can give it on their behalf.

You might first want to check if the feedback process can be adjusted to allow the patient to respond. For example, whether they can have a questionnaire in another format (such as 'easy read' or large print) or if they can give feedback another way (such as verbally).

How does the doctor decide which patients are asked for feedback?

Doctors shouldn't choose which patients are asked to give them feedback. Usually, patients are chosen at random or a number of consecutive patients the doctor sees are asked.

Can I give feedback about my doctor, if I have not been asked?

Yes. You can give your doctor feedback at any time, even if you've not been asked. You can give feedback directly to your doctor, or through the clinic or reception staff. There are also websites where you can share feedback about your care with others.

Your doctor also regularly reviews any complaints or compliments they receive from patients.

How is giving feedback different from making a complaint?

Feedback is about giving a doctor information, both positive and negative, that they can learn from. A complaint is expressing something unacceptable or unsatisfactory, which needs a formal response.

If you want to complain about a doctor, you might find it helpful to read our guidance www.gmc-uk.org/concerns/information-for-patients/local-help-services.