

## Frequently asked questions for patients – about giving your doctor feedback for revalidation

### 1. Why have I been asked to provide feedback on my doctor?

All licensed doctors in the UK must regularly show that their knowledge and skills are up to date and they are fit to practise. This process is called [revalidation](#).

To revalidate, your doctor must have a yearly appraisal based on our guidance for doctors, [Good medical practice](#).

Doctors have to collect a range of different information about their practice to bring to their appraisal, and this includes feedback from their patients.

### 2. How will my feedback be used?

At their appraisal meeting, your doctor will discuss the feedback they have received. They'll talk to their appraiser about what the feedback tells them about their practice, identify the things they're doing well, and the things they can improve.

They will look at what practical changes they can make to improve the care they give to their patients.

### 3. Will my doctor know the feedback is from me?

No. The doctor should not have any involvement in collecting the feedback. Those administering the questionnaires must make sure that:

- doctors don't see individual responses from patients;
- information given to doctors is based on the answers from all patients taking part. No patient should be identifiable;
- all information is held in a way that meets the requirements of data protection legislation

## **4. What if I provide negative feedback?**

We know it can be difficult to give negative feedback but your feedback should be honest. If your feedback is negative, you should explain why in the free text space on the form. This helps your doctor understand your feedback and how they can improve the care they give.

## **5. Why are there questions about my age, gender and ethnicity?**

This means doctors can make sure the patients they ask to fill in the questionnaires are from a range of backgrounds. It also helps the doctor and appraiser understand the sample of patients who gave the feedback.

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

## **6. How is this questionnaire different from other surveys I regularly complete after visiting the doctor?**

Patients are often asked to complete surveys about services and facilities in healthcare organisations. This questionnaire is different. It's asking for your views on the care you received from your doctor at an appointment, such as did they listen to you and explain your condition.

## **7. I am the patient's carer/family member. Can I complete the questionnaire on their behalf?**

If the patient is a child or lacks capacity to complete the questionnaire themselves, you can complete it on their behalf.

You might first want to check whether the feedback process can be adjusted to allow the patient to respond themselves. For example, whether a questionnaire in another format can be provided, such as 'Easy Read' or large print.

## **8. I'm not a patient. Why have I been asked to complete this questionnaire?**

Some doctors have limited or no patient contact. For example, a pathologist, or a doctor who works for a pharmaceutical company might not be able to ask their patients to give feedback in the same way as a GP or hospital doctor can.

You have been asked because in your role – whether you are a carer, a family member, a student, a customer, or something else – you will be able to give some valuable feedback to help your doctor learn about their practice.

## 9. How does the doctor select patients to complete the questionnaire?

Doctors will not individually select patients to complete questionnaires.

Doctors using the GMC's own questionnaire will normally give the questionnaire to 45 consecutive patients. This helps make sure they get feedback from a range of patients they see.

Wherever possible, the questionnaires will not be given out directly by your doctor. However, in some cases, the doctor may need to give out the questionnaire themselves at the end of the appointment.

## 10. Can I give feedback about my doctor, if I have not been given a questionnaire?

Yes. You can give your doctor feedback at any time, even if you have not been asked to complete a questionnaire. You can give this feedback directly to your doctor, or through the clinic or reception staff.

Your doctor also reviews and discusses complaints and compliments they receive as part of their annual appraisal.

Making a complaint about your doctor is a separate process from giving them feedback. If you want to make a complaint about your doctor, you might find it helpful to read our interactive guide [Patients' help](#) for more information.

## 11. How else are patients involved in revalidation?

Some organisations offer patients and the public opportunities to be involved in revalidation. For example, some patients help with the selection, training and quality assurance of doctors' appraisers. And some clinical governance groups include public representatives. For some of the roles you'll need to have certain skills and experience.

If you'd like to find out how you can be involved, you should contact your local organisation. This might be an NHS hospital, GP practice or a health board. They'll be able to tell you what opportunities are available.