

For doctors who are considering whether they need to tell us about their health condition(s)

We know medicine can be a challenging and stressful profession. While making care for your patients your priority, it's also important to look after your own health.

In line with our guidance to doctors, a small number of doctors refer themselves to the GMC in relation to the impact of their health on their fitness to practice and we manage these cases as sensitively as we can, including getting expert advice where needed and dealing with it confidentially.

This leaflet explains:

- when we need to know about a health condition
- what information to provide us with if you need to self-refer concerns about the impact of your health condition.

What [Good Medical Practice](#) says about a doctor's health

"You must act promptly if you think that patient safety or dignity is, or may be, seriously compromised." *Good Medical Practice* paragraph 75

"You must consult a suitably qualified professional and follow their advice about any changes to your practice they consider necessary if:

- a. you know or suspect that you have a serious condition that you could pass on to patients
- b. your judgement or performance could be affected by a condition or its treatment.

You must not rely on your own assessment of the risk to patients." *Good Medical Practice* paragraph 79

When we need to know about a health condition

A self-referral only needs to be made in relation to your health condition if this condition poses a risk to public protection

If you need advice about whether to make a self-referral about your health condition, please get in touch with our contact centre on 0161 923 6602.

We understand it will be stressful and upsetting for you to have your fitness to practise questioned because of a health condition. Where you have a health condition we want you to get the right support.

We only need to be made aware of your health condition if it poses a risk to patients. But where a health condition may be a contributory factor to other concerns about your fitness to practise that pose a risk to patients or public confidence in the profession, we need to consider the impact. However, this doesn't necessarily mean we'll need to take action in relation to the health condition itself.

Below is more information about when a self-referral does and doesn't need to be made in relation to your health condition, and the approach we take when we receive a self-referral that solely relates to your health condition.

When a self-referral doesn't need to be made in relation to your health condition

A self-referral doesn't need to be made about your health condition if:

- there are no concerns about your conduct, and
- there is no risk relating to the clinical care you provide and you are not working or likely to work or, if working, you are seeking and following treatment and advice, and taking steps locally to manage any potential risk to patients.

When a self-referral does need to be made in relation to your health condition

We will need to consider the impact, if any, of your health condition if there are also concerns about your conduct that put patients or public confidence in the profession at risk and your health condition may be a contributory factor. This includes where there are concerns amounting to serious misconduct and criminal offences involving drugs.

We will need to consider the impact of your health condition if you are working or likely to work and:

- there are, or have been, serious concerns about the clinical care you have provided and the health condition may have been a contributory factor.
- the nature of the condition may affect your conduct or the clinical care you provide and you are not seeking and / or following treatment and advice, and / or are not engaging with local support and steps put in place to manage any risks to patients. This suggests you may lack insight into any risk, or potential risks, your health condition poses.
- the health condition has only recently been diagnosed, is not well controlled and it is too soon to know if risks to patients can be appropriately managed by you seeking and following treatment and advice and / or engaging with local support and steps to manage risk.

What we'll do when a self-referral solely relates to your health condition

If we receive a self-referral that solely relates to your health condition, we need to decide whether the information suggests a risk to patients and therefore raises a question of impaired fitness to practise.

In cases where we need more information about your health condition, we will carry out provisional enquiries to allow us to assess whether the concerns about your health condition pose a risk to patients. This ensures we only undertake a full investigation where necessary.

Where the concerns about your health condition may pose a risk to patients, provisional enquiries can include us checking whether you are working or intending to work and asking for your consent for us to obtain information from your:

- treating doctor(s) to check you are seeking and following treatment and advice to manage any patient safety risks, and / or where appropriate
- employer, including the occupational health department, to check that local safeguards are in place to protect patients.

Where we receive assurance through this process that there is no unmanaged risk to patients, we won't usually need to undertake a full investigation.

Telling us about your health condition(s)

If you need to tell us about your health condition(s), please complete the self-referral form overleaf and provide as much detail as possible. We'll deal this as sensitively as we can.

A decision maker within the GMC will review the information you have provided and decide the next steps to take. They will aim to make this decision and write to you within 7 days of receiving your self-referral form, but this can sometimes take longer.

Please complete and email this form to practise@gmc-uk.org or post to Fitness to Practise Directorate, General Medical Council, 3 Hardman Street, Manchester, M3 3AW.

Full name:	
GMC reference number:	

Details of your health condition(s)

(Please tell us the nature of your health condition(s) for example, any diagnosis which has been made, whether this is a recent onset or long-standing condition and how this condition is currently affecting you.)

Information about how you are currently managing your health

(Please tell us about any support services, treatment or care you are receiving, any healthcare professionals who are involved in your care, including occupational health, and any other support you have available to you.)

Are you currently working?

(We do not need to know details of your employer(s) at this stage, but it is helpful to know whether you are currently practising and if so, whether you have disclosed your health condition(s) to your employer. It is also helpful for us to know if you are receiving any support in the workplace to help with managing your health condition.)

Further information

(Are you able to provide us with copies of any relevant letters from your GP, treating physician(s) or occupational health department which might outline your current condition, any treatment you are receiving and any support you are being given in your workplace? If so, please attach or enclose these with this self-referral form as it might help us to decide how best to deal with the information you have provided and advise you further.)