



Raising a Concern about a Practice Placement utilised by the School of Health Sciences (SHS)

Introduction

1. All students have a duty to raise concerns when patients may be at risk of harm or when there is any unsafe or unethical conduct. Concerns may include poor practice or malpractice, patient safety issues, safeguarding issues or any other serious issues. The practice placement concern form is designed to provide an effective means for reporting concerns about a practice learning environment to the SHS so that appropriate action can be taken to address them:

<https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/healthsciences/documents/practice-nursing/practice-esc-policy-issue4.pdf>

The process is intended to assist in identifying any placement learning setting that might be considered to be of concern – i.e. that, based on reasonable belief that can be justified, either something has taken place or is likely to happen in the future. This knowledge will enable practice placements to investigate any issues as necessary and for support to be put in place as needed. This form can be used by students, mentors, other health care professionals responsible for supporting students or by academic staff.

2. This procedure accompanies the Raising a Concern about a Student on a course within the School. Both processes are designed to complement each other. For information regarding raising a concern about student under the University of Nottingham School of Health Sciences Fitness to Practice procedure, please find the relevant form at: <https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/healthsciences/practice/safeguarding/raising-a-concern/concern-notification-form.aspx>

Procedure

1. We would strongly recommend that you have a discussion to explore whether a concern needs to be raised. In the first instance you should speak with your mentor and/or the placement area manager if you feel able to do so. If you do not feel able to discuss with either your mentor or the placement area manager, then do speak with the University Link Lecturer (ULL) and/or Practice Placement Support Tutors (PST). Contact details for your ULL are sent automatically to you via email on the first day your placement allocation commenced and can also be located via ARC POW.
2. Concerns raised anonymously will not be considered.
3. All concerns will be treated in confidence, but we cannot guarantee that the identity of the person raising the concern will not be revealed, for example in the event of a concern about a placement area or health care professional proceeding to formal investigation.
4. Raising concerns maliciously, recklessly or irresponsibly will be considered to contravene the Nottingham University Code of Conduct for Healthcare Students and may result in a Fitness to Practice referral.

Action

1. Following receipt of a concern form, and within 2 working days, the case will be referred to either the practice learning divisional leads or safeguarding divisional leads for triage and, if necessary, investigation.

2. If appropriate the individual, who has submitted the concern, will be contacted and the concern discussed. They may be asked to elaborate on the concerns noted in the form by, for example, completing a written statement.
3. Student evaluations of placement learning (SEPL), current audit documentation and the most recent CQC report (if available) will be reviewed if appropriate.
4. On the basis of the investigation the Investigator will decide on one of the following:
 - a. no action is warranted;
 - b. that the issue is sufficiently serious to be referred to the NHS Trust/Organisation so that their internal policies and procedures can be followed;
 - c. Depending on the nature of the allegation, and whether there have been previous expressions of concern one of the following may occur:
 1. The student raising the concern may be supported by ULL to remain in the practice placement setting. Support will also be provided by ULL and NHS Trust/Organisation to the placement area and/or individual members of staff involved. This may include reallocation of a student to an alternative mentor/supervisor/clinical manager
 2. Exceptionally removal of a student (or students) from the placement area. In this situation any suspension of a clinical area would be communicated with other HEIs and a re-audit plan would be developed in conjunction with the NHS Trust/Organisation.