



## Raising and escalating concerns within practice placement environments

All staff and pre-registration nursing, midwifery, physiotherapy, and Sport Rehabilitation students

All staff and students within the School of Health Sciences (SHS) have a professional responsibility to escalate all concerns relating to practice placement environments. Concerns may include poor practice, patient safety issues, safeguarding issues or any other serious issues concerns relating to service user/patient care and safety or Supervision and support of learning.

All concerns that relate to patient care or safety must be reported immediately to the person in charge of the clinical area and should also be raised with the SHS.

The following guidance enables staff and students to alert the appropriate individuals to ensure that all concerns relating to practice placement environments are dealt with promptly and effectively. In all instances it is important that the process of escalating concerns is initiated as illustrated in the flow charts provided in this document. All concerns raised will be dealt with in partnership between the SHS and practice partners.

<https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/healthsciences/raise-a-practice-concern/>

Throughout all investigations there will be a clear, transparent and confidential tracking process in place from initial concern to formal resolution. In addition to support within the School of Health Sciences the University counselling service and dignity advisors can also provide valuable support:

[The University Counselling Service](#)

Further resources can be accessed at: [Support and Wellbeing Service - The University of Nottingham](#)

There are a number of instances where concerns relating to placement environments may arise, such as:

- i. Unsafe or poor practice;
- ii. Alleged abuse of a vulnerable adult or child;
- iii. Quality of placement learning experience, for example failure to ensure adequate supervision and support for students, this may include students not being allocated a Practice Assessor/Practice Supervisor/Clinical Supervisor.
- iv. Concerns relating to discriminatory behaviour towards patients/service users, students, carers, or staff.
- v. Quality concerns arising from: Educational Audit, Care Quality Commission (CQC) or NHS England Workforce, Training and Education Quality Assurance visit for example, safety concerns or quality of learning environment.

Concerns regarding individual students such as fitness to practice or student support are addressed separately.

<https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/healthsciences/practice/safeguarding/raising-a-concern/concern-notification-form.aspx>

Please note that student support requests should go to the Academic Assessor/Clinical Link Tutor in the first instance. A concern form should only be completed where there are genuine Fitness to Practise concerns about a student.

## **Student Responsibilities**

All students within the School of Health Sciences have a professional responsibility to raise concerns when patients may be at risk of harm or where there is any unsafe or unethical conduct. In the first instance all students are advised to discuss concerns with their Practice Assessor/Practice Supervisor/ Clinical Supervisor/ Clinical Lead/Manager. During this process support is also available through the academic assessor/clinical supervisor for the identified area. Support is also available through practice leads and personal tutors.

Students should ensure they are familiar with both SHS and placement organisation guidance and procedures for escalating of concerns. Your orientation to placement and trust induction should include information on accessing policies and guidance for raising concerns.

All concerns that relate to patient care or safety should be reported immediately to the person in charge of the clinical area and should also be raised with the School using the on-line electronic reporting system  
<https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/healthsciences/raise-a-practice-concern/>

If you feel unable to raise your concern with the person in charge of the clinical area you must contact your university link lecturer and the practice lead immediately.

In addition, the Director of Practice Learning/Assistant Director of Practice learning and the Academic Lead for Safeguarding within School of Health Sciences should be informed. Where this involves midwifery students, The Lead Midwife for Education (LME) should also be informed. Students are welcome to contact these staff members directly via details below.

### **Director of Practice Learning - Heidi Baker**

[Heidi.baker@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:Heidi.baker@nottingham.ac.uk)

### **Assistant Director of Practice Learning – Zoe Tilley**

[zoe.tilley@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:zoe.tilley@nottingham.ac.uk)

### **Lead for Safeguarding: Elisabeth O'Brien**

[elisabeth.obrien@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:elisabeth.obrien@nottingham.ac.uk)

### **Lead for Practice Learning (Nursing) – Rohan Revell**

[rohan.revell@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:rohan.revell@nottingham.ac.uk)

### **Lead Midwife for Education (LME) Louise Walker**

[ntzlw@exmail.nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:ntzlw@exmail.nottingham.ac.uk)

### **Lead for Practice Learning (Midwifery) –Jo Foster**

[ntzjmf@exmail.nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:ntzjmf@exmail.nottingham.ac.uk)

### **Lead for Practice Learning (Physiotherapy) Asavari Dhodapkar**

[ntzad@exmail.nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:ntzad@exmail.nottingham.ac.uk)

### **Lead for Practice (Sport Rehabilitation) Rachel Royer**

[ntzrmr@exmail.nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:ntzrmr@exmail.nottingham.ac.uk)

## **Formal Statements**

In order for concerns to be investigated fully, students may be asked to write a formal statement, which will be shared with the Lead for Practice (and where appropriate Lead Midwife for Education), Director of Practice learning, and a senior member of the Trust/Practice organisation. If students are unwilling to produce a written statement it is unlikely that concerns can be fully investigated.

Practice organisations should always inform the University if they wish to meet with SHS students regarding concerns. Students are not to attend any formal meetings or submit any statements without university support and representation.

Guidance on writing of statements can be found later in this document.

## **Process flowcharts**

The following pages in this document contain a series of process flowcharts and guidance documents outlining information and the processes that should be undertaken for specific events in relation to concerns regarding practice placements and/or safeguarding.

1. Student concerns regarding Supervision, Support and Assessment.
2. Student concern regarding practice and/or patient safety
3. Process for the removal of students from a placement area
4. Process where a professional conduct or practice safety issue has been raised about a student via School of Health Sciences concerns process.
5. Process for School of Health Sciences to alert other Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)/Approved Educations Institutions (AEIs) of concerns about placement area.
6. Guidance on writing statements
7. Template for Student Statements

## 1. Student concerns regarding supervision, support, and assessment

While on placement when students identify a concern relating to their experience of supervision/ support processes they should where possible, attempt to discuss this with their Practice Assessor/Practice Supervisor/ Clinical Supervisor/Manager in the first instance.

Where this is not possible, they should address their concerns with the placement manager, Academic Assessor and personal tutor as appropriate.

During this process students and Academic Assessors/personal tutors should ensure that they keep an accurate record of the concerns raised and the measures taken to resolve these.



Concerns escalated to practice partner practice learning support team and collaborative action between practice partner and SHS taken to resolve the concern. Student kept informed of progress and given support.



Where concerns are resolved no further action may be required or action may involve additional university link lecturer support for the placement (local action plan)

Where concerns are not resolved they should be escalated to the School of Health Sciences Lead for Practice Learning for each programme regarding further action. Actions will be dependent upon the circumstances but may involve additional Academic Assessor/ university link lecturer support or reallocation of a student to an alternative practice assessor/practice supervisor/ clinical supervisor

## 2. Student concern regarding practice and/or patient safety

While in practice, where a student identifies or raises a concern regarding practice and/or patient safety they should raise this **immediately** with their Practice Assessor/Practice Supervisor/ Clinical Supervisor /Placement Manager.

Where this is not possible, they should address their concerns **immediately** with the practice learning team in the organisation and their Academic Assessor/ULL for the area. During this process students, Academic Assessors and tutors should ensure that they keep an accurate record (statement) of the concerns raised and the measures taken to resolve these. Concerns should be raised formally via electronic concerns form <https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/healthsciences/raise-a-practice-concern/>

This will automatically be electronically forwarded to the Leads for Practice Learning, Directors of Practice Learning, and Lead for Safeguarding within the School of Health Sciences.

Students may also wish to contact their academic assessor/clinical link tutor and university services for additional support and should be signposted to these by the Practice/Safeguarding Lead

<https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/studentservices/healthwelfare/index.aspx>  
<https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/counselling/>



Depending on the nature of the concern either the Lead for Practice Learning/Director of Practice Learning/Lead Midwife for Education (LME) or the Lead for Safeguarding within SHS will be responsible for escalating the concern (and completed documents/statement) to the appropriate practice/safeguarding mechanisms for the relevant Practice partner organisation. Where this involves midwifery students,

Whenever possible support will be given to allow the student to remain in the practice area, depending on the nature of the concern.

Further actions will be dependent on the nature of the concern. They may include:

- i. Removal of a student(s) from the placement area
- ii. Communication with other HEIs/AEIs
- iii. Suspension of a clinical area (with re-audit plan)
- iv. Escalation to PSRB and NHS England Workforce, Training and Education.



In all cases feedback will be made available to the student following investigation.

### 3. Process for the removal of a student(s) from a placement area

Where there is a serious concern about the student learning environment /safety of the student this should be **immediately** raised with the appropriate Practice Learning Managers within the organisation and the University Leads for Practice Learning / Director of Practice Learning/Lead Midwife for Education (LME)



The Practice Learning Team within the organisation and the University Leads for Practice should **immediately** ascertain:

- a) if a jointly agreed action plan can address and resolve the situation. Actions to be undertaken must be time limited and assigned to a named individual. Students may be temporarily advised to refrain from attending shift while discussions occur, and appropriate actions established.
- or**
- b) whether there needs to be immediate removal of students from the placement. This decision is usually made in partnership with the Practice Lead within the organisation. However, if there is unsafe practice or serious misconduct which could result in harm the placement can be terminated or suspended unilaterally by Director of Practice Learning pending joint investigation. Where this concerns midwifery students, Lead Midwife for Education (LME) to be involved in all aspects.



In the event of immediate removal of students:

- i. The Education Lead/Director of Nursing, Midwifery or Chief AHP for the Trust/Organisation to be informed to agree a joint action plan and timeframe for actions.
- ii. The SHS Director of Practice Learning, Director of Quality Assurance, Director of Education and Student Experience to be informed. Where this concerns midwifery students, Lead Midwife for Education (LME) also to be informed.
- iii. The clinical area should be immediately deactivated on the allocations and audit system (with re-audit plan).
- iv. Communication with other HEIs as appropriate.

During this process accurate record of the concerns raised and measures taken to resolve should be maintained on the SHS tracking form.



- i. NHS England Workforce, Training and Education normally notified at Quality Monitoring meetings as required.
- ii. Reported to professional regulators via annual monitoring report.
- iii. Or exceptional reporting when appropriate to both NHS England Workforce, Training and Education & professional regulators

#### 4. Process where a professional conduct or practice safety issue has been raised about a student via School of Health Sciences concerns process

Following receipt of a concern form, the School Lead for Fitness to Practice will, within 10 working days, assess whether formal investigation is required. If a formal investigation is needed, an Investigating Officer is appointed. On the basis of the investigation, which is normally completed within 20 working days of the appointment, the Investigator will make recommendation which could include:

- a) no action is warranted.
- b) a warning should be given and/or appropriate support organised.
- c) the issue is sufficiently serious to be referred to the Fitness to Practise Committee.

The School Lead for Fitness to Practice will, on receipt of the concern and depending on the nature of the concern, liaise with the Practice Learning Lead about the implications for practice and decide on the following:

- a) whether the student can remain in practice during the investigation.
- b) a suspension from practice, pending the outcome of the investigation.

**Further actions to be undertaken:**

Placements team to be notified and 'placement areas will be notified that the student will not be attending.



**Action B**

Following completion of the investigation if a warning is issued and depending on the nature of the allegation, and whether there have been previous expressions of concern the Fitness to Practice Lead will:

- i. notify the Lead for Practice Learning.
- ii. the Lead for Practice Learning will then work with Trust/Organisation Practice Placement Managers to agree an action plan and/or additional university link lecturer support.

**Action C**

students who are returning from a period of interruption or suspension from the course will be offered support from their Academic Assessor and Year Lead to review any competencies they may need refreshing and to ensure they have appropriate support on their next placement while also maintaining confidentiality where appropriate.



- i. NHS England Workforce, Training and Education normally notified via Quality Monitoring meetings, as required.
- ii. Reported to professional regulators via annual monitoring report.
- iii. Or exceptional reporting when appropriate to both NHS England Workforce, Training and Education & professional regulators

## 5. Process for School of Health Sciences to alert other Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)/Approved Educations Institutions (AEIs) of concerns about placement area

Where a concern regarding practice and/or patient safety has been raised this should be **immediately** investigated by the placement manager and university link lecturer for the area.

During this process an accurate record (statement) of the concerns raised and the measures taken to resolve these should be kept.

This record should be forwarded to the Lead for Practice Learning and Lead for Safeguarding within the investigating HEI/AEI.



Depending on the nature of the concern either the Director of Practice Learning or the Lead for Safeguarding will be responsible for escalating the concern to the appropriate practice/safeguarding mechanisms within other HEIs/AEIs. Where this concerns midwifery students Lead Midwife for Education (LME) will also be involved in all aspects.

Action requiring **immediate** escalation to other HEIs/AEIs includes:

- i. Removal of students (or a student) from the placement area
- ii. Suspension of a clinical area (with re-audit plan)



In the event of immediate removal of students and/or suspension of a clinical area:

- i. The Education Lead/Director of Nursing/Midwifery for the Trust/Organisation to be informed to agree a joint action plan and timeframe for actions.
- ii. This joint action plan to be shared with other HEIs/AEIs
- iii. The clinical area should be immediately deactivated on the allocations and audit system (with re-audit plan). All students on placement area, irrespective of HEI/AEI, to be reallocated to alternative active placement areas.



All HEIs/AEIs will alert NHS England Workforce, Training and Education and/or professional regulators:

- i. NHS England Workforce, Training and Education normally notified via Engagement Monitoring
- ii. Reported to professional regulators via annual monitoring report.
- iii. Or exceptional reporting when appropriate to both NHS England Workforce, Training and Education & professional regulators



## 6. Guidance on writing statements

### First steps

please ensure you have sought support from your Academic Assessor, University link lecturer or practice learning leads. You will then be offered a meeting to discuss your concern.

Practice organisations should always inform the University if they wish you meet with you. You should NOT attend any formal meetings or submit any statements without University support and representation.

Before meeting with the person who will be supporting you, it is useful to write some notes about your concern with as much detail as possible.

When writing your statement ensure you Write in the first person (i.e., I, me) and Sign and date the statement.

*Your statement should be a **factual** record of the concern including date, time and location.*

*You should also detail:*

- *who was involved*
- *what you witnessed in terms of practice or conduct*
- *what was said,*
- *The name(s) and role(s) of those involved and/or any witness where possible **Please ensure you anonymise patient names to ensure confidentiality but include full names and job titles of members of staff that you worked with.***
- *how did you initially raise your concern and to whom?*
- *what response did you receive?*

The guidance template below is based on the RCN statement template available alongside the guidance at: <https://www.rcn.org.uk/get-help/rcn-advice/statements>.

A downloadable version of this template is available at:

<https://uniofnottm.sharepoint.com/sites/SoHSSStudentExperience2/SitePages/Placement-Information.aspx>

## 7. Template for Student Statements

Name:

Programme:

Cohort:

Subject of statement: **[for example, concerns relating to XXX]**

This statement is based on **[personal recollection/review of records – or a combination]**.

I was on placement on **[placement name]** from **[start date]** to **[end date/present]**

*Guidance on writing your statement is provided below. please delete this before submission of statement.*

*Provide a factual record of the concern including date, time and location.*

*You should also detail:*

- *who was involved*
- *what you witnessed in terms of practice or conduct*
- *what was said,*
- *The name(s) and role(s) of those involved and/or any witness where possible **Please ensure you anonymise patient names to ensure confidentiality but include full names and job titles of members of staff that you worked with.***
- *how did you initially raise your concern and to whom?*
- *what response did you receive?*

This statement is true to the best of my knowledge and belief, based on the information available to me at this time.

Name:

Signature:

Date:

## Additional Resources

A range of resources and information are available on the School of Health Sciences Practice Learning and Safeguarding Webpages which are available at:

<http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/healthsciences/practice/index.aspx>

<https://uniofnottm.sharepoint.com/sites/SoHSStudentExperience2/SitePages/Placement-Information.aspx>

**Professional regulation information is available at:**

Nursing and Midwifery Council

<http://www.nmc.org.uk/>

<https://www.nmc.org.uk/standards/guidance/raising-concerns-guidance-for-nurses-and-midwives/>

Health and Professions Council

<https://www.hcpc-uk.org/>

<https://www.hcpc-uk.org/concerns/raising-concerns/>