

## Raising concerns about nurses or midwives



**What can I do if I am unhappy about  
the care I have received or witnessed?**

# The Nursing and Midwifery Council

All practising nurses and midwives in the UK are registered with the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC). We regulate nurses and midwives in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. We exist to protect the public.

We do this by setting standards of education, training, conduct and performance so that nurses and midwives can deliver high-quality healthcare throughout their careers. We make sure that nurses and midwives keep their skills and knowledge up to date and uphold our professional standards. We also have clear and transparent processes to investigate and take action against nurses and midwives who fall short of our standards.

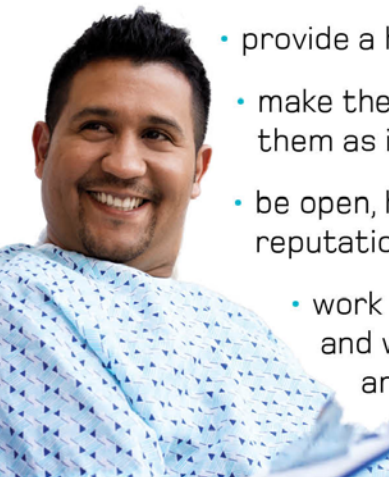
## Raising concerns about nurses or midwives

At some point in your life, you might find yourself in the care of a nurse or midwife and it is important that you can trust the quality of that care. So all qualified nurses and midwives must follow standards and guidance and be fit to practise.

## What standards of care should I expect from a nurse or midwife?

The Code: Standards of conduct, performance and ethics for nurses and midwives, sets out how nurses and midwives should behave in every area of their practice. Nurses and midwives must agree to follow the Code, which states that they must:

- provide a high standard of care at all times
- make the care of people their first concern, treating them as individuals and respecting their dignity
- be open, honest, and act with integrity and uphold the reputation of their profession at all times, and
  - work with others to protect and promote the health and wellbeing of those in their care and their families and carers as well.





## What can I do if I am unhappy about the care or behaviour of a nurse or midwife?

Please tell someone if you are unhappy about the standard of care or treatment you receive or witness, passing on the name of the nurse or midwife involved. Saying what you think about your experiences helps improve services.

Firstly, it is best to raise your concern locally, where you received or saw the care. This could be a hospital, care home or elsewhere. Local managers can handle your concern quicker by using their own procedures. The issue may be resolved without a formal complaint, but a complaint would also be investigated.

## Where can I get more advice on my concern?

Many issues can be dealt with informally. Patients and families sometimes worry that they or a loved one will be badly treated if they raise concerns. However, the Code states that nurses and midwives must respond constructively and not discriminate against patients in any way. There are lots of sources of advice on raising concerns and making complaints.

### In England

Your local Citizens Advice Bureau can offer advice. You can find information online at [www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk) or by calling **08444 111 444**. You can also find information about NHS complaints procedures online at [www.nhs.uk/choiceintheNHS/Rightsandpledges/complaints/Pages/NHScomplaints.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/choiceintheNHS/Rightsandpledges/complaints/Pages/NHScomplaints.aspx). On this website you can also search for your local patient advice and liaison service (PALS) which can help you deal with a less serious complaint.

The NHS Complaints Advocacy website also offers good advice at [www.nhscomplaintsadvocacy.org](http://www.nhscomplaintsadvocacy.org) or

you can call their helpline on **0300 330 5454**. If your concern is about a health or care setting rather than individual nurses or midwives in England, the Care Quality Commission would like to hear from you ([www.cqc.org.uk](http://www.cqc.org.uk)). Healthwatch England is an independent champion for health and social care, with local organisations across England. Visit [www.healthwatch.co.uk](http://www.healthwatch.co.uk) or call **03000 62 3000**.

### In Scotland

Health Rights Information Scotland publishes a useful leaflet, 'Giving feedback or making a complaint about the NHS', which is available at [www.hris.org.uk](http://www.hris.org.uk). Healthcare Improvement Scotland can help you if your concern is about the healthcare setting rather than an individual. Visit [www.healthcareimprovementscotland.org](http://www.healthcareimprovementscotland.org) or call **0131 623 4300**. For more general advice, find your local Citizens Advice Bureau by visiting [www.cas.org.uk](http://www.cas.org.uk) or calling **0808 800 9060**.

### In Wales

Visit [www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk) or call **0844 477 2020** for details of your local citizens advice bureau. Help and advice is available from your local community health council. Visit the NHS Wales website [www.wales.nhs.uk](http://www.wales.nhs.uk) or call **08456 447 814** to find your local branch and for the information leaflet, 'Putting things right'.

Healthcare Inspectorate Wales ([www.hiw.org.uk](http://www.hiw.org.uk)) is the regulator for healthcare settings.

### In Northern Ireland

The government website ([www.nidirect.gov](http://www.nidirect.gov)) has useful information about making a complaint, including contact details for NHS trusts. The Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority regulates healthcare settings in Northern Ireland ([www.rqia.org.uk](http://www.rqia.org.uk)). For general advice, visit [www.citizensadvice.co.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.co.uk) or call **028 9023 6522**.



## **If my concern is not resolved locally, what else can I do?**

Please contact us if your concern has not been dealt with or you think that a nurse or midwife has broken the Code in a serious way and it may affect whether they should be allowed to keep practising. You can make a referral on our website [www.nmc-uk.org](http://www.nmc-uk.org).

You can find examples of matters that could be referred to us at [www.nmc-uk.org/hearings](http://www.nmc-uk.org/hearings).

You will need to agree to share the information you provide with those involved so we can investigate your concern. We will also need the name of the nurse or midwife involved. If you do not want to share your details, this may limit what we can do. But we do want to hear what you have to tell us.

## **What will the NMC do?**

We will decide whether we need to take regulatory action based on your concern. We may then:

- investigate to find out if there is a case to answer and whether this might affect the nurse's or midwife's registration
- hold a hearing or meeting to decide if the nurse's or midwife's fitness to practise is impaired, and
- decide if any action is needed. This can be a caution, restrictions on practice, suspension or removing them from our register.

We can remove or restrict a nurse's or midwife's right to practise while we investigate if we consider that they are an immediate and serious risk to patients.

**For more information, visit  
[www.nmc-uk.org](http://www.nmc-uk.org)  
or call 020 7333 9333**





**Protecting the public  
through regulation**

