

What is triage?

When someone tells us about a concern, we must first decide if we are able to investigate it. We conduct a test that we call triage. There are three steps to the triage test.

1. The concern must relate to someone on our Register.

We can only consider concerns about people who are on our Register.

2. The concerns must be made in writing.

This can be by letter or email. We need the concern in writing so we can be clear on the precise concern and ask the registrant for their response. If someone needs help with this, we can support them to raise their concern with us.

3. We must also make sure that the concerns we are told about relate to one of our five statutory grounds of impairment.

The jargon buster on the right explains more about the five grounds of impairment.

What is happening now?

The concerns we have received will be given a reference number. The reference number will start with the letters FTP followed by 6 numbers. For example: FTP.123456. The triage officer will then check our Register to make sure the person the concerns relate to is on our Register. If the person is not on our Register, we will close the case and take no further action. This is because we can only investigate concerns about people who are on our Register.

If the triage officer is not sure if the person is on our Register, they will need to write to the person who raised the concern and ask them for more information.

What will happen next?

Once the triage officer can find the individual on our Register, they will consider if the concerns relate to one of the five grounds.

If the triage officer can confirm that the matter relates to a person on our Register and a statutory ground, they will send the case to the next team who will start an investigation. The case will be assigned to a named case manager who will write to the participants to introduce themselves and explain the next steps.

How long does triage take?

We aim to complete our triage stage within 10 working days. Sometimes this will be longer if we need to gather more information. The triage officer will keep everyone updated and can be contacted by telephone or email.

Jargon buster

Case manager

After the triage stage, each case has a named case manager who carries out the investigation. Case managers are neutral and do not take anyone's side. They can answer questions about the process and provide updates but cannot provide legal advice.

Complainant

This is the person who told us about the concerns.

Employer

This is the person or organisation that a registrant works for or was working for previously. We sometimes need to write to an employer to help us find a person on our Register.

Participants

The people or organisations involved in a case. The participants may be the complainant, the registrant and/or their employer.

Register

Our Register is a list of people who are allowed to use the titles that we regulate. Our Register is on our [website](#) and is always up to date. You can check if someone is on our Register by looking on our website.

Registrant

A health and care professional who is on our Register.

Self-referral

This is when a registrant tells us about something that might impact on their fitness to practise.

Statutory grounds

We can only investigate concerns that are about one or more of the following five categories, or grounds, of impairment. The grounds are:

- Misconduct – this means that the registrant's behaviour has fallen short of what we expect of them.
- Lack of competence – this means that a registrant has a lack of knowledge or skills to practise safely or effectively.
- Conviction or caution – this means the registrant has been convicted or cautioned for a criminal offence.
- Physical or mental health – this means the registrant has a health condition which impacts their fitness to practise safely or effectively.
- A determination by another health or social care regulatory or licensing body – this means another regulator or body has made a decision against a person on our Register. The regulator or licensing body may be in the UK or another country.

Threshold

The stage of the fitness to practise process, where an investigation is opened and we gather information about the concerns.

Triage

The first stage of our fitness to practise process. During triage we consider whether the concern we have been told about is something we can deal with.

Triage officer

Each case is given to a named triage officer who is the point of contact for everyone involved in the case at this stage. The triage officer decides if the triage test is met.