Learning Objectives

01

Understand why speaking up is important for safety and professionalism.

02

Identify HCPC Standards that guide raising and acting on concerns.

03

Learn effective, constructive approaches to raise concerns.

04

Explore how to adapt approaches based on the situation.

Share Your Experience

Have you ever seen or heard about someone speaking up in a healthcare or professional setting?

Examples

Patient Safety Issues

- Equipment malfunction or improper use, e.g. a broken machine
- Unsafe patient handling practices
- Failure to follow infection control protocols e.g. not washing hands or using PPE.

Colleague Behaviour/ Competence

- Inadequate clinical skills, e.g. struggling with a procedure.
- Unprofessional conduct, e.g. shouting at a patient or colleague.
- Suspected impairment of a colleague, e.g. signs of susbtance abuse or fatigue.

Systemic/ Organisational Problems

- Poor workplace policies, e.g. inadequate training
- Insufficient resources, e.g. lack of sterile supplies in a clinic.
- Chronic understaffing leading to delayed patient care..

Ethical/Legal Concerns

- Breach of patient confidentiality, e.g. discussing cases in public areas.
- Falsification of records or reports, e.g. altering test results.
- Failure to obtain informed consent before a procedure.
- Discriminatory behaviour toward patients or staff.

Why Speaking Up Matters

- Protects patient safety and prevents harm.
- Learning and continuous improvement - avoid repeating historical failings.
- Regulatory duties - comply with HCPC professional standards.
- Supports professionalism and accountability.
- Foster a culture of openness and trust.

153,008

Protecting Patient Safety and Preventing Harm

- 2020: **22.8%** of deaths (153,008) were **treatable**.

- Harm often comes from **systemic failings** - not just "bad apples"

- Complex systems = more points where errors can occur.

- Prevention requires **everyone's input** and openness.

Learning and Continuous Improvement

- Raising and listening to concerns early prevents small issues from becoming major problems.

- Speaking up creates opportunities to learn and improve safety and effectiveness.

- Leaders rely on staff feedback - without it, they are "working in the dark".

- Frontline staff are often best placed to spot risks and solutions.

- Apologising when things go wrong builds trust and is the first step toward learning and repair.

Trust, Accountability, and Professionalism

- Openness and honesty build trust across teams, management, and with patients.

- Speaking up is a "kindness" to colleagues, patients, and organisations - issues addressed early don't escalate.

- Protects the core "why" of healthcare: providing the **best care with dignity**.

- Speaking up reflects personal accountability and professional values.

Learning from History

- Mid-Staffordshire Inquiry (2005-2009): concerns ignored → unnecessary deaths.

- Shows the danger of silence or inaction.

- Speaking up is a safeguard against repeating past failings.

- Raising concerns early = a kindness to colleagues and patients (prevents issues from escalating).

HCPC Standards

The Standards Behind Speaking Up

- Speaking up is not optional - it's part of your professional duty.

- The HCPC Standards of Conduct, Performance, and Ethics set out clear expectations.

- Standard 7 (Raising Concerns) and Standard 8 (Duty of Candour).

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HCPC Standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics

Standard 7: Report Concerns about Safety

- Raise and act on concerns promptly and appropriately about the safety or well-being of service users, children, or vulnerable adults.
- Support and encourage others to raise concerns - never prevent them.
- Service user safety must always come first (**duty overrides loyalty**).
- Raise concerns about colleagues' bullying, harassment or intimidation via proper procedures.

Standard 8: Duty of Candour

- Be open, honest and transparent when something has gone wrong.
- Inform, explain, act to correct mistakes, and apologise.
- Apology is not admission of liability.

Students are expected to report concerns and be open when things go wrong as part of professional conduct.

Why Standards Matter

- Protects patients and colleagues

- Builds public trust in professionals

- Ensure accountability in practice

- Protects registrants from fitness-to-practise risks.

Quiz question 1: Patient Safety

In 2020, what proportion of deaths in the UK were classified as treatable (and could potentially be prevented)?

5%

10.5%

22.8%

50%

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Quiz question 1: The Correct Answer

In 2020, what proportion of deaths in the UK were classified as treatable (and could potentially be prevented)?

- 5%
- 10.5%
- **22.8%**
- 50%

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Quiz question 2: Raising Concerns Early

Why is it important to raise and listen to concerns early?

To shift responsibility onto colleagues.

To prevent small problems from becoming bigger and harder to manage.

To meet yearly audit requirements.

To avoid dealing with patients directly.

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Quiz question 2: The Correct Answer

Why is it important to raise and listen to concerns early?

To shift responsibility onto colleagues.

To prevent small problems from becoming bigger and harder to manage.

To meet yearly audit requirements.

To avoid dealing with patients directly.

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Quiz Question 3: HCPC Standards

According to HCPC standards, what must registrants do if they witness bullying of a patient or colleague?

Ignore it if it doesn't affect patient safety.

Report it through the proper procedures.

Discuss it informally with friends outside of work.

Wait until someone more senior raises it.

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Quiz Question 3 : The Correct Answer

According to HCPC standards, what must registrants do if they witness bullying of a patient or colleague?

Ignore it if it doesn't affect patient safety.

Report it through the proper procedures.

Discuss it informally with friends outside of work.

Wait until someone more senior raises it.

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Key Messages So Far

Patient Safety First

Avoidable harm is common, and prevention depends on openness and shared responsibility.

Raise Concerns Early

Small problems escalate if ignored; staff feedback is essential for improvement.

Professional Duty

HCPC Standards require registrants to act on concerns, put safety before loyalties, and be open when things go wrong.

Trust and Accountability

Honesty builds stronger teams, supports patients, and upholds the integrity of healthcare.

Constructive and Effective Approaches

Communicating Effectively

- Reflect first: what happened and why is it concerning?

- Choose the right time and place to raise concerns

- Use open, respectful language, e.g. "I noticed…", "Can you help me understand….?"

- Listen actively to understand the other perspective.

Using the Right Channels

- Start small: individual or line manager

- Escalate if unresolved: team, senior, or Freedom to Speak Up Guardian

- If still unresolved: regulators (HCPC, CQC) or independent advice

Always document actions and follow-up!

Overcoming Psychological Barriers

- Common fears: conflict, being judged, career impact, "nothing will change".

- Hierarchy and power dynamics can silence staff.

- Speaking up = professional responsibility, not personal confrontation.

- A culture of blame discourages openness - shifting to a learning culture is essential.

- **Seek support for yourself** - raising concerns can be stressful, so use available psychology support, clear guidance, and peer networks.

Developing Effective Approaches

01

Be clear and factual

Stick to observations, **avoid assumptions.**

02

Choose the right channel

Informal discussion, formal report, or whistleblowing.

03

Be constructive

Focus on solutions, **not blame.**

04

Practice active listening

Understanding others' perspectives when raising concerns.

Speaking Up in Different Situations

Types of Situations You Might Encounter

01

Urgent Risk
Patient at immediate risk of serious harm (e.g. unsafe care or equipment use).

02

Non-Urgent/Early Concerns
Small issues or behaviours that could escalate if not addressed (e.g. poor hand hygiene).

03

Senior Staff
Concerns involving colleagues in positions of authority or sensitive interpersonal matters.

04

Sensitive/Complex Issues
Problems with service management, staffing, policies, or repeated unsafe practices.

Adapting to Different Situations

Urgent Situations

- Act quickly, escalate to a supervisor or manager immediately.
- Safety comes before loyalty to colleagues or teams.

Non-urgent concerns

- Start with informal conversations: peer-to-peer or line manager.
- Early intervention prevents escalation.
- Use curiosity and compassion: "I noticed....", "What happened?"

Concerns about Seniors

- Raise via team, department or follow escalation policies, involve HR or regulators if needed or when direct conversation isn't safe.
- Seek guidance from Freedom to Speak Up Guardians (NHS).

Sensitive/Complex issues

- Genetic/confidentiality dilemmas: balance privacy vs. harm prevention.
- Systemic issues: report to regulators or local councils.
- Whistleblowing: report serious wrongdoing; protected by law.

Key Principles Across All Situations

- **Prioritise safety**: patient and colleague safety always comes first.

- **Act early and follow up**: don't wait for problems to escalate; escalate concerns if unresolved.

- **Communication matters**: be clear, compassionate, and respectful.

- **Support and psychological safety**: seek guidance, peer support and organisational resources.

- **Learning culture**: focus on improvement, not blame.

Quiz Question 4 : Constructive and Effective Approaches

Which of the following best describes a constructive approach when raising a concern in healthcare?

Confronting a colleague angrily to make them understand their mistake.

Ignoring small issues until they become serious to avoid conflict.

Preparing what to say, using clear observations, asking open questions, and listening actively.

Reporting every concern immediately to senior management without assessing the situation.

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Quiz Question 4 : The Correct Answer

Which of the following best describes a constructive approach when raising a concern in healthcare?

Confronting a colleague angrily to make them understand their mistake.

Ignoring small issues until they become serious to avoid conflict.

Preparing what to say, using clear observations, asking open questions, and listening actively.

Reporting every concern immediately to senior management without assessing the situation.

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Quiz Question 5 : Urgent vs Non-Urgent Situations

A patient is at immediate risk of serious harm due to faulty equipment. What is the most appropriate first action?

Report the issue at the end of your shift.

Ask a colleague to deal with it while you continue your work.

Document it for future reference without taking action.

Take immediate action to make the situation safe and then raise the concern.

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Quiz Question 5 : The Correct Answer

A patient is at immediate risk of serious harm due to faulty equipment. What is the most appropriate first action?

Report the issue at the end of your shift.

Ask a colleague to deal with it while you continue your work.

Document it for future reference without taking action.

Take immediate action to make the situation safe and then raise the concern.

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Quiz Question 6 : Sensitive or Complex Situations

If you notice a senior colleague consistently bullying a junior staff member, what is the best approach?

Ignore it - it's not your responsibility.

Address it only if it affects you personally.

Raise the concern via proper organisational channels, such as a manager or Freedom to Speak Up Guardian.

Discuss it publicly with other colleagues.

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Quiz Question 6 : The Correct Answer

If you notice a senior colleague consistently bullying a junior staff member, what is the best approach?

Ignore it - it's not your responsibility.

Address it only if it affects you personally.

Raise the concern via proper organisational channels, such as a manager or Freedom to Speak Up Guardian.

Discuss it publicly with other colleagues.
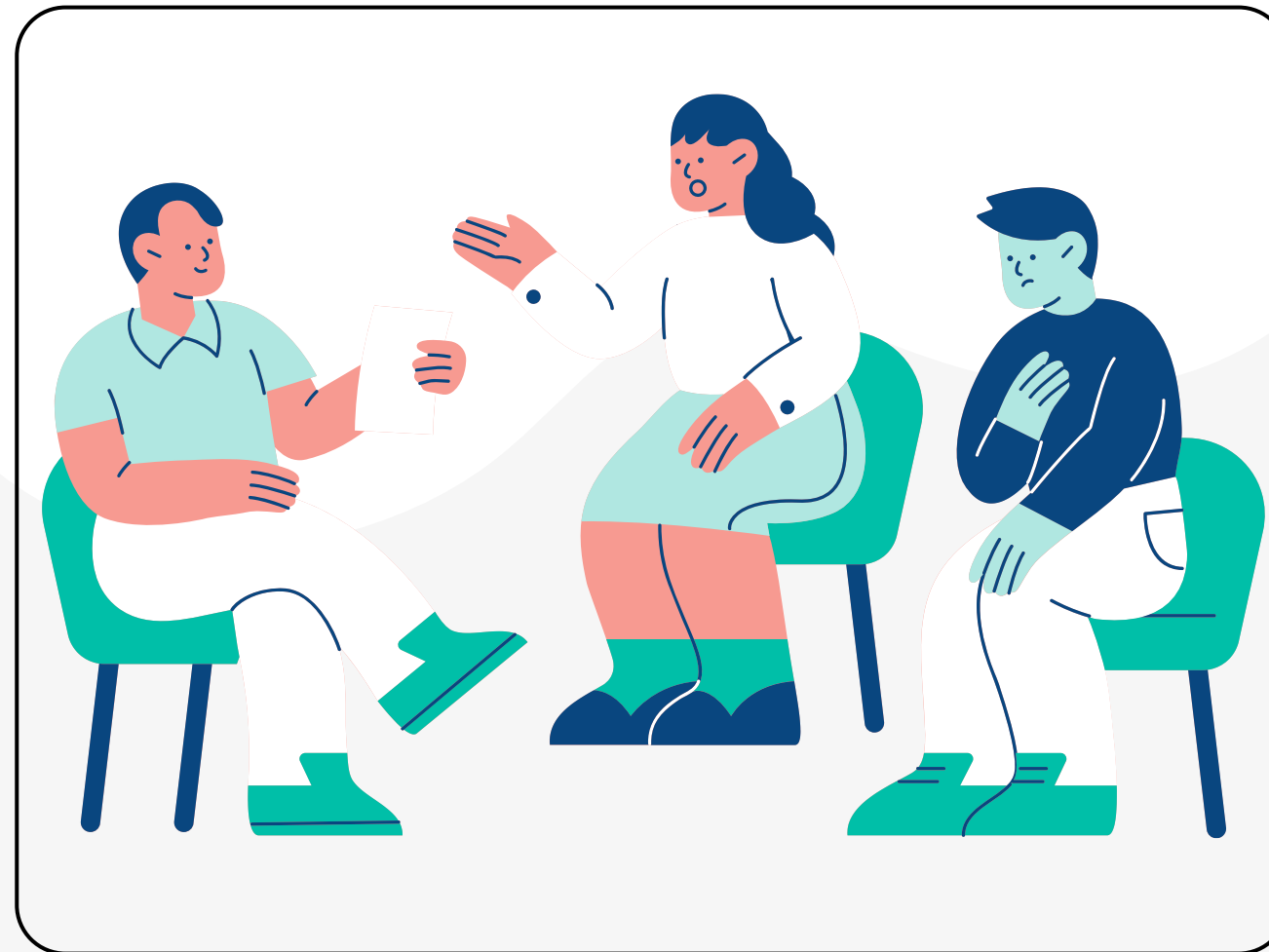
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Key Takeaways: Speaking Up & Raising Concerns

Why it matters

Protects patients, prevents harm, and maintains trust in healthcare.

HCPC Standards

You have a duty to act, raise concerns promptly, and put safety first.

Constructive Approaches

Use compassion, clarity, and timely action - speaking up is a kindness.

Different Situations

Tailor your response depending on urgency, sensitivity, or scale - but **always prioritise safety.**

Speaking up is central to professionalism, accountability, and delivering safe, high-quality care.