

Freedom to Speak Up Procedure

Approved by:	Effective date:	Next review:
Faculty Executive Board	1 September 2024	1 March 2025

Procedure

This procedure is written to help and support students to raise a matter of concern. It has been written to reflect the Professional Statutory and Regulatory Bodies advice on raising concerns, Freedom to Speak Up policy for the NHS (2022) and NHSE guidance on escalating quality concerns (2023).

Who needs to know about the procedure

Heads of School; Associate Heads of School and Course Directors

- Teaching Staff
- Managers, supervisors and educators within practice placement
- Students

Contacts

The University Quality and Compliance team are responsible for:

- Providing advice and assistance
- Providing guidance and templates
- Provision of training

The team can be contacted by emailing at placemenstquality@canterbury.ac.uk

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Introduction

This procedure is **written for students** to help and support them with the process for raising a matter of concern. In all investigations there will be a clear and transparent process in place from initial concern to resolution. This procedure has been written to reflect the Professional Statutory and Regulatory Bodies advice on raising concerns, Freedom to Speak Up policy for the NHS (2022)¹ and NHSE guidance on escalating quality concerns (2023).

Should a member of staff have a concern about a student, related to knowledge and skills, this should be dealt with directly with the student through a tripartite meeting together with the Academic Assessor (AA) and the Practice Assessor (PA) or the Practice Educator (PE) and the Placement lead (PL), the student should be offered support from the Personal Academic Tutor (PAT). Concerns related to poor professional behaviours or health and fitness should be addressed through the *Low Level Concerns, Fitness to Study and Fitness to Practise Policy and Procedures*.

Please note that Canterbury Christ Church University (CCCU) Guidance to Students on Whistleblowing² is a policy that refers to malpractice within the universities and not to 'whistleblowing' or speaking up as the phrase is commonly understood within health and social care placements.

¹ <https://www.hee.nhs.uk/sites/default/files/Education%20Quality%20Escalating%20Quality%20Concerns.pdf>

² <https://www.canterbury.ac.uk/asset-library/policy-zone/Whistleblowing-Student-Guidance.pdf>

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Aim for informal resolution

- It can sometimes be hard to know whether you should speak up but please try to explore this as your first option in your practice placement. As a student, you should initially raise your concerns with your Practice Supervisor (PS), PA, AA, PE, PL, Placement Facilitator or the ward manager. They will be able to support and advise you.
- Whilst it is preferable that concerns are raised at the time, it is recognised that students are evolving practitioners who may need support to reflect and consider a situation before challenging it, so they may seek out university support before approaching practice staff.
- You may be required to put your concerns into writing so **please seek support from your AA, PL or PAT before writing any type of statement or report.**

Remember to...

- Be factual – give an accurate report of the issue and give the date and time that it occurred.
- Stay neutral – you are likely to be upset about the issue, so it is important to clearly state the concerns that you have and what impact or possible impact there is to the safety of you, your patients or colleagues
- Keep a record – include key details of what happened, who was involved, when and where it happened.
- Seek support – it takes courage to speak up and you may be upset at having to do so. Your PAT can also offer support and you can seek further support from Student Health and Wellbeing³.

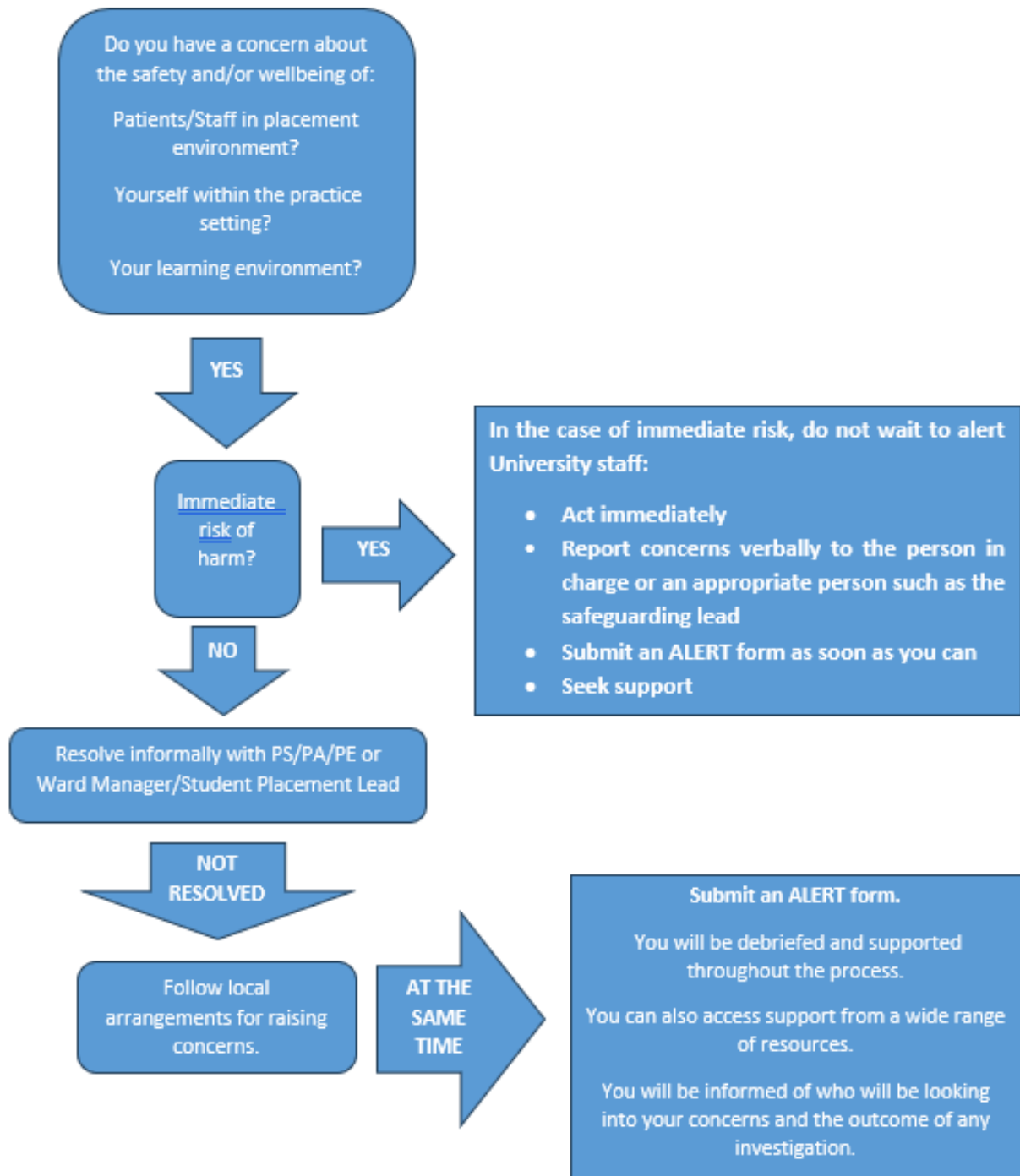
You should submit an ALERT form (see attached) if your concern has not been resolved informally.

If you feel unable to raise your concern or feel that your concern has not been acted upon, seek support from your AA, PL or PAT to complete an ALERT. This should be completed as soon as possible after the event. Remember to seek support from Student Health and Wellbeing

³ <https://www.canterbury.ac.uk/our-students/campaigns/student-wellbeing-services>

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Flow chart for speaking up within practice environments



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What happens next/further investigation

When you speak up, you should expect to:

- Be thanked for doing so
- Feel that you are being treated fairly
- Feel that you are being listened to and your concerns are being taken seriously
- CCCU will send your ALERT Form to relevant parties for investigation and for a response to be given
- You will be kept informed of how long we expect the investigation to take and should there be any delays to this process.

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Outcome of investigation

Wherever possible, we will share the full investigation report with you in a manner which meets the expectations of all parties involved. Where recommendations are identified, CCCU will work with the organisation to make the necessary changes and keep you informed of this.

We encourage you to maintain links with your PAT and AA or PL during this time and for as long as they are of benefit to you.

If you feel that you have not been listened to or that the matter has not been resolved, you can speak to:

- The Freedom to Speak Up Guardian within the organisation
- The Guardian Service
- Speakup Direct
- NHS England (NHSE)⁴
- Relevant professional body for matters around conduct of a member of staff
- Care Quality Commission (CQC) for quality and safety concerns about the services it regulates

⁴ <https://www.hee.nhs.uk/sites/default/files/documents/Raising%20concerns%20contacts.pdf>

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External reporting and reviewing the process

- Annual reporting and review of handling of process between organisation & university and agreement of actions required via Operation Quality Contract Review Meetings (OCQRM).
- Termly monitoring of all concerns raised through The Faculty Work Based Learning Sub-committee.
- Sharing with NHSE and Professional Statutory and Regulatory Bodies as appropriate.

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References and further resources

Health & Care Professionals Council. Fitness to Practice Raising Concerns. Available at: <https://www.hcpc-uk.org/concerns/raising-concerns/>

NHS England (2023) Reporting and/or Escalating Education Quality Concerns Available at <https://www.hee.nhs.uk/sites/default/files/Education%20Quality%20Escalating%20Quality%20Concerns.pdf>

NHS England Freedom to Speak Up national policy, guidance and planning tool. Available at: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/freedom-to-speak-up/developing-freedom-to-speak-up-arrangements-in-the-nhs/>

Nursing and Midwifery Council, Raising concerns: Guidance for Nurses Midwives and Nursing Associates. Available at <https://www.nmc.org.uk/standards/guidance/raising-concerns-guidance-for-nurses-and-midwives/>

Royal College of Nurses, Raising Concerns. Available at <https://www.rcn.org.uk/employment-and-pay/raising-concerns>

Social Work England. Raise Concerns about a Social Worker. Available at: <https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/concerns/raise-a-concern/>

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Document information

	Description of document information
Document title	Freedom to Speak Up Procedure
Department owner	Faculty of Medicine, Health and Social Care
Document category	<p>Academic - Documents directly affecting research, assessment or teaching within the University</p> <p>Administrative practice - Documents of an administrative or operational nature</p> <p>Equality and diversity - Documents relating to the promotion of equality and diversity</p> <p>Ethics and compliance - Documents concerning appropriate conduct or compliance with legal or regulatory requirements</p> <p>Health, safety and environmental - Documents relating to the health, security and safety of staff, students and visitors</p> <p>Students - documents directly affecting student life at the University</p>
Document owner	Pro Vice Chancellor and Dean of Faculty of Medicine, Health and Social Care
Document manager	Faculty Director for Quality and Compliance
Related University policies	Whistleblowing Policy
Related University procedures	Student Guidance on the University's Whistleblowing ('Speak Up') Procedure
Approved by	Faculty Executive Board
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Web address	