

Your complaint and the General Medical Council

We understand that you are likely to be disappointed by our decision not to investigate your complaint further. We hope that this factsheet will help you understand why we have made that decision. The factsheet also provides information about other organisations that may be able to help you.

What is the role of the General Medical Council?

We are responsible for maintaining the register of doctors able to practise medicine in the UK. Our fitness to practise powers focus on the most serious concerns that may call into a question a doctor's fitness to practise and suitability to retain unrestricted registration as a doctor.

Where a doctor's fitness to practice is found to be impaired, we can suspend or remove a doctor from the medical register or place conditions on the doctor's registration. This might be because the doctor poses a risk to patients or because the doctor's conduct is likely to undermine confidence in the profession. This will normally arise because of a serious or persistent breach of the standards set in our guidance to doctors *Good Medical Practice*. We review all new complaints to assess whether they raise issues which we need to investigate further.

What are the types of complaint the GMC cannot help with?

We cannot do any of the following:

- Arrange for an apology from the doctor or healthcare provider
- Provide an explanation of what happened
- Order a doctor to provide the treatment you want
- Help you with a claim for compensation.

If you are seeking any of the above you should normally complain through local complaints procedures.

Why has the GMC decided not to consider my complaint further?

We are not a general complaints body and most complaints about doctors are best handled locally, by doctors' employers. We will only investigate those cases which we think may be so serious that we may need to take action to stop a doctor from practising or to restrict their practice in some way. We look at all new complaints to assess whether the GMC should investigate the concerns further. Our letter to you should set out the reasons for our decision.

How was the decision taken?

All new complaints are reviewed by an Assistant Registrar who is an experienced member of our investigation team. We have very detailed guidance to help them make their decisions.

What if I am not happy with the decision?

We hope that this factsheet will help you to understand why we have decided not to investigate your complaint further. We cannot normally reconsider complaints unless you think we have misunderstood your complaint.

What if I am not happy with the way the GMC has handled my complaint?

If you are not happy with the way we have handled your complaint, please discuss the problem with the person who handled your complaint. You may email customerservicemanager@gmc-uk.org if you are still unhappy.

Where else can I go for help with my complaint?

There are many organisations that can help patients and others who have concerns about an aspect of their healthcare. England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland all have their own support organisations. The organisations that may be able to help you are shown on our website.

Alternatively, your local GP Practice or hospital you attended or your local Citizens Advice Bureau will be able to give you details of the organisations that can help you.

Further information

Our website provides much more detailed information about our role and the kinds of complaints we can consider. It also has an online, interactive guide called *Patients' Help*, which provides details of where you can go for help and advice about your complaint which can be found at www.gmc-uk.org/concerns.