



Royal College
of Nursing

SPEAKING OUT



**Whistleblowing
hotline**

Raising concerns

The RCN is here to help you give the best care you can, to help you protect patients and to protect you if you raise concerns over patient care.

As an RCN member, if you feel no action has been taken or you are at risk of victimisation, the RCN can help – and keep you anonymous.

If you have concerns over serious risks to patients call **0345 772 6300** - we want to know.

How to report

Always remember:

- no one can tell you what not to report or what is a valid concern
- no one can reassure you to 'leave it with them'
- be as comprehensive as possible to ensure the full risk is understood and action can be prioritised accordingly.

Speak to your line manager

You should notify your manager over any concerns you have about patient care.

Patient records

It is important to note if patient care needs have not been met.

Incident report forms

Employers should have a method for reporting incidents or near misses.

You should have access to the form and be free to describe the incident/near miss as you see fit.

Clinical meetings

Nursing teams discuss clinical care, nursing standards and nursing audit when they meet. If you have a concern you can have it added to your meeting agenda. You can also ensure that when they are discussed a note is recorded of the discussion along with agreed outcomes and who is to be responsible for taking the issue further.

Discuss with your RCN representative

Your steward, health and safety or learning representative can raise issues about patient care and safety (for patients or staff) with employers. You can also ask your RCN representative to raise the issue with your local RCN officer in your region or country.

Blowing the whistle

You must access your local whistleblowing policy first. Public interest disclosure legislation protects you from victimisation and dismissal, but your concerns must be genuine and must have been raised (unless you have very good reason not to) internally or with a specified 'prescribed person'.

NHS Employees

Agenda for Change (Section 21) confirms that staff have a right and a duty to raise concerns in the public interest.

Health and social care inspectorates

There are health and social care inspectorates across the UK. Their web sites provide helpful information on how they work and how they investigate complaints or concerns.

- England – www.cqc.org.uk
- Northern Ireland – www.rqia.org.uk
- Scotland – www.healthcareimprovementscotland.org and www.scswis.com
- Wales – **health:** www.hiw.org.uk and **social care:** <http://wales.gov.uk/cssiwsuite/newcssiw>

If you are a registered nurse

The Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) Code applies to all registered nurses no matter what their position is - if you have concerns over the delivery of care you must:

- act without delay if you believe that you or a colleague or anyone else may be putting someone at risk
- inform someone in authority if you experience problems that prevent you working within this code or other nationally agreed standards
- report your concerns in writing if problems in the environment of care are putting people at risk.

Read the full NMC Code and the publication *Raising and escalating Concerns. Guidance for nurses and midwives* at www.nmc-uk.org

For more information about raising concerns and how the RCN can support safety and quality in health visit:

www.rcn.org.uk

For help and advice call:

0345 772 6300

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