

Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) Referral Guidance

How to tell us your concerns about a social
work student

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This guidance sets out when higher educational institutions (HEIs) should refer students to us. We set thresholds about the referrals we accept to make sure we focus our resources on cases which could involve risks to the safety of people who use services or which could damage the public's confidence in the social service profession.

1. The role of the Scottish Social Services Council

We are the regulator for the social work, social care and children and young people workforce in Scotland.

Our work means the people of Scotland can count on social work, social care and children and young people services being provided by a trusted, skilled and confident workforce.

We protect the public by registering social workers, social care and children and young people workers, setting standards for their practice, conduct, training and education and by supporting their professional development. Where people fall below the standards of practice and conduct we can investigate and take action.

HEIs also play an important role in protecting the public by having robust admission processes and by taking appropriate action when a social work student falls short of the expected standards.

2. What is fitness to practise?

A student is fit to practise if they meet the standards of character, conduct and competence to do their role safely and effectively. The fitness to practise process considers if a student's fitness to practise is currently impaired. A student's fitness to practise may be impaired due to their conduct, professional practice or health.

Our process is not about resolving general complaints or punishing students for past mistakes.

We expect social work students to meet the standards set out in the SSSC Codes of Practice for Social Service Workers and Employers (the Codes).

3. Why HEIs need to tell us about fitness to practise concerns?

We approve courses for people who wish to become social workers under the SSSC's Rules for Social Work Training 2003. To meet these Rules and the course approval criteria HEIs must:

- tell us about any matter that may call into question a student's suitability for registration with the SSSC
 - ☐ tell the student that a report has been made to us
 - ☐ cooperate with our investigations and hearings
 - ☐ respond appropriately to our findings and decisions and cooperate with any action we take.

4. What HEIs must tell us about registered social work students and when

All social work students must register with the SSSC at the beginning of their course. HEIs must tell us about any concerns that a student's fitness to practise may be currently impaired.

We need to know about registered social work students:

- ☐ when their place on the course has been terminated on the grounds of misconduct or capability due to professional practice or health
- ☐ if a student withdraws from a social work programme during an HEI fitness to practise or disciplinary investigation
- ☐ if a student is suspended from a social work programme pending the outcome of an HEI fitness to practise or disciplinary investigation
- ☐ the student has been charged or convicted of an offence
- ☐ anything you would refer to Disclosure Scotland
- ☐ in any other circumstances where you are concerned that the behaviour or actions of a student **raises a serious concern** about their fitness to practise (see page 6 for our thresholds).

When you should tell us

Immediately if the:

- ☐ behaviour is serious (see page 6)
- ☐ student is suspended
- ☐ student withdraws and termination was likely outcome
- ☐ student is charged with a criminal offence.

Otherwise, let us know at the end of the disciplinary/ performance/ capability process.

Regulatory action may be required if the concern relates to the following.

1. Misconduct – behaviour towards service users, colleagues or other people which is serious and is:
 - physically, sexually, emotionally or financially abusive
 - reckless or negligent, and likely to cause harm
 - an improper relationship or breach of boundaries
 - dishonest or lacks integrity
 - discriminatory
 - a breach of confidentiality.
2. Deficient professional practice – serious and/or persistent failure to carry out the duties of their role competently and meet the Codes of Practice.
3. Health which is not being managed and puts people who use services at risk of harm.
4. Behaviour that is fundamentally incompatible with registration, such as serious criminal acts, or bringing the profession into disrepute.

If you have taken action which is less than suspension or termination of the students place on the course, please do take time to consider if the concerns of a student raise a serious concern about their fitness to practise (as listed above). A pattern of behaviour may be an indicator of seriousness.

Remember: if the allegations against the student are serious and meet our thresholds, you **must** still make a referral to us even if you have undertaken an investigation and found no case to answer. You should make a referral to us regardless of any evidence that you may have to suggest the behaviour did not occur.

Matters you should not refer to us

You do not need to refer HEI investigations and disciplinary matters about the conduct, professional practice or health of students that result in less serious outcomes, unless the conduct/professional practice/health concerns meet **our** thresholds.

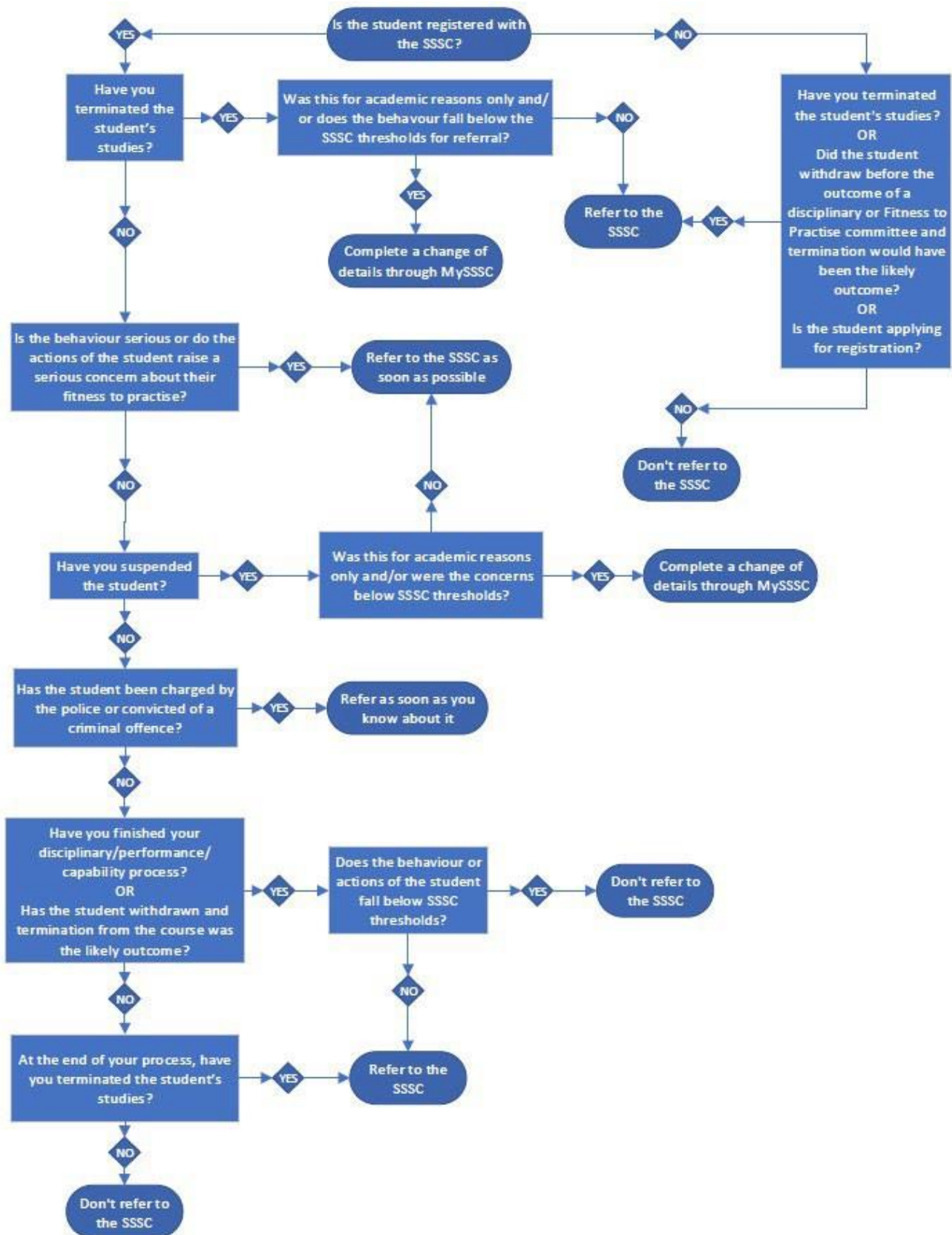
If you believe the concerns **do not** meet **our** thresholds, but you have taken any of the actions listed on page 5, please update the student's record on MySSSC. You can do this by selecting the student, then selecting View and Amend details in the registrant's section (change of details). When doing this, please also provide a short but detailed summary of why you think the behaviour does not meet our thresholds.

If you are not able to access MySSSC for a student, please email us at ftp@sssc.uk.com providing their name, date of birth and registration number and a short but detailed summary of why you think the behaviour did not meet our thresholds.

If in doubt about whether you should refer a student, please check with us.

- **Email:** We have a dedicated email you can use to contact us for advice on whether to refer a student. This is managed by experienced advisers who will be happy to offer referral advice on a case-by-case basis. You can email us at: employerlink@sssc.uk.com
- **Phone:** We also have a dedicated phone line for employers and HEIs looking for referral advice. You can phone 0345 60 30 891, selecting the option for 'Fitness to Practise' and then 'Employer Advice Line'.

5. HEI referral flow chart



The information in this flow chart is outlined within the body of this referral



guidance.

6. Referral categories

Some cases are complex and it will not always be clear if the matter is about conduct, professional practice, or health, or a combination of these.

If there is a combination of concerns that may impair a student's current fitness to practise, we will consider **each area of concern** individually and then decide whether the concerns individually or collectively (or both) meet our thresholds and, in turn, which of these concerns would impair the student's fitness to practise. Where one allegation or one part of the concern meets our thresholds, but you are unsure about the other concerns, you should refer **all** concerns so we can assess the allegations both individually and collectively.

If you need help deciding if a behaviour or concern meets our thresholds and whether you should make a referral to fitness to practise, please contact us on the email address or phone number listed on page 7.

Conduct

Conduct is about how a student has behaved.

Our definition of Misconduct is 'behaviour (whether by act or omission) which does not meet the standards set out in the Codes and includes a breach of a condition agreed with or imposed by a regulatory body and behaviour which has led to a criminal sanction.'

We explain what and when to refer to us in [Section 4](#).

You will find examples of conduct referrals in the [Appendix](#).

Professional practice

Fitness to practise may be impaired due to a student's professional practice. This is about the student's competence. Professional practice is about how a student carries out their role, whereas conduct is about their behaviour.

We appreciate that some students learn at a different rate and that capability issues may be harder to recognise during the learning process. We would expect you to have completed your internal capability processes and procedures before making a referral to us.

For example, you may have:

- tried to identify a possible cause for the practice concern
- addressed any problems formally with the student
- agreed targets to address the issues
- identified any training and support needs
- given the student adequate training, support and opportunity to help them reach a satisfactory standard
- reviewed progress against agreed areas for improvement.

You will find examples of professional practice referrals in the [Appendix](#).

It might not be clear whether the referral is about conduct or professional practice. We will decide this at the end of the case.

If you need any support deciding if a behaviour meets our thresholds and whether you should make a referral to fitness to practise, please contact us at the email address or phone number listed on page 7.

Health

General information

Many people living with a health condition can practise safely and effectively with or without adjustments.

We would expect students to manage health conditions by:

- being open and honest with their HEI about their condition and any limitations they may have
- complying with any recommended steps to manage the condition.

When health might be an impairment

A student's fitness to practise may be impaired if they have a health condition (which includes a dependency on drugs or alcohol) which has an adverse effect on their ability to do their role safely and effectively. For example, where the student's reasoned decision making, thinking and/or behaviour are affected or where there is a physical symptom that means they cannot carry out their role safely and effectively.

Students who are signed off

A student may be signed off as 'unfit' due to ill health but this does not necessarily mean their fitness to practice is impaired. Cases of ill health are likely to be better managed with the support of an HEI to safely reduce any risk to people who use services and may not require regulatory investigation.



This might include where the student:

- has shown good insight into the extent and effect of their condition
- is taking appropriate steps to access treatment and is following advice from the health professionals treating them
- is receiving support from occupational health or counselling services through the university
- is managing his or her practice appropriately, for example by taking sick leave or postponing a practice learning placement opportunity.

HEIs remain responsible for meeting their duty of care to their student and people who use services. You should not refer to us until you have concluded your normal capability procedures, unless you believe the student presents an immediate risk, including to themselves.

Termination of course due to health

There will be occasions when you have concluded your normal procedures and there are no reasonable adjustments that can be made to support the student to remain on the course, and/or the student's health condition is so serious they cannot continue the course.

If the student has shown good insight into the extent and impact of their health condition and they do not intend to return to the course or to work in a registerable role until they are well enough to do so, a fitness to practise referral is not required. You should however tell us by updating the student's record on MySSSC. Please be clear there are no current fitness to practise concerns. If you are not able to access MySSSC for the student, please email us at ftp@sssc.uk.com telling us the date the student stopped attending, confirm they are not working/attending class due to their health and that there are no current fitness to practise concerns.

Examples

Here are some examples of health conditions that **might** mean fitness to practise is impaired (this is not a complete list):

- periods of unconsciousness or blackouts
- serious memory loss
- inability to control anger or other emotions
- reduced ability to make decisions
- inability to carry out certain physical tasks
- lack of self-awareness and impact of behaviour on others
- lack of concentration
- alcohol and/or drug dependency
- a serious communicable disease.

Long term **untreated** (or unsuccessfully treated) or **unacknowledged** physical and mental health conditions will be of particular concern if there is a risk to public protection.

Short term illnesses and conditions related to pregnancy should be managed by the HEI and should not usually be referred to us.

We expect an HEI to have evidence or reasons for a referral, however we understand you may not have access to a diagnosis. In this situation you should still refer to us. We also understand an HEI can only tell us what they know based on the information disclosed to them by the student. See section 9 for guidance about sharing health information.

What about students whose health fluctuates?

There may be situations where a student goes through periods of ill health when they cannot practise safely and then is well again. This may happen when a person is living with a mental health condition. If the student acknowledges the situation, you are managing it together and there is no public protection concern there is no need to refer it to us.

You will find examples of health referrals in the [Appendix](#).

7. How do I make a referral?

We expect HEIs to use the referral form on our website:

<https://www.sssc.uk.com/knowledgebase/article/KA-02110/en-us>

If you have any problems using this form, please contact our experienced Fitness to Practise Assistants at ftp@sssc.uk.com

When to use MySSSC to update a student's record

There may be matters you have dealt with that led to you sanctioning a student, however they do not meet the SSSC's thresholds for investigation.

In these circumstances, HEIs can inform us of any changes by updating the student's record on MySSSC. Based on the information you provide, we will decide whether we need further information and will contact you if we do.

If you are not sure whether something meets our thresholds, or you are unsure whether to complete a referral form or update the student's record on MySSSC, please contact us at the email address or phone number on page 7.

8. What information do we need?

We only need a formal Fitness to Practise referral for allegations that meet **our** thresholds. For all other matters you need to tell us about, you can do it on the student's record on MySSSC.

When you have suspended a student

We know at this stage you may not have started a full internal investigation and you may believe you have no paperwork you can send us. However, you are likely to have some very useful information you can share which will help us to make an initial screening decision.

The more information you can send us at this early stage the more likely we will be able to make a defensible and accurate screening decision, and the less likely we will need to come back to you repeatedly for more information.

We ask that you provide as much information as you can at this stage, which may include:

- an incident or accident report
- initial statement or comments from a witness and or an individual who uses services
- initial comments made by the student, if available
- a copy of a complaint
- names and contact details of any witnesses
- any information that would help us with our investigation, for example if there is any police involvement; if there is any information to suggest at this stage that the behaviour did not happen; if there have been any previous concerns, etc.

Remember if the allegations against the student are serious and meet our thresholds, you **must** still make a referral to us even if you have undertaken an investigation and found no case to answer. You should make a referral to us regardless of any evidence you may have to suggest the behaviour did not occur.

When you have terminated a student's course place on the grounds of misconduct or capability, or the student withdraws from the course during an HEI fitness to practise or disciplinary investigation

We are likely to ask for the information you considered at a disciplinary or fitness to practise hearing, including:

- notes of relevant meetings, investigation report and outcome of the disciplinary hearing
- statements taken throughout your investigation
- incident or accident reports
- any related policies and procedures
- any relevant practice placement report
- training record
- standards of practice where capability and competency has been considered
- any relevant medical report
- if you have taken any action previously, either informally or formally against the student, please include this as we may consider this as part of our decision making and investigation.

The legal requirement to provide us with information is set out at s57B of the Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001 which is summarised in section 3.

Remember if the allegations against the student are serious and meet our thresholds, you **must** still make a referral to us even if you have undertaken an investigation and found no case to answer. You should make a referral to us regardless of any evidence you may have to suggest the behaviour did not occur.

How much information to share

When completing the referral, please provide as much detail as you can about the student's alleged behaviour/deficient professional practice/health. For us to assess the behaviour against our thresholds, we need to understand what the specific concerns are about the student.

The more information you can give us at referral stage, the less likely we will need to come back to you for further information.

Details of your concerns

Please be specific about your concerns. The events that lead to a referral are often long and complex. It helps us to understand your concerns if you set out what has happened from the beginning and as much detail as possible. Please include dates where you know them.

A few tips to make the allegations clear.

- Start at the beginning to help us understand who everyone you mention is and how they're involved.
- If you're concerned about something a student has said, quote the exact words used rather than saying things like 'swore at me' or 'used sexist language'.
- If you use words like 'inappropriate', consider replacing them with something more specific. What was the tone/language/picture/decision and why was it inappropriate?
- If the allegation is of dishonesty, tell us what was said, what the truth was and how the student knew what they said was untrue. If it is in a document, please say which document and on what page of that document.
- Think about whether you have given us the who, what, where, when, why and how of the allegation, or at least as many of those things as possible.

Documents

You need to decide what documents to share, considering the relevant data protection legislation. We need enough information to understand if a student's fitness to practise may be currently impaired. This would likely include the issue, the impact on their work and their current practice placement.

If you have concerns about sharing information and are considering redacting any information in documents before making the referral please contact us, as we may ask for the information to be unredacted for us to be able to investigate fully. We know you may wish to remove the names of people who use services in the information you give us. This can make it more difficult to understand the behaviour and decide if there is enough evidence to show a student's fitness to practise is impaired. If you choose to redact some information, do not edit more than is necessary and use initials where possible. We often redact information including personal details of vulnerable people, personal details of people not connected to the allegations, and any information about issues that are not relevant to the fitness to practise concern before we send papers to the student or the Fitness to Practise Panel.

Be assured we have a public duty to manage confidential information correctly and will always ensure anything shared publicly will be managed safely in accordance with our procedures and relevant data protection legislation.

It is helpful if you tell us about health issues that may affect how and when we contact the student, for example if they are suffering from an acute mental or physical health condition. If you have the student's consent you may be able to release detailed health information such as GP or occupational health reports. If not, we will contact the student to get more information from them and may ask them to sign a mandate authorising you or their doctor to release information.

We may also contact you for more information about how the student's health affects their ability to carry out their role and how it is managed. If you are aware a student has a terminal diagnosis or is severely ill, please make sure you tell us, so we do not cause them unnecessary distress by contacting them in an insensitive manner.

The Equalities Act 2010 (the Act)

The Act prohibits discrimination against people with the protected characteristics set out in section 4 of the Act. These are:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation
- marriage and civil partnership.

Discrimination may be direct or indirect. Direct discrimination in services and public functions happens when someone is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic. Indirect discrimination happens when there is a rule, a policy or even a practice that applies to everyone but which particularly disadvantages people who share a protected characteristic.

We cannot provide HEIs with advice about complying with this legislation. We consider that our model of regulation is compliant with this legislation and you can see our Equalities Impact Assessment on our website. You can find more information and guidance about equalities on the website below.

www.gov.scot/Topics/People/Equality

www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance

www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/equality-act-2010/what-equality-act

www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=3017



Human Rights Act 1998

The Human Rights Act 1998 sets out that it is unlawful for a public authority to act in a way that is incompatible with a convention right. One of these rights is Article 8 which is 'the right to respect for private and family life.' Article 8 allows interference with this right in certain circumstances. However, we cannot provide HEIs with legal advice about this. We make sure that we carry out our function in a way that is compatible with human rights legislation. You can find more information and guidance about human rights on the websites below.

www.gov.scot/Topics/Justice/law/human-rights/ScotlandAndHumanRights

www.scottishhumanrights.com/

9. What do we do with the information?

When we receive a referral, we will send you an acknowledgement. The referral is then passed to our screening team who will review and risk assess the referral within one working day of receipt.

Screening stage

There are a number of steps we may take at screening stage, depending on the information we have. If we do not have enough information to make an initial screening decision, including if we are not satisfied that we understand the allegation(s), we will contact you for more information.

If we are satisfied we understand the allegation(s), we will take the following steps.

- We will assess the behaviour against **our** thresholds.
- If the behaviour does not meet our thresholds, we will close the case at screening stage and take no further action. We will notify the referrer and the student of this decision in writing.
- If the behaviour meets our thresholds, we will complete a risk assessment and consider if the student is currently impaired. There are different steps we may take in this scenario.
 - If the student is assessed as not currently impaired, we will take no further action and we will close the case at screening stage. We will notify the referrer and the student of this decision in writing.
 - If the student is assessed as currently impaired but we believe some minimal pieces of additional information may satisfy us that the student is not currently impaired, we may undertake some further enquiries. These enquiries may include, contacting the student to gain a better understanding of their level of insight/regret/remorse. If on receipt of this information we are satisfied there is no prospect of a finding of current impairment, we will take no further action and close the case. Alternatively, if after undertaking these further enquiries we still consider the student to be currently impaired, we will proceed to a full investigation.
 - If the student is assessed as currently impaired and we decide we need to undertake a full investigation, we will open a case and pass to our investigation team. If the behaviour is very serious and we consider the need for temporary measures to protect the public and uphold public confidence, we will complete a temporary order assessment and pass the case to a solicitor.

Investigation stage

If we decide to carry out a full investigation, we will let the student know we have received the referral. We will tell the student the information set out in the referral form so they can comment on it. During our investigation, the student will receive a copy of all relevant information we receive so they can understand and respond to the allegations against them. You should tell us if there is anything you would prefer we did not send to the student. We will consider this request but may still need to provide the information. We will not share any information that might compromise a criminal investigation.

We may use any information an HEI provides as evidence of the allegations against the student.

Fitness to Practise portal

The Fitness to Practise portal is a central place where we store all communications between the SSSC and the HEI contact for an investigation.

- Using the portal is the best way to ensure sensitive data relating to an investigation is shared and stored securely.
- We will send details of how to access the portal to the relevant HEI contact at the beginning of a case and place any documents to be viewed there.
- An email alert lets the HEI contact know if there are new documents for their attention and that they should access the portal to view them.
- Any paperwork we ask for should be uploaded by the HEI directly into the portal. You will receive an alert when anything new is placed in the portal.

Fitness to Practice Impairment Hearing

If the matter goes to an impairment hearing, we publish details of the hearing and the allegations seven days advance on our website. We do not publish information in advance about:

- a health matter
- application hearings
- temporary orders
- restoration hearings.

Hearings are usually held in public and the media can attend. The media may publish information about hearings from the information we publish on our website.

We publish all Notices of Decision (accepted by the student or made at a hearing) on our website. Health and other sensitive information may be withheld. The media may report on any published decisions.

The Notice of Decision is always sent to the HEI. We may also share information with other regulatory bodies and partner agencies where we consider it appropriate. If sharing information we will comply with data protection legislation. We may also release information as part of a subject access request made under the data protection legislation or a freedom of information request.

Confidentiality

People who use services

You may wish to remove the names of people who use services in the information you give us. This can make it more difficult to understand the behaviour and decide if there is enough evidence to show a student's fitness to practise is impaired. It is better if you send us as much unredacted information as you can. If you choose to redact some information, do not edit more than is necessary and use initials where possible. We take data protection very seriously and regularly redact information before we send papers to the student or the Fitness to Practise Panel.

Statements

You and your staff/students may be concerned about sending us statements. These are important and will help us decide if we need to speak to staff/students and perhaps call them as a witness. We expect you to support staff or students to help with our work.

Please ensure that statements are signed and include contact details of each witness. We expect students to adhere to code 3.6 which states they will 'Cooperate with any investigations by my employer, the SSSC or another authority into my fitness to practise or the fitness to practise of others. This may include attending hearings and providing witness statements, documents or other information'.

10. Continued enrolment of students under investigation by the SSSC

Being subject to an investigation does not automatically make a student unsuitable to continue their social work course or start employment. The purpose of our investigation is to satisfy ourselves that the student remains suitable to be on our Register. However, if we impose a Temporary Order, you may not be able to allow the student to continue with their studies. Find more information on our website: <https://www.sssc.uk.com/fitness-to-practise/temporary-orders/>

When looking to enrol someone who is under investigation you should bear in mind the SSSC Codes of Practice and your requirement to take our findings and decisions into account.

11. More information

Visit the fitness to practise section on our website at <https://www.sssc.uk.com/fitness-to-practise> to find out about:

- the investigation process
- registrants subject to temporary orders
- Fitness to Practise Panel hearings
- being a witness
- outcomes of investigations.

We also have factsheets on these topics:
<https://www.sssc.uk.com/knowledgebase/category/?id=CAT-01326>

If you cannot find what you need, please contact us.

- **Email:** We have a dedicated email you can use to contact us for advice on whether to refer a student. This is managed by experienced advisers who will be happy to offer referral advice on a case-by-case basis. You can email us at: employerlink@sssc.uk.com
- **Phone:** We also have a dedicated phone line for employers and HEIs looking for referral advice. You can phone 0345 60 30 891, selecting the option for 'Fitness to Practise' and then 'Employer Advice Line'.

12. Appendix – Case examples

Example: Conduct

The relative of a person who uses services has made a complaint to the manager of a family support service about a social work student's actions while they were on placement in the service. The complaint is that they saw the student swear at a parent of a person who uses the service; called the parent a liar; refused to listen to the parent and used excessive force to slam the door shut when leaving the room.

The student is no longer on placement and has not been suspended from the course.

You should tell us on conclusion of your process.

Example: Conduct

A social work student attends university on Monday morning. During her break she tells a fellow student about an incident that occurred during a night out at the weekend which resulted in her being charged with breach of the peace and police assault. The student's peers then inform the programme lead. You confirm with the student the information is correct and undertake a risk assessment.

You should tell us as soon as you know about the charge, regardless of the outcome of your risk assessment.

Example: Conduct

When assessing an assignment, the marker is concerned the student has plagiarised some of the content. On further scrutiny, it's clear the student has used material from other sources without appropriately referencing these and has claimed the work as their own. The assignment is marked as a fail and the course tutor invites the student to a meeting to discuss it. The student accepts she has not adequately referenced the work of others and the sources of her material, acknowledging this is unacceptable. A formal record of the meeting is kept on her file. The student is given an opportunity to resubmit the assignment and successfully passes.

This is an isolated incident of academic plagiarism that was addressed appropriately by you. There were no other concerns regarding the student's honesty and this is not of a level of seriousness that would suggest the student's fitness to practise may be impaired.

You do not need to tell us about this.

The same student goes on placement and a colleague raises a concern the student has prepared a report for a Children's Hearing which appears to be very similar in content to a previous report on the same child prepared by another worker. On further scrutiny, it's clear the student has copied and pasted large sections of the previous report and presented the content as her own.

When asked about it, the student refutes that she has used someone else's work. The report content is outdated and does not accurately reflect the current circumstances for the child. The report is not submitted to the Children's Hearing, however the potential impact of the panel making a decision on inaccurate information is serious. The student has demonstrated a pattern of behaviour. There is also a concern regarding the student's honesty and integrity. The student is suspended from her placement and referred to the fitness to practise committee of the university.

You should tell us about this at the point of suspension.

Example: Professional practice

You have concerns about a student who is on placement in a criminal justice social work office. The placement practice teacher has raised concern about the ability of the student to carry out adequate risk assessments and make decisions they will defend in court.

You jointly decide to manage her fitness to practise through highlighting the concerns at the placement midway meeting. You agree to provide the student with additional training and mentoring support and clearly set out the improvement required by the student to meet the standards expected. The placement provides the student with further mentoring and further training. While this is being carried out all the student's risk assessments are countersigned by her practice teacher.

The student withdraws from the programme before the end of the placement.

You still have concerns that her practice is unsafe in this area.

You should tell us about this when she withdraws from the programme.

Example: Professional practice

A student fails his final practice learning placement. He was unable to demonstrate that he was practising at the standards required as defined in the Standards in Social Work Education. He has successfully achieved all other aspects of his course. The practice learning panel decides to allow the student to resit his final placement.

The student successfully passed his placement the second time. There is no ongoing concern regarding the student's ability to practise safely and effectively.

You do not need to refer this matter to us.

Example: Professional practice

A final year student failed two modules in her first semester and a further module in her second semester. She successfully passed her practice learning placements. All the modules she failed were assessed by written assignments. The student has achieved consistently low level passes in her academic assignments throughout the course. The university is not aware of any underlying reason for the student failing the assignments and the student was given the opportunity to repeat her final year and resit these modules.

The student did not pass on her second attempt and was referred to the fitness to practise committee of the university. The committee decided to terminate her place on the course on academic grounds only.

You do not need to refer this to us.

Example: Professional practice

You have concerns about a student's record keeping. You decide to manage this through your capability process. You arrange for the student to have increased supervision, mentoring and additional training while on placement.

After regular assessment of skills and the capability procedures, the student still fails to meet the record keeping standards. Despite the additional training and support the placement provider is not satisfied the student can competently carry out case recording.

As there are concerns about the student's fitness to practise you should tell us about this.

Example: Health (alcohol dependency)

A student has told you that she suffers from alcohol dependency but the condition is under control and she is attending counselling sessions.

You increase the student's supervision sessions. You are satisfied the student is managing her alcohol dependency and the impact her alcohol dependency could have on colleagues and people who use services.

You do not need to tell us about it as the health condition is being managed.

Before the student completed her counselling sessions, she attended her placement under the influence of alcohol and her placement provider asked her to go home. You are now concerned about the student's ability to manage her alcohol dependency safely and effectively.

You should now tell us about this and make a referral.

Example: Health (clinical depression)

A student has clinical depression and is taking medication for it. Her doctor recommends that she changes her medication. When she does, she experiences difficulties managing her condition.

In particular, she finds some aspects of her course difficult and distressing. She speaks to you and you agree that her workload will be adjusted and she will not go on placement until the issue with her medication is resolved.

The student has identified an area of work where she may not be able to meet our and your own standards. By doing this she has shown appropriate insight and understanding into her condition and the impact this could have on her ability to practise safely and effectively. She has discussed with you and effectively restricted her scope of practice. She is currently managing her condition.

You do not need to tell us about this.

Example: Health (diabetes)

A student has type 2 diabetes. He has been taking medication and insulin injections for over seven years and has never fallen ill at university or work during this time. When on placement he tells all his colleagues about his condition and keeps a small amount of medication somewhere safe.

The student is currently managing his health condition safely and effectively. His insight into understanding and management of his condition means he can practise safely.

You do not need to tell us about this.

Example: Health (sick leave)

A social work student develops pneumonia. She is on sick leave for several weeks while she recovers. Although she is not fit enough to attend university, she is still on our Register, because her illness does not affect her fitness to practise.

You do not have to tell us about this.

Example: Health (epilepsy)

A student was recently diagnosed with epilepsy and let you know. You recommended that the student tell his colleagues and asked him to make sure he took his medication, particularly when due to attend a work placement. The student chose not to tell any of his colleagues and in the following months did not take his medication on a significant number of occasions.

The student had a seizure when he and his colleague were carrying out a home visit with a vulnerable person who uses services. The colleague had to help the student and the vulnerable person witnessed this. As the colleague did not know about the student's condition, she became very distressed.

You are concerned the student is not currently managing their health condition safely or effectively as he is not complying with his medical treatment and his condition is having an impact on his colleagues and people who use services.

You should tell us about this.

Example: Health (mental health)

A student has a history of depression and around 10 years ago was diagnosed with bipolar disorder. Several years ago the student attempted suicide and temporarily withdrew from her programme re-joining the next cohort of students the following year. You have no concerns about the student's standard of practice and her mental health condition has not had a negative effect on people who use services.

The student attempted suicide again more recently and was detained under the Mental Health Act. This suggests the student is no longer managing their health condition.

You should tell us about this.



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