



Raising Concerns

Interactive Quiz on
Protecting Patients and
Supporting Professionals
in Healthcare



HCPC student competition
2025

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this activity, learners will be able to:

1. Recognise why speaking up and raising concerns is vital for patient safety, professionalism, and public trust.
2. Explore a range of constructive approaches to raising concerns, from informal conversations to formal escalation.
3. Apply judgment to select the most appropriate approach depending on the situation, urgency, and risk.
4. Reflect on their own feelings and barriers when raising concerns, including when they themselves make a mistake.
5. Link decisions to the HCPC Standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics (2024).





INSTRUCTIONS



You will be presented with realistic scenarios that healthcare professionals may face in practice. For each scenario, you must choose from a few possible responses by clicking on them, following which, you will see:

- The potential outcome of your decision.
- The HCPC Standard(s) linked to that choice.
- Prompts to stimulate self-reflection on how you might navigate these scenarios

The aim is to explore different approaches, understand potential consequences, and reflect on how to act constructively in line with HCPC standards. At the end, review your responses and consider:

- When would you feel confident speaking up?
- What barriers might stop you?
- What strategies could help you raise concerns more effectively in practice?

You are encouraged to return to the scenarios and explore all of the responses and potential outcomes.



[Click to Start](#)



Scenario 1



It's been a busy Friday afternoon, and as you are going about your tasks, you spot your colleague skipping hand hygiene before patient contact.

You have never seen them do this before and haven't really noticed anything concerning about their practice until now.

What would you do?

Ignore it

Raise with supervisor

Speak privately afterwards

Mention casually:
“Did you forget to gel your hands?”

File a formal report



Ignore it...

You have chosen to ignore it and pretend you saw nothing, but this would mean that the risk to the patient continues.

Not only does this breach HCPC Standards 6 and 7, it would result in other patients being harmed if your colleague's behaviour continues, and you being liable should it come to light that you were aware of this issue.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), hand hygiene is the single most important practice in the reduction of the transmission of infection in the healthcare setting (Gammon and Hunt, 2019)

Standard 6

Standard 7



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6. Manage risk

- **Identify and minimise risk**

6.1. You must take all reasonable steps to reduce the risk of harm to service users, carers and colleagues, as far as possible.

6.2. You must not do anything, or allow someone else to do anything, which could put the health or safety of a service user, carer or colleague at unacceptable risk.

- **Manage your health**

6.3. You must take responsibility for assessing whether changes to your physical and/or mental health will detrimentally impact your ability to practise safely and effectively. If you are unsure about your ability to do so, ask an appropriate health and care professional to make an assessment on your behalf.

6.4. You must adjust your practice if your physical and/or mental health will detrimentally impact your ability to practise safely and effectively. These adjustments must promote safe and effective practice. Where it is not possible to make these adjustments within your scope of practice, you must stop practising.

7. Report concerns about safety

- **Report concerns**

7.1. You must report any concerns about the safety or wellbeing of service users promptly and appropriately.

7.2. You must support and encourage others to report concerns and not prevent anyone from raising concerns.

7.3. You must take appropriate action if you have concerns about the safety or wellbeing of children or vulnerable adults.

7.4. You must make sure that the safety and wellbeing of service users always comes before any professional or other loyalties.

7.5. You must raise concerns regarding colleagues if you witness bullying, harassment or intimidation of a service user, carer or another colleague. This should be done following the relevant procedures within your practice or organisation and maintaining the safety of all involved.

- **Follow up concerns**

7.6. You must follow up concerns you have reported and, if necessary, escalate them.

7.7. You must acknowledge and act on concerns raised to you, investigating, escalating or dealing with those concerns where it is appropriate for you to do so.

Raise with the supervisor...

You have decided that the best way to deal with your concern is to raise it directly with your supervisor without discussing it with your colleague.

Your supervisor will deal with this according to trust guidelines which may include issuing a reminder to whole ward, or perhaps have a private conversation with your colleague.

Whilst you may wonder if you're going behind your colleagues back, you are doing this out of concern for both them and the patient, and according to HCPC Standard 7, the patient's safety and wellbeing must always be the priority



Report concerns

7.1. You must report any concerns about the safety or well-being of service users promptly and appropriately.

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“Did you forget to gel your hands?”



You informally mention it to your colleague, in an attempt to remind and caution them, but they laugh it off...

What now?

Let it go

Escalate

Let it go...

Could you let it go? After all, you did try to say something...

But once again, this breaches Standards 6 and 7 as it does not address the behaviour or satisfactorily mitigate risk to the patient.

Identify and minimise risk

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Escalate

Escalate

You have decided to escalate this concern to your supervisor. By now, you have tried to have a conversation with your colleague about why their behaviour is a risk to patient safety and how they can ensure it does not happen again. They have, unfortunately, not been receptive or cooperative.

Whilst there is a possibility that your colleague might feel like they are being undermined, you are acting in accordance with HCPC guidelines. Patient safety is paramount, and escalating concerns would result in a significantly higher likelihood of their behaviour being addressed.

How might you present this concern to your supervisor?

Report concerns

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Speak privately after

You speak to your colleague privately, immediately following this incident. You tell them what you've seen, why you are concerned about it and how their practice can put patients at risk. You ask them for their side of the story...

How to Wash Your Hands



They explain to you how stressful the day has been for them and that they're struggling to manage their workload.

They conclude by saying that they sometimes forget due to the large number of patients they come into contact with and the limited time they have between each instance of contact.

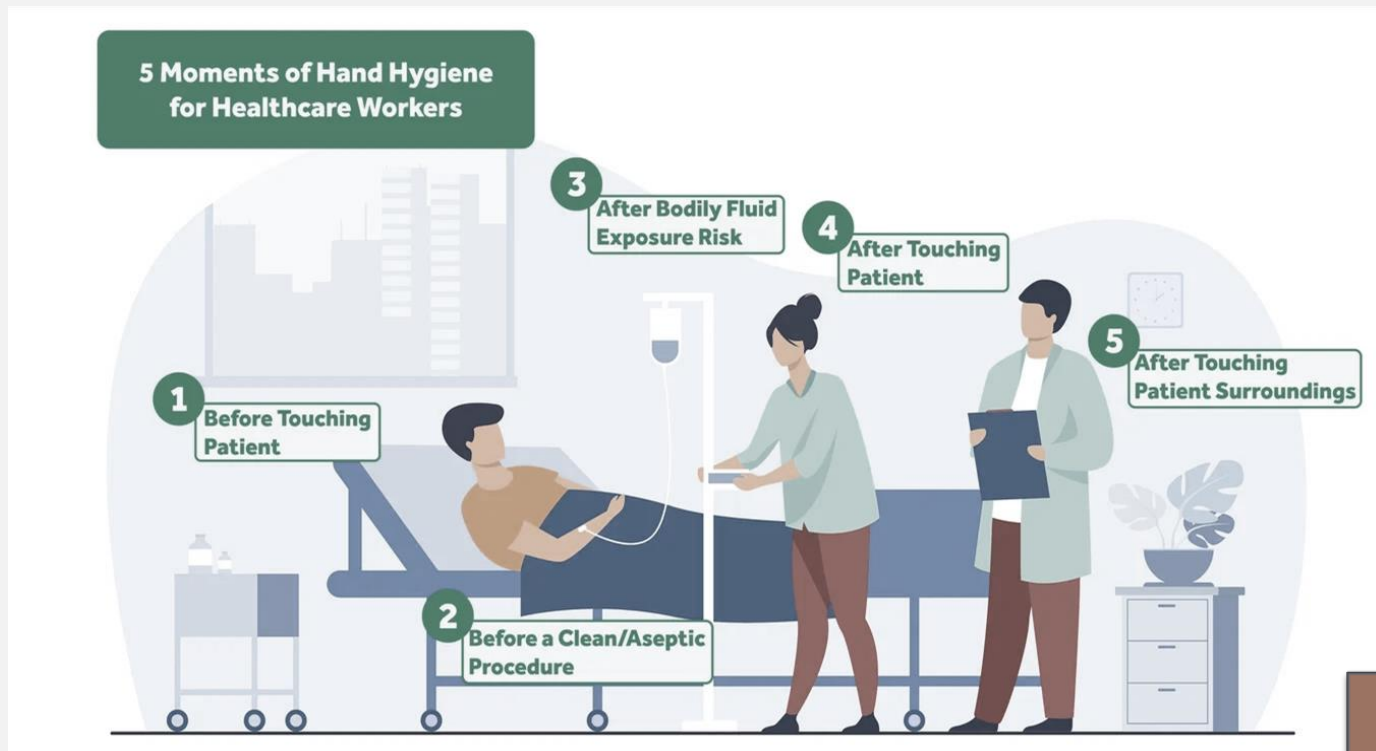
Offer reminder strategies
(e.g. alcohol gel at bedspace)

Escalate anyway

Offer reminder strategies

You have a conversation with your colleague about how they can be assisted in remembering to clean their hands at the appropriate times.

Perhaps they could carry sanitizer gel on their person? Or have a bottle at their workstation? It could maybe be a more widespread solution where a posters or prompts encouraging handwashing could be placed tactically across the department?



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Escalate anyway

You have decided that the best approach to addressing your concern is to escalate it to your supervisor. In line with HCPC Standard 7, you can encourage your colleague to report any concerns they may have about remembering to wash their hands at the appropriate times and any other issues they may be experiencing in this matter.

However, it is important to note that patient safety is paramount, and whilst you may be concerned about your colleague's feelings, the safety and well-being of service users always comes before any professional or other loyalties.

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Follow-up concerns

7.6. You must follow up concerns you have reported and, if necessary, escalate them.

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File a formal report.

You have decided to file a formal report. The benefits are doing so are that you are in line with HCPC Standard 7 and have an official record that you can follow up on or refer to in the future.

However, there is the potential that this will create tensions between you and your colleague, or within the department.

Whilst there is no doubt that the safety and well-being of service users always come before any professional or other loyalties, it is essential to use situational judgement skills in determining the actions that can be taken to meet the HCPC standards most effectively.

You are perfectly justified in making this choice; however, it may be worth considering the advice of a senior colleague or manager with more experience than you, to inform your decision on how to proceed with your concern, if you have the opportunity to do so.

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Scenario 2



It's been a long morning, and you've been looking forward to your coffee break. You pop to the café across the street from the hospital, a popular spot for hospital staff, and take a seat with your brew.

Sat behind you are two members of staff from the hospital and you hear them discussing a patient's personal details in their conversation.

What would you do?

Ignore it

Speak privately with them later.

Join the chat but steer it away.

Report directly to the manager.

Politely remind them about confidentiality.

Ignore it...

You could ignore it and just stick to drinking your coffee.

But this would mean that the breach of patient confidentiality continues, significantly violating the HCPC Standards 5, 6 and 7 and the trust the patient has in the professionals caring for them.

You put yourself in the patient's shoes and reflect on how you would feel if it were your information being discussed...

Standard 5

Standard 6

Standard 7



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5. Respect Confidentiality

- **Using information**

5.1 You must treat information about service users as confidential.

- **Disclosing information**

5.2 You must only disclose confidential information if:

- you have permission;
- the law allows this;
- it is in the service user's best interests; or
- it is in the public interest, such as if it is necessary to protect public safety or prevent harm to other people.

6. Manage risk

- **Identify and minimise risk**

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6.4. You must adjust your practice if your physical and/or mental health will detrimentally impact your ability to practise safely and effectively. These adjustments must promote safe and effective practice. Where it is not possible to make these adjustments within your scope of practice, you must stop practising.

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7.6. You must follow up concerns you have reported and, if necessary, escalate them.

7.7. You must acknowledge and act on concerns raised to you, investigating, escalating or dealing with those concerns where it is appropriate for you to do so.

Join the chat but steer it away...

By doing this, you might minimise further risk on this occasion, but it does not address their behaviour.

Whilst your intention is to maintain patient confidentiality, this behaviour will likely repeat itself and continue when you are not present to intervene, putting patients' information and safety at risk.



Using information

5.1 You must treat information about service users as confidential.

Identify and minimise risk

6.1. You must take all reasonable steps to reduce the risk of harm to service users, carers and colleagues, as far as possible.

6.2. You must not do anything, or allow someone else to do anything, which could put the health or safety of a service user, carer or colleague at unacceptable risk.

7.1. You must report any concerns about the safety or wellbeing of service users promptly and appropriately.

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Speak privately with them later

You go over to the department that the two staff members are from and ask them if you could have a quick chat with them somewhere quiet. You let them know that you were sat next to them in the café and heard them discussing patient details that should be treated with the utmost confidentiality.

They look a little uneasy, but thank you for your discretion and assure you that they will be more mindful of their environment and maintain confidentiality.

This is a constructive and non-confrontational way to handle the situation and shows your intention to uphold HCPC Standard 5.

However, you must consider the fact that in the time between you overhearing a part of their conversation and the staff members leaving the café, they may have continued their breach of patient confidentiality and been overheard by many more patrons of the café



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Report directly to manager

You have decided that to report it directly to the manager.

This decision might result in the issue being addressed formally, as the manager is expected to deal with it according to trust guidelines which may include issuing a reminder to whole ward regarding patient confidentiality or perhaps having a private conversation with these specific members of staff.

You may be worried about potentially creating tension or animosity between the two members of staff and yourself, however according to HCPC standards, the patient's wellbeing must be the priority.

Perhaps you can explain this concern to the manager and ask for your identity to be kept confidential if they think its possible to?

Using information

5.1 You must treat information about service users as confidential.

Report concerns

7.1. You must report any concerns about the safety or well-being of service users promptly and appropriately.

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Politely remind them about confidentiality

Feeling a little bit awkward you interrupt their conversation. You tell them that you were sitting behind them and couldn't help but overhear their conversation and that it involved a patient's protected information.

Whilst there was nobody else near their table but you, you remind them that their actions were a breach of patient confidentiality, and they should perhaps be more careful of where they are and who is within earshot if they need to discuss a patient.

Somewhat embarrassed, they apologise and thank you for your vigilance. They decide to pause the conversation till they are in a more private environment.



Do you think that you have acted in line with HCPC Standards 5, 6 and 7 satisfactorily?

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Scenario 3



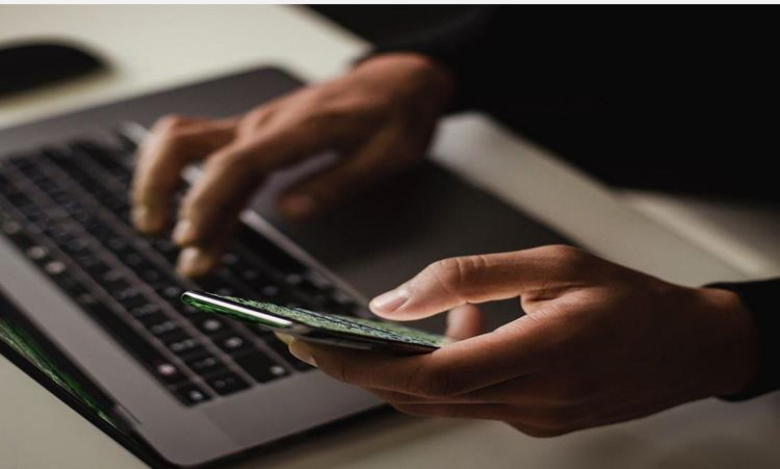
You are emailing a patient's discharge summary to their GP. A few minutes later, you realise you accidentally attached the wrong file, another patient's summary and therefore sent it to the wrong GP practice...

What will you do?

Do nothing

Inform your supervisor immediately and follow the data breach policy

Quickly delete the email from your "sent" folder and move on



Phone the GP practice to ask if they can delete the email

Do nothing and hope that no one notices...

You have decided to do nothing, hoping that nobody will notice your mistake.

Perhaps they will, perhaps they won't; however, this is still a serious breach of HCPC Standards 5 and 9.

Whilst everybody makes mistakes, it is important to report your own mistakes to prevent further harm to the patient, their rights, and your professional reputation.



Failure to notify the necessary personnel and follow the appropriate procedures may be interpreted as an attempt to conceal wrongdoing, thereby increasing potential disciplinary consequences.

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Quickly delete the email from your “sent” folder and move on...

Doing this will not retrieve the information sent from the recipient and may be interpreted as an attempt to conceal wrongdoing, thereby increasing potential disciplinary consequences.

This is a clear breach of HCPC Standards 5, 8 and 9.



Standard 5

Standard 8

Standard 9

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5. Respect Confidentiality

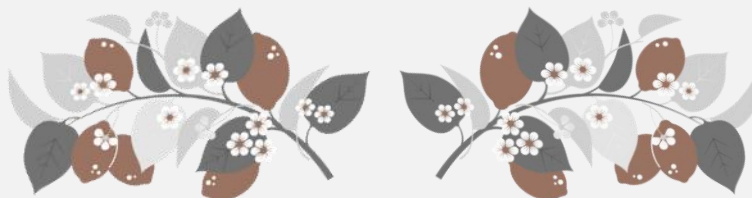
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- it is in the service user's best interests; or
- it is in the public interest, such as if it is necessary to protect public safety or prevent harm to other people.



8. Be open when things go wrong

Openness with service users and carers

8.1 You must be open, honest and candid when something has gone wrong with the care, treatment or other services that you provide, by:

- where applicable, alerting your employer of what has gone wrong and following the relevant internal procedures;
- informing service users and where appropriate carers, or where you do not have direct access to these individuals the lead clinician, that something has gone wrong;
- providing service users and carers with a detailed explanation of the circumstances in which things have gone wrong and the likely impact; and
- taking action to correct the mistake if possible and detailing this action to the service user and where appropriate, their carer.

8.2 You must apologise to a service user and their carer when something has gone wrong with the care, treatment or other services that you provide..

Deal with concerns and complaints

8.3 You must support service users and carers who want to raise concerns about the care, treatment or other services they have received.

8.4 You must give a helpful and honest response to anyone who complains about the care, treatment or other services they have received

9. Be honest and trustworthy

Personal and professional behaviour

9.1 You must make sure that your conduct justifies the public's trust and confidence in you and your profession.

9.2 You must be honest about your experience, qualifications and skills.

9.3 You must take reasonable steps to make sure that any promotional activities you are involved in are accurate and are not likely to mislead.

9.4 You must declare issues that might create conflicts of interest and make sure that they do not influence your judgement.

Important information about your conduct and competence

9.5 You must tell us as soon as possible if:

- you accept a caution from the police or you have been charged with, or found guilty of, a criminal offence;
- another organisation responsible for regulating a health or social care profession has taken action or made a finding against you; or
- you have had any restriction placed on your practice, or been suspended or dismissed by an employer, because of concerns about your conduct or competence.

9.6 You must co-operate with any investigation into your conduct or competence, the conduct or competence of others, or the care, treatment or other services provided to service users.

Inform your supervisor immediately and follow the data breach policy

You immediately head to your supervisor's office to see if they're in. They are and invite you into their office to talk about what has happened. You explain what has happened, apologise for your mistake, and ask them for advice on the best way to proceed.

They reassure you by saying that you did the right thing by coming to them immediately and offer to assist you in going through the steps of the data breach policy and the subsequent steps.

By making this decision, you have not only demonstrated accountability but also upheld Standards 5 and 8 by taking the necessary steps to maintain patient confidentiality and trust, even after a mistake was made.



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Phone the GP practice to ask if they can delete the email without reading it

You ring the GP practice to which you sent the patients' details and speak to the receptionist. You explain to him what has happened and ask if it's possible for him to delete the email you have just sent without reading it.

He tells you that he has not opened it and agrees to delete it but advises you to follow the data breach policy on your side and report it to your manager.



What will you do?

Do nothing further

Escalate to manager

Do nothing further



Whilst you have acted quickly and taken the necessary steps to protect patient confidentiality, even after a mistake was made, according to HCPC Standard 7, the incident must still be reported formally; transparency with the patient is essential.

Failure to report this breach of patient confidentiality, even though you have taken action to rectify it, can have disciplinary consequences and affect your professional reputation

8.1 You must be open, honest and candid when something has gone wrong with the care, treatment or other services that you provide, by:

- where applicable, alerting your employer of what has gone wrong and following the relevant internal procedures;
- informing service users and where appropriate carers, or where you do not have direct access to these individuals the lead clinician, that something has gone wrong;
- providing service users and carers with a detailed explanation of the circumstances in which things have gone wrong and the likely impact; and taking action to correct the mistake if possible and detailing this action to the service user and where appropriate, their carer.

8.2 You must apologise to a service user and their carer when something has gone wrong with the care, treatment or other services that you provide.

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Escalate to your manager and log the breach

You call your manager and explain what has happened and the steps you have taken to minimise the damage to the patient's confidentiality.

You say that you would like the breach to be logged formally and to follow the necessary procedure in informing the patient, giving them a detailed explanation of the circumstances and the likely impact.

Your manager agrees that this is the appropriate course of action and is willing to support you in logging the breach and notifying the patient, in accordance with trust guidelines.

By making this decision, you have not only demonstrated accountability but also upheld Standards 5 and 8 by taking the necessary steps to maintain patient confidentiality and trust, even after a mistake was made.



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END QUIZ



WELL DONE!



You have successfully completed this interactive quiz on Raising Concerns!

To further consolidate your knowledge and proficiency on this topic, you can:

- Read through HCPC Standards of conduct, performance and ethics
- Familiarise yourself with trust guidelines on Raising Concerns
- Stay updated on policy changes
- Speak to your supervisor/manager about further advice and training on Raising Concerns

Remember to always keep patients at the heart of the care you provide and to support your colleagues in doing the same!



THANK YOU



HCPC Standards of conduct, performance and ethics

Website:

<https://www.hcpc-uk.org/standards/standards-of-conduct-performance-and-ethics/>

PDF:

<https://www.hcpc-uk.org/globalassets/resources/standards/standards-of-conduct-performance-and-ethics-2024.pdf#page=3.12>

