

Stage 1: Early resolution

Five working days

What to expect at stage 1

- On-the-spot explanation and/or action to resolve the matter quickly, in five working days or less
- Extend timescales with agreement if there are exceptional circumstances
- Handled by member of staff receiving the concern OR referred to appropriate person for early resolution (within five working days) OR progressed to stage 2 (within five working days)

If the whistleblower is not satisfied with the response at stage 1, or agreed action has not been taken, they can take their concern to **stage 2: Investigation**

Stage 2: Investigation

20 working days for definitive response

What to expect at stage 2

- Respond in 20 working days following thorough investigation of concern(s)
- Extend timescales to achieve quality investigation and outcomes
- Responses signed-off by senior management and must signpost to the INWO, including timescales

Action taken as agreed to resolve issue of concern and avoid any repeat

If the whistleblower is not satisfied with the response they have received to stage 2, they can bring their concern to the INWO for independent external review

INWO consideration

Anyone raising a concern can come to the INWO at any point in this process, and the INWO can provide information and advice to support the process

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Closing the case at stage 1: information for case handlers

- Record details of the concern, outcomes and actions taken (or planned)
- Reflect on how the concern was handled: what went well and what could be improved

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Closing the case at stage 2: information for case handlers

- Record details of the concern, outcomes and actions taken (or planned)
- Use the concern and outcome to improve services and patient safety

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Information about the INWO

- Concerns that have completed the process will either have been thoroughly investigated or will have been refused by the organisation at initial assessment; these must be signposted to the INWO
- INWO may assess
 - how the concern was handled by the organisation
 - whether the organisation's decisions about the concern were reasonable
 - how the whistleblower was treated through the process
 - how the organisation supports a culture of speaking up