COPMeD guidance on medical revalidation processes relating to “Cause for Concern” arising in a doctor in postgraduate training

**Definition**
A cause for concern is any significant issue which may call into question a doctor’s fitness to practise.

**Responsible Officer role in managing a cause for concern**
One of the purposes of the RO’s role is to assure themselves of the fitness to practise of the doctors for whom he/she is responsible. Therefore any cause for concern should be reviewed by the doctor’s Responsible Officer (RO) and any further necessary action taken to protect patients, e.g. enhanced supervision, remediation, training support, referral to the GMC, etc.

**Thresholds of causes for concern**
Whether or not an issue is a cause for concern should usually be determined by a global assessment of the doctor’s performance and should not usually be based on only one attribute. There may be exceptions to this, e.g. the severity, number, impact and/or potential risks of actions (or failures to act), and the level of the doctor’s involvement in an incident.

Any significant or recurrent breaches of, or failures to meet, expectations of professionalism or conduct as outlined by GMC Good Medical Practice guidelines should be considered a cause for concern about a doctor.

Professionalism, as defined by the Gold Guide is:
Adherence to a set of values comprising statutory professional obligations, formally agreed codes of conduct, and the informal expectations of patients and colleagues. Key values include acting in the patient’s best interest, and maintaining the standards of competence and knowledge expected of members of highly trained professions. These standards will include ethical elements such as integrity, probity, accountability, duty and honour. In addition to medical knowledge and skills, medical professionals should present psychosocial and humanistic qualities such as caring, empathy, humility and compassion, social responsibility and sensitivity to people’s culture and beliefs.