

AHCS Concerns & Complaints Policy

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Contents

1. Introduction	4
2. Scope	4
3. Roles and responsibilities.....	4
4. How to make a complaint.....	4
5. Who can make a complaint?	5
6. Time limit for making a complaint.....	6
7. Process	6
8. Confidentiality and consent	7
APPENDIX 1 –	8

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1. Introduction

The policy outlines our commitment to handling complaints and concerns about:

- (i) AHCS Registrants
- (ii) The AHCS, its processes or an AHCS employee
- (iii) The Equivalence process
- (iv) The Programme Accreditation process

2. Scope

We recognise that, on occasion, there will be legitimate concerns or complaints that you need to raise. For the purpose of this Policy, a concern or complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about an AHCS service, process or the competence or practice of an AHCS Registrant.

We can benefit from exploring such issues, and the lessons learnt to enhance our work and ensure continuous improvement.

3. Roles and responsibilities

The Chief Executive has overall accountability for ensuring that complaints are handled within the expectations set out in our Concerns and Complaints Policy.

Complaints are investigated by Case Officers appointed by the AHCS Registrar, or by Panels appointed by the Regulation Board, Equivalence team, or Accreditation team, dependent on which process is followed. It is the responsibility of these teams to consider whether your complaint can be resolved informally, in which case we will deal with it as a concern. However, if it is clear that a formal complaint is to be made, then we will follow our Concerns & Complaint Policy in full.

In accordance with our governance framework, all complaints are reported to the Management Board, the Finance, Audit & People Committee, Regulation Board and the Education, Training & Standards Committee, all who will ensure that process has been followed. Any of these Committees can also make recommendations to review and change the Concerns & Complaints Policy and procedures.

4. How to make a complaint

Raising a concern or complaint must be made by completing the [AHCS Complaint & Concern Form](#), and sending it to:

Email:

complaints@ahcs.ac.uk

Or by Post to:

Academy for Healthcare Science, 6 The Terrace, Rugby Road, Lutterworth, LE17 4BW.

We will seek to make any necessary and reasonable adjustments in order to handle a concern or complaint. For people whose first language is not English (including Welsh), we will aim to use a translation and telephone interpreting service. We can also handle complaints in alternative formats such as Braille, large print and e-reader versions.

5. Who can make a complaint?

Any person or organization can raise a concern or make a complaint about us, our processes or one of our registrants.

A complaint can also be made by the next of kin or representative acting on behalf of a person who:

- a. Has died

The complainant should be the next of kin or personal representative of the deceased. In order to respond to the next of kin or personal representative, we may ask to see some formal documentation, such as copy of a Death Certificate and Will, or other form of evidence if a Will is not available (to demonstrate their role as executor).

- b. Is a child

We need to be satisfied that there are reasonable grounds for the complaint to be made by a representative of the child and that the representative is making the complaint in the best interest of the child (a child is considered anyone up to the age of 18).

- c. Has physical or mental incapacity

If a person is unable to make the complaint themselves because of either physical incapacity or a lack of capacity within the meaning of the Mental Capacity Act 2005, we need to be satisfied that the complaint is being made in the best interest of that person.

In relation to points a, b and c above, if AHCS are satisfied that the representative is not conducting the complaint in the best interests of the person on whose behalf the complaint is made, we will notify the representative in writing of this decision and state the reason for that decision.

d. Has given consent to a third party acting on their behalf.

In this case, we will require the following information;

- Name and address of the person making the complaint
- Name and either date of birth or address of the person who is the subject of the complaint
- A consent form signed by the person giving consent to the third party

This information is recorded as part of the complaint file by the Case Officer.

e. Has delegated authority to act on their behalf, for example in the form of a registered Power of Attorney which must cover health and welfare affairs

f. Is an MP, acting on behalf of and by instruction from a constituent

Where the constituent is not the complainant or the person who is the subject of the complaint, we will seek consent from the relevant person

6. Time limit for making a complaint

There is no time limit for submitting a complaint, but if we are not satisfied that there is good reason for a delay of more than 12 months following the occurrence of an incident or conclusion of a process, or we think it is not possible to properly consider the complaint (or any part of it) because of the delay, we will write to the complainant explaining this.

7. Process

We will acknowledge receipt of the completed AHCS Complaint & Concern Form within 3 working days.

We will add details of the complaint or concern to our Log.

We will then ask the relevant team to investigate the complaint or concern, as follows:

- Complaints about an AHCS Registrant will be referred to the Regulation Team, who will follow the process outlined in the [Fitness to Practice Process](#)
- Complaints about the AHCS, one of our staff or about any of the AHCS processes (excluding equivalence) will be dealt with in accordance with the [AHCS Complaints & Concerns about the Academy](#) process
- Complaints about an Equivalence application or outcome will be dealt with in accordance with the [AHCS Appeals and Complaints Process for Equivalence Applications](#)
- Complaints about the result of a Programme Accreditation visit will be dealt with in accordance with the [AHCS Appeals and Complaints Process - Programme Accreditation](#)

Please refer to **Appendix 1** for complaint timelines:

8. Confidentiality and consent

We have a legal duty to maintain the confidentiality of personal information. We will not access or share information pertaining to complaints without the consent of the complainant or their representative.

There may be circumstances in which information disclosure is in the best interest of the patient, or the protection, safety or wellbeing of a child or adult at risk. In these circumstances, a complaint will be escalated as necessary and we will advise the complainant accordingly

**APPENDIX 1 –
SUMMARY TIMELINE – MAKING A COMPLAINT**

Working Days after receipt of a complaint	Action
Day 0	Receipt of the complaint via complaints@ahcs.ac.uk Receipt recorded on the AHCS's appeals and complaints tracker by Head of Operations.
+3 days	Head of Operations acknowledges receipt of the appeal via email. Head of Operations identifies appropriate team to investigate and refers on accordingly.
+10 days	The appropriate team reviews the matter and prepares a short report outlining the issues and any recommended actions to be taken and sends to the CEO to review.
+20 days	The agreed response is sent to the complainant, outlining any action to be taken and the timescales involved.