

Reporting and Escalating Concerns

Guidance for Registrants

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Introduction

This document provides guidance on reporting and escalating concerns for Academy for Healthcare Science ('the Academy') registrants.

This guidance is focused on our standards. Your employer may also have relevant policies or guidance that apply to you.

This guidance draws on guidance published by the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC).

Language

Throughout this document:

- 'we' and 'our' refers to the Academy for Healthcare Science ('the Academy');
- 'registrant' refers to a professional or practitioner on our Accredited Register; and
- 'you' or 'your' refers to a registrant.

Section 1: Our standards

'Reporting and escalating concerns' refers to a registrant identifying a concern about patient and service user safety, reporting their concerns and following up their concerns where they need to.

This includes 'whistleblowing', a term which refers to a person formally disclosing serious concerns about wrongdoing in their workplace.

Good Scientific Practice (1.1.1) says that registrants must:

'...put patients first and do the following:

- Act in the interests of patients' safety and well-being at all times.
- Fulfil your duty of care if you have a concern about a patient's safety.
- Fulfil your duty of candour if something goes wrong in a patient's care.
- Adhere to safeguarding requirements and uphold the interests of vulnerable individuals in how you deliver care.

We also say that registrants must:

'...engage with health and safety requirements and do the following:

- Escalate a health and safety issue either that you identify or to which you are alerted that poses a risk or actual hazard to yourself and/or others. (2.2.2)

Section 2: Our expectations

Our standards prioritise the safety of patients and service users. We want our registrants to feel safe and confident to raise concerns about safety when they occur.

You should do the following.

- Report concerns you have about safety promptly and appropriately. For example, this might include discussing your concern with your immediate line manager in the first instance if you are able to.
- Support and encourage others to report concerns, creating an environment where no one is prevented from raising concerns.
- Follow-up on your concerns once you have reported them, and, if you need to, escalate them. For example, this might include escalating your concern to a more senior manager.
- Acknowledge and act on concerns raised to you, investigating, escalating or dealing with concerns where it is appropriate for you to do so. This will particularly apply to registrants in managerial positions.

Section 3: Whistleblowing

Some concerns which are of a more minor nature can be dealt with informally in the workplace.

However, where the concerns are particularly serious, or where appropriate action has not been taken, you might consider reporting your concerns formally through your organisation's whistleblowing policy.

If you are unsure what to do, and particularly if you are contemplating raising your concerns formally, you should familiarise yourself with your organisation's whistleblowing policy. You might also want to seek advice from an appropriate person in the workplace. If you work in the NHS, each UK country has its own arrangements for supporting staff who want to raise concerns. You may also want to seek independent advice (see section four).

UK legislation protects whistleblowers from unfair treatment. Under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, workers can report wrongdoings to specified organisations such as the NHS and certain regulators. Those who report wrongdoings in this way are protected by law.

The Academy itself is able to consider concerns about the fitness to practise of a registrant. You can find out more about our fitness to practise process and when and how to raise a concern by visiting our website: <https://www.ahcs.ac.uk/patients-public/the-register-and-regulation/raise-a-concern/>

Section 4: More information

You can contact us if you have any questions about this guidance or our standards. However, we cannot offer legal advice.

Our contact details are:

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

Email: admin@ahcs.ac.uk

You can download copies of our standards documents and other publications from our website at: www.ahcs.ac.uk

If you require support and advice, you might consider discussing your situation with someone at the whistleblowing charity, Protect. They offer free advice to people about whistleblowing concerns. You can visit their website here: <https://protect-advice.org.uk>

Glossary

Escalate

To pass on a concern about a patient, service user's or carer's safety or wellbeing to someone who is better able to act on it, for example, a more senior colleague, a manager or a regulator.

Patient

Those who receive care or a service by the healthcare science workforce. This term includes service users and clients.