

AHCS Complaints & Concerns about the Academy for Healthcare Science Process

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1. Introduction

This document sets out the process used by the Academy for Healthcare Science (AHCS) for handling concerns or complaints raised about the Academy, its processes (excluding equivalence) or one of our employees.

Everyone who contacts the AHCS will be dealt with fairly, equitably and objectively.

Members of the AHCS team will be courteous and polite and the same is expected of anyone raising a concern or complaint. If any individual is rude or abusive to AHCS employees, steps may be taken to limit contact to email or written correspondence only.

We welcome constructive feedback on the way in which we implement this policy.

2. Raising a Concern or Complaint

If you wish to raise a concern or make a complaint about the Academy, its processes (excluding equivalence) or one of our employees you should, in the first instance, complete an [AHCS Concern & Complaint Form](#) and send it to:

Email: complaints@ahcs.ac.uk

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

Alternatively, you may write to the AHCS at:

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

You will be asked to state the nature of any concern or complaint clearly and concisely, in writing, and provide any supporting evidence together with your name and contact details.

Concerns expressed anonymously will be considered at the discretion of AHCS if it is deemed to be in the public interest. In exercising this discretion, the factors to be considered will include:

- The seriousness of the issues raised;
- The credibility of the concern;
- The likelihood of confirming the allegation from attributable sources.

3. Communication of Information

This process document provides clear and straightforward information to everyone concerned in each case it deals with. Due to the nature of the complaints process, there may be complex legal or professional issues involved. We aim to clearly set out and explain these without the use of jargon and abbreviations that are not commonly known.

If requested, information can be provided in different formats, e.g. Braille or Large Print. We will also provide an interpreter, or other facilities to assist complainants, e.g. signing and communication services for people with hearing loss.

4. Procedure for Managing a Complaint

On receipt of a concern or complaint, the details will be passed as soon as is reasonably possible to a designated Case Officer who will be responsible for managing its investigation until the process reaches a conclusion.

If the Case Officer changes, the person raising the concern or complaint will be notified.

Complaints about AHCS process or procedure or an employee will be investigated by the appropriate AHCS Director unless the complaint is about the Director or is in any way related to the actions of the Director. In such cases, the complaint will be investigated by the Chief Executive.

Complaints about the Chief Executive will be passed to the Chairman.

The complainant has the right to bypass the line management structure and take their complaint directly to the Chairman. The Chairman has the right to refer the complaint back to the AHCS management team if it is considered that it, without any conflict of interest, can more appropriately investigate the complaint.

If there is evidence of criminal activity the investigating Case Officer will inform the police. The AHCS will ensure that any internal investigation does not hinder a formal police investigation.

5. Timescales

Due to the varied nature of complaints, which may involve internal investigators and / or the police, it is not possible to lay down precise timescales for such investigations. The Case Officer will ensure that the investigations are undertaken as quickly as possible without affecting their quality and depth.

The Case Officer will send a written acknowledgement of the complaint to the complainant within 5 working days of its receipt and thereafter report in writing the outcome of the investigation and on the action that is proposed.

If the investigation is prolonged, the Case Officer will keep the complainant informed, in writing, as to the progress of the investigation and when it is likely to be concluded. An update on progress will be made no later than 35 days following receipt of the complaint.

If the complainant is not satisfied that their concern is being dealt with properly by the Case Officer, they have the right to raise the matter in confidence with the Chief Executive or Chairman.

6. Safeguards

i. Protection

AHCS policy is to offer protection to those who raise concerns or complaints provided the disclosure is made in good faith and in the reasonable belief that it indicates potential malpractice or impropriety.

ii. Confidentiality

The AHCS will treat all disclosures in a confidential and sensitive manner. The identity of the individual making the complaint may be kept confidential provided it does not hinder or frustrate any investigation. However, the investigation process may reveal the source and the individual or organisation making the disclosure may need to provide a statement as part of the evidence required. All information received will be treated according to the AHCS Privacy Policy.

iii. False Allegations

If an allegation is made in good faith but which is not confirmed by subsequent investigation, no action will be taken against that individual or organisation.

However, in making a disclosure due care should be exercised to ensure the accuracy of the information provided. If an individual or organisation makes a false, malicious or vexatious allegation, and if they persist, legal action may be taken against them.