

AHCS

Complaints and Concerns about Registrants Process

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1. Introduction

This document provides a summary of the process used by the Academy for Healthcare Science (AHCS) for handling fitness to practise concerns about any of its registrants.

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

In this policy:

- 'we', 'us' and 'our' refers to the Academy for Healthcare Science (AHCS);
- 'registrant' refers to someone who is registered with us in an accredited register; and
- 'complainant' refers to someone who raises a concern with us under this policy.

The Fitness to Practise Procedure, available on our website, sets out in more detail our fitness to practise process.

2. Our role

We are able to consider concerns about the fitness to practise of our registrants. Where we find that a registrant's fitness to practise is impaired (negatively affected in some way), we can take action where necessary to protect the public. This includes, in the most serious cases, removing a registrant from our Register.

When we talk about 'fitness to practise', we mean that a registrant has the necessary skills, knowledge, character and health to do their job safely and effectively in a way which will command the confidence of the public and their profession.

We only consider concerns about the fitness to practise of a registrant. This means, for example, that we are unable to consider concerns about organisations; deal with customer service or consumer issues; arrange compensation; intervene in disputes between registrants; or make a registrant apologise. We are also unable to consider concerns about individuals who are not registered with us.

Many concerns about registrants where they arise can be best resolved at a local level by speaking directly to the registrant or their place of work and/or following local complaints procedures.

We will always consider any concern raised with us to see if it is something we can investigate. Complainants who are unsure whether their concern is something we can investigate are encouraged to contact us to discuss their situation before submitting their concern.

3. Raising a concern

Any individual or organisation wishing to raise a concern about a registrant should contact us by email or in writing at:

Email: registration@ahcs.ac.uk

Or alternatively, write to the AHCS Registrar at:

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

Emails will be answered promptly, but if this is not possible, we will respond at the earliest opportunity.

The nature of a concern should be stated clearly and concisely together with the name and contact details of the complainant.

4. Anonymous concerns

This process document encourages complainants to put their name to any concerns. Concerns expressed anonymously will be taken seriously but are more difficult to investigate thoroughly. Anonymous concerns will not normally be taken forward, unless we decide that this is in the public interest.

In deciding whether we can investigate an anonymous concern, we will consider the following factors.

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

5. Case management

The AHCS will promptly acknowledge a concern, normally within five working days of receipt.

Upon receipt of a concern, we will consider the information according to the AHCS Fitness to Practise Procedure, to determine whether the concern appears to be an allegation about the fitness to practise of a registrant that we are able to deal with.

If we conclude at any stage that the concern is not about a registrant and/or not a fitness to practise concern that falls within our remit, the concern will be closed. The complainant will be advised.

If the concern appears to fall within our remit, we will investigate the matter. This may include gathering further information from the complainant and/or third parties.

The case will be assigned to a member of staff who will be responsible for its management until the process reaches its conclusion.

AHCS staff are generally available between 9am and 5pm, Mon - Fri. The direct contact details of the staff member will be provided to anyone raising a concern about a registrant to ensure that they can be contacted to answer questions about the procedures to be followed or the progress of the case.

If the staff member changes, the person raising the concern or complaint will be notified.

We aim to make decisions about concerns as quickly as possible. However, in some cases it may take longer, for example, where there are ongoing criminal or disciplinary investigations about a registrant.

6. Accessible information

Our process provides clear, straightforward information to everyone concerned in each case it deals with. Due to the nature of the fitness to practise process, there are sometimes complex legal and 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 and registrants, e.g. signing and communication services for people with hearing loss.

7. Safeguards

Confidentiality

We will treat all concerns raised with us in a confidential and sensitive manner.

All information received will be treated according to the AHCS Privacy Policy.

Frivolous, abusive and vexatious allegations

Our approach is designed to offer protection to those who raise concerns in good faith and in the reasonable belief of the individual or organisation making the disclosure that it indicates potential malpractice, impropriety or impaired fitness to practise.

If an individual or organisation raises a concern we consider to be frivolous or vexatious, particularly if they persist in doing so, we will close the concern and inform the individual that we will no longer enter into correspondence on the matter.

Everyone who contacts the AHCS will always 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.

If any individual is rude or abusive to our employees, steps may be taken to limit contact to email or written correspondence only.