

AHCS Policy

Complaints & Concerns

About Registrants

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1 Introduction

This document sets out the policy and process used by the Academy for Healthcare Science (AHCS) for handling concerns or complaints raised about any of its registrants.

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.

The AHCS welcomes constructive feedback on the way in which we implement this policy.

2 Raising a Concern or Complaint

Any individual or organisation wishing to raise a concern or make a complaint about an AHCS registrant should, in the first instance, contact the AHCS Registrar by email or telephone 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

Tel: 01455 244640

Telephone calls and emails will be answered promptly, but if this is not possible, we will respond at the earliest opportunity.

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

3 Case Management

The AHCS will formally acknowledge a concern or complaint within 2 working days of receipt.

Upon receipt of a concern or complaint, the AHCS Registrar will consider the information according to the AHCS Fitness to Practise Rules, to determine whether the concern or complaint amounts to a Formal Allegation or is an issue that can be resolved informally or by mediation.

If the concern or complaint is deemed to be a Formal Allegation, the Registrar will refer the matter to the AHCS Registration Council which will convene an Investigation Panel under the AHCS Fitness to Practise Rules.

The case will be assigned to a Case Officer who will be responsible for its management until the process reaches its conclusion.

AHCS Case Officers are generally available between 9am and 5pm, Mon - Fri. The direct contact details of the Case Officer will be provided to anyone raising a concern or making a complaint 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 Case Officer changes, the person raising the concern or complaint will be notified.

The AHCS aims to resolve each concern or complaint within 6 months of receipt. However, in some cases it may take longer e.g. where there is a health or character issue that requires investigation.

4 Communication of information

The AHCS policy is to provide clear, straightforward information to everyone concerned in each case it deals with. Due to the nature of the complaints 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.

The AHCS Registrar asks that provide any information requested promptly and in the form specified.

5 Safeguards

i. Protection

This policy is designed to offer protection to those who raise concerns or complaints provided the disclosure is made 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.

ii. Confidentiality

The AHCS will treat all such disclosures in a confidential and sensitive manner. The identity of the individual making the allegation may be kept confidential so long as it does not hinder or frustrate any investigation. However, the investigation process may reveal the source of the information and the individual making the disclosure will need to provide a statement as part of the evidence required.

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

iii. Anonymous Allegations

This policy encourages individuals to put their name to any disclosures they make. Concerns expressed anonymously will be taken seriously but are more difficult to investigate and explore thoroughly. They will be considered, at the discretion of AHCS Registrar, 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.

iv. Untrue Allegations

If an allegation is made in 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 malicious or vexatious allegation, and particularly if they persist in making them, disciplinary or legal action may be taken against them.
