

## Disciplinary Procedure - 'plain English' summary

*For the benefit of anyone wishing to make a Complaint about a Member of the ACP*

### What happens if you have concerns about the conduct of a member of the ACP?

Contact the ACP by letter, email or telephone. The ACP has a Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics (The Code) which all members are expected to follow. Your concerns will be looked at against these standards.

After discussing your concerns with the Chair of the Ethical Practice Group, the Chair may decide that it is right for them to be considered as a formal complaint.

### What happens next?

#### The Screening Group

- Your complaint will be looked at by the Screening Group. This is made up of the Chair of the EPG (Ethical Practice Group), a lay member and a child psychotherapist. They aim to make a decision within 20 working days of receiving the information.
- If the Group finds that the Member may have breached The Code, your issue will be fully investigated by an Investigating Panel.
- If the Group decides that your complaint does not indicate a possible breach of The Code the case will be closed and you will be informed.
- You will receive written information about the process and asked to give your consent to share information with the panel.
- A letter will be sent to the Member about whom you are complaining, informing them of the details of the complaint.
- If your complaint indicates that there may be an immediate risk of harm to anyone the Screening Group can impose conditions on the member immediately. More details of these are available in the full Disciplinary Procedure.

## Investigating Panel (IP)

- The IP is 2 members of the EPG, a lay member and a child psychotherapist, who are chosen by the Chair of the EPG.
- The IP looks at all the evidence submitted from the Member and yourself.
- The IP may interview people involved, including yourself. You can have support from a friend, family member or legal representative during the interview.
- The IP decides whether a Practice Review meeting OR a Disciplinary Hearing is needed. Sometimes it is decided not to continue further with the investigation. You will be given a full explanation of the decision, and the reasons for it.
- The IP aims to produce a report within 60 working days of their appointment.
- You will receive a copy of this report.

## The Practice Review

- Where the Member admits they were at fault the Practice Review is an opportunity for them to think in detail about what happened, and how they could have behaved differently.
- The Practice Review Panel is 2 members of the EPG who were not involved in the Investigating Panel. A lay member and a child psychotherapist.
- You will be invited to attend part of the Practice Review meeting to explain your concerns.
- You can have support from a friend or family member at this meeting.
- This meeting may complete the process or result in conditions of practice being imposed on the member.
- Occasionally it may be necessary to refer the complaint back to the Chair of the EPG to be re directed to a disciplinary hearing.
- The outcome of the Practice Review will be recorded by the ACP, but will not appear on its website.

## Disciplinary Panel (DP)

- The DP is 3 members of the EPG who were not involved in the Investigation. Ideally, 2 lay members and a child psychotherapist. A legal representative may also be part of the DP.
- The first meeting is called an Arrangements Meeting held within 30 days of their appointment. This is to decide how the Disciplinary Hearing should be conducted, and a date for the hearing. Full details can be found in the Disciplinary Procedure.
- The Disciplinary Hearing is where all of the evidence is heard. A member of the Investigating Panel presents the case concerning the Member's actions. Witnesses may be called. Then the Member may give evidence and call witnesses.

The outcome of this Hearing may be to:

- Find that there has been no breach of the Code; or
- Find that there has been a breach and impose conditions for future work (called sanctions). These may include any of the following:
  - to expel the Member from the ACP.
  - to suspend the Member from membership of the ACP for up to 3 years.
  - to impose conditions of practice on the Member.
  - to give a written warning to the Member
- You and the Member will receive a copy of the outcome in writing.
- If the DP decide there has been a breach, a summary of the breach and any sanctions imposed will appear on the ACP website.

The Member against whom a complaint is made can appeal a decision made by the Disciplinary Panel or the Practice Review.

**This ‘plain English’ Summary and the Flow Chart below are not official documents. Full details of the procedure and how a complaint should be prepared and dealt with can be found in the official document entitled DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES issued by the ACP.**

## FLOWCHART - OVERALL DISCIPLINARY PROCESS

