Information for Registrants Under Investigation

If you are a member of a union or a professional body, you may wish to contact them. The unions and professional bodies understand fitness to practise processes and are a good source of advice and support. They may also be able to offer legal support. Alternatively, you may wish to seek independent legal advice.

There are support organisations, such as the [Samaritans](http://www.samaritans.org/), which can give you emotional support if you need it.

**Communicating with us during the investigation process**

Communicating with us, especially with the help of an advisor, will make sure that your views are taken into account during the fitness to practise process. How you respond to any concerns raised about you are important factors in a panel’s assessment of whether your fitness to practise is impaired, should a case reach that stage. It may also help us decide whether a full contested hearing is required or not. Your early involvement in the process helps us to know whether there are any other issues, such as health concerns, that may need to be taken into account.

To make sure that you receive correspondence from us it is important that we have your up-to-date contact details. You can update your address or other contact details through your online profile account. Alternatively you can contact our administration team who will be able to assist with changes to your contact details (registration@ahcs.ac.uk ).

We appreciate that the fitness to practise process can be stressful. You may appoint a representative to act on your behalf during the process, such as from your union or professional body, a legal advisor or a friend or family member. If we have your consent to do so, we can communicate with your representative directly.

**Continuing to work in your profession under AHCS Registration**

You can continue to practise while we investigate your case unless we have imposed Interim Measures on your registration. Interim Measures may place restrictions on your practice or prevent you from practising under AHCS registration altogether. We will tell you if we intend to apply for Interim Measures.

You cannot remove yourself from our Register while there is an ongoing fitness to practise investigation and must continue to pay your registration fee and complete your annual renewal.

**What you can expect from us during an investigation**

We investigate all cases objectively and independently and do not take the side of either you or the person who raised the concerns and will treat you fairly and explain what will happen at each stage of the process.

The Fitness to Practise Administrator will be the primary contact for all parties (ftpadmin@rccp.co.uk) who will manage the case throughout the process and gather relevant

information and keep you to date with the progress of the investigation. They cannot give you legal advice but they can explain how the process works, what information we require.

**Keeping you informed**

We will try to complete our investigations as quickly and efficiently as possible and aim to have a case considered by the Assessment Committee within six months of receipt of a concern (if the concern meets our threshold); and hold a final hearing within nine months of the Assessment Committee panel’s decision that there is a case to answer.

While these are our aims, the time a case takes to reach the end of the process can vary depending on how complicated the issues are. This can affect the type of investigation we need to carry out. Each stage of the process may take a shorter or longer period of time.

The Fitness to Practise Administrator will write to you regularly to keep you informed of the progress of the case.

**Reasonable adjustments**

We aim for our processes to be fair and inclusive, and appreciate that everyone has different needs.

If you require any adjustments for example to the format of documents (such as braille, enlarged print or electronic formats) or to address specific learning difficulties or health issues, please inform the Fitness to Practise Administrator as soon as possible.

**What our investigation involves**

When we receive a concern, we will acknowledge the raised concern in writing to the complainant and inform the Registrant concerned. The Fitness to Practise Administrator under the guidance of the Deputy Registrar may ask for more information from both the complainant and/or Registrant before making a decision if the concern meets our Standards of Acceptance criteria (threshold criteria) for fitness to practise investigations.

When we write to you we will give you some examples of what you might want to consider including in your response. For example, you may want to include a timeline of events that gave rise to the concern, and, if this applies, any learning from the events and any actions you have taken to put things right. You may want to get advice from your union or professional body (if you are a member), or seek independent legal advice, before you respond.

We will not give your response to the person who raised the concern about you. However, we may need to ask them questions arising from the points you make.

If the threshold is met the raised concern and any documentation will be referred to our Assessment Committee for preliminary investigation, who will decide if there is a case to answer or not.

If we decide that the threshold has not been met we will close the case and take no further action and will write to all parties including the reasons why this decision was reached.

**Assessment Committee Panel**

During this initial investigation the Assessment Committee may request more information from all parties involved before reaching a decision. They may also notify your employer and request information from them directly, depending on the nature of the concern. This information is required to assist the Assessment Committee decision process in deciding whether the concern, and the information gathered, amounts to a registrant’s fitness to practise being impaired. We will take into account whether the matter could amount to a breach of the RCCP’s Standards .

**Serious concerns**

Some concerns we receive are so serious that they will meet the threshold criteria at the point we decide that a concern is within our remit. Examples of serious concerns include serious violence, sexual offences or serious or sustained dishonesty. This is not a full list.

These cases will be referred automatically to the Assessment Committee. This is because, if proven, they are likely to result in us taking action on a registrant’s registration. Further information about the serious concerns process is available in our Standards of Acceptance (Threshold Policy) for Fitness to Practise Investigations.