



UK Board of Healthcare Chaplaincy

December 2016

Raising concerns or a complaint regarding a UKBHC Registrant or the UKBHC Board

Raising a concern or a complaint about a UKBHC Registrant

1. If a member of the public or a professional colleague has a concern that a UKBHC Chaplain or a member of a Chaplaincy Team may not meet the UKBHC standards and draws this to the attention of the UKBHC, we will investigate and where necessary take action to protect the public. In most cases concerns should be raised locally. The employer or chaplaincy team can often resolve these issues quickly. If the complainant feels that it is not appropriate to report directly to the employer or chaplaincy team the matter should be reported directly to the UKBHC.
2. The UKBHC Registrar will administer and facilitate the process of receiving a complaint, liaising with all relevant parties, gathering evidence, preparing an allegation and case report, referring appropriate cases to the Screening Committee and disposing of a range of suitable cases himself.
3. The UKBHC will support complainants in making complaints and will ensure provision of readily available advice and information on how to access support services appropriate to the complainant's needs.
4. Complaints may be made verbally or in writing and should also be accepted via any other method, for example, the telephone or electronically. The person

raising a concern may find it helpful to use the referral form. This can be accessed at:

<http://www.ukbhc.org.uk/sites/default/files/UKBHC%20Complaint%20Form.pdf>

5. If an individual needs help in filling in this form or set out an allegation, advice and help can be obtained by contacting the Registrar at:

iain.macritchie@nhs.net

and the UKBHC will do its best to help.

6. If the complainant is unable to put their concerns in writing the Registrar will arrange for the concerns to be documented following a conversation with the complainant and assistance can be offered in the formulating of a complaint.
7. All complaints received should be treated with equal importance regardless of how they are submitted. Complainants should be encouraged to speak openly and freely about their concerns and should be reassured that whatever they may say will be treated with appropriate confidence and sensitivity.
8. Complainants should be treated courteously and sympathetically and where possible involved in decisions about how their complaint is handled and considered. However received the first responsibility is to ensure that the complainant's immediate needs are being met. This may require urgent action before any matters relating to the complaint are addressed.
9. Where any delays are anticipated in handling the complaint the Registrar will advise the complainant of the reasons and keep them informed of progress.

Initial consideration of a complaint.

10. When a complaint or concern is received by the UKBHC it is logged and assessed in order to identify the nature of the allegation, and establish whether the

chaplain is on the Register and the complaint is in the form required by the UKBHC.

11. The complaint must be from a person who identifies themselves by full name and postal address, identifies the registrant(s) complained about, and describes the incident(s) or behaviour leading to the complaint, supported by appropriate evidence and includes the name(s) and contact details of any witness, and whether they are prepared to give evidence. An acknowledgement of receipt of the complaint should be made within **five working days**.
12. The Registrar will instigate investigations with the employer and/or the registrant's authorising faith community* or belief group*. If the complaint is capable of being resolved quickly and informally through discussion with the complainant and/or the chaplain(s) that will be considered.
13. If the issue cannot be resolved informally or calls into question the fitness to practice of the chaplain(s) formal proceedings will be initiated. In most circumstances it will be the employer and/or faith community or belief group who will take disciplinary action. The Registrar and subsequently the Screening Committee must satisfy themselves that any disciplinary action taken by an employer and /or faith community or belief group, against a UKBHC Chaplain, follows recognised good practice for example the guidance given to employers as set out by ACAS or the Labour Relations Agencies in Northern Ireland and Scotland.

***Faith community:** A recognisable group who share a belief system and usually undertake religious practices such as prayer, scripture reading, meditation and communal acts of worship.

***Belief group:** Any group which has a cohesive system of values or beliefs but which does not self-classify as a faith community.

Raising concerns or a complaint against the UKBHC Board.

14. Concerns or complaints against the Board may be made verbally or in writing and should also be accepted via any other method, for example, the telephone or electronically. The Registrar report all complaints to the Board
15. Complaints or concerns regarding the Board should be initially considered by the Board Secretary and Board Chair. Where possible the involvement of the

complainant throughout the consideration of their complaint will provide for a more flexible approach to the resolution of the issue.

Acknowledgement of the concern/complaint.

16. A complaint or concern should be **acknowledged within 5 working days of receipt**, and indicate that a **full response will be provided within 20 working days**. Where these response times are not possible an explanation should be provided to the complainant.
17. The acknowledgement should:
 - Seek to confirm the issues raised in the complaint;
 - Offer to discuss the issues.
18. If possible the complaint should be resolved quickly and informally through discussion with the complainant.

Investigation of the complaint/concern.

19. If the complaint is not to be resolved informally, the Board Chair will appoint a suitable person to investigate the complaint. Whoever undertakes the investigation will seek to understand the nature of the complaint and identify any issues. Complaints will be approached with an open mind, being fair to all parties.
20. Once the investigator has reached their conclusion they will prepare a draft report/response. The purpose is to record and explain the conclusions reached after the investigation of the complaint.

Responding to a complaint/concern.

21. A response should be sent to the complainant within **20 working days** of receipt of the complaint or, where that is not possible the complainant must be advised of the delay.
22. The response should be clear, accurate, balanced, simple and easy to understand. It should avoid technical terms, but where these must be used to describe a situation, an explanation of the term should be provided. The letter should:

- address the concerns expressed by the complainant and show that each element has been fully addressed;
- include an apology where things have gone wrong and
- report the action taken or proposed to prevent recurrence;

23. Once the final response has been signed and issued the Board Chair should ensure that all necessary follow-up action has been taken.