

Procedure for potential non-compliance of the Institute of Psychosexual Medicine (IPM) Code of Conduct by a member of the IPM

Introduction

The Institute of Psychosexual Medicine (IPM) is a professional organisation and is a registered charity (Unincorporated Association). Its Code of Conduct sets out the high standards members uphold to maintain and enhance the reputation of the IPM.

This procedure details the steps for handling a potential breach of this Code. Developing a procedure for such situations promotes fairness and transparency. The procedure will be communicated to members and made available on the IPM website.

Notification of potential non-compliance of Code of Conduct

The Chair of the IPM should be notified in writing or email regarding any potential non-compliance of the Code of Conduct or concerns about conduct.

Investigations

The Chair of the IPM will carry out any necessary investigations of a potential non-compliance to establish the facts. This may involve other IPM Council Members or any witnesses as appropriate. This may include holding an investigatory meeting with the member concerned. In other cases, this may involve the collation of evidence.

If investigations suggest a potential non-compliance of the Code of Conduct, it may be possible to deal with this informally using feedback and support. If informal resolution is not appropriate as the conduct is sufficiently unacceptable or when there is a pattern of such conduct, the member will be invited to a meeting.

Meeting with member concerned and right to be heard

The member will be invited to a meeting by the Chair, usually in writing or by email. The concern will be discussed and the member will be requested to put their case. The Chair will invite other IPM Council Members or witnesses as required. The member may be accompanied at the meeting by a friend, relative, colleague or other advocate.

At this meeting, the Chair will explain the concern and go through the evidence that has been gathered. The member is allowed to set out their case and answer any allegations.

Written minutes of the meeting will be kept and be confidential. The meeting may be recorded providing all attendees consent. The matter will be dealt with privately and only relevant information will be shared. Information and documents will not be shared with a wider audience.

The member should make every effort to attend the meeting. If the member repeatedly fails to attend a meeting, the reasons will be considered. The reason may be genuine, such as illness, or a refusal to face up to the issue. If the member continues to be unavailable, a decision may need to be made based on the available information.

Council decision

Following the above meeting, the matter will be discussed by the IPM Council. The timing of this meeting will be determined by the urgency of the case. An extraordinary Council Meeting may be required if the next scheduled Council Meeting is not early enough. This meeting may be face-to-face, virtual or other appropriate form of communication. If non-compliance of the Code of Conduct is established, a decision about any sanctions or actions will be decided by a simple majority. Possible sanctions are set out in the Code of Conduct. They will be used with due consideration and be proportionate.

Details of the case will be confidential, but there may be certain circumstances where Council may see fit to make a statement to the membership. Council may need to involve other agencies or organisations in some circumstances e.g. safeguarding concerns.

Member informed

The Chair of the IPM will inform the member of the Council decision in writing or by email.

Right to Appeal

If the member feels the decision is wrong or unjust they have a right to appeal. They should appeal in writing to the Chair stating the grounds for their appeal and within 15 working days.

The appeal should be heard impartially by another committee, if possible. The Chair of IPM will identify suitable people to conduct the appeal. Ideally, these would be from an external or umbrella organisation, such as RCOG or FSRH post-holders. There may be times when this is not possible and the appeal must be heard by the same IPM Council members. The member may be accompanied at the meeting by a friend, relative, colleague or other advocate.

Decision of appeal committee

The member will be informed of the decision in writing or email.

The decision of the appeal committee will be final.

References

1. IPM. Code of Conduct
2. IPM. Constitution
3. ACAS. Code of Practice on Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures 2015
4. The ACAS Guide. Discipline and Grievances at work 2020
5. Charity Commission. Rs7.Part B:Best Practice - some guidelines
6. General Medical Council. Good medical practice. London: GMC 2013
7. General Medical Council. Code of Conduct for Council members.www.gmc-uk.org
8. The Seven Principles of Public Life. www.gov.uk 1995
9. Nursing and Midwifery Council. The Code. London: NMC 2015
10. Chartered Society of Physiotherapy. Code of members' Professional values and Behaviour. London: CSP 2019
11. British Medical Association. BMA code of conduct. London: BMA 2018
12. Royal College of Physicians. RCP500 Code of Conduct. London 2018
13. Equality Act 2010