

JCCP Help and Support for Witnesses and Complainants

Introduction

When an allegation is made about a non-surgical cosmetic practitioner, the JCCP has to decide whether the case should proceed to a hearing in front of a fitness to practise panel or whether the case can be dealt with by other means, such as through internal resolution procedures managed by the Council's Case Managers and by procedures set down in the JCCP's Complaint's Procedure.

However, if the practitioner disputes the allegations, or for some other reason the case is to be heard by a JCCP fitness to practise panel, witnesses may be called to provide evidence at a hearing.

To prove the allegations, the JCCP must gather evidence to support its case. This will be made up of a number of documents including reports, correspondence, and written witness statements.

You may be asked to speak to a JCCP official on different aspects of the case or complaint. Arrangements will be made for you to discuss the complaint or case or to meet with the JCCP case/complaints investigator, who will allow you to ask any questions about the process.

Making a Complaint

It is recognised that raising a concern or making a complaint is stressful and that the JCCP will make every effort to support patients through the complaints process. A JCCP Patient Representative on the JCCP Board will be designated to provide an independent source of advice and support to complainants.

Complaints and concerns will be handled in the strictest confidence at all times. Care will be taken that information is only disclosed to those who have a demonstrable need to have access to it. Information will not be disclosed to patients or complainants unless the person who has provided the information has given explicit consent to the disclosure of that information. If the JCCP require consent from an individual they will send a consent form which can be signed and returned to the Council.

Complaints and concerns will be dealt with in the strictest of confidence.

Being a witness

Being a witness at a JCCP hearing is very important. When giving evidence before the Council's Fitness to Practice Committee, you are helping the panel by providing them with

first-hand information to help them understand what has happened and enable them to make a decision about a case.

The hearing date

Should our investigations result in us providing you with a request to attend a JCCP fitness to practise hearing we will contact you to discuss a hearing date and your availability to appear as a witness. Where possible, we will try to ensure that the hearing date coincides with a time when you are available. However, this may not always be possible as there are a number of other factors that will affect the date, as well as many other people to accommodate.

Please let your JCCP contact know as soon as possible about any specific travel or accommodation requirements that you may have. For example, if you are a wheelchair user or if you have a visual impairment.

We will let you know as soon as a date has been confirmed, and we offer to make arrangements for your travel etc.

Talking to someone about being a witness or making a complaint

Making a complaint or being a witness can be a stressful experience for some people. If you feel that you would like support, you might wish to speak to someone who can provide you with advice and support. The JCCP case officer will endeavour to provide you with confidential advice and support at any time whilst making a complaint and also before, during or after attending a hearing.

The support we can offer can provide:

- telephone support
- face to face support
- an opportunity to talk to someone confidentially about how you are feeling
- help to understand what happens during an investigation into a complaint about a JCCP Registrant
- an independent supporter who can accompany you on the day and be in the room while you give evidence to a hearing
- practical assistance to make sure the JCCP is aware of any arrangements that are needed to enable you to attend the hearing and help completing your expenses claim form
- sign-posting to other organisations that can provide further support.

This service is free and confidential.

Things to remember

Make sure you have all the information you need before the day of the hearing.

- Check that you know the location of the hearing centre – we will send you a map beforehand and we will also be available to discuss the venue with you at any time.
- Write down any questions you may have about being a witness and feel free to discuss these with your JCCP contact.
- Check the journey time to make sure you won't be late for the hearing.
- Bring your witness statement and other relevant documents to read through, as well as a book or some other activity to help keep you occupied while you wait to give evidence.

Support and assistance

We understand that the process may seem legalistic and can be intimidating: however, our staff are on hand to provide help and assistance to witnesses throughout the hearing process. This includes answering questions on the hearing process, assisting with travel arrangements and handling expense claim forms.

Should you need to talk to someone about anything to do with being a witness, please contact the person who notified you of the hearing who will be able to answer your questions.

Help for witnesses - After giving evidence

When you have finished giving evidence, you can choose to leave, or may remain to listen to the rest of the case proceedings. If you wish to stay, you will be shown to where you can sit.

You will be informed of the outcome of the hearing when it has finished. The timing of this will depend on the length of the hearing, but generally we aim to notify all parties within two weeks of the end of the hearing. If you do not hear anything, please ask your JCCP contact who will be able to advise you on the progress of the case and its outcome if it is known.

Other help available

If you are particularly concerned about meeting the JCCP Registrant who is the subject of the fitness to practise hearing, or anyone else involved in the case, it may be possible for someone to meet you and escort you to a private waiting area away from other witnesses. Unfortunately, it is not possible to guarantee that you will not meet other people involved in the case.

There may be factors that might make giving evidence particularly difficult for some witnesses. If you have a disability, illness or a condition, such as a depression or anxiety, a

learning difficulty, a physical disability, or you experience difficulty in social situations, then this may affect how you give evidence before a fitness to practise panel. The way in which you present evidence may also be affected in situations dependent upon the nature of the allegation, particularly if you are the alleged 'victim' or you feel intimidated due to your age, gender, race, cultural background or sexuality.

If you have any concerns about giving evidence or making a complaint, please raise this at an early stage with your JCCP contact. They will discuss your circumstances with you and let you know whether adjustments can be made to assist you to make your complaint or how give your evidence.

Contact us

If you would like to receive further information about the support we can offer to witnesses and complainants you can contact us by calling **TBA** or emailing **TBA**.

Claiming expenses

We will send you details of how to claim for out-of-pocket-expenses you may be entitled to for the period of time that you are required to attend in order to give evidence.

Giving feedback

We want to improve the service we provide and welcome any comments you might have following your experience as a witness or complainant.