

Professional registration-representation unit: advice for members

If you are a member of any of these professional registration bodies:

- CCW (Care Council for Wales)
- CRFP (Council for the Registration of Forensic Practitioners)
- GCC (General Chiropractic Council)
- GDC (General Dental Council)
- GOC (General Osteopathic Council)
- GPC (General Pharmaceutical Council)
- GSCC (General Social Care Council)
- HPC (Health Professions Council)
- NISCC (Northern Ireland Social Care Council)
- NMC (Nursing and Midwifery Council)
- SSSC (Scottish Social Services Council)

[For the ISA (Vetting & Barring) or Disclosure Scotland (Protection of Vulnerable Groups) schemes, see section below.]

and an allegation or complaint has been made against you and you have been disciplined or dismissed then it is likely that you will be referred to your professional registration body for investigation. A Committee of the registration body will then consider whether or not, as a result of the allegation or complaint:

- **your fitness to practice is impaired**
- **you are suitable to remain on your professional register with or without restriction**
- **you are no longer suitable to remain on your professional register.**

Note

In certain circumstances a referral may be made even before the internal disciplinary procedure has been completed. Separately you may be referred to the ISA which operates the Vetting & Barring Scheme in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, or to Disclosure Scotland which operates the Protection of Vulnerable Groups scheme (see section below).

If you are under investigation by your professional body, or are likely to be you should:

- 1.** Act quickly!
- 2.** If your professional body informs you that you are under investigation for any allegations or complaints, or if you think that you might be referred for investigation in the future – tell your local UNISON branch immediately.
- 3.** Give your local UNISON representative a copy of any documents that your professional body has sent to you about their investigations.
- 4.** Give your local UNISON representative a copy of any documents you have about the complaints/allegations, including copies of the notes of any relevant meetings or disciplinary hearings.
- 5.** Make a note of anyone who might, in future, be able to give you information about the incident that led to the complaint (eg a witness statement).
- 6.** Make a note of any information that might assist your case in the future (eg list medical or any client records relevant to the incident that led to the allegation or complaint).
- 7.** Your professional body will ask you to respond to the allegations or complaints by a certain date and they will use your response to help them decide whether there is a ‘case to answer’ against you, which will require further investigation and, possibly, a hearing – do not submit your response without UNISON guidance.
- 8.** Your professional body may ask you to attend a short notice hearing where they will consider whether they should impose an Interim Order (ie suspension or conditions of practice); if they do, you must contact your UNISON branch at once to ask for UNISON representation at the Interim Orders hearing. This will usually be a case officer based at UNISON head office.

Your UNISON branch representative will:

- 1.** Ask you to complete a UNISON case form or update your case form if you have previously completed one.
- 2.** Refer the matter urgently to the regional office for assistance.

Your UNISON regional representative will:

- 1.** Ask you and the registration body for all documents about the complaint, including any evidence supporting you and the allegations against you.
- 2.** Interview you to assess the strengths and weaknesses of your case.
- 3.** Help you to write your response to any investigations into the allegations or complaints; and help you to identify relevant documents to attach to your written response.

If your registration body decides to hold a conduct, competence or health hearing:

The regional representative who assisted you with your written response to the investigating committee will refer your case to a

specialist case officer at UNISON's head office who will then contact you.

- 1.** Don't agree any hearing dates without the agreement of your UNISON head office representative.
- 2.** Tell the registration body the name of the UNISON officer who is representing you at the hearing.
- 3.** Inform your UNISON representative immediately that there will be a hearing.
- 4.** Agree to the terms of UNISON representation (see UNISON case referral form).
- 5.** Maintain your UNISON subscriptions for membership at the appropriate level.
- 6.** Attend meetings with your UNISON representative to discuss your case and how it will be managed throughout the registration body process.

Your UNISON representative at head office will:

- 1.** Liaise with the registration body at all stages leading up to and during the hearing.
- 2.** Meet with you (in person at their office, by video conference or by

telephone) to discuss your case and help write your witness statement to respond to the allegations/complaints against you.

3. Commission expert witnesses as necessary.
4. Advise you on your case.
5. Represent you at the hearing.

Your UNISON branch will provide further assistance including:

- Payment of reasonable, relevant expenses for you and any of your witnesses attending a hearing.
- Arrange travel and hotel accommodation for you and your witnesses as necessary.

If you receive notice of an investigation under the Vetting & Barring, or Protection of Vulnerable Groups, schemes, you should:

1. Act quickly!
2. Follow the guidance for professional body investigations above.

Your UNISON regional representative will:

Advise and assist you to collate evidence and to make the appropriate written representations.

Where the same allegations are also being investigated by your registration body, the PRRU case officer handling your case at head office will assist you.

Workers who come into regular contact with children or vulnerable adults must be registered under the VBS (England, Wales and N Ireland) or the PVGS (Scotland). Where an allegation is made against you that, if proven, may impair your suitability to work with children or vulnerable adults, a complaint can be made whether or not the same complaint has been made to your registration body (if you have one).

If you are notified that you are under investigation under one of these schemes you will have only eight weeks to make written representations. Your ability to continue to work in future may depend on those representations. So you must contact your branch immediately.