CNHC Complementary & Natural Healthcare Council

INFORMATION LEAFLET

How CNHC deals with complaints

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Live from November 2026

Email: complaints@cnhc.org.uk
Telephone: 020 3327 2720
www.cnhc.org.uk

professional standards authority accredited register

CYBER ESSENTIALS CERTIFIED PLUS

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Need help making a complaint?

If writing your complaint down is likely to be a problem, contact us by telephone or email and we will do our best to arrange for someone to help you.

complaints@cnhc.org.uk

Telephone: **020 3327 2720**

Contact us

Email is our main way of contacting people.

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Telephone: **020 3327 2720**
Website: **www.cnhc.org.uk**

About CNHC

The Complementary and Natural Healthcare Council (CNHC) is the UK voluntary regulator for complementary therapists. We were set up with government support to protect the public. Our Register is accredited by the Professional Standards Authority for Health and Social Care (PSA).

Our main duties are to:

- set standards of education and training for the therapies we register
- set standards of conduct, performance and ethics
- keep a Register of practitioners who meet our standards
- deal with complaints about registered practitioners (registrants).

The therapies we register

- Alexander Technique Teaching
- Aromatherapy
- Bowen Therapy
- Colon Hydrotherapy
- Craniosacral Therapy
- Healing
- Hypnotherapy
- Kinesiology
- Massage Therapy
- Microsystems Acupuncture
- Naturopathy
- Nutritional Therapy
- Reflexology
- Reiki
- Shiatsu
- Sports Massage
- Sports Therapy
- Yoga Therapy

Before you complain

Some concerns can be sorted out straight away by talking to the therapist, so we suggest you try this first. We understand that sometimes you may prefer to contact us straight away.

Making your complaint

Please complain in writing, using our complaint form. You can ask someone to fill it in for you. If writing your complaint down would be difficult, contact us by telephone or email and we will help you.

We need to know who you are, because we share the complaint with the registrant and may need to ask you for more information. We do not normally act on anonymous complaints, but we will always consider serious and credible concerns about a registrant.

Every complaint is considered on its merits, and making several complaints does not count against you. In rare cases, our Chief Executive can close a complaint as vexatious, for example where it repeats a complaint we have already decided without any new information. We will tell you why in writing, and the Chief Executive's decision is final. If someone's frequent complaints become an abuse of our process, we will tell them in writing that further complaints may still be looked into and resolved without us acknowledging them or keeping them updated. We will still deal with, and acknowledge, any concern we identify about a registrant's fitness to practise or serious harm to the public. Our Frequent, Vexatious and Abusive Complaints Policy explains this, and how we respond to unreasonable or abusive behaviour.

Email: **complaints@cnhc.org.uk** (our main contact method) · Telephone: 020 3327 2720 · www.cnhc.org.uk

What we can and cannot deal with

We can deal with complaints or concerns about:

- care or advice you received from one of our registrants
- business practices that could disadvantage or exploit clients, including advertising
- the physical or mental health of a registrant
- any part of a registrant's professional or personal behaviour that is relevant to their fitness to practise.

The PSA requires us to deal with complaints about other therapies our registrants practise, including a therapy they are not CNHC registered for. For example, a registrant who practises Aromatherapy and Reflexology but is registered with us for Aromatherapy only.

Time limit

Unless there are exceptional circumstances, we cannot consider something that happened, or that you became aware of, more than two years ago.

We cannot deal with

- complaints about companies or clinics, rather than individual registrants
- claims for compensation. All CNHC registrants must have insurance, and will give you the details if you ask.

How we will contact you

Email is our main way of contacting you. Letters, decisions and other documents will be sent to the email address you give us. Please tell us straight away if your contact details change.

If you need us to contact you another way, for example as a reasonable adjustment or because of an accessibility need, please tell us. We will make the arrangements and record what we have agreed.

Your complaint at a glance

HOW A COMPLAINT MOVES THROUGH OUR PROCESS

1. Receive and assess
Day 1

Complaint received
We acknowledge it by email and explain the process.

Early resolution assessment
Is the complaint suitable for informal resolution?

Immediate risk to the public?
The Registrar can make an urgent Interim Order for up to 56 days. This can happen at any stage.
56 days

2. Resolve or investigate
Informal resolution or investigation

Informal resolution
An Early Resolution Officer helps the complainant and registrant agree a way forward. If it does not work, the complaint is investigated.
normally 4 weeks

Investigation
The registrant sends their client records and a written response. The complainant can comment on the response.
7 / 28 / 14 days

3. Case Examiners
Two lay Case Examiners, with PSB expert input

No further action
No realistic prospect of a finding of impairment.

Warning
Not published. Kept on record.

Accepted outcome
Caution or Restriction of Practice Order, accepted by the registrant in writing.
28 days to accept

Referral to a Panel
Where a hearing is needed, or the registrant does not accept.

4. Panel
Conduct and Competence or Health Panel

Consensual disposal
The registrant admits the allegations in full and an agreed outcome is put to the Panel.

Hearing
Facts, grounds, impairment, then sanction.

Possible outcomes
No further action, Caution, Restriction of Practice Order, Suspension or Removal.

5. After the decision
Notice, publication, challenge

Notice of Decision
Sent to the registrant and complainant.
within 7 days

Publication
Accepted outcomes and Panel sanctions are published. Warnings are not.

Review or appeal
Review of Case Examiner decisions. Appeal against Panel decisions.
28 days

Case closed
Orders are reviewed before they end. Restoration is possible after 5 years.

Dealing with complaints informally

First, we decide whether your complaint can be dealt with informally. This means one of our staff, an Early Resolution Officer, will help you and the registrant agree a way forward. For example, the registrant might explain what happened, apologise, or change something about how they work.

Informal resolution is not used for serious concerns. These include harm or risk of harm to a client, safeguarding, sexual misconduct or abuse of trust, dishonesty, fraud or other criminal acts, lapses in competence, findings by another regulator, serious health concerns or substance misuse, and a pattern of complaints.

If you are the registrant's client, we will ask you to agree before we offer informal resolution to the registrant. We usually expect it to be completed within **four weeks**. If it does not work, or new information changes the nature of the complaint, we will investigate it formally.

Investigating your complaint

We will send the registrant a copy of your complaint. They must send us their original client records within **7 days**, and we will send you a copy for information. They have **28 days** to send a written reply.

We will send you the registrant's reply, and you will have **14 days** to comment on it if you want to. The registrant will see your comments. If your health records are relevant, we will ask for your permission before getting them.

If it is needed, we will ask a member of the relevant Profession Specific Board (PSB) to write an expert report.

1. **Client records**
   Registrant sends them
   7 days
2. **Registrant's reply**
   Sent to you
   28 days
3. **Your comments**
   Sent to the registrant
   14 days
4. **Case Examiners**
   Consider everything
   normally 28 days

The Case Examiners' decision

Two independent Case Examiners, who are lay members of our Professional Committee, look at all the information in private. We will tell you when they will meet. They decide whether there is a **realistic prospect** that a Panel would find the registrant's fitness to practise is impaired. They can:

Take no further action

Where there is no realistic prospect. We will explain why.

Issue a warning

Not published, but kept on record and shared with you.

Propose an accepted outcome

A Caution or a Restriction of Practice Order, which the registrant must accept in writing. We will ask for your views first.

You have 14 days to comment

Send the case to a Panel

The Conduct and Competence Panel or the Health Panel, for a hearing.

What is an accepted outcome?

An accepted outcome lets a complaint be concluded without a hearing, where the facts are clear and a Caution or restrictions on the registrant's practice would protect the public. The registrant has to accept the Case Examiners' findings and the outcome. If they do not, the case goes to a Panel. Accepted outcomes are published, just like Panel decisions. They are never used for the most serious concerns, such as sexual misconduct, dishonesty or serious harm.

If you disagree with the decision

You, the registrant or CNHC can ask for the Case Examiners' decision to be reviewed within **28 days**. A review is carried out by someone who has not been involved in the case. You need to explain why: for example, that the procedure was not followed, there is new information, or the decision does not protect the public.

If there is an urgent risk

In very serious cases, where there could be an immediate risk to the public, our Registrar can suspend the registrant or restrict their practice for up to 56 days. This is called an **Interim Order**. Our Investigating Committee or a Panel then decides whether a longer Interim Order is needed while the complaint is dealt with.

Panel hearings

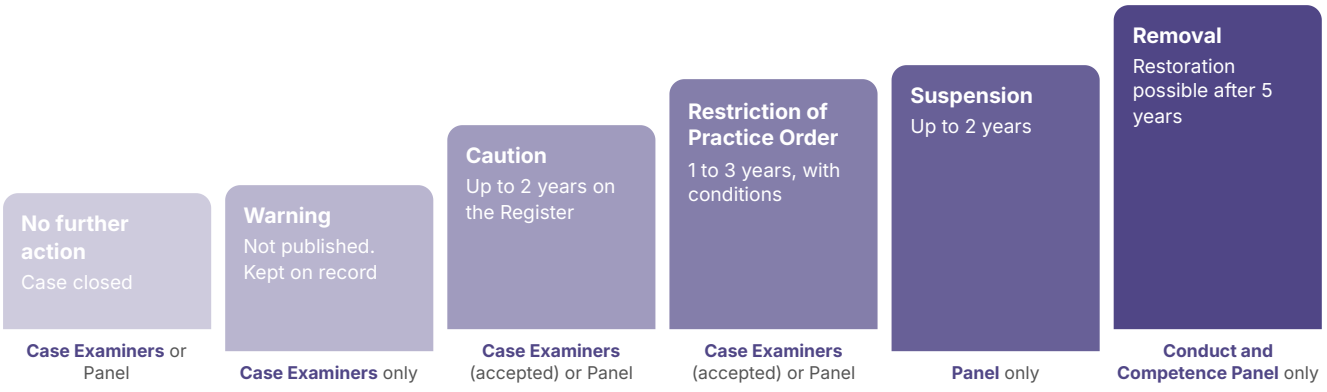
Hearings of the Conduct and Competence Panel take place in private, at an agreed/communicated location. We will send you a copy of the Notice of Hearing, and the date will be published on our website 28 days in advance.

Before the hearing, we will invite you to make a statement of evidence. With your agreement, a solicitor will contact you by telephone or email to go over your complaint, draft your statement and send it to you for comments. You will then take the final version to a local solicitor to witness your signature. We will pay the solicitors' fees.

We will ask you to give evidence at the hearing and will pay for your agreed travel costs and, if you need it, overnight accommodation. A member of CNHC staff will be there to answer your questions about the process, although they cannot discuss the case with you.

At the hearing, the Panel decides whether CNHC has proved its case. If it has, the Panel can take no further action, or:

WHAT A PANEL CAN DECIDE



The purpose of a sanction is not to punish the registrant, but to protect the public.

Consensual disposal

Before the hearing, the registrant can admit all the allegations and propose an outcome. This is called **consensual disposal**. We will ask for your views. If the Panel accepts the proposal, you will not need to attend the hearing.

Health Panel

The Health Panel meets in private. The arrangements for your evidence are the same. It can take no further action, issue a Caution, restrict the registrant's practice, suspend them for up to two years, or refer the case to the Conduct and Competence Panel, which can remove a registrant from the Register.

After a decision

Whatever the outcome, we will send you and the registrant a copy of the decision and the reasons within seven days of a hearing.

We publish Panel sanctions and accepted outcomes on our website and the registrant's Register entry while they are in force. We never publish your name or details of anyone's health.

A Panel sanction normally takes effect 28 days after the decision is sent, or after any appeal. Where there is a risk to the public, the Panel can make an Interim Order to cover that time.

The registrant can appeal against a Panel decision within **28 days**. CNHC can also appeal against a sanction. An accepted outcome cannot be appealed, because the registrant has accepted it.

Support for you

We know that being involved in a complaint can be stressful and worrying, whether you have raised a concern or a concern has been raised about you. We offer the same support to complainants and registrants.

If your complaint is dealt with informally, your point of contact is the Early Resolution Officer. If it goes to our formal procedures, you will have a named contact at CNHC who will keep you informed at each stage and explain what decisions mean. They cannot advise you on what to do or on what the outcome should be. Please tell your contact if you are finding things difficult. We will make reasonable adjustments if you need them, and we can consider giving you more time to respond.

You may also find it helpful to talk to someone outside CNHC. The organisations below are independent of us, and talking to them will not affect your complaint. If you are a registrant, your professional association or insurer may also be able to help.

Organisation	How they can help	Contact
Samaritans	Someone to talk to about anything, at any time	**116 123** (free, 24 hours a day). Welsh language line: 0808 164 0123 www.samaritans.org
Shout	Confidential crisis support by text, if you would rather not talk	Text **SHOUT** to **85258** (24 hours a day) giveusashout.org
Mind (England and Wales)	Mental health information and support	**0300 123 3393** (Monday to Friday, 9am to 6pm, except bank holidays) www.mind.org.uk
NHS 111 (England)	Urgent mental health help	Call **111** and select the mental health option 111.nhs.uk
C.A.L.L. (Wales)	Mental health listening and advice	**0800 132 737** (24 hours a day)

Organisation	How they can help	Contact
Breathing Space (Scotland)	Someone to talk to if you are feeling low or anxious	**0800 83 85 87** (Monday to Thursday, 6pm to 2am; Friday 6pm to Monday 6am) www.breathingspace.scot
Lifeline (Northern Ireland)	Crisis counselling	**0808 808 8000** (24 hours a day) www.lifelinehelpline.info
Citizens Advice	Free, independent advice, including on money, work and legal questions	England: **0800 144 8848** Wales: **0800 702 2020** Scotland: **0800 028 1456** www.citizensadvice.org.uk
Advice NI (Northern Ireland)	Free, independent advice	**0800 915 4604** www.adviceni.net
Victim Support (England and Wales)	Support if you have been affected by crime	**0808 16 89 111** (free, 24 hours a day) www.victimsupport.org.uk
Rape Crisis (England and Wales)	Support if you have been affected by rape or sexual abuse, however long ago	**0808 500 2222** (free, 24 hours a day) rapecrisis.org.uk

If you or someone else is in immediate danger, or you do not feel able to keep yourself safe, call **999** or go to A&E.

Contact us

EMAIL (OUR MAIN CONTACT METHOD)
complaints@cnhc.org.uk

TELEPHONE
020 3327 2720

WEBSITE
www.cnhc.org.uk

Document control

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Questions about this document: email **complaints@cnhc.org.uk** (our main contact method) or telephone 020 3327 2720.