

Timeline for processing complaints

Article 12.6 Procedure

How long will it take to deal with my complaint?

There are several key stages in the complaints procedure and the following timeframes will give you an indication as to these stages and how long each stage may take.

If your complaint is taken through the procedure, we would aim to complete the process within 9-16 months. At the outset of a complaint, the gathering of information, assessment and allocation, and communication with the parties involves investment in time, and you will find below the estimate of these timings, for each stage. Please bear in mind that some complaints are more complicated and can take longer to prepare and to receive all the information we need. The outcome of an investigation can affect a member's ability to practice, so we must ensure we have all the information needed to proceed.

Aims

1. We aim to meet the timeframes listed below; however, where we are unable to, or there is a delay, we will let you know.
2. We aim to update you at appropriate and regular intervals during the process unless you ask us not to. This may be by email, letter or telephone, our preferred method of contact will be by email.

Stage	Action	Timeframe for each stage
Complaint received by BACP	Acknowledge Receipt	Within 1 week
Initial Internal Assessment of complaint against requirements of Article 12.6 Procedure	Review of complaint information and evidence submitted	4-6 weeks to be assessed. If further info is required allow 2-3 weeks. (Total 12 weeks max)
Allocation to relevant person processing the case	The relevant person may contact the Referrer and the Member to request any relevant evidence or information	2 weeks. If further info is required allow 2 weeks and 1 further week if chasing. (Max 5 weeks)

Stage	Action	Timeframe for each stage
Report preparation and BACP Registrar decision making	On receipt of any information, the relevant person will prepare a report for the Registrar who can decide to refer the matter to an Article 12.6 Panel; close the case or refer it to be processed through the Professional Conduct Procedure.	2 weeks
Referral to an Article 12.6 Panel	Where the matter is referred for panel consideration the Member will be notified of the allegation to respond to.	6-8 weeks
Panel Decision	The Panel can decide to withdraw membership or close the matter.	Article 12.6 Panel decision to be notified to parties within 14 days of the date the Panel convened
Registrar Decision to close	Where the Registrar decides matter should be closed the parties will be notified.	6-8 weeks
Registrar decision to refer through the Professional Conduct Procedure	The Member will be notified and given an opportunity to make a response	2 weeks
Application of Threshold Test	On receipt of any response the Threshold Test will be applied. Where the matter passes this test, a report will be prepared for the Investigation and Assessment Committee (IAC) to consider	2 to 3 weeks
IAC to consider the matter	On completion of the IAC summary report an IAC will be convened to consider the matter	2 to 3 weeks

Stage	Action	Timeframe for each stage
Notification of IAC decision	The IAC may decide to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask for further information • Dismiss the complaint • Allocate the complaint to a professional conduct hearing Invite a consensual disposal	IAC decision to be notified to parties within 4 weeks of the date the IAC convened
Case proceeding to a Practice Review or Disciplinary Proceedings Hearing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case Preparation and listing of case 	12 to 24 weeks (4-6 months) depending on the nature and complexity of the case
Member invited to enter into a Consensual Disposal	Where the IAC decide that the case should be settled by a consensual disposal and agreement will be drafted by the IAC and finalised between the Member and the Chair of the IAC	6 to 10 weeks from the date the IAC convened