

The National Clinical Assessment Service

www.ncas.nhs.uk

Who we are

NCAS helps improve patient safety by helping to resolve concerns about the professional practice of doctors, dentists and pharmacists in the UK and overseas. We provide expert advice and support, clinical assessment and training to the NHS and other healthcare partners.

NHS managers and commissioners with concerns about a practitioner's performance should contact us at the earliest opportunity. Most of our services are free of charge to the NHS.

Update

On 1 April 2013 we will join the NHS Litigation Authority and leave our current host, the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence. This will enable us to focus on our shared common purpose of improving patient safety. We will continue to offer a free at the point of use service to the NHS in 2013/14. As DH England confirmed on 1 August 2012 by letter, *Ministers recognise that the transition to a self-funding model needs to be carefully planned and have not set a date by which NCAS will be independent of central funding*

Our mission, vision and values

Our mission

Bringing expertise to the resolution of concerns about professional practice

Our vision

To be an internationally recognised innovator and provider of choice, informing best practice in managing performance concerns

Our values

Respect

We respect and value others, we appreciate and celebrate diversity, we commit to and contribute to effective teamwork both internally and externally.

Integrity

We are open, transparent and ethical in our dealings with others.

Excellence

We constantly seek to improve standards, we embrace change and are open and responsive to feedback.

Empowerment

We enable staff to develop and grow in a safe environment, we take ownership and responsibility for our contribution to the success of NCAS.

A learning organisation

We are a learning organisation, building and sharing knowledge, learning from success and failure and taking responsibility for personal development.

Services Offered

Suspension or exclusion

NCAS offers advice on the use of suspension and exclusion of practitioners. We aim to ensure that these measures are used only when absolutely necessary and for the shortest time consistent with understanding and resolving the concern. NCAS also monitors the number of episodes, how they arise and how they are resolved.

If you are considering excluding an employed doctor or dentist who is subject to the *Maintaining High Professional Standards* framework, you should contact NCAS to discuss the situation before any move to formal exclusion is made. Primary care organisations are required to notify NCAS where they have suspended a practitioner on the Performers List.

Health Professionals Alert Notices

NCAS is developing, at the request of the Department of Health (England), a Health Professionals Alert Notices database (HPAN). HPAN will enable health care employers and contracting bodies to access information about current alert notices about any health care professional in an effective and timely manner. It will also facilitate the local management of alert notices to ensure that the information available is always up to date.

Mediation

NCAS employs several trained and accredited mediators who can help resolve conflict in the work environment and resolve employment disputes. Mediation is a formal process governed by accepted rules and procedures and so it is important that both parties understand and agree to the process.

Assessment services

We now provide a range of assessment services:

1. Performance assessment: An NCAS assessment offers a way forward in cases where an independent view on the practitioner's performance may be helpful. The purpose of an NCAS assessment is to clarify concerns and to identify factors that may be contributing to the difficulties, in order that they may be effectively addressed and resolved. NCAS assessment includes assessment of the practitioner's health, behaviour, clinical skills and context of practice. We produce a report with recommendations for improvement and resolution of the case. [More](#)

2. Assessment of health: Where concerns about a practitioner include some health component, NCAS may advise the employing/contracting body to consider an assessment of their health. We can provide this or we can offer advice to referring bodies who may wish to commission their own occupational health assessment. [More](#)

3. Assessment of behavioural concerns: Where there are concerns about an individual's behaviour we can offer an assessment to provide an independent view

on whether there are behavioural factors that are causing concern and make recommendations for addressing any difficulties identified. More

4. Assessment of communicative competence: An NCAS performance assessment may also include, where appropriate, an assessment of the practitioner's communicative competence. The purpose of this assessment component is to review, in the clinical context, a practitioner's ability to communicate effectively with patients and colleagues. In some circumstances, NCAS may be able to offer an assessment of communicative competence as a stand-alone assessment component. More

5. Regulatory assessment: NCAS may carry out performance assessments on behalf of health profession regulators with a specification agreed between NCAS and the regulator. The assessment will include some or all of the components of the NCAS performance assessment.
More

Must knows - England

PROFESSIONAL CODES

Good Medical Practice (2006) - the medical profession's rules of behaviour, drawn up and regularly updated by the General Medical Council.

Standards for Dental Professionals - the dental profession's conduct rules, kept under revision by the General Dental Council.

Standards of conduct, ethics and performance
- published by the General Pharmaceutical Council, the regulator for pharmacists, pharmacy technicians and pharmacy premises in England, Scotland and Wales.

NATIONAL CONTRACTS AND PROCEDURES

Employed dentists and doctors

Maintaining High Professional Standards in the Modern NHS - guidance on processes to use where there are serious concerns involving health, conduct or capability, for dentists and doctors not covered by performers list regulations.

Doctors in primary care

The National Health Service (Personal Medical Services Contracts) Regulations 2004 SI 2004 No 627 (pdf 325kb)

The National Health Service (General Medical Services Contracts) Regulations 2004 SI 2004 No 291 (pdf 363kb)

GMS Statement of Financial Entitlements (SFE) 2005 onwards

- the contractual terms on which general medical practitioners provide services to the NHS.

Primary Care Trust Medical Services (No. 2) Directions 2005 - rules governing the provision of primary medical services by PCTs, as distinct from PCT commissioning or contracting.

Alternative Provider Medical Services (No. 2) Directions 2005

- setting out minimum standards and requirements for PCT contracts with non-NHS

bodies for provision of primary medical services.

The National Health Service (Performers Lists) Regulations 2004 No 585 (pdf 141kb) with subsequent amendments – SI 2004 No 2694 (pdf 82.4kb), 2005 No 3491 (pdf 62.3kb), SI 2005 No 893 (pdf 130kb) and SI 2006 No 1385 (pdf 10.9kb) together with Department of Health guidance on list management in Primary Medical Performers Lists – Delivering Quality in Primary Care (pdf 18.9kb)

- the framework under which PCTs can take action on conduct, competence or performance concerns.

Dentists in primary care

The National Health Service (General Dental Service Contracts) Regulations 2005
The National Health Service (Personal Dental Services Agreements) Regulations 2005

- the terms on which dentists in primary care in England provide services to the NHS.

The National Health Service (Performers Lists) Amendment Regulations 2005

- procedures for dealing with concerns about their performance, used alongside the 2004 and 2005 Performers List Regulations and amendments already listed above in the doctors section.

Primary Care Trust Dental Services Directions 2006

- rules governing the provision of primary dental services by PCTs, as distinct from PCT commissioning or contracting.

Pharmacists

The National Health Service (Pharmaceutical Services) Regulations 2012

- the principle terms on which pharmacies work with primary care trusts in England

The Pharmacy Order 2010

- arrangements for the professional regulation of pharmacists in England, Wales and Scotland.

NCAS newsletter

The easy way to keep in touch with developments in NCAS is to read our newsletter. We launched it at the end of last year and it will be a quarterly publication from April, with news of services, staff, new casework research findings and more. If you are not already on our mailing list, you can subscribe online.

- Update: 26 November 2012
- Issue 4: October 2012
- Update: 07 August 2012