

Urgent Protection Policy

(Feb 2016)

Last updated: Aug 2018

Last reviewed: July 2021

Policy Statement

Immediately upon being informed that the actions of a Registrant are putting at risk, or are likely to put at risk, the safety or wellbeing of a client or other member of the public, the HGI Registration and Professional Standards Committee (RPSC) will take steps to mitigate that risk.

Such actions by therapists include breach of professional boundaries, manipulative or predatory behaviour, abuse of trust and professional incompetence likely to cause harm to clients.

Urgent Protection Process

Allegations concerning the harmful actions of therapists will, in general, be made by clients themselves or concerned third parties, such as relatives/carers, friends or professionals with whom the client is in contact. A concern might also be raised by another member of the HGI via the [HGI Whistleblower policy](#) or by a therapist's supervisor.

In most cases, notifications of concern regarding risk to clients and other members of the public will be communicated to the HGI office at Church Farm, Church Farm Lane, Chalvington, East Sussex, BN37 3TD by either telephone, e-mail or letter. On receipt of a notification, the HGI Membership Secretary, or in their absence, another member of staff, shall immediately telephone a Co-chair of the RPSC or the Complaints Coordinator, alerting them to the situation.

Where the individual notifying the concern believes there is risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult, the HGI Membership Secretary shall advise them to contact their local social services department, or if necessary, the police.

On receipt of a notification of concern, the RPSC Complaints Coordinator shall, at the earliest opportunity, communicate with the concerned party, obtaining further information as required and assuring them that appropriate action will be taken to mitigate the risk in question.

Mitigation of Risk

At the earliest opportunity, two or more members of the RPSC, to include a Co-chair of the RPSC, shall decide on how best to mitigate the identified risk. In cases where a therapist appears to pose a risk to clients or other members of the public steps shall be taken to suspend the therapist from practising, after they have been heard and their objections noted. This will involve the use of an interim suspension order for 30 days, with the option to extend this beyond 30 days, as necessary. Note: The HGI Indicative

Sanctions Guidelines make provision for the issue of interim suspension orders in the circumstances concerned.

In the case of Registrants of the HGI, a notice to the effect that their practice has been suspended for an alleged breach of the HGI Code of Ethics and Conduct, shall be displayed on the publicly accessible online Current Upheld Complaints page of the HGI website at

<https://www.hgi.org.uk/therapist-register/raising-concerns/current-upheld-complaints>

The therapist concerned shall be instructed that they must not practise as a therapist for the duration of the suspension order and that any breach of this condition shall result in their removal from the HGI Register and termination of their membership of the HGI. A Co-chair of the RPSC shall communicate details of the action taken to the therapist concerned and to the individual who notified the concern. Note: The RPSC shall maintain a record of all action taken, including its rationale for said action.

If it subsequently appears that there is a case to answer, an adjudication panel will be formed to review and/or postpone the interim suspension.

Note:

The sanctions available to the RPSC are set out in the HGI Indicative Sanctions Guidelines.

Additional Points Concerning Mitigation of Risk to Clients and Members of the Public

Therapists working with children

The HGI Policy and Guidelines for Therapists Work with Children sets out the action that therapists must take when they become aware that a young client may be at risk of harm, as set out in the following extracts:

When to refer concerns

- If a child is in immediate danger, e.g. you witness them being assaulted by a parent, carer or other person, ring the public alarm number (in the UK 999) and alert the police.
- If you believe that a child is at risk of abuse and/or neglect, you *must* inform your local Children's Services or Protection authority – you can contact them by phone in the first instance, although it is common practice for them to require a referral form within 24 hours.
- If you think a family needs *support* (i.e. in the absence of specific signs of abuse) from authorities such as Children's Services you can still make a referral but you will need the family's requisite consent to do so.

Making a referral

- Obtain basic information on the child/children you are concerned about and if possible any other adults or children living in the household.
- Be specific about the concerns you have. It is not enough to say a child is not dressed properly or that there are signs of physical abuse – give details.
- Include any other information that you think may be relevant, such as what your involvement is with the child and the family, how many times you have seen them and what you have observed on those occasions, etc.

Risk posed by clients to themselves or others

The HG document, *Managing risk of suicide and other harm-related behaviours in clients*, which is available via the Professional Members Area of the HGI website, provides therapists with guidance on how to mitigate risk of self-harm.

In addition, the HGI makes its therapists aware of their duty of disclosure where indications of risk to clients, or others, emerge during the course of therapy. For example, the HGI Confidentiality Agreement, which is signed by clients at the commencement of treatment, contains the following statement:

"I understand that all information shared with my therapist will remain confidential within their service and will only be disclosed with my consent, except where they believe there may be a risk either to myself or others, or where there is a legal duty of disclosure."