

## Accredited Registers

### Condition Review: British Occupational and Hygiene Society (BOHS)

#### 1. Outcome

At the British Occupational and Hygiene Society (BOHS)'s initial accreditation, the Professional Standards Authority ('we') issued one Condition on its accreditation, which was to be completed by 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2023 (see paragraph two of section 5 of the published outcome).

This report sets out our assessment of the actions taken by the BOHS to satisfy the Condition.

We found that the BOHS had met Condition One.

#### 2. Background

We assess registers against our *Standards for Accredited Registers* ('the Standards')<sup>1</sup>. Where a Register has not met a Standard, we can issue Conditions. A Condition sets out the requirements and the timeframe that a Register must meet.

At the BOHS's initial accreditation, completed in December 2023, we issued one Conditions (a full list is published on the BOHS's directory page: [British Occupational and Hygiene Society](#)). Condition One had to be implemented by 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2024:

- **Condition One:** BOHS's complaints procedures should allow for appropriate lay input

This report discusses the actions the BOHS took to address the Condition, as well as our decision about whether the Condition is met.

We reviewed the following evidence:

- a) BOHS's reported actions about what it had done to meet Condition One

#### 3. Concerns leading to the Condition

Our minimum requirements specify having lay involvement in complaints decisions. The Accreditation Panel noted that BOHS does not currently have lay representation on its Investigating Committee. Although the Faculty of Occupational Hygiene (FOH) Committee includes a member from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), they are also a practising Occupational hygienist.

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<sup>1</sup> The BOHS were originally assessed against the [Standards for Accredited Registers \(April 2016\)](#)

This means that there is no lay involvement in complaints decisions. BOHS had provided its rationale for this during the assessment, with reference to the fact that most complaints are of a technical nature, and that unlike with most other Accredited Registers, registrants do not engage in the direct provision of healthcare to patients or service users.

The Accreditation Panel discussed the purpose of our requirement for having lay involvement in complaints. This can be seen as two-fold: it allows independent input into decision making and can make sure that the interests of patients and service users are represented. These aspects safeguard against the risk of professional interests guiding decision-making on complaints.

Although BOHS' complaints procedure has a clear focus on public protection, the Code of Ethics covers professional behaviours as well as technical competence. Additionally, although there is no direct contact with members of the public, lay input could allow for the interests of groups most affected by the work of Occupational hygienists, to be represented. The Accreditation Panel determined that the requirement to have lay involvement in complaints decisions is relevant to BOHS' Professional Register of Occupational Hygienists.

Further details can be found under Standard 5 of the BOHS's initial accreditation outcome<sup>2</sup>.

#### **4. Assessment of Condition One**

The BOHS provided its response to the Condition on 12 July 2024.

In an email dated 12<sup>th</sup> July 2024, the BOHS wrote:

“The Faculty of Occupational Hygiene has agreed the amendment of its Code of Ethics Procedure to include lay input in line with the Condition. See attached 9.2”.

The BOHS then attached their amended Code of Ethics – Complaints Procedures for verification: [BOHS Code of Ethics - Complaints Procedures.docx](#).

We checked and confirmed that Paragraph 9.2 of the Code of Ethics - Complaints Procedures has indeed been amended to make provision for lay involvement in the Investigating Committee. The new paragraph now has two sub-paragraphs, which read:

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<sup>2</sup> [BOHS Initial Accreditation Report Dec 2023](#)

9.2 The Investigating Committee membership is designated by the Registrar on the advice of the Faculty Committee and will normally be made up of:

9.2.1 three current Fellows in good standing of the Faculty, excluding current members of the Faculty Committee or the Board; and

9.2.2 One lay-person, dependent on the nature of the complaint. The lay person is to be independent of the Occupational Hygiene profession and not on the Register of Occupational Hygiene Professionals.

Following this confirmation, and even though not required by the Condition, we enquired further from BOHS whether the amended Code has been published or if BOHS registrants had been informed of the amendment. We also enquired whether there were any complaints in progress where the amended Code has been applied. BOHS gave a reasonable and straightforward response:

“We formally ratified the change last week and the updated version will be loaded on the website. We did want to ensure that PSA was happy with our approach prior to doing so, to avoid having to make further amendments.

We will be doing a comms campaign on a range of changes in coming months”.

We also wondered what the effect is of the qualification or condition of the sub-clause (“...dependent on the nature of the complaint”) attached to the amended clause, and so we requested for clarification. In an email dated 19<sup>th</sup> August 2024, the BOHS responded by detailing a clear rationale for the qualification on the amended clause. This centres around the distinction between complaints that had implications for public protection and those that were related to contractual matters and had nothing to do with public protection matters: [RE Reminder of Condition for BOHS due soon. Kevin.msg.](#)

We noted that it is deliberate and appropriate for the BOHS to exercise choice in lay membership of its panels because it has two categories of complaint (contractual and Code of Ethics). Contractual matters will not attract lay input, while Code of Ethics matters will.

While this is a reasonable distinction to make, we thought it prudent to consider this in our complaints audits in future to make sure that this discretion is exercised appropriately.

We suggest no recommendation, but we request BOHS to keep us updated on any further activity around the Code.

## **5. Conclusion**

The amendment to the BOHS' Code of Ethics - Complaints Procedures would now ensure that an independent and user representative voice exists as part of the complaints process. This is a sufficient safeguard for the dispensation of justice by the Investigating Committee.

We noted that the BOHS has a clear rationale for qualifying the amended clause by making lay membership of the Investigating Committee dependent on the nature of the complaint. They clarified that there is a distinction between complaints that were related to the Code of Ethics and, therefore, have implications for public protection and those that were related to contractual matters and had nothing to do with public protection matters. We, therefore, accepted that it is appropriate for the BOHS to exercise choice in lay membership of its panels because it has two categories of complaint (contractual and Code of Ethics).

We therefore found that Condition One has been met.