

Standards of Conduct, Practice and Ethics



BRITISH/
PSYCHOANALYTIC
/COUNCIL

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Overview

About us

The British Psychoanalytic Council (BPC) is a regulator whose responsibility is to protect the public. We set and uphold standards of conduct, practice and ethics. We keep a register of professionals who are required to meet our standards for their professional training, knowledge, skills and behaviour. The people on our register are referred to as 'Registrants'.

About these Standards

These standards set out, in general terms, how we expect Registrants to behave.

We keep these standards under regular review. This version – together with separately published supporting guidance – replaces the BPC Code of Ethics and Ethical Guidelines published in 2011.

Who we regulate

We currently regulate the following professions:

- Jungian Analysts
- Jungian Analytic Psychotherapists
- Psychoanalysts
- Psychoanalytic Psychotherapists
- Psychodynamic Counsellors
- Psychodynamic Organisational Counsellors
- Psychodynamic Organisational Therapists
- Psychodynamic Psychotherapists

Our Registrants work with a variety of different people including adults, children and families, couples, organisations and other professionals. In this document we have tried to use terms which everyone can understand and with a broad definition to be applicable to all of our Registrants. For example, the use of 'patient' refers to anyone, whether an individual or organisation, using the services of one of our Registrants. It may include supervisees where the standard is applicable to supervisors and trainees where the standard is applicable to trainers. Some terms are explained in the glossary at the end of this document.

Patients and the public

If you are:

1. a patient in treatment with one of our Registrants, or
2. a member of the public considering treatment with one of our Registrants,

the standards will help you to understand how they should behave towards you. On the rare occasions that something goes wrong, anyone can raise a concern through our Fitness to Practise process. We can take action when there are serious concerns about a Registrant's knowledge, skills or behaviour. We use these standards of conduct, practice and ethics to help us decide in each case whether we need to take action to protect the public.

www.bpc.org.uk/regulation/complaint-handling

BPC Registrants

If you are registered with us, you must make sure that you are familiar with the standards and that you continue to meet them. If you are applying to be registered with us, you will need to complete a declaration to confirm that you will keep to the standards.

As a Registrant, you are personally responsible for the way you behave. You will need to use your judgement so that you make informed and reasonable decisions and meet the required standards at all times. You must always be prepared to explain or justify your decisions and actions. Making informed and reasonable decisions might include getting advice and support from colleagues, education providers, professional bodies, or other people. We recognise the valuable role Member Institutions play in representing and promoting the interests of their members. This often includes providing guidance and advice about good practice, which can help you maintain the standards.

We will rely on the standards when considering whether a Registrant is fit to practise. If a Registrant does not meet these standards, there may be sanctions imposed such as removal from our register. By upholding the standards, the BPC maintains the public confidence in the profession and ensures public safety.

Language in this document

The language used in these standards is intended to be unambiguous so that everyone can be clear about what we expect of our Registrants.

In this document:

'Must' is used where the standard is compulsory.

'Consider' and **'Unless there are exceptional circumstances'** are used where the standard or part of a standard would not apply in all situations and where there are exceptional circumstances that could affect whether, or how, a Registrant can comply with the requirement.

Where we consider additional guidance would be helpful to help Registrants meet specific standards, we have included this in the supporting Guidance document.

You can find further guidance at

www.bpc.org.uk/professionals/registrants-hub/guidance



The Standards

The standards are listed here and set out more fully in the text that follows. Registrants have an individual responsibility to behave professionally and follow these standards at all times. The standards set out what a Registrant must do as a minimum.

As a Registrant you must:

- 1. Make the care of patients your primary concern.**
- 2. Ensure a safe environment for you and your patients.**
- 3. Raise concerns if patients or others are at risk.**
- 4. Not unlawfully discriminate.**
- 5. Not engage in conversion practices.**
- 6. Maintain, develop, and work within your professional knowledge and skills.**
- 7. Ensure you have appropriate supervision in place.**
- 8. Maintain and protect patient information.**
- 9. Work effectively with colleagues.**
- 10. Maintain public confidence in the profession.**
- 11. Maintain professional candour.**
- 12. Ensure you have the appropriate Professional Trustees protocol in place.**
- 13. Keep up to date with our guidance.**

Standard 1

Make the care of patients your primary concern

You must:

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- 1.1 Make the care of patients your primary concern.

 - 1.2 Take all reasonable steps to ensure the safety of a patient during treatment, training, or supervision, as patient welfare is paramount.

 - 1.3 Maintain professional boundaries with a patient at all times during treatment and following termination of the treatment, including:
 - not asking for, accepting or indicating a willingness to accept gifts or bequests, except token gifts of nominal value;
 - not entering into financial or commercial relationships outside the agreed treatment; and
 - not having sexual contact or entering into sexual relationships.

 - 1.4 Ensure that any description of yourself or your practice contained in any publication, including online or any electronic publication, is truthful, accurate, includes a clear statement of your qualifications and is fully compliant with the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) advertising codes.

 - 1.5 Inform prospective patients, before work commences, of the fee payable for any initial consultation(s) or preliminary meeting(s).
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1.6 Before you and a patient agree to work together, clearly explain, either orally or in writing:

- the fee, including any cancellation policy which affects fees;
- the frequency of proposed sessions including day and time where this has been agreed; and
- the limits on confidentiality.

If at this or any other stage a patient has other questions, for example regarding the possible length of treatment, the complaints process or data storage, you must be prepared to answer this candidly.

1.7 When working in conjunction with other healthcare professionals, explain to the patient that you may share information with these professionals.

1.8 Unless there are exceptional circumstances, notify a patient of any proposed changes to the therapeutic process, the practicalities of the treatment offered and/or the terms and conditions of treatment, and provide the patient with a reasonable amount of time to understand and accept the proposed changes.

1.9 Unless there are exceptional circumstances, give patients appropriate and sufficient notice of the ending of treatment to permit a thoughtful ending phase of appropriate duration, having regard to the length and complexity of the relationship and the continuing clinical needs of the patient.

Standard 2

Ensure a safe environment for you and your patients

You must:

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- 2.1 Ensure a safe, secure and private environment for patients.

 - 2.2 Ensure compliance with all relevant Health and Safety legislation.

 - 2.3 Only practise if your work is covered by adequate and appropriate professional indemnity insurance or, if applicable, by your employer's indemnity arrangements.
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Standard 3

Raise concerns if patients or others are at risk

You must:

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- 3.1 Comply with legal obligations in relation to the safeguarding of children, young people and adults at risk.

 - 3.2 Protect and safeguard children, young people and adults at risk from abuse by:
 - being alert to signs of abuse; and
 - promptly reporting concerns to an appropriate person or organisation if you believe any such person is at risk of harm.
-

Standard 4

Must not unlawfully discriminate

You must:

- 4.1** Not unlawfully discriminate against actual or prospective patients, whether directly or indirectly, on the grounds of:
- age;
 - disability;
 - gender reassignment;
 - marriage and civil partnership;
 - pregnancy and maternity;
 - race, including colour, nationality, culture, ethnic or national origin;
 - religion or belief;
 - sex;
 - sexual orientation.
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- 4.2** Not let your own religious, moral, political, or personal beliefs and values prejudice or adversely affect the treatment provided to a patient.
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Standard 5

Must not engage in conversion practices

You must:

- 5.1** Not offer, practise or advocate conversion practices.
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Standard 6

Maintain, develop and work within your professional knowledge and skills

You must:

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- 6.1 Work within your knowledge, skill, and professional competence.

 - 6.2 Not offer or accept work which is beyond your competence and if, in the course of ongoing work, the work exceeds or is reasonably likely to exceed your competence, you must consult with your supervisor with a view to taking appropriate action including referral elsewhere.

 - 6.3 Exercise clinical judgement in considering whether to seek a medical opinion about a patient.

 - 6.4 Undertake Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and maintain expertise required to work competently with each of your patients. Your CPD must at least meet the BPC CPD requirements for registration.

Standard 7

Ensure you have appropriate supervision in place

You must:

- 7.1** Only practise if you obtain sufficient and competent supervision or consultation with a suitably qualified supervisor or supervision peer group, having regard to:
- your own level of competence and experience;
 - the number of patients in your practice;
 - the clinical demands of each individual patient within your practice; and
 - whether the supervisory relationship has, for any reason, ceased to provide the level of challenge and depth necessary for competent work.
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- 7.2** Take all reasonable steps to ensure Registrants working under your supervision adhere to these standards.
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Standard 8

Maintain and protect patient information

You must:

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- 8.1** Keep a suitable record of patients' contact details for your Professional Trustees.
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- 8.2** Keep a written record of decisions and actions when reporting safeguarding concerns.
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- 8.3** Where relevant, meet employer obligations on notetaking.
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- 8.4** Preserve the confidentiality of personal information acquired through your professional practice and protect the privacy of individuals and organisations about whom information is held.
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- 8.5** At the outset of treatment, inform patients about confidentiality and how and in what circumstances you may share personal information with others if relevant to their treatment.
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- 8.6** Consider obtaining legal and ethical advice before providing information if it is required by law or directed by a court.
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- 8.7** Ensure information held about a patient is held securely and protected from unauthorised access.
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- 8.8** When sending patient information electronically or by other means, ensure the process is confidential and secure.
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- 8.9** Comply with all applicable Data Protection and Access to Health Records legislation.
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8.10 When sharing confidential information with another person:

- use anonymised information if possible and consider whether it will serve the purpose for which it is shared;
- not share more identifiable personal information than is necessary for the purpose for which it is shared;
- be satisfied that the recipient understands and will respect the confidential nature of the information;
- not share identifiable personal information without the patient's consent unless it is required or permitted by law (such as in safeguarding against the risk of serious harm to the patient or others) or is justified in the public interest; and
- tell the patient about any such disclosure unless it would undermine the purpose of the disclosure.

8.11 When using clinical material for clinical research or publication:

- carefully consider the potential impact on the patient of publishing material concerning their therapeutic experience; and
- either ensure the patient has given informed consent for its use, which clearly involves considering the impact on the patient of asking them; or
- ensure that the material is effectively anonymised as far as possible so that the patient cannot be sure of recognising themselves or be recognised by others.

8.12 When using clinical descriptions for training purposes:

- ensure that the material is anonymised as far as possible and appropriately for the audience concerned without losing the purpose of its use in training;
 - ensure that your audience understands their responsibility to maintain complete confidentiality.
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Standard 9

Work effectively with colleagues

You must:

9.1 Work effectively and collaboratively with colleagues with the patient as the primary concern.

9.2 Treat colleagues fairly and with respect.

Standard 10

Maintain public confidence in the profession

You must:

10.1 Act with honesty and integrity.

10.2 Only practise if you are fit to practise. You must cease to practise if you are unfit to practise for any reason including, but not limited to, poor physical, mental, or emotional health.

10.3 Ensure that your conduct, whether or not connected to professional practice, does not undermine public confidence in you or the profession.

10.4 Avoid conflicts of interest which may affect your professional judgement.

10.5 Notify the BPC immediately if you have:

- been charged with a criminal offence;
- received a conviction or caution in the United Kingdom for a criminal offence or for an offence elsewhere which, if committed in England or Wales, would constitute a criminal offence;
- any proceedings commenced against you, civil or criminal, or by any professional body;
- received an adverse determination (i.e. a complaint has been upheld) by another professional regulatory or registration body, either in the United Kingdom or elsewhere; or
- an adverse physical or mental health condition which affects your fitness to practise.

10.6 Not resign or apply to voluntarily remove yourself from the BPC whilst subject to a Fitness to Practise investigation.

10.7 Fully cooperate with any investigation commenced by the BPC.

10.8 Monitor your own health and seek professional help for any problems which may adversely affect your ability to meet the requirements of safe practice.

Standard 11

Maintain professional candour

You must:

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- 11.1** Be open and honest with patients when things go wrong, taking into consideration the impact on the patient's treatment.
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- 11.2** Respect a patient's right to complain and ensure that making a complaint does not impact the standard of care, service or treatment provided to the patient.
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- 11.3** Respond to a patient's complaint in a professional manner.
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- 11.4** Inform the BPC if you are aware of concerns relating to a colleague that may be harming their patients or other colleagues.
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Standard 12

Ensure you have the appropriate Professional Trustees protocol in place

You must:

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- 12.1** Appoint Professional Trustees who have consented and have access to the relevant patient information when needed. There must be written instructions.
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Standard 13

Keep up to date with our guidance

You must:

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- 13.1** Ensure that you are familiar with and understand the BPC's published policies and guidance, which are available on the BPC website and/or notified to you by email.
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Glossary

Agreeing to work together – implies consent for the treatment has been given by both Registrant and patient.

Colleague – anyone working within the same organisation, the Member Institution or a fellow Registrant.

Consider – think about the standard and be sure you can explain why you decide to follow or not to follow what is suggested.

Conversion Practices – intentional attempts to change or suppress a person's sexual orientation or gender identity.

Competence – the combination of training, skills, experience and knowledge that a person has and their ability to apply them to perform safely.

CPD – Continuing Professional Development is the term used to describe learning activities that help professionals develop and grow and are ongoing.

Discriminate – to unfairly treat a person or group of people differently from other people. This includes treating others differently because of your views about their lifestyle, culture or their social or economic status, as well as the characteristics protected by law: age, disability, gender reassignment, race, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

Dual relationships – having more than one different type of relationship with a person you have a professional role with.

Duty of Confidentiality – refers to the legal duty of confidence to keep personal identifiable or confidential information private.

Data Privacy – refers to the proper handling of data and complying with data protection regulations.

Fitness to Practise Committee – a committee or panel of professionals that come together to make judgements about a person's fitness to practise.

Glossary

Impaired – there are concerns about a Registrant’s conduct, competence or health that suggests they may not be safe to practise.

Member Institutions – professional associations that are members of the BPC.

Medical opinion – to seek an opinion or advice from a medical doctor.

Patient – refers widely to anyone in any form of treatment or consultation with one of our Registrants.

Peer group supervision – is when a group of trained clinicians reflect on their own work in a group.

Professional candour – refers to being open and honest with people, including patients, when things go wrong.

Professional Trustee – someone who has been named by the Registrant who can be called on to communicate with the Registrant’s patients if the Registrant becomes unavailable or dies.

Registrant – everyone on our register.

Supervision – is a formal process of professional learning and development that enables reflection and exploration of a Registrant’s work. This could be individually with a more experienced clinician, or in a group.

Safeguarding – is the action that is taken to promote the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults and protect them from harm.

Sanctions – a restriction that is imposed if a Registrant’s fitness to practise is impaired.

Treatment – refers broadly to the process of the work provided by a Registrant to a patient.

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