

Register of Clinical Technologists' Policy on Safeguarding

Background

The Register of Clinical Technologists (RCT) was set up in 2000 to provide a voluntary register which would protect the public by setting standards for the training, competence and conduct of clinical technologists. Once accepted onto the register, after completing an approved training course or through an equivalence route, registrants are required to pay an annual renewal fee and confirm each year that they are carrying out continuing professional development (CPD) and that they will abide by the RCT Code of Professional and Ethical Conduct. The names of all registrants appear on a searchable online register on the RCT's website (www.therct.org.uk).

Safeguarding and whistleblowing by Clinical Technologists

The policy of the RCT Management Board (is to encourage registrants and support staff to understand, recognise and address safeguarding concerns. Such concerns must be addressed in a rapid and appropriate manner to prevent or minimise harm and protect the public.

The RCT MB recognises the risk of safeguarding issues arising in the professional practice of clinical technologists, particularly when:

- registrants work in patients' homes;
- registrants have one-to-one consultations with patients;
- registrants are in a position to observe a vulnerable individual being, or having been, mistreated by others.

All registrants are required, under clause 1 of the RCT Code of Conduct, to 'Ensure that the well-being, interests and dignity of patients are promoted and safeguarded at all times'. This clause refers to registrants' wider responsibilities and the RCT MB requires registrants to be aware of and vigilant about the potential for specific safeguarding issues to arise.

Training in safeguarding

Registrants: this topic should be addressed in the training courses which provide entry to the RCT and/or in the statutory and mandatory training undertaken by clinical technologists during their employment. Applicants to the register using the equivalence route are required to give evidence of the mandatory training they have undertaken including safeguarding.

RCT staff: the staff who support the RCT in the IPEM National Office should have basic safeguarding training included in their CPD plans so that they recognise a safeguarding issue should it be reported to them in any form. Any such report should be passed on urgently (within four hours) to the CEO of IPEM who will consider whether any immediate reporting to external authorities (policy or local authority) is required, taking formal advice from local safeguarding teams as required. The CEO is also Secretary of the RCT Professional Conduct Committee (PCC) and can pass on the report as a complaint to the Chair of the PCC. The PCC's Investigatory Committee can make an interim suspension order if they consider this necessary for public protection.

'Whistleblowing' – raising concerns

Local NHS organisations, and the NHS nationally, have clear policies and procedures in place for staff to protect vulnerable patients and to report any concerns about safeguarding. These include arrangements for 'whistleblowing', and support and advice for staff who need to raise a concern in

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this way. In England this includes a national team of Freedom to Speak Up Guardians which has a representative in every NHS Trust. Outside of the NHS other employers should have procedures for expressing concerns about the safety of others without the individual raising the concern suffering detriment as a result.

The RCT requires all registrants to read, understand and follow their employer's local procedures for safeguarding vulnerable people and, if necessary, reporting concerns ('whistleblowing') in all cases. If a registrant is reported to the RCT for safeguarding concerns this will be passed on to the Professional Conduct Committee of the RCT as a provisional complaint.

Fitness to Practise (FtP) procedures

There is a comprehensive Fitness to Practise Procedure (formerly Disciplinary Procedure) in place for the RCT, which was most recently reviewed and amended with legal advice in February 2018. This enables the Professional Conduct Committee (PCC) of the RCT (which is completely separate from the Management Board) to appoint Investigating Panels to handle any allegations of misconduct against registrants.

The Fitness to Practise Procedure requires that the outcome of fitness to practise proceedings involving a registrant should be shared with other professional registers, if the registrant is also on another register, so that the other register can consider appropriate action:

'6.11 Should the Appeal Panel uphold the decision of a Health Panel or Conduct Panel that a Subject Member who is registered with a statutory or voluntary Registration Council should be expelled from the Register, or be subject to any other penalty for a disciplinary offence that may also be a disciplinary offence under any code of conduct and disciplinary procedure issued by the relevant Registration Council, the Secretary shall write in confidence to the Registrar of the relevant Registration Council to communicate the findings of the RCT Management Board.'

All fitness to practise cases are summarised against the individual's name on the RCT website providing information that is accessible to the public and to prospective employers.

Safeguarding issues in FtP cases

If the outcome of fitness to practise proceedings against an individual registrant indicates that there may be risks to the safety of children or vulnerable adults – 'safeguarding issues' – posed by that individual, then additional measures will be taken:

- The Chair of the Professional Conduct Committee will consult the legal advisor on the case about whether to write to the Disclosure and Barring Service so that they can make a decision about whether that person should be barred from working with vulnerable adults and children.
- The PCC may also refer information to the police if an investigation indicates that it is necessary to do so, and will always do so if there is evidence of a criminal offence.

Communicating about safeguarding to Registrants

To ensure that Registrants are aware of their responsibilities and able to respond appropriately, the Registrar will remind registrants regularly of this policy and the associated guidance on

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whistleblowing and the duty of candour. The policy and guidance will be made available via the RCT website.

See also:

- RCT Fitness to Practise Procedure (P&P document 01-21-04 0399)