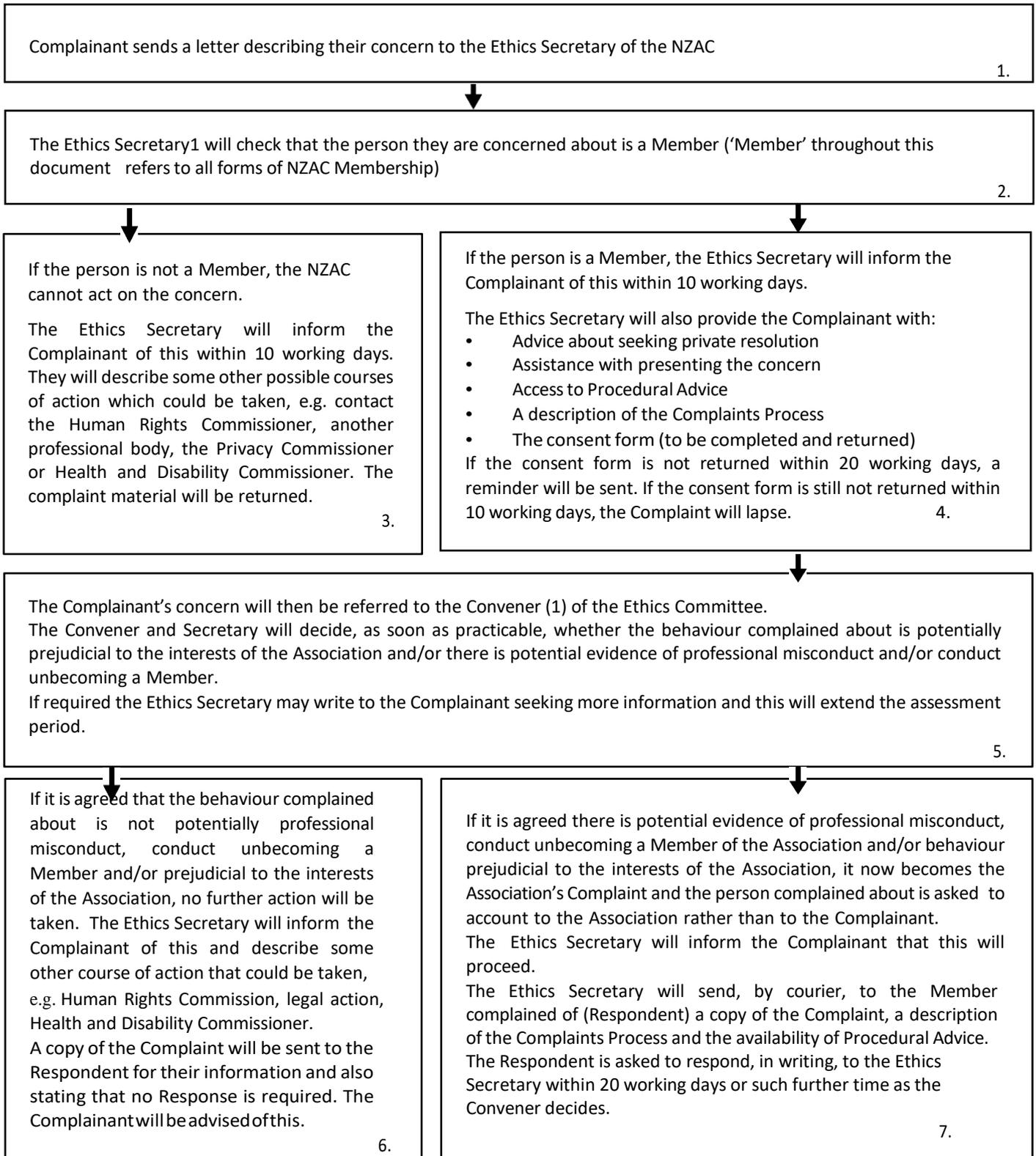


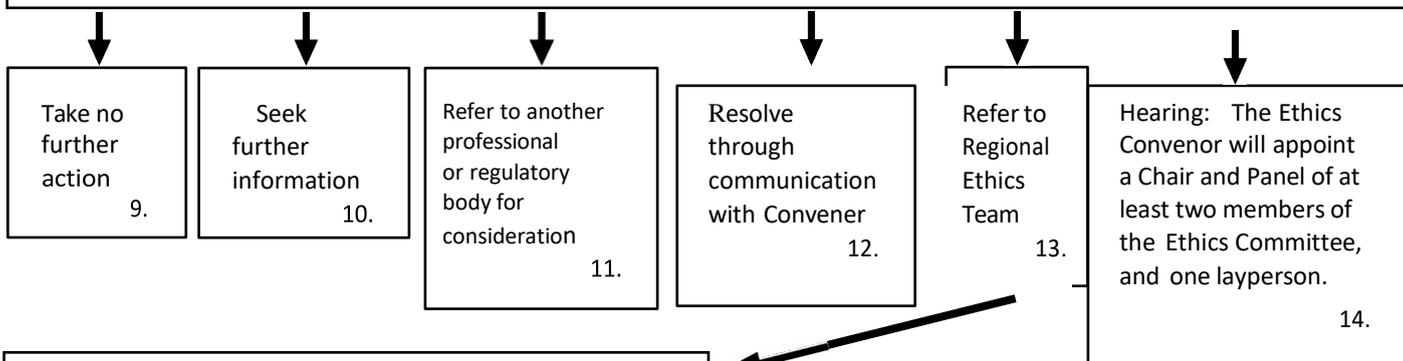
New Zealand Association of Counsellors Professional Codes and Guidelines COMPLAINTS PROCESS



At any stage of this complaints process, the Ethics Convener and Ethics Secretary may delegate their responsibilities, if necessary. The Ethics Convener's responsibility will be delegated to another member of the Ethics Committee. The Ethics Secretary's responsibility will be delegated to another Ethics staff member or an Ethics Committee member.

As soon as practicable after receipt of the Response, the Convener, Secretary and one other Ethics Committee member will form an Initial Assessment Group (IAG). They will review all the material submitted and decide how to proceed, namely: no further action/seek further information/ refer to another participant or regulatory body for consideration/resolve through Convener communication/refer to a Regional Ethics Team/ appoint a Panel to prepare charges and conduct a formal Hearing. If further information is received from the Complainant, it will be forwarded to the Respondent who will have a further 20 working days to respond before the IAG decides its next step.

8.



For a Regional Ethics Process, the Secretary of the Ethics Committee will send a copy of the complaint documentation (Complaint and Response) to the Regional Co-ordinator who will arrange for two Regional Ethics Team members to meet separately with the Complainant and the Member and their Supervisor to discuss the concerns. Possible outcomes from the meeting are: facilitating a private resolution between the parties; identifying, negotiating or recommending remedial action, e.g. acknowledgement, apology, further education or training, specialist consultation or training; or no further action. The RET may also refer the matter back to the IAG with a recommendation to undertake another option within the process. E.g Communication with the Convener, Hearing.

13A

In order to prepare for a Hearing the Ethics Panel will:

- Formulate the charges in terms of the material presented and will identify, in writing, the way it considers the behaviour to be potentially prejudicial to the interests of the Association or that there is potential misconduct or conduct unbecoming a member.
- Advise the Ethics Secretary who will, as soon as possible, notify the Respondent of the charges.

14A

In a Hearing:

- The case will be heard by the Ethics Panel at a place and time to be determined by the Ethics Panel.
- A Notice of Hearing, specifying details of the charges and the material to be considered by the Panel at the Hearing, will be sent to the Respondent not less than 20 working days before the Hearing, or in a shorter time if agreed between the Panel and the Respondent.
- The Ethics Secretary will provide the Complainant and the Respondent with details of the Hearing Process.
- The Ethics Panel will consider the material identified in the Notice of Hearing.
- Any additional material the Respondent wishes the Panel to consider is to be provided to the Ethics Secretary no later than 10 working days before the hearing date.
- The Respondent may be assisted by one or more of the following: a Procedural Advisor, support person/s and/or legal counsel.
- The Complainant as a witness for the Association may be assisted by a Procedural Advisor and/or support person/s.
- The procedure adopted at a Hearing shall be at the discretion of the Ethics Panel and shall comply with the principles of natural justice.

14B

The matter will be closed when the outcome is resolved to the satisfaction of the Regional Ethics Team. The Team may instead choose to refer the Complaint back to the IAG to consider alternative action.

13B

The decision of the Panel will be delivered as soon as practicable after the conclusion of the Hearing.

If the Panel finds that there is evidence of professional misconduct, conduct unbecoming a member of the Association and/ or behaviour prejudicial to the interests of the Association then, before determining what sanctions to impose against the Respondent, the Panel shall:

1. Inquire of the Ethics Secretary whether or not any previous charges of professional misconduct, conduct unbecoming a member of the Association and/or behaviour prejudicial to the interests of the Association have been upheld against the Respondent;
2. Provide the Respondent with a copy of any information supplied by the Ethics Secretary in response to its inquiry pursuant to clause 1 above;
3. Invite the Respondent to provide, in writing, within 15 working days of receiving notification of the outcome of the Hearing or within 15 working days of receiving the information provided to the Panel by the Ethics Secretary (whichever is the later) such information as the Respondent wishes the Panel to take into account before it determines the sanctions to be imposed and makes recommendations to the National Executive about publication of the outcome.

14C



If the Panel finds there is evidence of professional misconduct, conduct unbecoming a member of the Association and/or behaviour prejudicial to the interests of the Association, responses or sanctions shall be applied from the following, as listed in the NZAC Constitution. The Ethics Panel may:

- i. Warn the Member or Provisional Member;
- ii. Provide educative advice to the Member or Provisional Member;
- iii. Require the Member or Provisional Member to cease and desist from the behaviour considered inappropriate or unethical;
- iv. Reprimand the Member or Provisional Member;
- v. Require the Member or Provisional Member to undertake a specified programme of education and/or supervision under the direction of the Ethics Committee;
- vi. Require the Member or Provisional Member to cease working with a particular client group for a specified period of time;
- vii. Require the Member or Provisional Member to undergo a practice audit, under the direction of the Ethics Committee.
- viii. Recommend to the National Executive a change of status from Member to Provisional Member;
- ix. Recommend to National Executive that the Member or Provisional Member be suspended as a member of NZAC until the completion of specified education and/or personal counselling under the direction of the Ethics Committee.
- x. Recommend to the National Executive that the Member or Provisional Member be invited to resign;
- xi. Recommend to the National Executive that the Member or Provisional Member be expelled from the Association.

14D



After consultation, the final decision of the Ethics Panel, including recommendations regarding the publication of these outcomes will be confirmed in writing by the Ethics Secretary as soon as is practicable. The Respondent will receive a full copy of the decision. The Complainant will receive notification and a summary of the outcome.

14E



When a finding is made of professional misconduct, conduct unbecoming a Member of the Association and/or behaviour prejudicial to the interests of the Association, the Ethics Committee will notify the National Executive of the outcome in order for it to be formally received and will include any recommendations to the National Executive regarding publication of the outcome.

15



On receipt of information from the Ethics Convenor regarding non-compliance with any duly imposed sanctions (iii), v), vi) or vii), this behaviour may be treated as conduct unbecoming, professional misconduct or behaviour prejudicial to the interests of the Association and may be subject to a new complaint lodged by the National Executive against the member.

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Reviewed: March 2017

For Review: March 2020