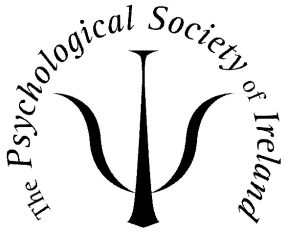
Form D1



Making a Formal Complaint
about a Psychologist who is a Member of The Psychological Society of Ireland

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF IRELAND
Cumann Síceolaithe Éireann

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The Psychological Society of Ireland

The Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI) is the professional body of psychologists in Ireland. It was established to advance psychology in Ireland and to maintain high professional standards in the profession.

PSI takes very seriously any complaints about the professional conduct of its members and has procedures for investigating complaints .The procedures are designed to be fair to both the person making the complaint and the psychologist against whom the complaint is made. (PSI cannot investigate complaints about psychologists who are not members)

PSI's Board of Professional Conduct is responsible for investigating these complaints. Some members of the Board are psychologists and others are non-psychologists.

Making a complaint about a psychologist

1 **You contact the OFFICE of PSI at the above address.**
The office will send you a Formal Complaint Form and a copy of the procedures for investigating complaints. (i.e. section 36 of the Articles of Association)

They will also send you the rules for good practice (i.e. Code of Professional Ethics), which psychologists must follow.

2 **You fill in the Formal Complaint Form.**
You must complete and sign the Formal Complaint Form. *PSI only investigates complaints that are made in writing and signed*. You are asked to give the name of the psychologist and a short description of your complaint. You are asked to read the Code of Professional Ethics, and, if you can, to say which rules you think the psychologist has broken. You will also be asked to tell us what you hope might happen as a result of the investigation. We will send you a form to help you with this.

3 **You send the forms to the Chairperson of the Board of Professional Conduct** c/o PSI office.

How the investigation works

1 **The Chairperson sends a copy of your complaint to the psychologist.**
The psychologist is asked to give a written response**.**

2 **Two members of the Board of Professional Conduct investigate your complaint.**
The members contact both you and the psychologist. This may be in writing or by phone or both. The two members may be able **t**o help you and the psychologist resolve the complaint, or they may decide that the complaint needs to go to a formal Panel Hearing.

How a Formal Panel Hearing works

The Board of Professional Conduct on behalf of PSI takes responsibility for the Formal Panel Hearing. The panel is made up of members of the Board. The chairperson of the panel is always a non-psychologist.

1 After the hearing, the Panel decides whether the complaint is justified. If the psychologist is found guilty of professional misconduct the panel can recommend to PSI that the psychologist, for example:

- be reprimanded
- be given mandatory advice on future conduct
- be suspended or expelled from PSI membership
- be suspended or expelled from PSI's Register of Psychologists.

2 If a psychologist is found guilty of serious professional misconduct the decision of the Board of Professional Conduct is published in the Irish Psychologist, the newsletter of PSI. PSI may also, if appropriate, inform bodies such as Health Boards in order to protect the public interest.

3 If the Panel finds that the complaint was not justified the psychologist is exonerated.

4 Both you and the psychologist will be informed of the decision of the Panel and the reasons for the decision.

Other Points

1 **Further information about a Panel Hearing** is contained in a separate leaflet.

2 **The rules** that govern the investigation and sanctions are contained in PSI's Articles of Association. The procedures used to investigate a complaint will always be those contained in the most recent edition of the Articles, regardless of the date of the events that give rise to the complaint. Normally, the current rules of good practice (Code of Professional Ethics) will also be used.

3 Consent and confidentiality. In order to be fair to all parties, complaints are accepted for investigation on the basis that the person who submits the complaint will give consent to the use of any relevant information, including confidential information that may arise out of the investigation of the complaint.

PSI makes every effort to ensure that, for its part, as few people as possible know about the subject of the complaint or the identity of the parties. The information is only given to the Chairperson of the Board of Professional Conduct, the two members of the Board who make the initial investigation and the members of the Panel. They will treat the information received with the utmost confidentiality