



# The British Psychological Society

Promoting excellence in psychology

## Member conduct rules

### Foreword

Members of the British Psychological Society are required to accept the following member conduct rules as a condition of membership and are required to inform the Society of any conviction, order or finding which may entitle the Society to take action under these rules. These rules are intended to provide clarity and transparency in the underpinning standards of what it means to be a member of the Society. We believe they provide a solid foundation to protect the reputation of the Society and its members.

The Society's Royal Charter object is '*to promote the advancement and diffusion of a knowledge of psychology pure and applied and especially to promote the usefulness of members of the Society by setting a high standard of professional education and knowledge*'. These rules set out those circumstances in which the Society may reprimand, suspend or expel a member and are required in order to fulfil the Society's Royal Charter object.

The Society publishes a *Code of Ethics and Conduct* and expects members to be guided by the code in their work as a psychologist and in resolving ethical dilemmas. The Society also publishes a *Code of Conduct* for members undertaking activities on behalf of the Society and expects members to be guided by that code in their contributions to the Society's work. The Society does not determine allegations about the fitness to practise of its members and does not intervene in disputes between members and clients/service users. Complainants making fitness to practice allegations are referred to the relevant competent authority, e.g. the Health and Care Professions Council.

The Society will only consider allegations that a member has breached the member conduct rules and will normally require such allegations to first have been determined using other appropriate procedures. To assist the Society in deciding whether any action against the member should be taken, it may become necessary to contact the member and provide details of the complaint and the name of the person who has raised the concern. In such cases, the Society will remove all personal details (other than name) from any documents sent to the member.

**Dr Carole Allan** CPsychol CSci FBPsS  
Honorary General Secretary

## Scope

These rules of membership provide guidance on the behaviour expected of members of the Society. They do not repeat obligations placed on members by the general law, for example, in the areas of discrimination and employment.

## Interpretation

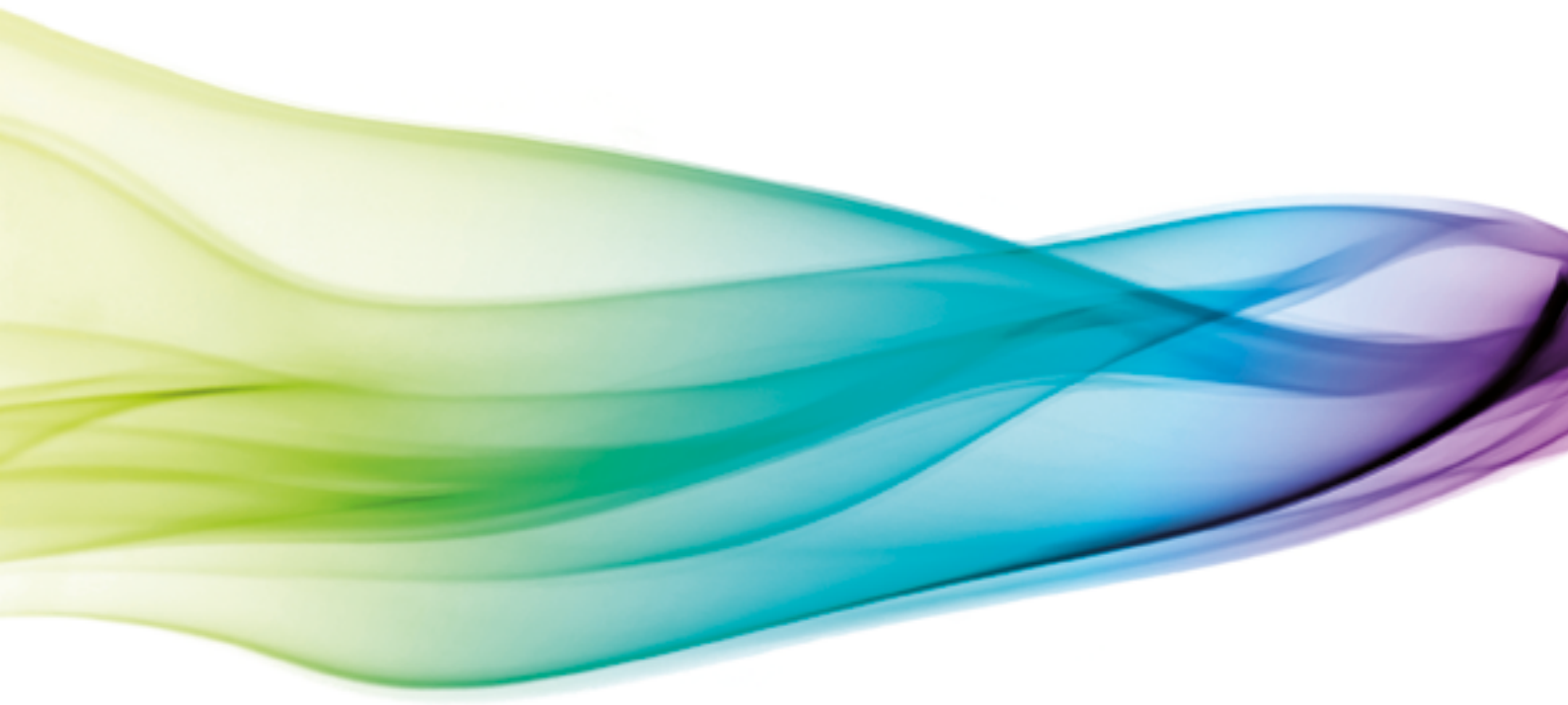
In these rules, 'member' means a Student, Graduate, Chartered or Honorary Member of the Society.

## Rules

- 1** Members must not act in a way that damages, or is likely to damage, the reputation of the British Psychological Society or is contrary to the object of the Society as set out in the Royal Charter.
- 2** Any member convicted of the following criminal offences will be expelled from the Society:
  - a** A sexual offence against a child or vulnerable adult, or a sexual offence committed by a careworker against a person who has a mental disorder, including any offence of possessing or taking indecent images of children.
  - b** Any other criminal offence for which a custodial sentence is imposed.
- 3** Any member who is struck off the Register of the relevant competent authority, e.g. the Health and Care Professions Council, based on a finding of lack of competence will be expelled from the Society. Any member struck off the Register for reasons other than lack of competence may, at the discretion of the Society, be reprimanded, suspended or expelled from the Society.
- 4** Any member who has been found by a court or tribunal, an employer's internal disciplinary investigation, or a university disciplinary investigation to have plagiarised the work of another or to have falsified the results of, and/or data relating to, psychological or other research will, at the discretion of the Society, be reprimanded, suspended or expelled from the Society.
- 5** Any member who, while holding an elected or appointed office within the Society, is found by the Society to have acted in a way which is in conflict with the interests of the Society may, at the discretion of the Society, be reprimanded, suspended or expelled from the Society.
- 6** Any member who is found by the Society to have claimed to hold a grade of membership to which he or she has not been elected, or has been found to have used misleading titles or descriptions, will be reprimanded, suspended or expelled from the Society.
- 7** Any member who is found by the Society to have provided false or misleading information in an application to become a member of the Society, or an application for election to a membership grade or Society title, or an application for a specialist register or award, will be reprimanded, suspended or expelled from the Society.
- 8** Any member whose subscription remains unpaid at the end of the payment period will be removed from membership of the Society.

## Procedures

- 1** Allegations of a breach of the member conduct rules ('the rules') must be made in writing to the Chief Executive of the Society and must include any relevant evidence to support the allegation. The Society will normally require evidence that the rules have been breached to first have been determined using other appropriate procedures. The Chief Executive of the Society, or a member of staff delegated to carry out this function on his or her behalf, shall consider whether the matter falls within the rules. If the matter does fall within the rules and action is taken, they shall inform the member of this.
- 2** A copy of one of the following documents will be admissible as proof that a member has breached rules 2a, 2b, 3 and 4:
  - a** certificate of conviction
  - b** an order of a court or tribunal
  - c** a decision of a statutory regulatory body
  - d** a decision of an employer's or university's internal disciplinary investigation.Evidence from application forms, websites, letterheads, awarding institutions etc., will be admissible as proof that a member has breached rule 6 or 7.
- 3** Where an allegation of a breach of the rules is judged to fall within them but is not supported by any of the evidence detailed in Procedure 2 and this evidence is not expected to become available in the future, the Society will assess the evidence presented for each case on an individual basis to determine if this is sufficient for the allegation to be considered. If the allegation is deemed to merit further consideration, the Chief Executive or the delegated member of staff will give the member against whom the allegation is made the opportunity to make representations in response. Thereafter, if it is judged that there is sufficient evidence to take the matter forward, the matter will be referred to a panel of at least three appropriate members, usually Trustees and including the Chair of the Membership and Standards Board, who may, at their discretion, deal with the matter on the papers or give the member against whom the allegation is made the opportunity of a meeting. The panel may consider any other evidence they consider relevant to the matter provided that the process of reaching a decision is fair to the member who is the subject of the allegation. A decision will be made on whether any action against the member should be taken, and the member will be informed accordingly.
- 4** Where it is decided that action is necessary, the Chief Executive or delegated member of staff will establish a case history in determining whether reprimand, suspension or expulsion is the appropriate action, including any period of suspension.
- 5** Where a decision has been made under the rules to reprimand, suspend or expel a member, the member may appeal this decision to the President of the Society on the grounds that there are exceptional circumstances such that the decision is not necessary in order to protect the reputation of the Society, or that the Chief Executive or delegated member of staff failed to follow procedure in reaching their decision. The President shall nominate a panel of at least three Trustees (not previously involved in the case) to consider this appeal. The panel shall have the discretion to deal with the appeal as they see fit provided the process of reaching a decision is fair to the member.
- 6** When considering an appeal the panel nominated under procedure 5 may uphold the first decision, substitute any one of the three outcomes (reprimand, suspend or expel), or decide that the first decision should be set aside and that no further action is necessary.
- 7** Where the Society has discretion to suspend a member from the Society the suspension period will not normally exceed three years.
- 8** A member who has been expelled from the Society may apply to rejoin the Society provided that not less than three years have elapsed since the decision to expel him or her and that he or she meets the reinstatement criteria in place at the time of application.
- 9** If a member notifies the Society of his or her wish to resign after he or she has been notified of an allegation against him or her, the Society shall accept the member's resignation. If the member wishes to reinstate their membership they should contact the Society.
- 10** If a member has been removed from membership under rule 8, they are permitted to apply for reinstatement at any time, subject to meeting the reinstatement criteria at the time of application.



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