CNHC Complementary & Natural Healthcare Council

POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Accepted Outcomes Policy

Version 1
Pending approval
Published for information. Not yet in force.

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professional standards authority accredited register

CYBER ESSENTIALS CERTIFIED PLUS

POLICY AND PROCEDURE

How we resolve complaints through accepted outcomes

When Case Examiners can propose an outcome that the registrant accepts, without a hearing, and the safeguards that protect the public, complainants and registrants.

Pending approval

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1 What this policy covers

1.1 An accepted outcome lets a complaint be concluded without a hearing. Case Examiners propose an outcome, and the registrant accepts the findings and the outcome in writing.

1.2 This policy sets out when accepted outcomes can be used, how they are decided, and the safeguards around them. It explains how we apply paragraph 17 of our **Detailed Procedures for Dealing with Complaints** (version 2), which sets out the rules for accepted outcomes.

1.3 It also covers consensual disposal at Panel stage, which is already provided for in paragraph 30 of Appendix 2 (section 11).

1.4 It does not cover complaints dealt with under our Informal Resolution Framework, or warnings issued where there is no realistic prospect of a finding of impairment (paragraphs 16.6 to 16.8).

1.5 This policy follows the Professional Standards Authority's guidance, *Using accepted outcomes in fitness to practise* (June 2025). Where we depart from that guidance, we will record our reasons.

2 Who decides

2.1 Each complaint is considered by **two Case Examiners**, drawn from CNHC's Professional Committee, a pool of independent lay members. Professional input comes from the relevant Profession Specific Board (PSB): a PSB member writes any expert report (Procedures 15.5), and the Case Examiners can ask a PSB member for advice on practice. This approach ensures that Case Examiner decisions are informed by independent lay judgement and, where available and relevant, professional expertise.

2.2 If the Case Examiners need further advice on practice in the discipline, they can ask a member of the relevant Profession Specific Board, and the advice is shared with the registrant.

2.3 If the Case Examiners cannot agree, the complaint goes to the Investigating Committee (paragraph 16.3).

2.4 A Case Examiner with a conflict of interest takes no part in the case.

3 When an accepted outcome can be used

3.1 Case Examiners can only propose an accepted outcome where:

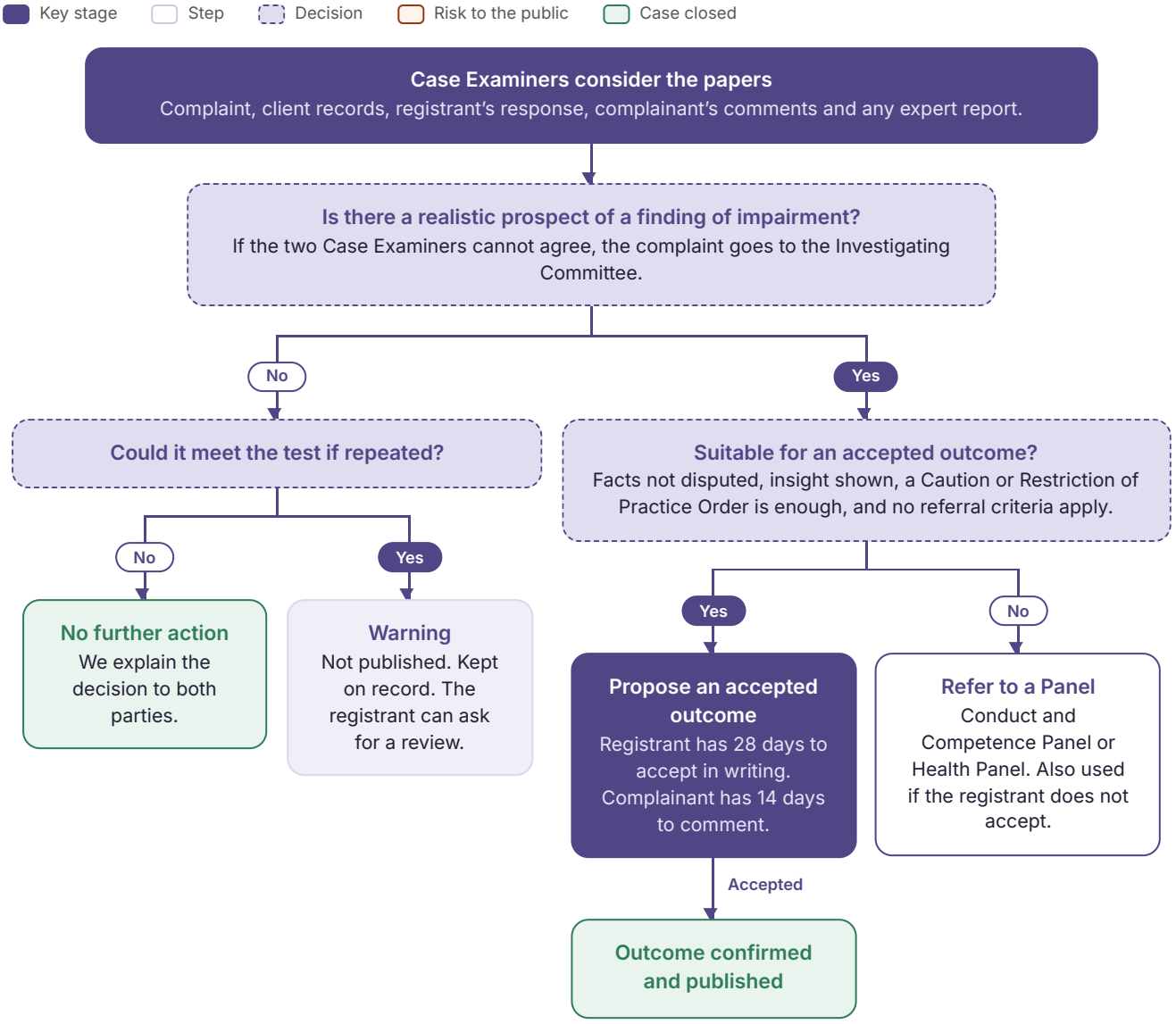
- there is a realistic prospect of a finding of impairment (Note 1 of the Detailed Procedures)
- the facts are clear and not in dispute
- the registrant has shown insight into the concerns, or there is a realistic prospect they will
- an outcome without a hearing would protect the public and maintain confidence in the Register
- the right outcome is a Caution or a Restriction of Practice Order (section 5).

3.2 Case Examiners **must refer** the complaint to a Conduct and Competence Panel or Health Panel where any of the following apply:

Referral criteria	Why a hearing is needed
The facts are disputed	Disputed evidence needs to be tested at a hearing.
The likely outcome is suspension or removal	Only a Panel can suspend or remove a registrant.
Sexual misconduct, dishonesty, or serious harm to a client	The seriousness and public interest call for a hearing.
A criminal conviction or caution, or a determination by another regulator	These need to be considered by a Panel.
Serious doubts about the registrant's insight or attitude	The risk of repetition cannot be assessed on the papers.
Complex cases, or cases where the right outcome is borderline	A Panel is better placed to weigh the evidence.
A pattern of concerns, including previous warnings or sanctions	Previous history raises the level of risk.
The registrant does not accept the findings or the outcome	An outcome cannot be imposed without agreement.

3.3 The referral criteria are guidelines for the Case Examiners' judgement, set out in more detail in the Case Examiner Guidance (section 9). If the Case Examiners decide not to follow them, they must record why.

HOW CASE EXAMINERS DECIDE



4 How it works

ACCEPTED OUTCOME: STEP BY STEP

1. **Investigation** — Response and comments — 28 + 14 days
2. **Case Examiner decision** — Realistic prospect, and outcome — normally 28 days
3. **Proposal sent** — Findings, outcome and reasons
4. **Registrant responds** — Accepts or declines in writing — 28 days
5. **Complainant's views** — Considered before confirming — 14 days
6. **Outcome confirmed** — Takes effect and is published — notice in 7 days

Step	What happens	Time allowed
1. Investigation	The registrant responds to the complaint and the complainant comments on that response (paragraph 15).	28 days for the registrant's response

Step	What happens	Time allowed
2. Case Examiner decision	The Case Examiners decide whether there is a realistic prospect of a finding of impairment and, if so, whether an accepted outcome is suitable.	Normally within 28 days of receiving the papers
3. Proposal to the registrant	We send the registrant the Case Examiners' findings, the proposed outcome and the reasons, and tell them they can take independent advice.	—
4. Registrant responds	The registrant accepts the findings and outcome in writing, using the form in section 14, or declines.	28 days, which can be extended on request
5. Complainant views	We tell the complainant about the proposal and invite their comments. The Case Examiners consider them before the outcome is finalised.	14 days
6. Outcome confirmed	The Case Examiners confirm the outcome and it takes effect. We tell both parties and publish the decision (section 8).	Within 7 days of the decision

4.1 If the registrant declines or does not respond, the complaint is referred to a Panel. The Panel is not told about the proposal or the registrant's response.

4.2 If the complainant's comments raise new and relevant information, the Case Examiners may change the proposal or refer the complaint to a Panel.

4.3 Registrants will not be pressured to accept an outcome. Declining an accepted outcome is never treated as a lack of insight.

5 Outcomes Case Examiners can propose

Outcome	What it means
Caution	Recorded on the registrant's Register entry for up to two years.
Restriction of Practice Order	For between one and three years. It can include requirements such as further training, supervision, or corrective action such as changing advertising.

5.1 Case Examiners decide the outcome using our Sanctions Guidance (version 2), which applies to Case Examiner decisions as well as Panels. The outcome must be the least restrictive one that protects the public and maintains confidence in the Register.

5.2 Case Examiners cannot suspend or remove a registrant. Where either might be needed, the complaint must be referred to a Panel.

5.3 We monitor every Restriction of Practice Order made as an accepted outcome. Before it expires, the Case Examiners review the registrant's compliance on the papers. If the registrant has not complied, the case is referred to a Panel under paragraph 17.11 of the Detailed Procedures, which sets out the notice, the evidence the Panel considers and the orders it can make. If non-compliance comes to light shortly before the Order expires, CNHC may apply for a separately justified Interim Order, which is subject to the usual limits on length, review and renewal (paragraph 17.12). Any new allegation is investigated as a new complaint.

6 Interim orders

6.1 If, at any stage, the Case Examiners consider there may be an immediate risk to the public, they must tell the Registrar straight away. The Registrar can issue an urgent Interim Order for up to 56 days and apply to a Panel for an Interim Order (Appendix 1).

6.2 An Interim Order may remain in force while an accepted outcome is being considered, subject to the applicable limits on its duration, review and renewal. When an accepted outcome takes effect, the Registrar applies to the Panel to revoke the Interim Order, unless the risk continues.

6.3 Case Examiners cannot make Interim Orders themselves, and an Interim Order is never used to encourage a registrant to accept an outcome.

7 Reviews and appeals

7.1 The registrant, the complainant or CNHC can ask for a **review** of a Case Examiner decision, including an accepted outcome, within 28 days, on the grounds that:

- the procedure was not followed in a way that affected the decision
- there is new and relevant information that was not available at the time
- the decision was materially wrong, for example because it does not protect the public.

7.2 Reviews are decided by a member of the pool who has not been previously involved in the case. The reviewer can confirm the decision, ask the Case Examiners to reconsider, or refer the complaint to a Panel.

7.3 As the registrant has accepted the outcome, they cannot appeal against it under Appendix 3. Appendix 3 has been updated to say this (Appendix 3, paragraph 1.2), and the review process is set out in paragraph 18 of the Detailed Procedures.

8 Publication

8.1 We publish each accepted outcome on our website and on the registrant's Register entry for as long as the outcome is in force. The published decision includes a summary of the concern, the facts found, the outcome and the reasons, in enough detail for a member of the public to understand it.

8.2 We do not publish the complainant's name or any details of a registrant's health. We tell the complainant and registrant what will be published before it appears.

8.3 Warnings are not published (paragraph 16.7). Our Publication Policy sets out what we publish and for how long.

9 Case Examiners: recruitment, training and guidance

9.1 Case Examiners are drawn from the Professional Committee, a pool of independent lay members recruited by CNHC against published competencies (Case Examiner Guidance, Annex B). They are invited to consider complaints when required.

9.2 Case Examiners declare any interests on appointment and before each case, and take no part in a case where they have a conflict of interest.

9.3 Before taking part in decisions, Case Examiners complete induction training covering:

- the realistic prospect test and this policy
- our Sanctions Guidance and the referral criteria
- equality, diversity and unconscious bias
- writing clear decisions with reasons.

9.4 They also take part in refresher training every year and an annual performance review.

9.5 Our **Case Examiner Guidance** and **Sanctions Guidance** help make outcomes consistent, and are published on our website. Every decision must record the concern, the relevant facts, the registrant's response, the assessment of impairment and insight, the outcome and the reasons.

10 Support for complainants and registrants

10.1 We know that being involved in a complaint can be stressful. Once a complaint is in our formal procedures, every complainant and registrant has a named contact at CNHC who keeps them informed at each stage and explains what an accepted outcome means.

10.2 We send the complainant the registrant's response so they can comment on it, and we invite their views on any proposed outcome before it is confirmed (step 5).

10.3 We will make reasonable adjustments, for example accepting comments by telephone or email, or in another format, and our complaints leaflet (section 13) lists independent organisations that can offer support to complainants and registrants.

10.4 Our complaints leaflet, *How CNHC deals with complaints*, explains accepted outcomes in plain English and is published on our website.

11 Consensual disposal at Panel stage

11.1 Where a complaint has been referred to a Panel, it can still be concluded by agreement under paragraph 30 of Appendix 2. This is called consensual disposal.

11.2 The registrant must admit the allegations in full, and the proposed outcome must be consistent with the likely outcome of a contested hearing (30.2). Unlike an accepted outcome, a Panel can agree to suspension or removal.

11.3 The Panel can reject a proposal. The case then goes to a full hearing before an entirely different Panel, which is not told about the proposal unless the registrant chooses to raise it (30.4).

11.4 A registrant cannot end an outstanding complaint by asking to leave the Register. The case continues, and an agreed Removal Order can be considered through consensual disposal.

12 Monitoring and audit

12.1 Every three months, the Registrar or a nominated senior member of staff audits a sample of Case Examiner decisions, including all accepted outcomes, against this policy and the Case Examiner Guidance.

12.2 Each year, an independent reviewer from outside CNHC audits a sample of decisions. Findings are reported to the Board, along with what we have changed as a result.

12.3 We monitor outcomes by discipline and, where we have the data, by protected characteristics, to identify any unfair differences. We also ask complainants and registrants for feedback.

12.4 Any issues found are addressed promptly, for example through further training, updated guidance or a review of the decision.

13 Review of this policy

13.1 We will review this policy two years after it starts, or sooner if the PSA's Standards or guidance change.

14 Accepted outcome response form

To be completed by the registrant and returned to CNHC within 28 days.

Registrant name	
Registration number	
Case reference	
Proposed outcome	As set out in the Case Examiners' decision dated:
My response	I accept the findings and the outcome / I do not accept the findings or the outcome
Any comments	
Declaration	I have read the Case Examiners' decision. I understand that, if I accept, the outcome will be recorded on the Register and published, and that I cannot appeal against it. I understand that, if I do not accept, the complaint will be referred to a Panel.
Independent advice	I have taken / chose not to take independent advice
Signature and date	

15 How this policy meets the PSA conditions

The PSA shared nine conditions with CNHC on 13 March 2026 to shape the introduction of accepted outcomes.

PSA condition	Where it is met
1. Criteria for escalating concerns to a hearing	Section 3; Procedures paragraph 17.2; Case Examiner Guidance section 7
2. Appeal procedure updated for Case Examiner decisions	Section 7; Procedures paragraph 18 and Appendix 3, paragraph 1.2
3. Support for complainants explained on the website and in guidance	Section 10; How CNHC deals with complaints
4. Recruitment, appointment criteria and training for Case Examiners	Section 9; Procedures paragraphs 8.9 to 8.11; Case Examiner Guidance, Annex B
5. Guidance for Case Examiners to keep outcomes consistent	Sections 5 and 9; Case Examiner Guidance; Sanctions Guidance
6. Ongoing monitoring and regular audits	Section 12; Procedures paragraph 22
7. Interim order process for accepted outcomes	Section 6; Procedures paragraph 19.3
8. Publication policy for Case Examiner decisions	Section 8; Publication Policy
9. Lay and professional input	Section 2; Procedures 8.9, 15.5 and 16.1 (lay Case Examiners, with professional input from the PSB where available and relevant)

Document control

Version	1
Status	Pending approval. Published for information. Not yet in force.
Replaces	New document. Supports paragraphs 16 to 18 of the Detailed Procedures for Dealing with Complaints (version 2).
Owner	Head of Operations and Governance
Approved by	Pending approval
Classification	Public
Date approved	Pending approval
Effective from	Not yet in force. The date will be confirmed on approval.
Next review	Two years after it comes into force

Questions about this document: email **complaints@cnhc.org.uk** (our main contact method) or telephone 020 3327 2720.