Our behaviour principles

- Be professional
- Respect others
- Be accountable
- Be representative
- Be kind
Introduction

The BMA code of conduct sets out the standards of behaviour that are expected of members and provides guidance on the type of conduct that is in line with our values and supports the work that we do. Every BMA member is bound by the code when carrying out BMA business or discussing matters related to the BMA. The code is based on a set of behaviour principles that provide guidance to members on what they should aspire to embody when representing the BMA.

Examples of how these principles can be put into action can be found in Appendix 1 of the code.
Introduction

The code embodies the responsibility of BMA members to role model and promote positive behaviours and to challenge poor behaviours. It also brings together (and provides links to) the relevant guidance and policies that apply to BMA members and ensures that members are held to a similar standard of conduct to staff.

If any BMA member or member of staff encounters behaviour from a member that they feel may have fallen below the standards outlined in the code, they can raise their concerns under the BMA resolution process.
The BMA resolution process

The **BMA resolution process** covers any complaints made about the behaviour of members when they are representing the BMA. It’s important that poor behaviours are challenged but also that positive behaviours are supported and promoted; the resolution process highlights that the preference, wherever possible and appropriate, is to deal with matters informally.

If you are concerned about poor member behaviour you have experienced or witnessed, there are a number of options available to you.
Options for members

- If you are comfortable doing so, as a first step you may wish to discuss your concerns with the relevant secretariat staff or committee chair, who may be able to support you in addressing the issues directly and informally. The resolution process (pages 4-5) provides guidance on the ways you might do this.

- If the concerns you have are about postings on a BMA listserver, you can refer the matter to the independent Listserver Assessors for an independent view on whether further action might be necessary.

- Alternatively, or as a next step, you can call the BMA code of conduct support line, a 24-hour, telephone line that is managed by an external, independent provider and staffed by accredited counsellors. The phone number for the support line is 033 3212 3618.

- You can discuss your concerns confidentially and explore whether informal resolution is possible and what support you might need to achieve this, or whether it could be dealt with through a formal investigation.

The support line will provide advice and suggestions, but you will be the one to decide how to go forward.

- There may be circumstances in which the behaviour that has been encountered clearly requires formal action – the resolution process outlines how these matters can be raised directly.

- Formal investigations might be required where, for example, the matter raised is particularly serious (eg bullying, harassment, discrimination, behaviour that has the potential to cause harm to others or to the BMA) or it otherwise wouldn’t be appropriate to handle it informally (eg where there is a pattern of behaviour and previous attempts have been made to address it through informal action).

- If it does need to be looked at formally, the complaint will be referred (via the BMA) to an external, independent investigation service. The detailed process for this is set out in the resolution process (pages 6-9).
Options for staff

- If you are comfortable doing so, as a first step you may wish to discuss the matter with:
  - your manager or a colleague;
  - your union representative;
  - the relevant secretariat staff; and/or
  - the chair of the relevant committee

- If you would rather contact somebody outside your directorate, you can get in touch with John Macey, HR Director, or the HR team who have accountability for staff concerns in relation to member behaviour.

- Alternatively, or as a next step, you can call the BMA code of conduct support line, a 24-hour, telephone line that is managed by an external, independent provider and staffed by accredited counsellors. The phone number for the support line is 033 3212 3618.

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Options for staff managers

If a staff member raises concerns with you about member behaviour, and depending on the circumstances, you can consider the following options:

– In discussion with the staff member, consider if it’s appropriate to speak to the member yourself or raise the concern with the chair of the committee so that they can address the behaviour

– Encourage the staff member to contact the support line

– Contact the support line yourself for guidance on how to support the staff member (while respecting the staff member’s wishes regarding confidentiality).

Staff behaviour is not managed through the BMA code of conduct or BMA resolution process. If the behaviour concerns relate to a member of staff they should be raised with the relevant manager or staff director or with BMA HR so that it may be dealt with through the disciplinary or grievance process if appropriate.
Resolving complaints

Informal resolution
There are many ways in which a concern can be dealt with informally. Members and staff can discuss the best options with colleagues or with the independent BMA code of conduct support line. These options include (but are not limited to):
- advice being given to the person about whose behaviour concerns were raised as to their future conduct
- the matter being raised with them and their acknowledgement of, and apology for, the impact of their behaviour
- mediation or facilitated meetings between the parties
- training or other ongoing support for the person whose behaviour led to concerns

Formal investigations
In cases where, after discussion with the BMA code of conduct support line, it is decided that the concerns raised are not suitable for informal resolution, they will be referred for formal investigation. The matter will be passed to external, independent investigators who will speak to those involved, gather evidence and report back with a conclusion on whether there is a case to answer under the code of conduct before a resolution panel (in line with the resolution process). The panel will then hear the case and decide whether there has been a breach of the code of conduct and whether any sanctions should be applied.
The speak up guardian is Mary Walsh from The Guardian Service who can be contacted between 8am and 8pm, Monday to Friday at 0333 577 6116 or contact@theguardianservice.co.uk.

Speak up guardian

The speak up guardian is an independent and objective person that elected members and BMA staff can speak to, to raise any concerns about their work at the BMA that they feel unable to raise by other routes.

This service can offer information and emotional support in a strictly confidential, non-judgemental manner and in an off-the-record discussion.

It can help you:
- articulate your concerns;
- understand your options in resolving it;
- decide what actions you may wish to take;
- offer support as an independent facilitator; and
- by request, bring an issue to the attention of an appropriate executive or management team member (anonymously or ‘named’).
How your concerns can be handled

Complaint/concerns

- Contact speak up guardian

Discuss with chair/manager/colleague

- Comfortable discussing with chair/manager/colleague?
  - Yes
  - No

- Appropriate/possible to resolve directly?
  - Yes
  - No

- S/UIR?
  - Yes
  - No

- Support line provides support for informal resolution

- Support line provides support for informal resolution

- Obviously serious/unsuitable for informal resolution?
  - Yes
  - No

Advice from listserver assessors

- Optional referral to listserver assessors

- Concerns about postings on listserver?
  - No
  - Yes

- Refer for formal action

S/UIR = Serious/unsuitable for informal resolution
Other support for staff and members

Wellbeing support remains available to all BMA members. Further information is available here.

As well as the support available to staff from their line manager and colleagues, any member of staff who would like advice or help (including on health, wellbeing and financial matters) can access the employee assistance service. Further information is available here.
Contact

Should you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact Daira Moynihan, complaints lead: dmoynihan@bma.org.uk.