

Information for Witnesses

About this brochure

This brochure contains information for witnesses who are asked to provide a witness statement or attend a hearing to act as a witness. Please read it carefully, and if you have any more questions, please contact our fitness to practise department.

About us

The Health Professions Council has an overall role in safeguarding the health and wellbeing of those who use our registrant's services. The standards that we expect our registrants to keep to are set out in two documents. The standards of conduct, performance and ethics describe the general standards that we expect all registrants to keep to. The standards of proficiency set out the competencies specific to each profession that we expect registrants to achieve and to maintain throughout their registration.

We can consider complaints that a registrant's fitness to practise is impaired. The standards above are not an exhaustive list but will be taken into account when considering whether we uphold a complaint.

What is fitness to practise?

Fitness to practise involves more than just competence in a chosen profession. When we say that a registrant's fitness to practise we mean that the registrant has the health and character, as well as the necessary skills and knowledge to do your job safely and effectively. We also mean that we trust the registrant to act legally. Our main responsibility is to protect the public, maintaining public confidence in the professions and professionals we regulate.

Who can complain?

Anyone can make a complaint about a registered health professional. We receive complaints from fellow registrants, other health professionals, patients and their families, employers and the police. We can consider allegations that a registrant's fitness to practise is impaired by one of the following:

- misconduct
- lack of competence
- conviction or police caution
- determination by another regulator responsible for healthcare
- physical or mental health

We can also consider allegations about whether an entry to our register has been fraudulently obtained or made incorrectly. There is no time limit on the consideration of complaints.

What happens at the hearing?

If you are asked to attend a hearing, we will arrange your transport/hotel arrangements for you and pay any expenses you incur in the course of attending the hearing.

Hearings are usually held in public. This means that members of the public (including the press) are able to attend. A shorthand writer will also produce a transcript, which if the case is proven, will be available on our website. However, the hearing may sometimes be held in private, if the panel feels this is in the interests of the witnesses, patient confidentiality or to protect the private life of the registrant concerned.

At the hearing itself, the case will be presented in front of a panel. This panel will consist of a chairman, a person who is from the same profession as the registrant concerned and a lay partner (someone who is not on our register). Sometimes a registered medical practitioner also sits on the panel. There will also be a legal assessor present at the hearing, whose role it is to advise all parties on law and procedure and ensure the hearing is fair. We also have a transcript taken of the proceedings. We do try and conduct the hearings in an informal manner, however, the proceedings are serious and a certain amount of formality is necessary. You will, for instance, if called to give evidence, be asked to give your evidence under oath.

When giving evidence, the process will be you will initially be questioned by Kingsley Napley, the registrant or their representative will then be entitled to ask you some further questions, then Kingsley Napley may ask you some further questions. The panel may also have some questions for you. Once this has happened, you will be released. You are entitled to stay to observe the rest of the hearing if you wish or you may leave.

What powers does the panel have?

If the panel finds the case well-founded they will return to hear from those present about what action they should take. The panel will return to hear any representations on what they should do. The panel have the following options available:

- 1) They can decide to take no further action.
- 2) They can impose a caution order. This means that the word 'caution' will appear against the registrant's name on the register. Caution orders can be between 1 and 5 years in length.
- 3) They can place some sort of restriction or condition on the registrant's registration. This is known as a conditions of practice order. This might include working under supervision or to undertake further training.
- 4) They can suspend registration. This may not be for longer than 1 year.

- 5) They can decide to remove the registrants name from the register. This is known as a striking-off order.

Any action the panel takes is intended to protect the public and is not intended as a punishment. The panel will always consider the individual circumstances of a case and take into account what has been said by all those at the hearing before deciding what to do.

I hope the above information has been helpful. If you have any more queries please do not hesitate to contact the Fitness to Practice department on 0207 840 9814

HEALTH PROFESSIONS COUNCIL

Fitness to Practise Team Contact Information

Fitness to Practise e-mail: **ftp@hpc-uk.org**

Health Profession Council website: **www.hpc-uk.org**

Director of Fitness to Practise

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Team Administrator

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Travelling to Park House

Street Address

Health Professions Council, Park House, 184 Kennington Park Road, London, SE11 4BU

Public Transport

Arriving in London – Your rail operator will have details of mainline services to London stations.

London Underground

HPC is a 5 minute walk from both **Kennington & Oval** Underground stations on the Northern Line. If you have access to the internet you may find the following link useful for planning your journey on the London Underground - <http://tube.tfl.gov.uk/>

Attached is a black & white copy of the London Underground map (a.k.a. 'Tube' Map). Kennington or Oval Stations can be found in grid reference F5 of this map on the Northern Line (coloured as a solid black line on this version of the Tube Map).

HPC from Kennington Station – Kennington station is situated on the corner of Kennington Park Road and Braganza Street; exit the station onto Kennington Park Road and turn left. Follow Kennington Park Road for approximately 500yds until you see Kennington Park (at the junction of Kennington Park Place). At this junction there is a pedestrian crossing, cross here and continue left for approximately 15yds and Park House is on the right at 184 Kennington Park Road.

HPC from Oval Station – Oval station is situated on the corner of Clapham Road (which continues onto Kennington Park Road after the crossroads) and Harleyford Street. Exit the station and cross Harleyford Street at the pedestrian crossing. Continue down for approximately 700yds down Kennington Park Road (crossing Kennington Road & past Costcutters) and Park House is situated at 184 Kennington Park Road on the left.

Buses

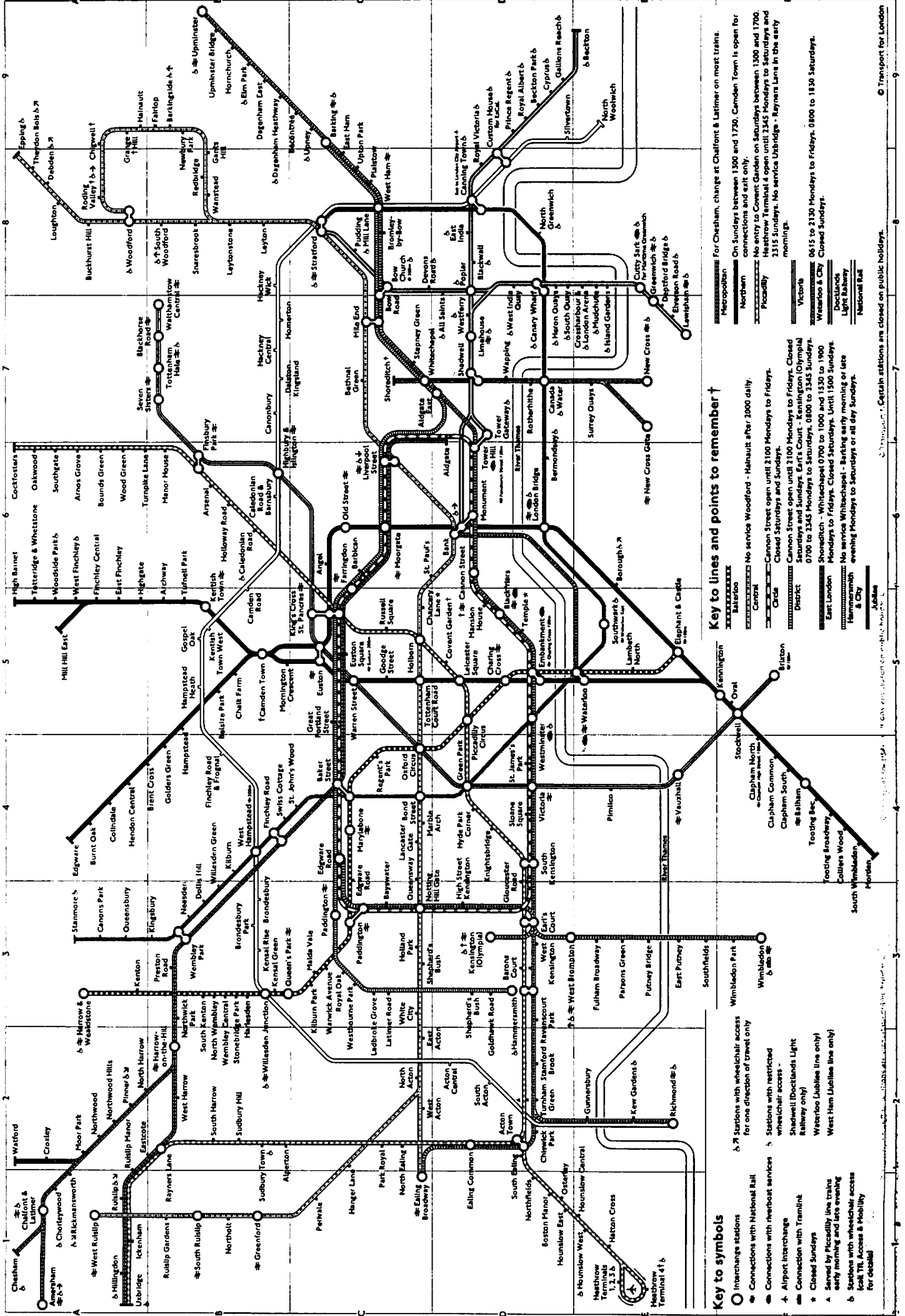
155, 133 & 333 stop on Kennington Park Road
3, 36, 59, 159, 185 all stop near by (5/10 minute walk)

Bicycles

There are off street bicycles racks at the front of Park House.

Car Parking

The HPC has no car parking facilities for visitors.



Key to symbols

- Interchange stations
- Connections with National Rail
- ⊕ Connections with wheelchair access for one direction of travel only
- ⊖ Stations with restricted wheelchair access - Shadwell (Docklands Light Railway only)
- ⊗ Airport interchange
- ⊙ Connection with Tramlink
- ⊛ Closed Sundays
- ⊠ Served by Piccadilly line trains early morning and late evening
- ⊡ Stations with wheelchair access (see TFL Access & Mobility for details)

Key to lines and points to remember †

- Metropolitan: For Chesham, change at Chalfont & Latimer on most trains. On Sundays between 1300 and 1730, Camden Town is open for connections and exit only.
- Northern: No entry to Covent Garden on Saturdays between 1300 and 1700. Heathrow Terminal 4 open until 2345 Mondays to Saturdays and 2315 Sundays. No service Uxbridge - Rayners Lane in the early morning.
- Piccadilly: Victoria: 0615 to 2130 Mondays to Fridays. 0800 to 1930 Saturdays. Windsor & City: Closed Sundays.
- Victoria: Light Railway: National Rail
- Waterloo & City: Closed Sundays.
- Circle: Closed Saturdays and Sundays.
- District: Cannon Street open until 2100 Mondays to Fridays. Closed Saturdays and Sundays. Epsom Court - Kensington (Olympia) 0700 to 2345 Mondays to Saturdays. 0800 to 2345 Sundays.
- East London: Mondays to Fridays. Closed Saturdays. Until 1500 Sundays. No service Whitechapel - Barking early morning or late evening Mondays to Saturdays or all day Sundays.
- Hammersmith & City: All day Sunday.

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HEALTH PROFESSIONS COUNCIL

EXPENSE CALCULATION FORM FOR WITNESSES

NAME OF WITNESS

ADDRESS

REGISTRANT VENUE

DATE OF HEARING

	£	p
TRAVELLING		
Rail Fare*		
Air Fare*		
Tube, Coach and Bus Fare		
Mileage Allowance (..... miles atp per mile) Car Registration No: cc Rating of car cc		
Other (e.g. parking, tolls)		
TOTAL TRAVEL		
* Do not claim if ticket provided through HPC travel agent who will bill HPC direct.		
SUBSISTENCE		
Hotel Expenses		
(do not claim more than under HPC guidelines) Other Meals Claimed		
(Describe)		
TOTAL SUBSISTENCE		
OTHER EXPENSES		
(Describe)		
TOTAL CLAIM	£	

Signed by Claimant **Date**

In signing the claimant declares that the expenses were necessarily disbursed and arose solely in performance of official duties. In claiming mileage allowance the claimant declares that a valid UK driving licence is held and that the vehicle is insured for bus

Authorised **Date**

In authorising the claim the signatory agrees that the claim has been made in accordance with HPC guidelines and that the claim is arithmetically correct. The signatory authorises the Finance Department to make the payment to the Claimant.

HEALTH PROFESSIONS COUNCIL

EXPENSES: HOW TO CLAIM WITNESSES

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This document explains how to claim your expenses when you have acted as a witness for the HPC
- 1.3 Witnesses are asked to submit their expenses to the Finance Department of HPC at the end of the month their work was undertaken. Late submission may result in late settlement. Authorisation will be made by the HPC Director of Fitness to Practise
- 1.4 Payments will be made by cheque or straight into your bank account. If you would like your payment to be paid into your bank please provide your bank details on the expense form
- 1.5 Receipts are required to substantiate claims, which should be made on the form provided. Vouchers for items below £5 are not required.

2 GENERAL CONDITIONS

- 2.1 Payments of expenses should only be made where expenses notified in the claim were actually and necessarily incurred.
- 2.2 Details of the expenses incurred should be indicated on the expense calculation form.
- 2.3 Wherever possible travel and hotels must be booked through your Fitness to Practise Case Manager or the Fitness to Practise Team Administrator.
- 2.4 There is no payment for any loss of earnings you may incur.

4 TRAVELLING AND SUBSISTENCE

If you are attending a hearing as a witness for the HPC, we will arrange all your travel and accommodation for you. However, you may find the following information useful

- 4.1 Reasonable rates are payable for travelling and subsistence costs to reimburse the out-of-pocket expenses of witnesses. Expenses will only be reimbursed if actual expenses are incurred. The following expenses will normally be paid:

Rail Fares: Standard Class rail fares at the cheapest available rates.

Air Fares: Economy Class airfares will be reimbursed where appropriate and authorised.

Tube, Coach and Bus Fares:

will be reimbursed as incurred.

Mileage Allowances:

Mileage allowance is payable for the use of own cars. The rates are in accordance with Inland Revenue rates, which are subject to annual change.

The rates to be used until any notification of change is made are as follows:

Date	Ver.	Dept/Cmtc	Doc Type	Title	Status	Int. Aud.
0000-04-11	n	FSP	POI	Witness Expense Policy	Draft DC: None	Internal RD: None

Cylinder capacity	1 st 10,000 miles	Additional Miles
Any rating	40p	25p

Rates for lease cars, motor cycles and pedal cycles are available upon request.

Taxi Fares: will be reimbursed where a taxi journey is considered quicker or more economical than using public transport.

Other Travelling Expenses:

Expenses incurred in respect of tolls, parking and ferries may be claimed.

Hotel Accommodation and Meals:

Bed and breakfast arrangements up to a daily maximum of £120 will be reimbursed. An evening meal up to a maximum of £30 will be reimbursed.

Witnesses staying with friends or relatives may claim £30 towards subsistence.

Meals taken during travel will be similarly reimbursed if within the spirit of the clause above.

Care allowance (e.g. for children or elderly dependents):

An allowance of up to £30 per day will be paid but only against a valid invoice or receipt from the carer. It should be noted that such allowance is a benefit in the hands of the claimant and will be subject to tax and national insurance.

5 CONCLUSION

5.1 Further advice and guidance is available from the Fitness to Practise Department