

The Institute of Trichologists

Disciplinary Procedure

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1. Introduction

The Institute of Trichologists (IOT) requires high standards of conduct from all of its members and is committed to giving Members the opportunity to improve and learn from mistakes where necessary. The IOT recognises the potential impact that disciplinary procedures can have on the health and wellbeing of members and will ensure that the correct support is put in place at an early stage.

This policy is intended to ensure that a fair, systematic and uniform approach is taken when conduct falls short of the required standard in accordance with our code of ethics policy.

The ethics committee will always attempt to resolve minor matters of concern through an improvement conversation and by offering any other support required. If informal approaches do not remedy poor conduct or if misconduct is sufficiently serious, the formal stages of the disciplinary procedure will apply to ensure patient welfare and safety.

2. Duties (Principal)

All members are required to make themselves aware of and adhere to the IOT's disciplinary rules and professional conduct standards, as outlined in the **Code of Professional Practice and Ethics**.

The Ethics Chair and the Ethics committee will ensure that all action taken in line with this policy and procedure is reasonable. Members will be given the opportunity to know the reasons and the nature of evidence for any potential disciplinary action. Members will be given the opportunity to be represented at all formal stages of the procedure. Members will have the opportunity to respond fully to allegations before disciplinary action is taken. The Chair of Ethics will ensure that the main points of a formal meeting are summarised in an outcome letter. Members have the right to appeal against any formal disciplinary action. With the exception of offences, which constitute gross misconduct, members will not normally have their membership withdrawn for a first offence.

If a member is charged or convicted for a criminal offence, whether committed on or whilst practising, the IOT will consider whether the offence renders the individual/s unsuitable for continued membership and may withdraw the member following a full investigation and properly constituted disciplinary hearing.

The IOT reserves the right to take action independently of any legal proceedings. Dismissal due to professional misconduct will be reported on the IOT website.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

It is a fundamental responsibility of the Ethics Committee to take appropriate action to address conduct issues using the IOT Disciplinary Policy and Code of Professional Standards. This will be taken following a thorough investigation and consideration of the facts and any mitigating circumstances presented by the member and Ethics Committee. The Chair of Ethics should always attempt to resolve matters immediately and informally in the first instance, reserving formal action for serious cases and/or where an informal approach has been tried and failed.

- Support members subject to disciplinary proceedings to ensure that the appropriate support is put in place.
- Adopt a person-centred approach to managing the member.

- Consult with the relevant independent professionals before taking formal action, including suspension.
- Allow accredited representatives to attend formal meetings and disciplinary hearings.
- The Chair of Ethics is where there is a possible conflict of interest, for instance, the members have worked together in the same practice then another member of the Ethics Committee will commission the investigation.

3.1 The Chair of Ethics (Investigating Officer)

The Chair of Ethics is responsible for undertaking the fact-finding as appointed by the IOT Board of Directors. S/he will be an experienced member holding the title of MIT or FIT.

- The Chair of Ethics will determine witnesses to interview as part of the investigation and collate the relevant evidence.
- It is incumbent upon the Chair of Ethics to write up the report and findings and submit to the .
- Should the matter be referred to a disciplinary hearing, the Chair of Ethics will present the findings.
- The Chair of Ethics should not make recommendations regarding a potential sanction but confine themselves to establishing the facts.
- The Chair of Ethics must declare any conflicts of interest.
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3.2 The Independent Chair of Ethics

- Ensuring the pre-investigation checklist to examine and record consideration of other options, such as informal resolution is completed.
- Review the investigation report received from the Chair of Ethics and decide whether or not the case should be considered at a formal disciplinary hearing.
- Chair the disciplinary hearing and consider the case in accordance with this procedure and ensure that any decision taken is fair and reasonable.
- The parties must declare any conflicts of interest.

3.3 Members of the Institute

- All members have a responsibility to ensure they abide by the IOT's Code of Professional Practice and Ethics at all times.
- A member must be available to provide statements/evidence in a timely manner and nominate witnesses if appropriate.
- To attend the disciplinary hearing, provide answers to questions and arrange a representative or companion.

3.4 Representative

To accompany the member at the disciplinary hearing when required.

- May respond to any views expressed at the disciplinary hearing.
- May confer with the member
- May question witnesses if required.
- Cannot answer questions on the member's behalf

- May address the hearing in accordance with the wishes of the member.
- Cannot prevent the Chair of Ethics from presenting the case.

3.5 Chair of Ethics

The Chair of Ethics is responsible for agreeing a communication plan with a member whose membership is suspended or subject to a formal investigation. The communication plan ensures that the member is contacted on a regular basis to keep them updated on the progress of any investigation and to check on their health and wellbeing.

4. Informal Procedure

4.1 Fact finding

The Chair of Ethics will carry out a fact-finding exercise to review the whole event and make a decision regarding the next steps. The fact-finding exercise will aim to establish dates and time of the incident, individuals involved in the event. The Chair of Ethics will also gather any other relevant information such as the patient's consultation notes and medical reports etc.

A fact-finding exercise is not part of a formal process and should start with a conversation with the individuals involved in the event. Statements should be obtained including witnesses if appropriate. The information and any mitigation or contributing factor should be carefully considered before deciding on next steps.

4.2 Improvement Conversations

In cases where minor misconduct is established for the first time, the Chair of Ethics will discuss with the member in private to discuss the unsatisfactory conduct at the earliest opportunity. The Chair of Ethics will hear any reasons or mitigation put forward, and will advise the member of the expected standards of conduct and, where appropriate, assistance will be offered to help the member achieve those standards and the timescale for them to be met. If necessary, further training, counselling, coaching, mentoring, supervised practice and mediation will be agreed with the member, which will be followed up by the Chair of Ethics, or a member of the Ethics Committee.

The member will also be informed that if there is a repeated act of minor misconduct, further action will be considered i.e. formal disciplinary procedure being invoked.

The details of the Improvement Conversation will be confirmed to the member in writing who will be entitled to register their response. A copy of the details of the Improvement Conversation will be placed on file.

5. Formal Procedure

5.1 Formal Investigation

A fact-finding exercise will be carried out before formal disciplinary action is taken. Please refer to section 11.0 of the Complaints procedure for further guidance.

The Chair of Ethics will complete the pre-investigation checklist to examine and record consideration of other options, such as informal resolution.

The member has the right to be accompanied by a representative such as a solicitor. In the case of legal representation the committee must be notified in an advance of the meeting. In addition, a disabled staff member may as an also be accompanied by a suitably qualified individual such as a support worker or someone with knowledge of the disability and its effects who can advocate on their behalf.

Investigations should be completed as quickly as possible and not delayed without good reason. If Chair of Ethics is unable to obtain relevant information in a reasonable timeframe, consideration may be given to concluding an investigation based on the information available. The Chair of Ethics must be mindful of the need for a fair and balanced investigation and give the member every reasonable opportunity to give their explanation and views. The Chair of Ethics should keep the member informed of the progress of an investigation on a regular basis.

Investigations by the Police or other agencies are in addition to and separate from investigations under this Procedure. The IOT will only delay proceeding with or concluding disciplinary investigations because of other investigations if proceeding would jeopardise or hinder the outcome of the other investigation. The decision to proceed should be made following consultation with other agencies, but will always be made in the best interests of patients.

5.2 Agreed Outcomes

Where the member has admitted and accepted the allegations against them, the Chair of Ethics in consultation with the Ethics Committee members will consider whether it is appropriate to conclude the matter without the need for a formal investigation and disciplinary hearing by agreeing an outcome with the member. It is open to either party, without prejudice, to suggest an agreed outcome at any stage of the disciplinary process.

This approach is only considered where the alleged conduct is likely to result in a formal warning and therefore, it excludes cases where the potential outcome is summary dismissal or dismissal with notice. If the member consents to an agreed outcome then the agreed outcome will be confirmed in writing within 7 days by the Chair of Ethics.

Any disciplinary sanction issued in this way has the same status as one issued after a disciplinary hearing. There is no right of appeal or of grievance against this decision once it has been agreed by the Ethics Committee.

5.3 Criminal Matters (Inside or outside of the IOT)

In cases where criminal activity is suspected for example theft, assault, etc. consideration needs to be given to informing the Police, Security Team, Counter Fraud Service or Health and Safety

Executive in the first instance as well as seeking legal advice in order that a proper investigation can be conducted.

Where a member is arrested, subjected to a criminal investigation, is charged, or has received a caution / sentence for a criminal offence inside or outside of work, it is the member's responsibility to inform the IOT of the circumstances. Failure to do so could result in a disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

Where the misconduct is the subject of a criminal investigation or legal process internally or externally, the IOT has the discretion to proceed with its own internal investigation and disciplinary in accordance with this procedure, without awaiting the outcome of any criminal investigation or prosecution. However, consent should be sought from the investigating team/Police in order not to prejudice any criminal investigation/prosecution.

A criminal offence outside of clinical practice will not automatically be regarded as a reason for disciplinary action or dismissal. The main consideration will be whether the conviction has clear implications for the member's performance in relation to a patient's welfare and/ or damage to the reputation of the IOT.

If this is the case, disciplinary action up to and including dismissal may be taken.

If it is decided that the offence could affect the performance of the individual or bring the IOT into disrepute, then a formal investigation may need to commence.

Where matters of a potentially criminal nature emerge in the course of an investigation then reference may need to be made to the Police, Security Team, Counter Fraud or Health and Safety Executives as appropriate and legal advice should be sought through the IOT solicitor.

Where someone is unable to work in clinical practice due to being detained by the authorities, the IOT may continue with the process in the member's absence. If an is unable to attend meetings and /or hearings, then they may send a representative on their behalf and or provide a written statement.

5.4 Conduct issues that occur outside the workplace

There may be occasions where misconduct occurs outside of clinical practice, for instance on social occasions, in public places, in the home and / or on social media etc. In these cases, if the misconduct affects or could affect colleagues, patients, the reputation of the IOT then this policy and the potential sanctions within will apply.

6. Suspension/ Exclusion

Exclusion from the membership is a last resort and should only be considered in cases of alleged serious misconduct where there is

EITHER a need to protect patients, colleagues or the business interests of the IOT pending a full investigation of allegations of gross misconduct AND there is no workable alternative to suspension.

Suspension will be for the minimum time necessary and will only be used after alternative ways of managing risk have been considered. All suspensions will be reviewed within an agreed time frame.

Suspension is a neutral act and is not a form of disciplinary action, but breaches of any conditions attached to suspension may lead to disciplinary action.

During the suspension period, the member will not be entitled to enter any IOT premises other than at the request of the Chair of Ethics to attend a meeting.

The Chair of Ethics must write to the member following suspension to state the allegation(s), reasons for suspension, confirmation of who commissioned the investigation. The name of the Chair of Ethics that will contact the individual and include the terms of reference for the investigation. The Chair of Ethics should maintain regular contact with the member as a supportive measure for the duration of the suspension. The method and regularity of this contact should be the most appropriate for each individual and should always be a support to the member. It is recommended that contact is made if possible on a fortnightly basis.

If a decision is reached at any point that the suspension should be lifted and the member allowed to return to work, then this should be confirmed in writing to the member as soon as possible, noting any specific arrangements in relation to the return to clinical practice.

A discussion should take place between the Chair of Ethics and the Member to discuss their return to clinical practice, before the letter is sent.

7. Formal Procedure for Disciplinary Hearings

At all formal stages of the Disciplinary Procedure, once the matter has been investigated and it has been established that there is a case to answer, a disciplinary hearing will be arranged with minimum delay.

Reasonable notice (normally 7 calendar days) must be given of the arrangements for the hearing, including who will be present at the hearing. The Independent Chair of the disciplinary hearing will provide the member in advance with written details of the allegation(s) and any supporting documentation that will be referred to at the hearing. The member must take all reasonable steps to attend the hearing, but if this is not possible, they may submit a written statement or ask a representative to attend on their behalf. If the member has an exceptionally strong reason that prevents them from attending the disciplinary hearing, then they should ask (in email or writing) the Independent Chair of the disciplinary hearing if they would be prepared to reschedule the hearing. However, the decision on when the hearing should be held rests with solely the Chair. If a member fails to attend a scheduled hearing without prior notification, a decision may be taken for the hearing to proceed in the member's absence.

The member has the right to be accompanied by an accredited representative. A disabled member may also be accompanied by a suitably qualified individual, such as a support worker or someone with knowledge of the disability and its effects who can advocate on their behalf.

The representative's role can include addressing the hearing on the member's behalf, putting forward the member's case and summing up, responding on behalf of the member to any views expressed at the meeting and to confer with the member. Representatives cannot answer questions on the member's behalf.

Cases that may result in dismissal will be heard by the Independent Chair of Ethics and supported by additional panel members who are not members of the IOT.

The panel members will have no previous involvement in the case or any conflict of interest that could influence decision-making and will be diverse in representation.

Panels must be diverse in representation and cater for factors such as BAME status, disability status. Panel members will be selected to achieve this, and where appropriate additional panel members will be recruited from relevant professional bodies. (Appendix lists independent advisors / committee of the IOT)

At the meeting, the Chair of Ethics will state the nature of the allegations and outline the case by going through the available evidence. The member will be given full opportunity to respond to the allegations. Whilst the member has to respond directly to any questions, the member's representative has the right to outline the member's case and ask questions on the member's behalf. In considering the sanction, the Chair of Ethics will take account of the member's previous record and other relevant factors.

The outcome of the hearing will be confirmed in writing within 7 calendar days. If disciplinary action is to be taken the letter will include details of the complaint, the improvement required (if appropriate), the timescale for this to be achieved and the right to appeal. It will also state that further disciplinary action may be taken if there are any further allegations of misconduct. If the member is professionally registered elsewhere e.g. Legal Expert Witness, the Chair of the Hearing will consider if the situation is such that a referral to the member's professional body is required. If they agree that a referral is to be made, the member should be advised of this.

7.1 Counter- Allegations during a Disciplinary Process

If a member makes a counter-allegation that is relevant to a disciplinary proceeding, these allegations may be considered as part of the disciplinary process and not separately under another procedure. If appropriate, it may be necessary to consider the counter allegations as part of mitigation submissions during the disciplinary hearing.

8. Formal Disciplinary Sanctions

The severity of the breach of conduct will determine the level of disciplinary action to be taken and Formal Disciplinary Sanctions may accordingly be entered at any stage. It is noted that any previous formal disciplinary warnings can be considered as part of the member's overall disciplinary record and any that are "live" at the time of the offence may be taken into consideration when considering the level of sanction required.

Stage 1 – Formal First Written Warning

If the member fails to meet the required standards following informal action or if the offence is sufficiently serious to warrant moving straight to the formal stages, a **Formal First Written Warning** may be given. Formal First Written Warnings are confirmed in writing and apply for a period of six months after which time they lapse.

Stage 2 – Formal Final Written Warning

If the failure to meet required standards continues or if the offence is one of sufficiently serious (but not gross) misconduct, a **Formal Final Written Warning** may be given. Formal Final Written Warnings are confirmed in writing and apply for a period of twelve months after which time they lapse.

Note: In exceptional circumstances, the duration of a Formal Final Written Warnings may be for longer e.g. 24 months where the Warning is an alternative to dismissal.

Stage 3 - Membership withdrawal

If the conduct or performance remains unsatisfactory or if the offence constitutes gross misconduct, removal from the membership will normally result. The Chair of the disciplinary hearing has the authority to dismiss.

9. Appeals

Members have the right to appeal against formal disciplinary action to the Appeals committee not previously involved in the initial disciplinary decision. Appeals will be heard under the Appeals Procedure.

Appeals will be heard by three suitably experienced and trained senior practitioners who had not had any previous involvement in the hearing or any conflict of interest that could influence their decision making. The Chair of the Appeal hearing will be from an independent professional body or HR professional with experience of dealing complaints and disciplinary hearings. The panel will be diverse in representation.

The appeal must be lodged in writing/email to the Chair of the disciplinary hearing within 14 days of the date of the letter confirming the outcome of the disciplinary formal action, stating the grounds on which they are appealing.

10. Implementation and Training

The IOT board of directors will ensure that members of the Ethics Committee, Independent Advisory Committee and Independent Ethics Committee with responsibility for sitting on disciplinary hearing are appropriately trained. The IOT makes the following training provisions:

- The Ethics Committee team are made aware of the disciplinary procedure and rules.
- Training in the management of misconduct and the application of this procedure for new and existing Ethics Committee team, with a particular focus on the need for informal resolution where appropriate.
- Training on Equality and Diversity and its relevance to disciplinary matters.

11. Monitoring Compliance

Measurable policy objectives	Monitoring/Audit Method	Frequency	Responsibility of monitoring	Responsible committee
To assist the Ethics Committee members in dealing with conduct issues and ensure consistency	Member relations tracker	Annual report	Chair of Ethics	Ethics Committee reporting to the Board of Directors

The Chair of Ethics and Ethics Committee team will ensure that the disciplinary procedure is applied fairly and consistently in line with the IOT's Equal Opportunities Policy. The application of the formal procedure by ethnicity, gender, disability, sexual orientation and age is monitored by the IOT board of Directors. Reports on the application of the procedure are discussed at the Ethics Committee team meetings (quarterly) at meetings within the IOT's Equality and Diversity governance structure and action taken accordingly.

12. Examples of Misconduct

Examples of the types of misconduct which may be considered as minor, serious and gross misconduct are detailed below. This list is neither exhaustive nor prescriptive and therefore does not include all types of misconduct and should only be used as a guide. It will be for the Chair of the disciplinary hearing to determine the findings based on the evidence. In all cases, the severity of the breach of conduct will determine the stage at which the disciplinary procedure is entered and the level of disciplinary action taken.

12.1 Examples of Minor Misconduct may result in a formal written warning, and/or further recommended training.

- Misleading membership descriptor e.g MIT or FIT instead of AIT
- Advance payment for treatment plans for treatment
- Products labelling not compliant with general cosmetic regulations but not causing adverse reaction to patient
- Not adhering to general health and safety standards e.g. not appropriately sanitising equipment

12.2 Examples of Serious Misconduct

Member will receive written warning and suspension from membership of up to six months.

- Breach of confidentiality
- Ill treatment/abuse of a patient
- Inappropriate use of the IOT's internet, email or social networking sites
- Use of foul language in clinical practice
- Failure to comply with health and safety requirement
- Failure to comply with mandatory IOT procedures

- Making malicious, vindictive or deliberately untrue statements against another member/s or patients
- Failure to comply with IOT information governance protocols, leading to the risk of a breach of data security

12.3 Examples of Gross Misconduct

The following offences are among those regarded as serious enough to warrant membership withdrawal, without any prior warnings, as constituting gross misconduct. (The list is not exhaustive).

- **Theft** - any instances of theft or attempted theft from patients or visitors.
- **Fraud** - this includes any deliberate falsification of records or documents, such as the misrepresentation of entitlement or the falsification of qualifications.
- **Assault** - any assault (verbal or physical) upon a patient, member of the public or fellow member, including cases of serious harassment and bullying.

Discrimination

- **Negligence** - any action or failure to act which could result in serious loss, damage or injury. Includes failure to give appropriate care and protection to patients.
- **Reckless Conduct** - an act of recklessness or incompetence sufficiently severe to break down trust and confidence in the member's ability to undertake their job.
- **Deliberate damage** - to the property of patients and visitors.
- **Being unfit for duty** - through the effects of drink or drugs.
- **Working in a role without the legal authority to do so** - where a member through their own action or inaction loses their statutory right to perform the duties for which they were qualified. For example, loss of professional registration to carry out legal expert witness work, no right to work in UK / visa restrictions, etc.
- **Breach of confidentiality** - disclosure of confidential patient information to unauthorised persons.
- **Serious infringement of health and safety rules**
- **Bringing IOT into disrepute** – this rule may be breached when a member intentionally, or recklessly acts in a manner which damages or is likely to damage the reputation of the IOT, for example through conduct incompatible with role or profession and / or is charged / convicted of a criminal offence. Members should be extremely careful in their use of social media and ensure that their opinions on social media do not link to their position at the IOT and they must not allow their opinions to bring the Institute into disrepute

- **Scientific Misconduct** - fabrication, falsification, plagiarism or deception in proposing, carrying out or reporting results of research or deliberate, dangerous or negligent deviations from accepted practices in carrying out research.
- **Breach of Trust** - this rule may be breached when an member acts in such a way to fundamentally damage the relationship of trust and confidence between the member and the IOT.

13. Associated Documents

- Complaints Handling Policy and Procedure
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Code of Professional Practice and Ethics
- Part B - Rules of Procedure for disciplinary hearings
- Part C - Rules of Procedure for disciplinary appeal hearings

Appendix 1

Code of Professional Practice and Ethics

For Registered Members of the IOT

Introduction

Registered Members and Registered Students of the Institute of Trichologists must adhere to this Code of Professional Practice and Ethics. The code is reviewed annually to review that it is still fit for purpose and encompasses the highest possible standards for each registered member; however we do collect and review information continually and can update this code at any time, with the authority of the Board of Directors to ensure that Practice Standards and Procedures are adhered to at all times. This code has been drawn up by the Institute of Trichologists Board of Directors and complies with the company's Articles of Association.

The purpose of this Code is to provide a high ethical and professional standard of conduct for Members to follow in order to protect the general public and to preserve and enhance the practice of Trichology.

These guidelines and rules are essential for the integrity of the Institute of Trichologists as a regulatory, standards and membership body.

The Institute has a duty to ensure that the Code of Professional Practice and Ethics is adhered to and does this by engaging with its members and the general public.

It is the responsibility of all Members to know the provisions of the current Rules. Members shall comply with this Code of Professional Practice and Ethics and any other standards or regulations as directed by the Institute, which shall be binding at all times in their professional activities.

Failure by a Member to adhere to the Code will result in disciplinary action. This will bring your fitness to practice into question and can endanger your registered member status. If there is gross negligence or misconduct, the name of the member will be removed from the register and the appropriate authorities will be informed of such action. All privileges of membership will be withdrawn.

This Code applies to all classes of membership.

The Institute may amend the Code of Professional Practice and Ethics at least annually and more frequently when necessary with the agreement of the Board of Directors.

General Rules for Registered Members:

1. A Member's prime concern must be for the welfare of the patient and the safety of the general public.

2. Members of the Institute of Trichologists shall conduct themselves at all times with dignity and behave in an honourable manner in their relations with patients, the general public, other members of the Institute, members of other professional bodies and other practitioners.

3. Members must act at all times in a manner which promotes public trust in the Trichologists' knowledge, ability and judgement, and enhances the good standing and reputation of the profession.
4. In order to maintain a high standard of professional competence, Members must regularly review their level of professional knowledge and expertise, and continually update their knowledge through professional journals, meetings and participation in continuing professional development and educational programmes recognised and promoted by The Institute of Trichologists.
5. Members must endeavour to co-operate with professional colleagues and members of other health professions for the benefit of their patients and the public.
6. A Member must be honest, uphold the honour and dignity of the profession, act with integrity and not engage in any activity which may bring the profession into disrepute.
7. Where patients' records, including names and addresses, are stored, each Member must ensure compliance with the General Data Protection Regulations, (GDPR) or if the registered Member is outside of the UK, they should adhere to the standards for data protection legislation governing their country or location.
8. Members are responsible for their own personal malpractice insurance, negligence and third-party insurance.
9. Members must provide a copy of their current insurance certificate with their annual membership subscriptions. Comprehensive insurance is a condition of Membership, failure to provide proof of insurance may result in temporary or permanent removal from the Members register.
10. Members' names will be removed from the Institute of Trichologists Members Register and they will not be permitted to use the designated letters after their name if their annual fees are not paid within one month of the due date or they fail to maintain adequate current Insurance.
11. Members must immediately advise the Institute and their insurance company of any official enquiry into their practice from whatever source.
12. All Members must maintain exemplary standards of professional conduct. As a professional you are personally accountable for your actions in your practice. You must always act within the law whether those laws relate to your practice or your personal life. All practices within the UK must adhere to The Health & Safety at Work Act 1974, those registered members outside of the UK must adhere to the relevant Health and Safety Legislation for their country or location.
13. Courtesy, patience and understanding should be shown to patients and the general public at all times. The patients' and general public's welfare must be paramount at all times. Members should be aware of the limits of their competence and be ready to refer the patient for further investigation when necessary.
14. A Member shall keep accurate and appropriate records of all patients, their treatments and prescriptions, and any such record shall be held safely and securely for seven years after the patient's last consultation or treatment. In the event that the Member's practice is transferred for whatever reason to

another Member, all such records shall be similarly In the event of a Member ceasing to practice, all patient records shall be submitted to the Institute for safe keeping, where they will be retained for seven years prior to destruction. All data held must comply with General Data Protection Regulation within the UK, or relevant country or location legislation to Members outside of the UK.

15. A Member is entitled to charge a deposit, or full fee for a consultation or treatment but may not charge for courses of clinical treatments in advance of seeing or treating a patient.

16. No Member shall corruptly offer or accept any gift or other inducement.

17. Consultations with patients should, wherever possible be carried out face to face with a physical examination of the hair and scalp to facilitate a diagnosis being made. A consultation should last for between 45 minutes and 1 hour. No treatments, products or medications should be supplied to a patient or member of the public without a full consultation having taken place first. In exceptional circumstances Registered Members are permitted to carry out a video consultation, this should follow the exact same format as a face-to-face consultation but will not allow in depth examination of the hair and scalp. It is possible to accurately diagnose some conditions without physical examinations of the hair and scalp; however certain conditions do need a hands-on examination to take place. Any video diagnosis must be clear in its limitations and must not mislead the Patient or Member of the General Public in any way. Video Consultations should last between 30 minutes and 45 minutes.

18. A Member may not disclose information obtained in confidence from a patient to anyone without prior consent from the patient or the appropriate guardian unless the interest of the patient or the Law requires such disclosure.

19. Patient records are to be kept confidential at all times and access restricted to the Member, clinical assistant and patient.

20. Members may accept patients who have been receiving treatment from other Trichology practioners, whether they are Registered Members of The Institute of Trichologists or other organisations. No Member must pass comment or judgement of another Member or Practioners competence, if the patient has a complaint, they should be encouraged to complete the complaints process to allow an independent investigation to take place. A Registered Member can write to another Registered Member or Trichologist to request patient notes, with the permission of the patient, if that patient has elected to change Practioner. Wherever possible Members and Non-Members should co-operate with information requests to safeguard the patient and Members of the Public.

21. A Member who has been or is employed as a Trichologist shall not in any way induce or attempt to induce any patient to leave the care of that employer.

22. All Registered Members must commit to ongoing professional development, as such a minimum of 5 Recognised Continual Professional Development, (CPD) points need to be accumulated annually. Any Registered Member who undertakes additional education and qualifications for use within their Trichology Practice may submit these to the Institute of Trichologists for approval to add to their Members Listing which details each Members levels of competence.

23. Use of Registered Members logos and post-nominal designatory letters awarded to the individual member are solely for the use with the Registered Members name, they cannot be used to credit a business, other practitioners or clinics generally. Websites belonging solely to a registered Member may display the logo and letters, however a website listing the registered Member as part of their team can only use the logo and letters attached directly to the Registered Members name. If regulations relating to annual Membership fee payment, attendance at CPD events and Practitioner Insurance are breached, then the use of the logos and designatory letters will be prohibited, and the Member removed from the published register.

General Rules for Registered Students:

24. Students may be Registered Student Members with The Institute of Trichologists, via their acknowledged Education Provider. They must adhere to the Student Policies and Procedures detailed by their individual educational bodies in terms of completing academic and clinical work and passing designated examinations or submitting portfolios of evidence to gain qualifications to move to Registered Member status.

25. Registered Students must at all times take the safety of the General Public, Patients and Colleagues as their number one priority.

26. No Registered Student may offer Clinical Consultations, (unless part of their training and with supervision), without achieving the Educational Standard required to do so, nor may they use any letters after their name, unless they have achieved the necessary qualifications to do so, and these are clearly documented on the Registered Members Website.

27. Student Members of the Institute of Trichologists shall conduct themselves at all times with dignity and behave in an honourable manner in their relations with the general public, other members of the Institute, members of other professional bodies and other practitioners.

28. Student Members may not disclose information obtained in confidence from an Educational Body or details of any patient seen during their clinical training, to anyone without prior consent from the Educational Body or patient or the appropriate guardian unless the interest of the patient or the Law requires such disclosure.

29. Registered Student Members will be clearly identified to the General Public as Students. All Educational Providers will be clearly listed, with details of the educational standards, accreditation and area of clinical competence detailed and easily accessed for the General Public and those considering taking up education to become Registered Members.

30. Registered students will only become Registered Members on the successful completion of their education requirements and subsequent application to the Institute of Trichologists to become a Registered Member.

Relationship with the Medical Profession and other Health Professionals:

31. Although Trichology has the potential to treat a wide variety of conditions, it may not always be the most appropriate treatment. Where Members feel this is the case, they should advise their patients of other therapeutic options and refer them to the medical profession or other health care professionals.

32. Members must not disparage the professional services of other Trichologists or health care professionals, nor make claims of superiority, either expressed or implied.

33. Members shall maintain a readiness to consult professional colleagues when appropriate.

Premises:

34. Registered Members based in the UK should comply with the Local Council Regulations and advice of the Environmental Health Officers regarding adequate facilities, such as heating, lighting, ventilation, toilets, electrical installations, smoke alarms and fire extinguishers. Outside of the UK Registered Members must consult with and comply with advice and regulations as legislation determines in their country or location.

35. Working conditions must be arranged so as to protect the safety of the public and those people working on the premises. Registered Members based in the UK must be aware of their responsibilities under Health and Safety Legislation, Registered Members outside of the UK should adhere with the legislation that is relevant to Health and Safety at work in their country or location.

36. A First Aid kit must be available at all times in clinics. Reference should be made to the Shops and Offices Act of the country in which Members' practice.

37. A regular review of the facilities and working practices should be carried out to ensure they comply with current standards. Registered Members based in the UK should be aware of their responsibilities under Health and Safety legislation, Registered Members based outside the UK must adhere to Law and Legislation relating to safe working practices for their country or location, this applies to employer, employee or self-employed.

Advertising Code:

38. No Registered Member within the UK should use the title Doctor in their Trichological advertising unless entitled as a registered member with The General Medical Council. Registered Members outside of the UK must only use the title Doctor in line with the legislation covering this term in their country or location. To do so in their country of abode. If the title of Doctor is used in other forms of advertising, then it must be stated clearly what the qualification refers to (e.g. PhD).

39. Advertising must not mislead the general public in any way, all benefits and services offered, and products referred to must be supported by medical or scientific research.

40. Advertisements by Registered Members should not claim or imply superiority over other professional services.

41. Registered Members may not endorse or promote any products using their Registered Member status or the name of The Institute of Trichologists.

42. Registered Members may offer expert consultancy to product development and may also comment on specific hair and scalp related questions and concerns in an educational and expert capacity.

43. Registered Members are prohibited from claiming cures to named conditions in compliance with the laws of the country where they practice.

44. Registered Members must ensure that all advertisements and other public pronouncements with which his or her name, or the name under which he or she practices, is associated are not such as would bring the Institute or the profession of Trichology into disrepute. Specifically, a Member shall adhere to accepted advertising practice and to any ruling by the Advertising Standards Authority.

45. Registered Members who use their name in connection with advertisement or promotion, by or for any establishment or practice, must ensure that they adhere to the Code of Professional Practice and Ethics. In respect of any patient visiting or consulting that establishment or practice, notwithstanding that the patient may not have consulted or have been treated by that Member; and if any complaint from any such patient is received by the Institute, that Member will be responsible under the terms of the Code as if the Member had dealt personally with that patient.

Conflict of interest

46. When competing interests impair our ability to make objective, unbiased business decisions we have a conflict of interest. You may face a conflict of interest when your professional duties as a member of the Institute of Trichologists and your personal interests diverge. Conflicts may take the form of financial interests in a supplier's or customer's business, recruiting a close family member or engaging in employment outside the Institute.

47. As a member, you are expected to:

- a. Maintain the highest possible standard of integrity in all your business relationships, both inside and outside the organisation in which you work.
- b. Reject any business practice which might reasonably be deemed improper (including improper practices which might benefit the Institute).
- c. Never use your authority or position for personal gain.
- d. At all times, act with impartiality, independence and integrity.
- e. Avoid being, or giving the appearance of being, in a position which may result in an actual or perceived detriment to the Institute's reputation and/or interests.

48. You must disclose or seek direction on any issues which may potentially conflict with your responsibilities to the Board of Directors.

49. You will not be permitted to engage in transactions on behalf of the Institute of Trichologists with organisations or individuals with which you have an interest. All decision making and transactions with the organisation concerned will be handled and managed independently.

50. It is not possible to define all situations or relationships which may create a conflict of interest, so each situation must be evaluated individually. However, some of the more obvious conflicts include:

- a. Having any interest, dealings or shareholdings in any business which is a competitor, customer or supplier of the Institute of Trichologists, or is seeking to become one.

b. A close family member (including children, in-laws, partner or spouse) having any interest, dealings or shareholdings in any business which is a competitor, customer or supplier of the Institute of Trichologists, or is seeking to become one.

c. Having a close or longstanding relationship/friendship with a business which is a competitor, customer or supplier of the Institute of Trichologists or is seeking to become one.

d. Using confidential information obtained through your membership of the Institute of Trichologists for your own personal gain.

e. Using confidential information obtained through your membership of the Institute of Trichologists in order to set up a competitor.

f. Receiving a gift or payment from a company which is associated with the Institute of Trichologists.

51. In all cases, individuals have a responsibility to assess the potential conflict. Potential or actual conflicts of interest must be disclosed.

52. Disclosure must be made in writing to the Board of Directors as soon as the member becomes aware of a potential or actual conflict.

53. If you are in any doubt as to whether a conflict of interest exists discuss the situation with the Board of Directors.

54. If you have any problems recording your conflict of interest, please inform the Board of Directors.

55. Failure to disclose, or avoid an actual conflict of interest may, at the absolute discretion of the board, result in:

a. the members name being removed from the Institute of Trichologists Member's Register,

b. legal action being taken wherever appropriate; and,

c. they will not be permitted to use the designated letters after their name.

IT Etiquette & Use of Social Media:

56. IT has become part of everyday life and as such will be used widely by Registered Members, the Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics would ask every Registered Member to ensure that:

o Digital Photographs used in patient diagnosis and stored in their records are only taken with the express permission of the patient. o Photographs taken on Smart Phones are transferred to secure storage and deleted from the Smart Phone within 24 hours of taking the image. o Online communications are used as the most appropriate method of communication unless a patient or member of the public request's written

communications as their sole or preferred method. o Texts are typed in full, avoiding the use of text abbreviations, which some patients and Members of the Public may not be familiar with or understand.

57. The use of online social networking sites (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, LinkedIn, WhatsApp, My Space, Bebo and others) is common on a professional level. Any information posted on these platforms, by Registered Members, must not make reference to their employer, employees, patients or members of the public, whether posted in from home or place of work. Any derogatory references posted by a Registered Member that relates to The Institute of Trichologists, employers, colleagues, patients or members of the public can result in disciplinary action including removal from the Members Register.

58. Social Media sites should not be used to discuss individual patient concerns to achieve diagnosis by consensus, this is not Professional or Acceptable in any form. If a Registered Member is unable to diagnose a condition, they should seek advice from The Institute of Trichologists, who will not only provide professional guidance, but may recommend further clinical education to prevent the situation recurring.

59. Sharing research, ideas and interesting facts is encouraged via the Official Institute of Trichologists Facebook Page and Website, this is professional and helps other Registered Members to learn and develop.

60. Social Media Sites used by Registered Members must not bring the Member, or other Registered Members into disrepute, use of language should be moderated at all times, with no comments being posted that could be construed as “abusive”. The posting of photographs should only take place with express permission to post and share these.

61. Registered Members should not access any Social Media sites for illegal content at any time.

62. Frequency of Social Media Posts to Registered Members and the general public should be carefully considered so as not to be intrusive, the Registered Members Facebook Page will be moderated to prevent this from happening to Registered Members.

63. Any complaints or concerns about Registered Members use of Social Media should be sent via the complaints form on the website, it will be independently investigated and findings and proposals for resolutions and corrective actions will be communicated to the complaint in line with the complaints procedure.

64. Emails should not include or access potentially offensive, abusive or pornographic content.

65. Emails should not include any derogatory or sensitive comments relating to the business, your employer, colleagues or patients.

66. You must not download any material which breaks copyright legislation.

67. You must not download any offensive or pornographic material.

68. Any breaches of this policy may result in disciplinary action including removal from the Members Register.

69. You should not add Institute of Trichologists patients to your personal social network site.

Signed: *Eva Proudman* **Eva Proudman**

On behalf of the Board of Governors Date 25/10/2021