

15 September 2017

Our ref: F17/9015/SJ

**General
Medical
Council**

Ms Ann Williams

3 Hardman Street
Manchester M3 3AW

By email only to: request-421491-953179d8@whatdotheyknow.com

Email: gmc@gmc-uk.org
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Dear Ms Williams

Information request review

Further to your email sent on 26 August 2017 regarding our refusal to supply information to you under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA), I have now reviewed this matter.

Chronology

Your original request sent by email on 28 July 2017 requested information concerning a senior decision maker (Assistant Registrar) at the GMC.

This request was given our request reference number F17/9015/SJ. Sadie Jones responded to your request on 22 August 2017. She advised that your request is subject to the personal information exemption at Section 40(5)(b)(i) of the FOIA.

My review

In your appeal email you focus on the refusal to provide answers to questions 3, 4 and 5. I have copied these below for ease of reference:

3) Why has the Assistant Registrar not been identified?

4) Given it took the GMC seven months to undertake said "review", how is it that it was dealt with in such an unsatisfactory manner? What is the target time for replying to complainants who request a review?

5) How is it that the very serious failures of this doctor were ignored, or covered up? Why were false statements made to exonerate him?

I have carefully reviewed this matter and having done so, I believe that the original decision was appropriate. Any information provided under the FOIA is a disclosure to the public as a whole rather than to an individual. In general terms we believe that it is reasonable for doctors and complainants to expect that any initial investigations are

conducted in confidence and details are not publicly released. Details regarding complaints are published in line with the disclosure points set out in the investigation process and this is the expectation of those we interact with during our investigations. We believe that our duty under section 40(5)(b)(i) is clear; we are not obliged to confirm or deny the existence of complaints which have not been subject to any of the public disclosure points. For information purposes here is a link to our publication and disclosure policy:
[http://www.gmc-uk.org/DC4380 Publication and disclosure policy 36609763.pdf](http://www.gmc-uk.org/DC4380%20Publication%20and%20disclosure%20policy%2036609763.pdf)

Your final sentence in Q4 asks about our time targets in relation to the review process, known as 'Rule 12'. We do not currently have a time target for the end-to-end process. Our current targets focus on particular aspects of the process such as acknowledgements and communicating decisions.

Further action

I appreciate that you will be disappointed with our response on this matter. Specifically in relation to the FOIA you do have a further right of complaint to the Information Commissioner's Office. Their contact details are as follows:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Tel. no: 0303 123 1113
Email: mail@ico.gov.uk

Yours sincerely



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