

24 October 2013

Our ref: F13/5745/SL

By Email to: request-139365-xxxxxxx@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxx.xxx

**General
Medical
Council**

3 Hardman Street
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Email: gmc@gmc-uk.org
www.gmc-uk.org

Dear Ms Knight,

Information request review

Thank you for your email dated 26 September 2013 seeking clarification of our response to you under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

I agree with my colleague Sarah Leigh that you are not requesting *recorded information* in your request. The FOIA gives anyone the right to access recorded information (such as printed documents, letters, statistics and emails) held by public authorities. I would draw your attention to page 3 of the general FOI guidance published by the Information Commissioner. I have provided a link to the guidance below:

http://www.ico.org.uk/for_organisations/guidance_index/~media/documents/library/Freedom_of_Information/Detailed_specialist_guides/guide_to_freedom_of_information.pdf

However, we have attempted to assist you, beyond the obligations set out under FOIA, by providing you with responses to the hypothetical situations you describe.

1. Please kindly confirm if you are stating in your above quoted first paragraph that it is completely acceptable to the GMC that doctors registered with them can use completely different and unrelated names to the name with which they are registered; or is it only acceptable for them to use a varied, familiar, or shortened form of the name with which they are registered for example Mike, Mick, Mickey etc for Michael?

And

2. Please kindly confirm that what you have stated in your above quoted second paragraph is that it is not acceptable to the GMC for doctors to use a completely different name from the one with which they are registered in writing prescription and signing statutory documents even if they may use these different/familiar [whichever is applicable to your response to question 1 above] names with patients and colleagues.

If a doctor was using a completely different and unrelated name to their registered name to sign statutory documents, with an intention to mislead then that would be a breach of our guidance. All doctors registered with the GMC must comply with the standards set out in [*Good Medical Practice*](#).

We believe the following paragraphs of the GMP are relevant to your query above:

Paragraph 64: If someone you have contact with in your professional role asks for your registered name and/or GMC reference number, you must give this information to them.

Paragraph 68: You must be honest and trustworthy in all your communication with patients and colleagues.

Paragraph 71: You must be honest and trustworthy when writing reports, and when completing or signing forms...You must make sure that any documents you write or sign are not false or misleading.

We have also published specific guidance for doctors regarding this issue on our website: http://www.gmc-uk.org/doctors/information_for_doctors/doctors_registration_number.asp

3. In the event that a doctor signs statutory documents with different names other than the name with which he is registered, what is the GMC's position in protecting the public in this instance?

We are not able to confirm what action the GMC would take in any particular given scenario. All complaints are assessed on an individual basis and the circumstances of each case are different.

4. Please kindly confirm if you are stating that the GMC does not keep record of these sorts of behaviour/improbities on the part of its registered doctors - if that is the case, can you please tell us the public, why the GMC would not keep such an important record and the statistics of such incidents?

I have reviewed Ms Leigh's responses to you and I do not believe she has stated that the GMC does not keep a record of complaints about registered doctors. I can confirm that within our case management system we record details of allegations made against doctors and link these to the relevant sections within *Good Medical Practice*.

I hope you find the additional information useful. You do have a further right of appeal to the Information Commissioner, the regulator of the DPA and the FOIA. 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.gsi.gov.uk

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Yours sincerely

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