

Overview of the complaints and notification process

Introduction

Te Kaunihera Manapou | Paramedic Council (Te Kaunihera) is a regulatory authority which is governed by the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 (HPCA Act).

The HPCA Act sets out several functions concerning the registration, continuing competence, and fitness to practise of paramedics. This includes the steps that Te Kaunihera must take if it receives a notification or complaint about a paramedic.

Complaints/notifications

Te Kaunihera accepts written complaints from any person, whether they be a member of the public or a health practitioner. A complaint should contain enough information to enable the Registrar to decide what action, if any, should be taken about the complaint. If the complaint does not include sufficient detail, further information may be requested.

Te Kaunihera provides an [online form](#) for complaints on its website, but it will accept written complaints in any clear and legible form.

Anonymous complaints aren't usually accepted.

If Te Kaunihera has information that raises questions about a paramedic's conduct or safety to practise, it may also refer a matter to a Professional Conduct Committee (PCC) for investigation without a complaint having been made.

Health and Disability Commissioner

All complaints that allege a paramedic's practice or conduct has affected a health consumer (a patient) must be referred to the [Health and Disability Commissioner](#) (the Commissioner). Te Kaunihera cannot act on a complaint when it is with the Commissioner, but we may impose interim protective measures (e.g., conditions on practice) if it believes these are needed.

If the Commissioner believes the competence of a health practitioner, their fitness to practise or the appropriateness of their conduct may be in doubt, it may refer a complaint to Te Kaunihera to investigate (including complaints that were referred to it by Te Kaunihera).

A complaint about a paramedic's practice or conduct that does not affect a health consumer may be dealt with by Te Kaunihera without being referred to the Commissioner.

Te Kaunihera's role

Initial assessment

Once a complaint has been referred to Te Kaunihera from the Commissioner, or if there is a complaint which doesn't affect a health consumer, Te Kaunihera will seek comments from the paramedic, and will then make an initial assessment and decide which of the three categories it falls into:

- Competence – Is the paramedic competent to practise their profession?
- Conduct – Is the paramedic's conduct appropriate?
- Health – Is the paramedic unable to practise their profession due to a physical or mental health issue?

If the Commissioner has provided any opinion on this, Te Kaunihera will take these views into account. However, Te Kaunihera holds a different lens to the complaint than that of the Commissioner. While the Commissioner considers matters from the perspective of patient rights, Te Kaunihera's role is to consider patient safety.

Initial inquiry

Te Kaunihera will make further inquiries about a complaint, or any information it has received regarding the conduct of a paramedic. The paramedic will be given the opportunity to respond to any information that Te Kaunihera holds.

A decision will then be made on how to proceed. Options include:

- A referral to a Professional Conduct Committee (PCC) for investigation into the appropriateness of the paramedic's conduct
- A review of the paramedic's competence
- An assessment of the paramedic's health
- Other, non-regulatory measures, such as an educational letter, or suggestions for future focus on professional development; or
- No further action.

An overview of the options available to Te Kaunihera included as [Appendix A](#).

Enquiries

Any enquiries about complaints or notifications should be addressed to the Registrar of Te Kaunihera – registrar@paramediccouncil.org.nz.

Appendix A – Options available to Te Kaunihera

