29 May 2019

To: MPTS Associates

Cc: Tribunal Clerks

New Witness Support Service

The GMC have changed the way they support witnesses and have launched their new Independent Support Service, which has been developed alongside the NMC as a joint service available for both GMC and NMC customers.

Complainants, patients, witnesses and their family members can access free confidential telephone support and advice 24 hours a day, 365 days per year, from Victim Support by calling 0300 303 3709 (calls are charged at local rates).

The service is available at any point from the start to the end of the GMC process and is offered to anyone who:

- has raised a concern with either the GMC, or
- is a witness in an investigation, or
- is a close relative or friend of a patient whose care is being investigated.

Where a witness requires emotional support during a hearing, the parties will be able to provide assistance, and if necessary assist the witness to contact Victim Support if this is required. We have specific private witness rooms available for this. Where Victim Support feel it is appropriate, they may refer the witness to alternative organisations and will do so directly, there is no longer the facility to provide a face to face supporter during the hearing. Witnesses appearing on behalf of a doctor can access the service if they wish and information on how to do so is available in the general witness room.

Doctors can continue to receive support from the Doctor Support Service provided by the BMA and the MPTS Doctor Contact Service remains available when the hearing centre is open.

Kind regards

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