

Blog and eLetter response terms and requirements

When you submit a response, you agree to the following, which may be amended from time to time.

We aim to post relevant responses within 1 working day. It is at our absolute discretion whether we publish any particular response.

We won't publish responses that we think are not appropriate, are likely to end in legal difficulties, and/or appear to be, obscene, libellous (or would require us spending time or money to establish that they aren't), in some other way illegal (for example, inciting racial hatred, contempt of court, breach of intellectual property rights), incomprehensible, insubstantial, written in capital letters, not written in English, almost entirely a quote from somewhere else, gratuitously rude, blatant advertising, or that give information on patients without their written consent, or are sent by someone who does not provide adequate and accurate personal and contact details which may include a functioning email address, or from people we suspect have used an alias (other than where a username alias is permitted), or who does not respond to email. We make our own judgements on the sorts of legal issues mentioned above, rather than refer them to our lawyer. By far the most common problem we see is libel. In nearly all cases the responses don't warrant us spending time and money to confirm our judgement that something is libellous (and we have experience from cases where we have consulted our lawyer that our judgement is usually right) and don't warrant making an effort to substantiate defamatory responses. The same applies to other breaches - contempt of court, copyright, etc.

If only a line or two of an otherwise OK response is defamatory or extremely abusive, we may delete the line and post the rest.

If patients could recognise themselves from your description or anyone else could recognise the patient, please obtain the patient's written consent to publication before sending your response. Download the [patient consent form](#).

Your response must be original and not infringe any third party's intellectual property rights.

We make no distinction between different types of respondent: doctors, other health professionals, patients, people from the UK, people from other countries, BMA members, etc. We pay attention only to the content.

Your name or username will be published with your response. For eLetters, your email address will also be included. For Blogs, if you want your email address to appear, include it in the body of the text of your Blog.

We reserve the right to edit responses before and after publication.

Once a response has been published on the website, you will not have the right to have it removed or edited in any way. The BMJ shall, however, be able to remove any article at its absolute discretion.

Authors are responsible for the accuracy of what they say in their responses. We cannot check facts, though we may challenge authors if we think they are wrong and may ask them to substantiate what they say- for example by giving a reference. We also do not check references to say that they really say what they are claimed to say, that too is the author's responsibility.

All responses are eligible for publication in the paper or any other versions of any BMJ Group publications (whether or not the same it is the publication the response was submitted for) and can be sub licensed to third parties for their use as deemed fit by the BMJ Group including(but not limited to) within local editions. All of the foregoing may be within any media known now or created in the future.

While we try to deal with all our authors in as courteous and timely manner as possible, because our threshold for posting responses is low, dealing with potentially contentious responses is a low priority for us.

We do minimal editing. We place the onus for correct spelling and punctuation firmly on the authors, and we don't have to correct these errors before or after publication.

We avoid entering into lengthy correspondence about why we have not posted a response, it's not a good use of our resources and it is at our discretion.

If asked to submit any competing interest declaration, this must be done honestly and truthfully.