

Doctors in assisted dying row

Andrew Gilligan

One of Britain's most prestigious medical bodies could face an official reprimand after the Charity Commission expressed "concerns" about how it dropped its opposition to assisted dying.

The Royal College of Physicians (RCP) is to be questioned by the regulator after senior figures, including former trustees, complained that the decision was taken through a "sham poll",

producing a policy not supported by most members.

In March the college, a registered charity, adopted a position of neutrality on assisted dying, despite the option coming last in a ballot of members.

In a letter dated April 23, a Charity Commission official said it was "unclear how the decision to change the [RCP's] position to neutral was determined ... the matter raises concerns with regard to how the charity dealt with and managed such

a sensitive and high-profile subject matter."

The RCP council minutes state merely that "there was a general feeling that neutrality was a legitimate position".

The Charity Commission said: "Charities should ensure that significant decisions such as this are properly thought out."

Andrew Goddard, RCP president, said: "We will look carefully at whatever we receive from [the commission] and any possible learnings."