



Scarborough Counselling & Psychotherapy Training Institute

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

A 'Concern' being something that engages interest or affects a person's wellbeing can be raised without any formal procedure and may be stated with the intention to initiate action.

A 'Complaint' being 'something is unsatisfactory or unacceptable' will usually require some level of action'

The purpose then of the 'Complaints procedure is then to establish the appropriate action and potential ways forward.

In determining the possible ways forward it will be necessary to determine if the 'concern' is a 'process', a 'procedure; or a 'Formal Complaint'.

A '*Process*' complaint is where there is unfinished transference or projective issues between two or more people. This may well *feel* like it is a huge injustice because of its emotive energy but is not in fact an ethical complaint.

A '*Procedural*' complaint is where there is a misunderstanding or potential shortfall of procedural services being adhered to. This may well be a lack of information given which would enable others e.g., trainees to complete their studies or administrative staff to undertake their tasks. This again is not an ethical complaint.

A 'Formal Complaint' is where there is an actual or potentially actual breach of SCPTI and therefore UKCP Code of Ethics. For example, the sexual or financial exploitation of a client, supervisee or trainee by another member who is in a position of power over the complainant.

If the complaint falls into the domain of the Ethical Complaint, then the following **formal** complaints procedure should be followed.

The complaints procedure is intended to:

- be publicised
- be easy to understand and use
- be speedy, with established time limits for action
- respect confidentiality as far as possible
- be impartial and objective
- be responsive, enabling redress as appropriate
- provide support and feedback
- stimulate the improvement of services

Definition of “Member”

- Anyone who is employed by the Scarborough Counselling and Training Institute
- Directors, Executive Directors
- Course tutors
- Trainees
- Graduates or previous trainers
- Practitioners renting rooms

Process:

1. All members, students, clients, and visitors have a responsibility to take informal or formal action to stop any form of harassment or bullying or any other matter of concern which is brought to their attention.

2. It is recognised that in some circumstances it may not be possible to proceed on such an informal basis. A record of such incidents and steps should be kept to assist if further formal action is required. If an informal approach is found to be inadequate, a complaint may be made to the Chair of the Quality and Ethics Committee.

3. All complaints will be investigated by the Quality and Ethics Committee. Complainants have the right to speak to someone of the same sex if this is their choice. Where an individual is subject to investigation, care will be taken to ensure that the investigation does not cause unnecessary distress to either party.

4. The member complained about must have been a member of SCPTI at the time of the alleged breach of the Code of Ethics and/or the Professional Practice Guidelines.

5. All complaints will be examined against the Code of Ethics laid down by SCPTI. This is in line with UKCP Codes of Ethics and Professional Practice Guidelines, in order to give an opinion as to whether there has been a breach of ethics. See UKCP website complaints policy at: <https://www.psychotherapy.org.uk/ukcp-members/complaints/make-a-complaint/>

6. All complaints will be examined against the SCPTI Code of Ethics and Professional Practice (which reflects the UKCP Code of Ethics and Professional Practice Guidelines) in order to determine whether there has been a breach of ethics.

If the complaint is made about a professional member who is a UKCP registrant, then the complaint may be taken to the UKCP if the following criteria are met:

(a) The Registrant is still on the register at the time the complaint is lodged with UKCP; and

(b) Was a Registrant at the time the complained of behaviour occurred; and

(c) The therapy or practice which is the basis of the complaint was in the UK, or if not, the current insurance provision is from the UK (see link to UKCP website)

7. The complaint should be made as near as possible to the time of origin. Complaints concerning events that occurred more than three years prior to the first contact with SCPTI's Quality and Ethics Committee will not normally be heard.

8. In the event of disciplinary procedures being invoked, any person involved must be told what is happening and informed of their rights.
9. If the investigation upholds the complaint, prompt action designed to stop unwanted behaviours and to prevent their recurrence will be taken immediately.
10. All parties will be protected from intimidation, victimization or discrimination for filing a complaint or assisting in an investigation. Retaliation against a person for complaining will be treated as a disciplinary offence.
11. All parties involved will be kept fully informed of any actions taken by SCPTI, this includes any disciplinary action if the complaint is upheld.
12. SCPTI will not assume responsibility for any expenses incurred by either party involved in a complaint
13. SCPTI may seek legal advice concerning a complaint.

Informal Procedure:

An informal complaint may be resolved by the parties meeting to discuss a resolution, or:

1. SCPTI will convene a mediation meeting between both parties.
2. All parties must agree to attend.
3. Two members of SCPTI's Quality and Ethics Committee will also be in attendance; one to mediate and one to observe the process.
4. The Mediation Process (see Appendix of the Complaints Procedure) will be followed.
5. This meeting will take place within one month of SCPTI receiving the complaint.

Formal Procedure:

1. A formal complaint will be put in writing for the attention of the Chair of the Ethics Committee.
2. Application to withdraw the complaint may be made at any point. However, the Chair may be required to follow due process; this will be dependent on the nature of the complaint.
3. If the complaint is deemed to be outside the remit of the Quality & Ethics committee, all parties will be informed in writing within two weeks.
4. The Quality and Ethics committee will decide if there is a case to answer and will respond accordingly within two weeks of receipt.

If the Complaint Is Upheld:

Upon receipt of a formal complaint, and agreement that the complaint is valid, the Quality & Ethics Committee will employ an Investigator who will:

1. Contact the parties involved.
2. Collect all relevant data.
3. Share the data with the Quality & Ethics Committee.
4. The person must agree to abide by the findings stipulated by the Quality & Ethics Committee. Evidence of compliance must be provided, in writing, within the specified time frame issued.
5. Recommendations/stipulations may be given that the complainee undertakes further supervision/therapy and training, of which the Quality and Ethics committee will be kept informed.
6. Non-compliance with the above may result in a formal warning.

7. Any formal warning given will remain on file for a minimum of 12 months and may lead to their membership of SCPTI being revoked, or their services terminated.

Appeals Procedure:

1. If any party is dissatisfied with the response, they should inform the Chair of the Quality and Ethics Committee.
2. Appeals will only be granted if the party making the application to appeal is able to demonstrate new evidence to support the appeal. The Quality and Ethics Committee will decide if there are adequate grounds for granting the appeal, in which case an external moderator will be appointed to make a decision.
3. If all processes are exhausted at the OM level, and the matter is not resolved, then an appeal can be made to the College (HIPC).
4. All parties must abide by this decision which will be final.

APPENDIX to Complaints Policy

Mediation Process

The purpose of mediation is to facilitate a satisfactory resolution.

Present in the meeting will be the Chair who will facilitate the SCPTI mediation process, and a process observer.

Participants are requested to respectfully agree to the following guidelines:

1. The content of the meeting is confidential.
2. Come from “I’m Okay, You’re Ok” position.
3. Own your own experience and material.
4. Direct your responses to the chair only.
5. You may only raise the issue that is the basis of the complaint.
6. The participants are asked not to speak directly to each other until the complaint is resolved.
7. Each party will explain what their complaint is and what they want for resolution of the complaint.
8. The complainant will be asked how they will meet the request, and what they want from the process.
9. It is hoped through this process that a positive and mutual resolution can be made.

Complaint Form

Incident Date: Incident Time:

Reported to:

Complainant's Details:

Name:

Address:

Tel:

Course Title (if applicable):

Trainer (if applicable):

Complainant given information about procedure: Y N

Full details of the complaint including date and time and place.
(Use separate page if required)

I agree that this is an accurate record.

Signed.....
(complainant)

Action

What complainant wants to do next:

Steps that have been taken to resolve this informally:

What we have done/will do:

Sent to:

Signed (Recorder).....

Date:

Signed

(Member)

Signed

(Member)

Signed

(Quality & Ethics Committee):

Follow up:

Signature..... Date

