

Avon Counselling and Psychotherapy Service (ACPS)

Complaints Procedure

Purpose

This procedure will be used to investigate and resolve a complaint by a client against Avon Counselling & Psychotherapy Service (ACPS)

Policy

The service aims to treat clients with consideration and respect and to act within the ethical framework of their accrediting body - BPC, UKCP or BACP. (British Psychoanalytic Council, UK Council for Counselling & Psychotherapy, British Association for Counselling & Psychotherapy)

All complaints made by clients to this service will be taken seriously and given due consideration.

Confidentiality

1. All aspects of any complaint will be dealt with in a confidential manner.
2. The complainant and the person complained against will be kept aware of the extent and detail of any information divulged to the other, which will be on a need-to-know basis.
3. The maintenance of the file and administration of the procedure in connection with a complaint will be the responsibility of a named individual within the Members of ACPS.
4. The complainant and the person complained against will be given the name of the Chair of Trustees and be informed that they will be responsible for the conduct of the complainant proceedings.

Initial Procedure

1. Any complaint made on the telephone or in person should be reported to the Chair of Trustees at the earliest opportunity and a note of the date and person receiving the complaint should be made on the client file and the therapist informed.

2. One of the Trustees will contact the complainant to discuss the nature of their complaint and outline the procedure. If they wish to pursue the complaint they will be sent a copy of the Complaints Procedure and be advised to send a formal written statement laying out the matters, which give rise to the complaint.
3. If the complainant declines to pursue the complaint the date of the conversation and nature of the complaint will be entered on the Client's file and the person complained against will be informed.
4. Internal disciplinary procedures may be put into effect if considered necessary.
5. Any written complaint received from a client regarding the work of the service should be passed to the Chair of Trustees as soon as possible. A formal record will be made on the Client file.

Formal Procedure – Stage 1

1. When a written complaint is received, the Chair of Trustees will write a letter acknowledging receipt within seven days. The therapist concerned will be informed and a meeting will be arranged to discuss the complaint.
2. A second letter will be sent to the client advising them that a discussion has taken place with the therapist concerned and offering an opportunity for formal discussion of the complaint with the Chair of Trustees. This meeting should take place not more than four weeks after receipt of the written complaint.
3. The complainant will have the right to be accompanied to the meeting by one other person, but that person will not actively participate in the meeting.
4. If the complaint is resolved at the meeting, the client and therapist and receive will receive written confirmation that the matter is resolved.
5. If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the meeting, they will be asked to give a written statement to this effect to the Chair of Trustees, and the complaint will move to Stage 2.

Formal Procedure - Stage 2

The purpose of this stage is to review the conduct of the complainant, to ensure that procedure has been followed correctly, to provide the client with an opportunity to contest the decision of the Chair of Trustees, to arrive at a final ruling for the resolution of the complaint.

1. The Chair of Trustees will inform the other Trustees of the continuing complaint and will write to the client and the therapist advising them that the procedure has moved to Stage 2.
2. The Chair of Trustees will convene a panel comprising of a Trustee, a therapist member and a person external to the service, with relevant experience, agreed by the therapist member and the client. A meeting date will be set to take place within 6 weeks of the decision to move to Stage 2.
3. The panel will be provided with all relevant paperwork prior to the meeting. The client, the therapist being complained against and the other member therapist will be given the opportunity to attend and may be questioned by the panel. The client and the therapist being complained against can be joined by one other person of their choice, but that person may not actively participate.
4. The findings of the panel, in the form of written report, will be conveyed to the Chair of Trustees, the client and therapist complained against. In the event of the client being dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 2, the Chair of Trustees will inform the complainant that the service has exhausted its procedure and that they may refer their complaint to the registering body of the therapist.