

CTC

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Psychological Services

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CONCERNS & COMPLAINTS

MAY 2022

COMPANY POLICY

Concerns & Complaints Policy

Introduction

CTC Psychological Services LLP [CTC] is committed to providing a quality service, and strives to maintain the highest standards. Whilst we try to provide the best possible service, we know that sometimes things can go wrong.

We take feedback about our services very seriously, and as such we are committed to looking into and responding to complaints, thoroughly, fairly and without bias or prejudice. In all of our interactions we will remain polite, honest and professional.

Assistance and advice is available to complainants to enable them to understand the concerns and complaints procedure, and where they may obtain this support internally and externally (including signposting to an independent advocacy).

The following document outlines our policy and procedures for responding to complaints.

What is a Concern?

A concern may be defined as an expression of worry or doubt, over an issue considered to be important, for which reassurances are sought.

It is in everyone's interest that concerns and complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. Some issues can be resolved informally, without the need to invoke formal procedures.

If a client has a concern, they should aim firstly to resolve it informally in discussion with their psychologist, therapist or counsellor, to provide an opportunity to discuss in the safety of the therapeutic relationship. This should resolve the majority of concerns. If the client's concern is not resolved this way, they may request an informal meeting with the Operations Manager & Partner, Julian Long.

What is a Complaint?

A client may make a complaint because they feel that:

- They have not been treated with courtesy and fairness;
- They are unhappy with the standard of service that they have received;
- They consider that we have failed to provide a service to which they are entitled;
- They are unhappy about action taken or not taken by us.

A complaint may be formal or informal and may be verbal or written.

Who can raise a Concern or Complaint?

- Anyone who is using our service;
- Anyone who has used our service within the past three years;
- Anyone who has enquired about our service or is on the waiting list;
- Anyone from another organisation who has enquired about our service, or who is working with or representing someone who is using or has used the service.

Anonymous complaints, and any that are deemed to be vexatious or malicious, will be

investigated by the Operations Manager, who will use discretion in assessing what action should be taken.

Scope of Concerns and Complaints

Concerns and complaints made under this procedure may cover all CTC staff, volunteers, associates or contractors acting on behalf of CTC.

Confidentiality and Communications

Every complaint will be treated with care and confidentiality. We will attempt to communicate clearly and directly with all complainants or their representatives in a timely manner, as described elsewhere within this document.

The complainant is required to give permission for confidential information pertinent to the complaint to be disclosed to the Named Independent Person should the case reach Stage 4 (Independent Review).

Safety and Wellbeing of Clients

If a complaint relates to the conduct of a therapist or counsellor within ongoing therapy or counselling, at all times the client's safety and wellbeing will be a primary consideration. Suspension of therapy or counselling, and/or disciplinary proceedings, may take place at any stage of the complaints process, if appropriate.

Summary of Complaints Procedure

CTC has a formal Complaints Procedure. We have adapted versions for younger and older children. If the issue raised cannot be resolved informally between the complainant, the staff member involved (if appropriate), and the Operations Manager, then the formal Complaints Procedure will be implemented without delay, up to and including the involvement of a Review Panel or Independent Person.

Where the complainant is a child or young person, CTC will endeavour to support them and provide them with age-appropriate information to facilitate their complaint.

The Complaints Process

A complaint may be received via any medium (eg telephone, post, email, face to face) and by any member of staff. In every instance, it is of vital importance that any complaint is listened to and acknowledged.

The individual making the complaint should be offered a copy of our Concerns & Complaints Policy and be given assurance that we will look into their complaint. Both the discussion that includes the complaint, and the giving of the policy, will be documented within the Case Record. The Operations Manager should be informed, and a new entry should be made in the Complaints Log

We ask that complainants please provide us with as much detail as they can, to help us investigate their complaint:

- Say what the problem is;
- Say what you want to happen;

- Provide information on any relevant communication with us on the subject, including the times and dates of any conversations.

Stage 1: Informal Complaint

The member of staff receiving the complaint should apologise for the complainant's experience of our service if this is appropriate for the situation. If it is possible to rectify the issue immediately, then action should be taken to do so. In each instance the staff member should inform the Operations Manager about the complaint, and also explain how they have responded.

These actions should also be recorded in the Case Record and in the Complaints Log. This process enables CTC Managers to have an overview of all complaints, in order to identify any areas of concern or wider action to be taken. It is also a requirement in the National Minimum Standards to keep a written record of complaints, in relation to our Adoption Support Agency status.

If the complainant feels that the staff member receiving their complaint cannot help them to resolve the matter, or if they are not satisfied with the response, the complainant should be asked to contact the Operations Manager, who can be contacted by telephone, email, letter or by requesting an appointment.

The Operations Manager will investigate the matter and, wherever possible, the outcome of the investigation will be provided within 10 working days of receipt of the complaint (although this can be extended to 20 working days with a good and justified reason, such as key staff holiday/sickness, a complex complaint, inter-agency delay or the need to appoint an advocate).

It is hoped that the matter will be resolved at this stage. If not, the client's complaint will be taken to Stage Two.

Stage 2: Formal complaint

All formal complaints must be put in writing to the Operations Manager (or to the Registered Manager if the complaint relates to the Operations Manager).

The Operations Manager will be responsible for ensuring that written records are kept up to date within the Complaints Log, and ensuring that the complainant receives communications and updates from CTC (especially regarding any delays to the process).

The Operations Manager will formally acknowledge receipt of the complaint within three working days. Following this the Operations Manager or Registered Manager may:

- Telephone the service-user to ask for more details
- Arrange to meet with the service-user to discuss their concerns
- Talk to other people who are involved
- Review any appropriate evidence/documentation

The Operations Manager or Registered Manager will investigate the complaint and, wherever possible, the outcome of the investigation will be provided in written format within 20 working days of receipt of the complaint. If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome at this stage, the matter will progress to a Review Panel.

Stage 3: Review Panel

If we have been unable to resolve a complaint using our informal or formal procedures, then the complainant will be invited to attend a Review Panel.

The Review Panel comprises members of our Senior Management Team. The Review Panel will be convened to scrutinise the complaint, the processes followed and the responses to date. Whether the complainant accepts the invitation to attend or not, the Review Panel will formally respond in writing within 20 working days of being convened.

The written response will be kept on record within the Complaints Log. The decision of the Review Panel will be considered to be our final position.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the response at this stage then they should be informed that they may seek an Independent Review and CTC will provide details of the Independent Person to undertake a review.

Stage 4: Independent Review

The Independent Person is someone who is not responsible for the service that is being complained about, and is not employed by CTC. The Independent Person will seek to understand the circumstances leading to the complaint, which may include discussions with the complainant or other members of staff, and looking at records concerning the matter being complained about. They will then make recommendations.

The Independent Person will aim to respond to the complaint within 25 working days of being instructed. The findings and recommendations of the Independent Person will be given to the Operations Manager or Registered Manager, and the complainant.

If the Complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the Investigation, they should inform the Operations Manager, or Registered Manager, in writing, within 14 days of receiving the findings. They may then choose to contact Ofsted (in cases relating to Adoption Support Services) or the relevant governing or regulatory body for a staff member about whom they are making a complaint.

Staff Support During a Complaint

We understand that having a complaint made against you can be stressful and may evoke a range of responses in staff. As such, we will endeavour to offer additional support to staff involved in a complaint process, including regular updates, a commitment to transparency, the offer of increased supervision, and the offer of bringing a supportive colleague to any formal meetings related to the complaint.

Operations Manager

Julian Long

Registered Manager

Dr Jeanie McIntee

Independent Person

Ms Jo Allen (Guardian ad Litem)

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually, to ensure that it remains up to date, and reflects the needs and practices of our organisation. It may also be reviewed in the interim if legislation changes, or if there is any indication that practices should be altered.

Last Reviewed : May 2022

Next Review : May 2023

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