



SERVICE USERS COMPLAINTS POLICY

At The Awareness Centre (TAC) we are committed to providing excellent customer service for our clients and private therapists and a supportive learning environment for placement therapists and Training School students.

We encourage constructive feedback from all the people who use our services, and we invite all stakeholders to tell us about their experiences – including complaints.

We take all complaints seriously and will do everything we can to put things right and reach a satisfactory outcome for all.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Making a Complaint

If you have a complaint – whether it's about TAC, a counsellor, or a member of our team or faculty – please speak to the individual directly in the first instance, where possible.

Alternatively, you can put a complaint in writing:

- By post to The Awareness Centre, 74-80 Upper Tooting Road, London SW17 7PB.
- Via email to complaints@theawarenesscentre.com. When emailing, please mention in the subject bar the department to which your complaint applies.

Front of House Complaints

- If your complaint relates to front of house services or the building, the Front of House Lead is the person to contact. Please set out your reasons – including any relevant supporting evidence – and indicate the outcome you desire.

Therapeutic Services Complaints

- If your complaint is about a private therapist, please contact your therapist first to discuss the issue. Private practitioners hire rooms from TAC and maintain their own professional indemnity insurance. They are registered/accredited with a professional body (BACP, UKCP and BPS) and you can make a complaint through the professional body too. You can also contact TAC's Counselling Manager, via complaints@theawarenesscentre.com, and you will receive acknowledgment within five working days.

- If your complaint is about NHS or Low-Cost Counselling, the Counselling Manager is the person to contact. Please set out your reasons – including any relevant supporting evidence – and indicate the outcome you desire. You will receive an acknowledgment within five working days.
- If you are unhappy with the response to your therapeutic services complaint, you can escalate it to the Clinical Lead by emailing the complaints inbox: complaints@theawarenesscentre.com

Training School Complaints

- If your complaint is about your course, tutor or facilitator, please contact your Programme Manager.
- If you are unhappy with the response to any Training School complaint, you can escalate it to the Training Lead via complaints@theawarenesscentre.com
- After speaking with either the Manager or Lead, if you are not happy with the overall outcome and wish to take things further, you may raise your complaint with the Managing Director.
- If you are not happy with the overall outcome and wish to take things further, please contact: BACP, 15 St Johns Business Park, Lutterworth, Leicestershire LE17 4HB. www.bacp.co.uk

How To Make A Complaint

Stage 1

If you wish to make a complaint, you must do so within **one month** of the date on which the event occurred – or within one month of the date on which you could reasonably be expected to have known about the matter.

A complaint may only be made by a service user or a group of service users, not by a third party or representative, and can only be made anonymously if there is sufficient evidence to support it. Anonymous complaints are rare and treated with caution.

You are encouraged to raise matters less formally with the individual concerned. For example, if you have a complaint about the building, please speak to the front of house team. If you have a problem with your counsellor, supervisor, tutor, facilitator or member of staff, please discuss it with them in the first instance. They will take your complaint seriously and will do everything they can to resolve the matter.

Stage 2

If the matter cannot be resolved informally, and you have written a formal letter/email

of complaint to the Manager, they are responsible for responding to you within **five working days**.

They may wish to interview you and any other person they deem relevant (unless you do not wish to be interviewed). They will make a formal report within two weeks of receiving the complaint.

The report must set out the evidence collected, the Manager's conclusions – including whether they uphold the complaint – and any recommendations they deem appropriate.

Getting Advice

At the interview you have the right to be accompanied by a person of your choosing.

Treatment of Complainants

You may have reservations about making a complaint. However, at TAC we take complaints seriously and view them as a means of improving the services we provide.

All employees involved in a complaint are required to respect the confidentiality of information and documents generated as a result of the complaint, and not to disclose any information to people who are not involved with the matters in question.

Outcome of the Complaint

The report from the Manager will indicate the actions they deem appropriate if the complaint is upheld, or partially upheld.

Stage 3

If you have received the Manager's formal report and are dissatisfied with the outcome of your complaint, you have the right to take the matter further by writing to the Clinical Lead or Training Lead **within 21 days** of receiving the report. You must include a copy of the report and state the reasons why you are not satisfied.

The Clinical Lead or Training Lead will undertake a further investigation, again interviewing you (unless you do not wish to be interviewed) and receiving further information as they deem appropriate.

The Clinical Lead or Training Lead will write a report within one month of receiving your complaint – setting out their conclusions, whether the complaint is upheld, and any further actions to be taken.

Please note that if you have **not** received the report from the Clinical Lead or Training Lead within the one month required – and they have not informed you of the need to extend that date, and the reasons for extending – you are entitled to raise your complaint with the Managing Director.

If you are still not satisfied, you can contact the BACP directly if it is a clinical or training complaint BACP, 15 St Johns Business Park, Lutterworth, Leicestershire LE17 4HB.

www.bacp.co.uk

Further information

If you require further information about our complaint's procedures, you can contact the Front of House Lead, Counselling Manager or Training Programme Lead via

complaints@theawarenesscentre.com

As a member of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) we abide by the BACP's Ethical Framework for the Counselling Professions, which includes the Professional Conduct Procedure.

If you do not feel that the above options are appropriate, or you wish to take things further, please contact BACP directly: 15 St Johns Business Park, Lutterworth, Leicestershire LE17 4HB.

www.bacp.co.uk