



Connections

Complaints Policy

The purpose of this Complaints Policy is to provide a transparent, fair, and efficient process for handling complaints from clients or other stakeholders regarding the services provided by Connections. This policy ensures that any complaints are managed professionally, ethically, and in compliance with COSCA's ethical guidelines and standards.

Scope

This policy applies to all clients, employees, associates, and any individuals engaged with Connections. It covers any complaints related to counselling services, professional conduct, confidentiality, administrative matters, and any other interactions within the practice.

Policy Statement

At Connections, we are committed to delivering high-quality counselling services and adhering to COSCA's ethical standards. We acknowledge that there may be instances where clients or others may have concerns or complaints. This policy sets out the process for raising a complaint, how it will be investigated, and how a resolution will be reached.

Definition of a Complaint

A complaint is defined as any expression of dissatisfaction about the service provided by Connections or the conduct of its counsellors or staff that requires a formal response. Complaints may concern, but are not limited to:

- The quality or effectiveness of the counselling services.

- Professional conduct of a counsellor or staff member.
- Breaches of confidentiality or privacy.
- Administrative issues, including billing or appointment scheduling.

How to Make a Complaint

Informal Resolution:

If appropriate, clients or others are encouraged to initially raise concerns informally with the counsellor or staff member involved. Many issues can be resolved quickly through direct and open communication.

Formal Complaint Process:

If the concern cannot be resolved informally, or the complainant prefers to proceed with a formal complaint, the following steps should be taken:

- **Step 1: Submitting a Complaint**

Complaints must be submitted in writing, either by email or letter, to the **Complaints Officer** at [Your Practice Name]. Please include:

- Your name and contact information.
- A detailed description of the issue, including dates and names (where relevant).
- Any supporting documentation or evidence.

Contact Information:

Connections Counselling

Complaints Officer: Ian Nicholson-Kapasi

Email: ian@connections counselling.co.uk

Phone: 07599220895

Address: 34 Dalmeny st, Edinburgh EH68RG

- **Step 2: Acknowledgment**

Connections will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 5 working days, providing a summary of the complaint, the steps involved in investigating it, and an estimated timeline for resolving the issue.

- **Step 3: Investigation**

The **Complaints Officer** or a designated investigator will conduct a thorough and impartial investigation. This process may include:

- Reviewing the details of the complaint and any associated records.
- Consulting with the complainant and any individuals involved.
- Gathering additional evidence, if needed.

- **Step 4: Resolution**

Upon completion of the investigation, the complainant will receive a formal written response within 30 working days. The response will include:

- A summary of the findings.
- An explanation of any actions taken.
- An apology, if deemed appropriate.
- Any recommendations for changes to services or procedures to prevent future issues.

If additional time is required for the investigation, the complainant will be notified and updated regularly.

Confidentiality

All complaints will be treated confidentially. Information related to the complaint will be shared only with individuals involved in investigating or resolving the issue. The complainant's identity will not be disclosed without their consent, except where required by law or professional obligations.

Non-Retaliation

Complainants who raise concerns in good faith will not face retaliation or adverse treatment. Connections values feedback as an opportunity to improve services and promote transparency.

Appeals Process

If a complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of their complaint, they may submit an appeal. The appeal must be in writing, clearly outlining the reasons for dissatisfaction and providing any new information or evidence that may have been overlooked during the initial investigation. The appeal will be reviewed by a senior member of the practice who was not involved in the initial investigation. A final written response will be provided within 30 working days of receiving the appeal.

Escalation to COSCA

If the complainant is not satisfied with the internal handling of their complaint, or if they prefer to raise the matter externally, they may escalate their complaint to COSCA. [Your Practice Name] is a member of COSCA, and as such, we adhere to their complaints procedure. The COSCA complaints process can be initiated after the internal complaints procedure has been exhausted.

Contact Information for COSCA Complaints:

- **COSCA (Counselling & Psychotherapy in Scotland)**
16 Melville Terrace, Stirling FK8 2NE
Telephone: 01786 475140
Email: info@cosca.org.uk
Website: www.cosca.org.uk

Record Keeping

Connections will maintain records of all complaints, investigations, and outcomes for a minimum of 3 years, in accordance with data protection laws. These records will be used to monitor and improve the quality of services.

Policy Review

This Complaints Policy will be reviewed annually to ensure that it continues to comply with COSCA's standards and any changes in relevant legislation or practice procedures.

Name:	Privacy Policy
Author:	Ian Nicholson-Kapasi
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