

## **CHARIS COUNSELLING COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

All clients should be aware of the complaints procedure and it is the duty of the therapist to inform the client of this.

All complaints should be taken up with the therapist, in the first instance, both verbally and in writing.

If there is no satisfactory conclusion the complaint should be taken up, in writing, with the Chairperson, Board of Directors, Charis foundation, 232 High Street, Leslie, Fife KY6 3DB.

Counsellors/therapists should seek legal advice and/or contact their accrediting bodies if they are in any doubt about their legal rights and obligations before acting in ways which conflict with their agreement with clients who are directly affected.

The Chairperson will liaise with the therapist and the client and if there is still no satisfactory resolution then the complaint will be adjudicated by a specially convened Adjudication Panel.

If there is no satisfactory outcome the complaint should then be taken up with the counsellor/therapist's accrediting body, details of which will be made available by the Chairperson of the Board of Directors.

The only complaints that can be dealt with are those concerning failure to comply with this Code of Ethics and Practice and that of COSCA.

As an organisational member of COSCA we are required to submit to COSCA immediate reports at the conclusion of any complaints proceedings related to counselling, counselling skills and psychotherapy, and notify COSCA of any sanctions applied to individual members of COSCA working for Charis. COSCA will consider taking appropriate action on receipt of notifications about sanctions. The following is an excerpt from COSCA Complaints Procedure:

*2.3 Where the complaint is against an organisational member of COSCA and the organisation's own complaints procedure has been exhausted, the role of COSCA is to verify:*

- *that the organisational member's procedures have been followed and that there has not been a breach of the COSCA Statement of Ethics and Code of Practice in the course of investigating the complaint*
- *that the outcome of the organisational member's procedures is not unlawful, unreasonable, unjust, oppressive, discriminatory or otherwise wrong*
- *that the above outcome is based on policies and practices that are not unreasonable, unjust, oppressive or discriminatory*
- *that the above outcome was explained properly to the complainant*

*2.4 If the COSCA investigation into the complaint finds that the member organisation has not followed procedures and/or that the outcome of the organisational member's procedures is deficient and/or erroneous as described under 2.3 above, COSCA can require that the member organisation reviews its decision related to the complaint under*

*investigation within a period of 3 months. If COSCA requires the member organisation to carry out the above review, COSCA can require the member organisation to:*

- *process with speed and efficiency the decision(s) of its own investigation into the complaint*
- *change or reconsider its decision*
- *give the complainant an explanation, or a better explanation, for the organisational member's actions and decisions*
- *provide an apology to the complainant*
- *consider reducing, waiving or writing off a debt or sanction*
- *consider paying the complainant some form of financial compensation*

*2.5 If the above investigation into the complaint finds that the time limits set by the organisation member for the investigation of complaints were not adhered to, COSCA can require the organisational member and the complainant to explain the reasons for this. In the event that the organisational member is deemed by COSCA to be responsible, or partially responsible for the time limits being exceeded, COSCA can require the organisational member to provide evidence to COSCA within a period of three months that robust measures are in place to prevent the organisational member exceeding its investigation time limits again.*

A copy of the full COSCA Complaints Procedure will be made available to all parties involved. Alternatively a copy can be seen on the COSCA website under Complaints. [www.cosca.org.uk](http://www.cosca.org.uk).