

What we do with your complaint once it has been submitted

This document should be read in conjunction with the document entitled Checklist. Your complaint will be reviewed by a member of staff in the Professional Conduct Department to ensure that it meets the requirement as set out in the Professional Conduct Procedure.

The requirements are as follows:

- Your complaint must be in writing, signed and dated;
- Your complaint must be detailed and give a full account of what went wrong. You must ensure that you provide dates for the events that you are describing.
- You must attach to your complaint all evidence in support.
- You must ensure that you specify the name of the individual/organisation and their location, so that the membership/registration status of the individual/organisation can be determined. BACP can only process complaints against individuals/organisation where their status permits.

If your complaint does not satisfy the above criteria, it will be returned to you with an explanation of why it does not meet the criteria.

Furthermore, you must include within your complaint, details of any attempts you have made to resolve the subject matter of your complaint. If you do not consider it appropriate to resolve your complaint with the Member Complained Against/Registrant, then you must provide a written explanation for this.

If you have not included details of the attempts you have made to resolve your complaint, you will be asked to provide this before your complaint can proceed any further.

There are 4 categories of people who can submit a complaint under the Professional Conduct Procedure. You will need to check that you fit into one of these categories before submitting your complaint. The categories are as follows:

- A member of the public who has sought or received counselling/psychotherapy related services from a member/registrant of BACP.
- A current member of BACP who has sought or received counselling/psychotherapy services from another member/registrant or who has witnessed poor practice of another member/registrant.
- A legal guardian or other appropriately authorised adult on behalf of a minor, or a person lacking legal capacity who has received services from a member/registrant.
- A third party who can demonstrate that they have sufficient interest and have been directly affected by the actions of the practitioner. There is a separate protocol which deals with third party complaints, which you will need to refer to before submitting a complaint.

You must also be aware of the timescales for submitting a complaint. A complaint can be submitted:

- Within three years of the ending of the counselling relationship.
- Within 3 years of the date when you became aware of the alleged misconduct. You must provide a written explanation stating how and when you became aware of the alleged misconduct. This explanation will be considered by the Pre-Hearing Assessment Panel (PHAP), who will decide if the explanation you have provided is good and sufficient.
- Within a reasonable period of time of the alleged misconduct.

If you have not included the written explanation as stated in the second bullet point as set out above, you will be asked to provide this before your complaint can be sent to the PHAP.

Generally, it will not take longer than twelve weeks to initially review the complaint. Once your complaint has been reviewed and appears to satisfy all of the conditions as set out above, you will be notified of this and it will be confirmed when the Panel is likely to meet to consider your complaint.