

Therapy Train Stirling CIC Complaints Policy

Adult Counselling or COSCA Counselling Certificate Training Complaints Procedure

Complaints from service users about any aspect of adult counselling or COSCA training offered by Therapy Train Stirling CIC may be raised by those who have been in direct personal contact with employed staff, trainers or counsellors, student volunteers or administrators. Contact may be made via email or our office telephone number.

Please note that Therapy Train Stirling CIC will not accept complaints from representatives of service users, respond to third party complaints or anonymous complaints.

Employees or volunteers currently working with Therapy Train Stirling CIC will not respond to complaints regarding people or resources unconnected with Therapy Train Stirling CIC.

Any problems with car parking, premises or staff employed by other organisations operating from the same building address will be signposted to the legal landlord responsible.

Our office number is: **01786 451 532** and email address: admin@therapytrainstirling.co.uk .

If you are partially sighted or blind, please call our office landline to request a larger print **or audio-recorded version**.

If you are unable to make a telephone call, you may nominate someone to call us or send an email on your behalf, stating your name and address.

The time limit for making a complaint is six months, however out-of-time complaints may be considered on a case-by-case basis. Due to our commitment to data protection, we can only deal with complaints from clients who have used our service.

If you would like assistance with understanding our complaints procedure, you may contact an independent external advisory centre, for example, Stirling District Citizens Advice Bureau <https://www.cas.org.uk/bureaux/stirling-district-citizens-advice-bureau-ltd> .

STAGE 1 - Informal Complaint Process

If you are dissatisfied with any aspect of our service, contact us as soon as possible. If a Person that you would like to complain against no longer works for Therapy Train Stirling CIC, we will endeavour to conduct an internal investigation to learn what went wrong. COSCA may investigate complaints against a person who has left Therapy Train if they are still a member of COSCA under the system for dealing with information about members.

Therapy Train Stirling CIC require complainants to give their written permission to share confidential information with those investigating the complaint.

Our aim as a service, is to respond quickly and informally to resolve any concerns. However, if we receive any complaint that is perceived by Therapy Train Stirling CIC as unreasonable, malicious, or if any complaint is deemed extreme or vexatious, it will not be investigated.

We will only respond if you include your name, address, and a personal contact number. If your complaint is against a specific individual within our team, we recommend that you respectfully and directly communicate with the Person concerned first, aiming to informally resolve the problem.

If you have already raised an informal complaint with the Person concerned and remain unsatisfied, you may formally raise your complaint to stage 2 of the process.

As a Complainant, you may declare if you think there has been a conflict of interest with Therapy Train Stirling CIC by emailing Administrator at admin@therapytrainstirling.co.uk

If the situation regarding a Person that you may have complained about at stage 1 remains unresolved during this informal stage of the investigation, we may need to ensure that you do not come into further contact with the individual concerned, until the situation has been fully investigated or even resolved. This could mean that you need to be offered a service at a different location or be referred to another service until the matter has been resolved.

STAGE 2 Formal Complaint Process

The timeline for raising a complaint to stage 2 after receiving a first response to an informal complaint, is **5** working days. You can do this by writing to our Administrator by email via: admin@therapytrainstirling.co.uk

At this second stage, those involved in the complaint process have the right to attend a meeting with an Independent Complaints Officer separately from each other and accompanied by an independent person of their own choice.

An Independent Complaints Officer (ICO) will be appointed at Stage 2 of the process. All those involved in Stage 2 of a complaint process will be advised not to meet or contact one another, while the Independent Complaints Officer conducts their investigation.

Any written notes made on your behalf will be held confidentially within the service, as per **General Data Protection Regulations (2018)**. Confidentiality will be kept during the process of investigating your complaint if there is no risk of harm to yourself or others.

Limits of Confidentiality

Therapy Train Stirling CIC holds Service User confidentiality in high regard. However, in the interest of safeguarding vulnerable individuals, confidentiality may be limited during the process of investigating complaints. This could occur if the Service Manager identifies a potential risk of harm to yourself as a Complainant or any other vulnerable individuals identified during the process of investigation. This could involve disclosing to other

professionals or services the names of vulnerable adults or children at risk of harm. Your confidentiality may be compromised if a clear risk of harm to you or other vulnerable individuals is identified; for example, if a disclosure needs to be made to either COSCA, a third-party organisation or statutory service; for example, any named GP or individual Health Service Worker, Social Work Service Workers, Counselling Agency Managers, GP Practice Managers, Probationary Service Workers, or the Police Force.

To make a written complaint via email, send it to admin@therapytrainstirling.co.uk and please ensure that you head any email message for the attention of the Administrator or Service Manager (whichever is relevant). If you choose to send a typed or hand-written letter, please post it for the attention of the relevant individual to the address below:

Therapy Train Stirling CIC
Lower Ground Office
12 Melville Terrace
Stirling
FK8 2NE

Please note that Therapy Train Stirling CIC may seek legal advice, or other specialist advice before responding to complaints at any stage of the process.

A written acknowledgement of your Service User complaint will be responded to within 5 working days of receipt, with a request for further information if needed.

Once an initial complaint has been received, the Administrator or Service Manager will investigate the matter and attempt to resolve the issue with the individual concerned, or make right whatever situation led to your complaint.

.For example, if a member of Staff or a Volunteer displayed impatience when answering a telephone enquiry, the individual being complained about would be interviewed and asked to explain what occurred; if appropriate the individual may be sanctioned by being asked to change their behaviour with regard to answering telephone calls patiently and professionally.

Our Service Manager, in co-operation with relevant staff or volunteers will monitor the commencement, completion and removal and communication of any imposed sanctions as a result of a formal complaints process.

We aim to issue a response, in writing within 28 days of the start of the investigation. If it has not been possible to complete the investigation within 28 days, the reasons why and the expected completion date will be advised. The maximum period allowed to investigate the complaint and to respond is 6 months.

If any form of legal action is initiated, Therapy Train Stirling CIC may put the investigation on hold until the legal investigative process has been completed. Please note that the process of

investigating your formal complaint may be adjourned at the discretion of the named Service Manager, with due regard to time limits and confidentiality.

A written complaint may be discontinued if you as the Complainant cease to participate with Therapy Train Stirling CIC during the process of our formal investigation, without any explanation. Your complaint may also be discontinued if you formally withdraw the complaint. In either case, both parties will be informed.

Stage 3 – Appeal Process

After receiving an outcome response following Stage 2 of a formal complaint process, an Appellant has **30 days** to write a letter of appeal. If you decide to appeal after receiving our Stage 2 outcome report after the investigation, you are advised to write a letter of appeal, stating on what grounds you are appealing.

Therapy Train Stirling CIC reserve the right to process appeals only where there are reasonable grounds given with new evidence linked to the original complaint or if a complaints process has not been followed. After receiving your letter of appeal, our Service Manager will contact another suitably qualified individual, independent of the complaint and the person complained against, to take up the task of Appeal Investigator. We will acknowledge your letter of appeal within 5 working days; however, the appeal investigation process may take 2-4 months to complete.

An Appeal Investigator will be asked to investigate the Stage 2 outcome report on your behalf. To ensure neutrality and ethical fairness for all parties, the Independent Complaints Officer will not correspond with the Appeal Investigator.

Both yourself as the Complainant and any other Person being complained about will be informed in writing regarding the outcome of the Appeal Investigation.

Therapy Train Stirling CIC will communicate the outcome of formal appeals to all parties involved in an appeal process.

Please note that in the interest of safeguarding any vulnerable individuals involved, confidentiality may be limited if there is any risk of harm to yourself as the Complainant or other vulnerable individuals identified as part of the appeal investigation; this may include vulnerable adults or children at risk of harm. To minimise the risk of harm to other vulnerable individuals, confidentiality may be limited if a disclosure must be made to a third party or a statutory organisation, for example, to staff employed by COSCA, relevant Health Services, Social Work Service, GP Practice, Probationary Service, or the Police Force.

The Appeal Investigator may agree on a sanction that may need to be applied to the Person being complained about (depending on the nature of the complaint).

If a sanction is agreed, Therapy Train Staff will monitor the situation. All parties involved in the complaint procedure will be notified of the Appeal Investigation Outcome; and the reason for the outcome will be sent in writing.

Therapy Train Stirling CIC may seek legal advice before responding to complaints at any stage of the process.

At the end of a Formal Complaints Procedure, an Outcome Report will be sent to COSCA from Therapy Train Stirling CIC, before or within 30 days of receipt of an independent report from the Appeals Investigator, regarding the outcome of a complaint investigation process.

Procedural Review by COSCA

After all stages have been investigated and processed as noted above, COSCA may on receipt of a written Complaint Outcome Report from Therapy Train Stirling CIC, verify whether this complaints procedure has been followed and if the outcome was lawful, reasonable, and properly explained. A request for a procedural review by COSCA from any Complainant must be made within 30 days either:

- after a Stage 2 written complaint outcome report has been received by all parties
- or after an appeal has been reviewed and finally processed by an Appeal Investigator.

COSCA Counselling & Psychotherapy in Scotland will **not** normally review Service User complaints until all the above procedures have been fully exhausted. COSCA will publish upheld complaints regarding COSCA Individual Members or Member Organisations. You may refer to the COSCA complaints policy on their website: <https://www.cosca.org.uk/guidance-policies/complaints> - for further information contact:

The Complaints Officer
COSCA (Counselling & Psychotherapy in Scotland)
16 Melville Terrace
Stirling
FK8 2NE

Tel: **01786 475 140**

Email: info@cosca.org.uk

Website: www.cosca.org.uk