# COMPLAINTS POLICY & PROCEDURE
# MINDSPACE COUNSELLING SERVICE

Mindspace
The Gateway Centre, North Methven Street, Perth, PH1 5PP
Telephone: 01738 631 639

Company limited by Guarantee No 180643 Registered in Scotland
Registered Charity number: SC002072

This policy covers complaints against members of staff, individuals (paid and volunteer) and groups carrying out work related to counselling and psychotherapy on behalf of Mindspace.

Mindspace is an organisational member of BACP (British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy, www.bacp.co.uk) and abides by its code of ethics and practice.

**How to use the policy**

This complaints procedure is available in Mindspace's counselling rooms, from the Mindspace counselling office, and on our website [https://mindspacepk.com].

This complaints procedure is available in other languages and formats on request. If you require assistance with understanding this complaints procedure, or submitting a complaint, please contact us or Citizens Advice Bureau 0845 2961010 or Independent Advocacy 01738 587887.

Complaints may be made by the complainant or authorised representative. Complaints must be received within 2 years of the date of the events complained about. In case of anonymous complaints, we will make a record of these but cannot take them further except by consultation with the complainant.

**Procedure**

In the first instance, any complaint should be discussed informally with your counsellor, if possible. If you wish to make a formal complaint, please contact the Senior Counsellor by phone, email or in writing. Mindspace staff will do all they can to support you with this process. The Senior Counsellor will investigate the complaint and respond in writing within 2 weeks of receiving all relevant information. If you are not satisfied with the response, put your complaint in writing to the Chief Executive. (Support to do this may be available from Citizens Advice Bureau or Independent Advocacy as previously noted.)

At that stage, a named person at Mindspace, normally the Chief Executive, will be responsible for managing the complaints process.

Within 4 weeks of receipt of the complaint, a Complaints Panel will be appointed to investigate the complaint. The panel will be impartial and independent of the complainant and Mindspace or the person

complained against and will act confidentially in their handling of the complaint. All parties involved in the complaint can, where relevant, declare a conflict of interest to a designated person. The Panel will hear separately the evidence from either party and meet with either party separately. The party complained against and the complainant have the right to attend the complaints panel meeting and be accompanied and/or represented by a supportive person of their choice at the meeting. Where a conflict of interest exists it should be declared to the Senior Counsellor or Chief Executive.

Within 4 weeks of receiving all the evidence, the Panel will inform you about the outcome of the complaint and their conclusion. The maximum amount of time for the complaint to be investigated is six months.

The responsible individual identified to manage the complaints procedure can halt the complaint at any stage should it emerge that legal action is under way, pending or intended. That person can halt the procedure until any legal process is complete. Possible sanctions that can be applied include suspension or termination of an individual's contract with Mindspace or a requirement for further training, completion of which will be monitored by the Chief Executive.

Where complaints are made anonymously, these will be noted but cannot be progressed without discussion with the complainant.

**Appeal**

If you feel the complaint has not been satisfactorily resolved and wish to pursue this further, you can write to the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees of Mindspace who will raise it at the next quarterly Board meeting. This is the final stage of the organisation's own procedure. You will receive a reply within one month of the Board's meeting. Any appeal must be raised no more than 6 months after the end of the original investigation of your complaint. A report will be submitted to BACP on conclusion and will include notification to BACP of any sanctions applied to individual members of BACP.

**Further action**

If the complaint has not been resolved by the organisation's complaints process, you can contact BACP at:

15 St John's Business Park, Lutterworth, Leicestershire, LE17 4HB

Tel: 01455 883300

Email: bacp@bacp.co.uk

Where the complaint is against an organisational member of BACP, or an individual working for a BACP organisational member, the organisation's internal complaints process must be exhausted before the complaint can be submitted to BACP.

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