Complaints Procedure

Cruse Bereavement Care Scotland (CBCS) wants to ensure that the service we provide is of the highest quality. If anyone is unhappy we want to hear about it and resolve it as quickly as possible. All complaints will be treated in confidence.

We are an organisational member of COSCA (Counselling and Psychotherapy in Scotland) and must ensure our complaints procedures meet the standards set by them.

Complaints Procedure Availability

- A copy of the procedure can be viewed and downloaded from CBCS's website – [www.crusescotland.org.uk](http://www.crusescotland.org.uk)
- Hard copies are available at all Area offices
- All notice boards will display a copy of the Complaints Procedure
- All clients are made aware of COSCA’s Complaints procedure
- The document can be made available in other languages and formats on request where possible

How to Make a Complaint

The Operations Manager is responsible for managing the complaints procedure. A formal complaint should be made to the Operations Manager. This can be by telephone, in writing by email or letter. Please contact:

Fiona Arnott-Barron, Operations Manager,
Cruse Bereavement Care Scotland,
29 Barossa Place,
Perth,
PH1 5HH
01738 444178
fiona.arnott-barron@crusescotland.org.uk

If you cannot put your complaint in writing we will offer assistance. We will also ensure that help and advice on the complaints procedure is available internally through the Operations Manager. You may also contact your local Citizens’ Advice Bureaux or local Advocacy Services. We can pass on information regarding these through our Area offices or through our Headquarters in Perth.
Making a Complaint

There are three stages in our complaints procedure. After each stage, a complainant can end the process if they feel the issue has been resolved – or proceed to the next stage.

Stage 1: Informal Complaint

CBCS will try to resolve a complaint as simply as possible in an informal way. We would hope that issues can be identified and discussed openly as soon as possible. If the matter cannot be resolved informally it will move to Stage 2.

Stage 2: Formal Complaint

A formal complaint will be acknowledged in writing by the Operations Manager within seven days. A copy of the Complaints Procedure will be enclosed.

The Operations Manager will appoint an independent and impartial person to explore and gather facts. A thorough and confidential investigation of the complaint will be made. Contact will be made with the complainant and the person complained against.

The investigator may ask either party for evidence and possibly meet each party separately. All parties have the right to be accompanied and/or represented by a supportive person of their choice at the meeting.

The investigator will send a written report within 28 days of receipt of the complaint. A Report at the Conclusion of Complaints Proceedings will be sent to COSCA by the investigator.

If the problem cannot be satisfactorily resolved Stage 3 should be followed.

Stage 3: Appeal

If the matter has not been resolved, the complainant may contact the Operations Manager in writing within 14 days of receiving the investigator’s report. This will be acknowledged within 5 working days. The Operations Manager will then set up a panel of three: two members of the CBCS Board and an independent and impartial person with relevant experience.

All documentation relating to the appeal will be copied to all parties and the panel members 14 days before the hearing.

A person representing each party may be asked to attend the hearing. They may be accompanied and/or represented by a supportive person.

Their decision will be made known within 28 days.

If the complainant is still dissatisfied he/she can contact COSCA through its complaints procedure.

COSCA (Counselling & Psychotherapy in Scotland), 16 Melville Terrace, Stirling, FK8 2NE.
Tel: 01786 475140
www.cosca.org.uk

The Complaints Procedure is in addition to, not a replacement for, any legal rights.

Standards

1. Our Complaints Procedure applies to complaints against members of staff, individuals (paid and voluntary) and groups carrying out work-related counselling and psychotherapy on behalf of CBCS.
2. Complaints by defined third parties and/or representatives are acceptable.
3. The Operations Manager is responsible for communicating the progress of the investigation with the complainants and will keep in regular contact.
4. The time limit for complaints to be accepted and investigated is 3 years.
5. All parties involved in the complaint can declare a conflict of interest to the Operations Manager.
6. CBCS is unable to respond to anonymous complaints, but will investigate and act where appropriate/possible.
7. The investigator and/or complaints panel will be impartial and independent of the complaint and person complained against and will act confidentially in their handling of the complaint.
8. The evidence from either party will be heard separately by the investigator and/or panel. The part or parties complained against and/or their representatives will not attend the complaints panel meeting at the same time as the complainant.
9. All parties have the right to attend the complaints panel meeting accompanied by a support person.
10. CBCS aims to have the whole complaints process completed in 6 months where possible.
11. The Operations Manager can halt the complaint at any stage should it emerge that legal action is under way, pending or intended until that legal action is completed.
12. Possible sanctions will depend on the nature of the complaint. Fulfilment of any sanctions imposed will be monitored by the Operations Manager.
13. CBCS will ensure that a report will be submitted to COSCA at the conclusion of the formal complaints procedure.