



PONY

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MBACP



PARTNERSHIPS

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Name of Organisation: Pony Partnerships CIC

Venue Address for which policy applies: All venues

Date of last review: 31st January 2022

Date of next review: 31st January 2023

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All staff at Pony Partnerships are registered members of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP). As registered members of the BACP they are required to provide a level of service to their clients that is both ethical and professional. The guidelines for modelling good practice are outline in the BACP Ethical Framework for Good Practice in Counselling and Psychotherapy (<https://www.bacp.co.uk/media/3103/bacp-ethical-framework-for-the-counselling-professions-2018.pdf>)

If you believe that the therapy you have received has not been conducted in such a way, as a first step you could talk to your therapist to see if the situation can be resolved informally and quickly. If you do not feel able to do this, or are unable to do so for any reason, you should follow the complaints procedure below. You could also contact the Professional Conduct Department at BACP and talk your situation through with a member of the team to see what you could do about it. You then have the option to raise your concerns formally with the BACP under the Professional Conduct Procedure.

Purpose: This procedure will be used to investigate and resolve a complaint by a client against Pony Partnerships (the Service).

Policy: The Service aims to treat clients with consideration and respect and to act within the Ethical Framework for Good Practice in Counselling and Psychotherapy of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP)

All complaints made by clients will be taken seriously and given due consideration.

Confidentiality:

1. All aspects of any complaint will be dealt with in a confidential manner.
2. The complainant and the person complained against will be kept aware of the extent and detail of any information divulged to the other, which will be on a need to-know basis.
3. The maintenance of the file and administration of the procedure in connection with a complaint will be the responsibility of a named individual, normally the Manager (referred to as the Manager in this document).
4. The complainant and the person complained against will be given the name and position of the Manager and be informed that they will be responsible for the conduct of the complaint proceedings.

Initial Procedure:

1. Any complaint made on the telephone or in person should be reported to the Manager at the earliest opportunity and a note of the date and person receiving the complaint should be made on the Client File.
2. The Manager will contact the complainant to discuss the nature of the complaint. If they wish to pursue the complaint the Manager will send them a copy of the Complaints Procedure and advise them that they should send a formal, written statement laying out the matters which give rise to the complaint.
3. If the complainant declines to pursue the complaint the date of the conversation and nature of the complaint will be entered on the Client's File by the Manager and the person complained against and their supervisor will be informed.
4. Internal disciplinary procedures may be put into effect if considered necessary.
5. Any written complaint received from a client regarding the work of the Service by any person working for the Service should be passed to the Manager as soon as possible and, in any case, within a week of receipt. A formal record will be made on the Client File.

Formal Procedure - Stage One:

1. When a written complaint is received, the Manager will write a letter acknowledging receipt within seven days. The counsellor concerned and their supervisor will be informed of the complaint and a meeting will be arranged, either together or separately with the Manager, to discuss the complaint. The Director will be informed that a formal complaint has been made.
2. A second letter will be sent to the client advising them that discussion has taken place with the counsellor concerned and offering an opportunity for formal discussion of the complaint with the Manager. This meeting should take place not more than four weeks after receipt of the written complaint.
3. The complainant will have the right to be accompanied at the meeting by one other person of their choice but that person will not actively participate in the meeting.
4. If the complaint is resolved at the meeting, the client, counsellor, supervisor and Director will receive written confirmation that the matter is resolved.
5. If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the meeting, they will be asked to give a written statement to this effect to the Manager, and the complaint will move to Stage 2.

Formal Procedure - Stage Two: The purpose of this stage is to review the conduct of the complaint; to ensure that procedure has been followed correctly; to provide the client with an opportunity to contest the decision of the Manager; to arrive at a final ruling for the resolution of the complaint.

1. The Manager will inform the Director of the continuing complaint, the Director will inform the Management Committee and Chair of Trustees, and will write to the client and person complained against advising them that the procedure has moved to Stage Two.

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2. The Director will convene a panel comprising a member of the Management Committee (not the Manager) and a person external to the Service, with relevant experience, agreed by the Manager and the Client. A meeting date will be set for the meeting to take place, within six weeks of the decision to move to Stage Two.
3. The panel will be provided with all relevant paperwork prior to the date of the meeting. The client, person complained against, and the Manager will be given the opportunity to attend and may be questioned by the panel. The client and person complained against can be joined by one person of their choice but that person may not actively participate.
4. The findings of the panel, in the form of a written report, will be conveyed to the Directors; the Management Committee; the client and person complained against. In the event of the client being dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage Two, the Chair of Trustees will inform the complainant that the Service has exhausted its procedure and that they may refer their complaint to the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy. Note: Counselling sessions will be suspended when the complaint moves to Formal Procedure Stage Two. At the discretion of the Manager, all client work of the counsellor complained against may be suspended during investigations.

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