



Complaints Policy – 2025–2026

Name of Organisation: Pony Partnerships CIC

Venue/Address: All venues

Date of Review: 1 September 2025

Date of Next Review: 31 August 2026

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1. Purpose and Scope

Pony Partnerships CIC aims to provide a service that is ethical, professional, and in line with the **British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) Ethical Framework for the Counselling Professions** (or equivalent governing body).

This procedure sets out how clients can raise concerns about the service and how these will be investigated and resolved. It applies to all clients, staff, and volunteers, across all venues.

2. Principles

1. All complaints will be taken seriously, investigated promptly, and treated with fairness and respect.
2. Confidentiality will be maintained, with information shared only on a need-to-know basis.
3. The process will be transparent, with all parties informed of progress.
4. Where appropriate, attempts will be made to resolve matters informally before moving to formal procedures.
5. This policy operates alongside the relevant governing body's professional conduct procedures.

3. Informal Resolution

3.1 If you feel able, raise your concern directly with your facilitator to seek a quick, informal resolution.

3.2 If you cannot do this, contact the Manager to discuss the matter.

3.3 You may also seek advice from the BACP (or equivalent) Professional Conduct Department about your options before proceeding.

4. Confidentiality

4.1 The complainant and the respondent will be made aware of the information shared with the other party.

4.2 Complaint files will be managed by a named individual (normally the Manager) who will oversee the process.

4.3 Both complainant and respondent will be informed of the Manager's name and role.

5. Initial Procedure

5.1 Any verbal complaint received should be reported to the Manager immediately, with the date, name, and details recorded on the Client File.

5.2 The Manager will contact the complainant to discuss the nature of the complaint.

5.3 If the complainant wishes to proceed, they will be sent a copy of this Complaints Policy and asked to submit a **formal written statement** outlining the concerns.

5.4 If the complainant chooses not to proceed, the matter will be noted on the Client File, and the respondent and their supervisor will be informed.

5.5 Internal disciplinary procedures may still be initiated if appropriate.

5.6 Any written complaint must be passed to the Manager within **seven days** of receipt, who will record it formally.

6. Formal Procedure – Stage One

6.1 Upon receiving a written complaint, the Manager will acknowledge it in writing within **seven days**.

6.2 The respondent and their supervisor will be informed.

6.3 A meeting will be arranged (together or separately) with the Manager to discuss the complaint. The Director will also be informed.

6.4 A second letter will be sent to the complainant offering a formal meeting with the Manager within **four weeks** of receipt of the complaint.

6.5 The complainant may bring one person for support, who may not actively participate.

6.6 If resolved, written confirmation will be sent to all relevant parties.

6.7 If unresolved, the complainant will be asked to confirm in writing that they wish to proceed to Stage Two.

7. Formal Procedure – Stage Two

7.1 This stage reviews the complaint, ensures procedure has been followed, and considers an appeal against the Stage One decision.

7.2 The Manager will inform the Director, who will notify the Management Committee.

7.3 A panel will be formed comprising:

- One Management Committee member (not the Manager)
- One external person with relevant experience, agreed by the Manager and complainant.

7.4 The panel meeting will take place within **six weeks** of the decision to move to Stage Two.

7.5 All relevant paperwork will be provided to the panel in advance.

7.6 The complainant, respondent, and Manager will have the opportunity to attend and answer questions.

7.7 Support persons may attend but not actively participate.

7.8 The panel's findings will be provided in a written report to the Directors, Management Committee, complainant, and respondent.

7.9 If the complainant remains dissatisfied, they will be advised that they may refer the matter to the respondent's governing body or insurers.

Note: Sessions will be suspended once Stage Two begins. At the Manager's discretion, all of the respondent's client work may be suspended during the investigation.

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