



## **Complaints Procedure**

### **Context**

Emma Marshall is a fully qualified and experienced Counsellor, Supervisor and Canine Assisted Therapist and a Senior Member (SMACCPH) of the Accredited Counsellors, Coaches, Psychotherapists and Hypnotherapists (ACCPH) and a Registered Practitioner (MCMA) of the Complementary Medical Association (CMA). It is Emma Marshall Counselling Services' policy to ensure that a person with a complaint relating to their counselling or supervision can use a procedure that can help them resolve it as quickly and as fairly as possible.

If anyone is unhappy with any part of the counselling service, or if they have a complaint to make, I would like to know about it as soon as possible in order to resolve the situation quickly. All complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially.

### **Aims of the Complaints Procedure**

- To enable a complaint to be investigated in a fair manner
- To enable complaints to be resolved as speedily as possible
- To allow consequences of mistakes to be put right without unnecessary conflict
- To improve the quality of the service

### **Access to this Complaints Procedure Document**

This Complaints Procedure can be accessed either in paper copy from the office or it can be viewed and downloaded as a PDF from [www.emcounselling.com](http://www.emcounselling.com)

### **Who can complain**

- Anyone who is using the counselling service
- Anyone who has used the counselling service within the past three years
- Anyone who has enquired about the counselling service or is on the waiting list

Anonymous complaints and any that are deemed to be false or of malicious intent will be investigated and I will use discretion in assessing what action should be taken.

## **Time limits for complaints**

Complaints can be accepted up to three years from the time of the problem arising. If the complaint refers to specific client work the maximum is three years from the date the client ended counselling with Emma Marshall Counselling Services. However, it is much easier to sort out difficulties if the complaint is brought to my attention as quickly as possible.

## **How to Make a Complaint**

If a client or supervisee has a concern, firstly please talk to me and we can try to resolve it informally in the safety of the counselling relationship. The majority of concerns should be resolved in this way.

If the client or supervisee's concern is not resolved this way, they may decide to make a formal complaint and the following procedure should be followed.

## **Complaints Procedure - Stage One**

The client should set out in writing their complaint to Emma Marshall and send it by email to [emmamarshallcounselling@gmail.com](mailto:emmamarshallcounselling@gmail.com). Alternatively, if you wish to do this by post, the office address will be supplied.

I will write back to you to acknowledge the complaint. I will advise my professional body and my Insurers that a complaint has been received and following their advice I will investigate the complaint with my Counselling Supervisor and respond to the client or supervisee in writing within 21 days. I ask clients or supervisees to please provide me with as much detail as they can to help me investigate their complaint. Please include the following details:

- What the problem is
- Say what you want to happen
- Provide information on any relevant communication with me on the subject including the times and dates of any conversations

The investigation may involve a meeting with the client or supervisee with my Counselling Supervisor or Legal Representative being present. If the complaint has arisen from participation in Canine Assisted Therapy, further investigation or consultation with a Dog Behaviour and Temperament Assessor certified by Therapy Dogs Training UK, may be necessary, so may lengthen the investigation timescale. Any costs for dog assessments will be covered by Emma Marshall Counselling Services.

I understand that making a complaint can be a difficult process and so the client or supervisee may wish to bring someone to support them to this meeting. Minutes will be taken at the meeting and afterwards the outcome of the investigation will be sent in writing to the client or supervisee. It is hoped that the matter will be resolved at this stage but if the client or supervisee remains dissatisfied they can take the complaint to Stage 2.

## **Stage 2**

If a complaint is taken to Stage 2, the client or supervisee should contact the either the ACCPH or the CMA using their public protection and complaints procedure at:

<https://www.accph.org.uk/public/protection/procedure>  
<https://www.the-cma.org.uk/policies/complaints-disciplinary-procedure/>

Emma Marshall Counselling Services adheres to the ACCPH Code of Conduct <https://www.accph.org.uk/code/of/conduct> and the CMA Code of Ethics [www.the-cma.org.uk/policies/code-of-ethics](http://www.the-cma.org.uk/policies/code-of-ethics). Complaints must demonstrate how either of these Codes have been breached, with reference to the relevant terms and clauses. Complaints must be supported by sufficient evidence.

### **Confidentiality and Communications**

Every complaint will be treated with care and confidentiality.

I will attempt to communicate clearly and directly with the client or supervisee in a timely manner as explained above.

The client or supervisee will be required to give permission for confidential information pertinent to the complaint to be disclosed to all parties cited in the complaint by those involved in handling the complaint, including Emma Marshall Counselling Services' Insurance, Legal, Supervisor or other specialist advisors.

### **Monitoring and Learning from Complaints**

A record will be kept of all complaints received including anonymous complaints. The record will also include the reasons for any decision to pursue or not to pursue the complaint.