



BEACON COUNSELLING TRUST - COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS POLICY & PROCEDURE

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POLICY

1. AIM

The aim of this policy is to ensure that all complaints and compliments received by Beacon Counselling Trust (BCT) are handled in a consistent, transparent, and professional manner. Feedback helps improve our services and celebrate successes. BCT is committed to providing a high quality service users range of services, and we actively welcome and seek all types of feedback, especially from people who use our services.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all staff, trustees, volunteers, and any others who engage with BCT. The policy ensures that feedback is managed appropriately, helping to improve services and build stronger relationships.

3. COMPLAINTS

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about the service provided, actions taken, or lack of action by BCT, its staff, volunteers, or trustees. A complaint may relate to the quality of support received, communication, professional conduct, delays, access to services, or any other aspect of the service users experience. Raising a complaint will not negatively affect the service users right to receive services from BCT.

BCT does not look on complaints as unwanted and will treat any expression of dissatisfaction about our conduct as a complaint. BCT see's complaints as a way to help improve the services.

Complaints will be investigated impartially and in a non-discriminatory manner.

4. COMPLIMENTS

A compliment is an expression of satisfaction or positive feedback about our service, staff, or volunteers. We are pleased to receive any positive feedback or compliments from service users about the help and support they have received from us and will communicate all compliments within BCT so that recognition can be given.

Compliments may be given:

- Verbally in person or over the phone.
- In writing in a card, letter, email or social media post.

It is important we capture all the wonderful things people say about us and our work.

5. SUGGESTIONS

We also welcome suggestions, especially from people who have used our services. Suggestions can play crucial role in helping us grow and improve our services.

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains effective.

PROCEDURE

1. MANAGERS AND STAFF DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS.

All complaints made by people using BCT Services should be taken seriously and dealt with promptly and in confidence. Regardless of the stage within which a complaint is resolved, copies of the complaint together with an anonymised outline of the process and outcomes should be passed onto the BCT Clinical Director to share learning within the charity.

2. STAGE ONE: INFORMAL COMPLAINT.

Where possible, BCT encourages concerns to be raised at an early stage so they can be resolved quickly and informally. Many issues, it is hoped, can be addressed through discussion and clarification.

In accordance with the policy, a BCT service user can make a complaint informally to a member of staff. **(See Appendix 1 which can be given to the service user)**. At this stage notes must be kept based on the complaint, and any meetings and action taken. Any action taken to resolve the complaint should be confirmed in writing. The member of staff handling the complaint should be supported by their manager to resolve the complaint informally. Any learning from complaints should be highlighted at team meetings and in supervisions.

3. STAGE TWO: FORMAL COMPLAINTS - TAKING YOUR COMPLAINT FURTHER.

In accordance with the policy, the complaint will have been made in writing to the Clinical Manager. The complaint needs to be acknowledged within five working days. A full investigation must take place and notes kept of all meetings and the decision-making process and have due regard to any relevant BCT policies. A copy of the decision and the reasons for that decision must be made in writing and have regard to the time scale in the Complaints Policy. If the complaint is resolved satisfactorily, at this stage any learning should be disseminated in relevant team meetings and supervisions.

4. STAGE THREE: FORMAL COMPLAINT TO THE CLINICAL DIRECTOR.

Again, if the complaint is passed onto the Clinical Director, all written evidence should be provided and notes of reasons for decisions. The Clinical Director may decide to talk to those involved again. Written notes must be kept. If the complaint is resolved, any learning must be disseminated through the relevant parts of BCT and communicated to the Board of Trustees.

5. STAGE FOUR: FORMAL COMPLAINT TO THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES.

If not resolved, the Chair of the Board of Trustees will examine the complaint and the way it has been dealt with. All written notes and evidence must be sent to the Chair. The decision-making process must be documented and learning from the complaint should be disseminated by the Board with any recommendations that may arise.

6. WHEN TO GET EXTERNAL HELP.

Charity trustees and members need to work together to settle any differences they have. If trustees cannot reach an agreement, the governing document should be referred to for directions. Independent external help may be required if appropriate.

An independent third party will look at both sides and produce fresh ways to resolve the dispute.

If the dispute is about the way BCT is run, for example:

- BCT will provide details of any services local to the area if we can, or further general advice can be found at [Complaints about charities - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/complaints-about-charities)
- Ask a local church leader or community elder for advice if it is a religious dispute.

7. CONFIDENTIALITY.

Complaints will be handled sensitively and confidentially. Information will only be shared with those involved in investigating and resolving the complaint. Records of complaints will be kept securely in line with our Data Protection Policy.

8. LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT.

BCT records and reviews complaints and compliments to identify themes and improve service delivery.

We are committed to learning from feedback and using it to strengthen our practice and governance.

All Policies and Procedures can be translated into the appropriate language.

APPENDIX 1

INFORMATION ON HOW TO COMPLAIN

Beacon Counselling Trust (BCT) aim to respond to verbal or written complaints within fourteen (14) working days, if possible. If this is not feasible, a reason for the delay will be given.

You should make your complaint as soon as possible and usually within **three months** of the date of the event you are complaining about. We hope that you will complain informally to the person dealing with the matter first to give them a chance to put things right. We hope you will be able to resolve your issue informally and only feel the need to make a formal complaint as a last resort.

Stage 1: Informal Complaint.

The first step is to talk to a member of BCT staff. This can be done quite informally, either directly or by telephone. Please see below for contact details.

Usually, the best staff member to talk to will be the person who deals with the matter you are concerned about, as they will be in the best position to help you quickly and to put things right. If they are not available, or you would prefer to approach someone else, then ask for their relevant line manager.

We will try to resolve the problem on the spot if we can. If we cannot do this, for example, because information we need is not to hand, then we will make a record of your concern and arrange the best way and time for getting back to you. This will normally be within **five working days**, or we will make some other arrangement acceptable to you.

Stage 2: Formal Complaint - Taking your complaint further.

If you are unhappy with the response you received at Stage 1, the next stage is to put your complaint in writing to the BCT Clinical Manager, setting out the details, explaining what you think went wrong and what you feel would put things right. If you are not happy about writing a letter, you can always ask a member of staff or an independent advocate to take notes of your complaint. You should make sure you agree with what they have recorded and that they provide you with your own copy for reference. This record will be passed promptly to the Clinical Manager to deal with.

Once we receive a written complaint, we will arrange for it to be fully investigated. Your complaint will be acknowledged in writing by the Clinical Manager within **five working days** of receiving it and the letter will say when you can expect a full response. This should normally be within **14 days** unless the matter is overly complicated, such as where other organisations need to be contacted. Where this is the case, we will still let you know what action is being taken and tell you when we expect to provide you with a full response.

Stage 3: Formal Complaint to the Clinical Director.

If you are not satisfied with the Clinical Manager's investigation, you can take your complaint to the BCT Service Director. They will conduct an independent review and will

contact you as part of that review. When they have reviewed the incident and subsequent investigation, they will write to you to let you know the outcome **within three weeks**.

Stage 4: Formal Complaint to the Trustee Board.

If you are still unhappy about the decision or any aspect of the way the complaint has been dealt with you can ask BCT's Trustee's board to consider your complaint. BCT is a registered charity and is managed by a Board of Trustees. All materials relating to your complaint and to the investigation will be sent to the Chair of the Board (contact details will be provided for you). They will let you know within **seven working days** that they have received your complaint and tell you when to expect a full response from them.

DATA COMPLAINTS

If you have any concerns about our use of your personal data, you can make a complaint to us using the contact details provided. If you remain unhappy with how we've used your data after raising a complaint with us. The complaint should provide as much detail as possible and should be sent to:

Support@beaconcounsellingtrust.co.uk or [263 Townsend Lane, Liverpool L13 9DG](#)

The complaint will be acknowledged within 30 days of receiving and will be recorded securely and necessary to investigate. Complaints will then be managed by the Data Protection Officer (DPO) who will handle the response and share the outcome without undue delay. Complaints should be made to BCT before escalating a complaint to the **Information Commissioner's Office (ICO)**. Website: <https://www.ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint>

TAKING YOUR COMPLAINT OUTSIDE THE ORGANISATION

If you are not satisfied with the Board's response, you can always seek advice from outside the organisation. It may be possible to seek help from an advice agency or other organisation. BCT will provide you with details of any services local to your area if we can or further general advice can be found at: [Complaints about charities - GOV.UK](#)

CONFIDENTIALITY, GDPR AND DATA PROTECTION

This policy complies with the requirements of The Equality Act (2010) and is in accordance with BCT commitment to diversity and inclusion. We will only tell those people involved in resolving your complaint about it. Sometimes we may need to share your complaint or concerns with other individuals to understand the situation fully.

After the complaint is resolved, we will keep a summary on record, using relevant data protection protocols. If you use our services and have a file, the complaint record will be placed on your file. We use anonymised information from complaints to make sure we learn and improve our services.

FEEDBACK

We value your feedback which can play a crucial role in helping us grow and improve our services. If you have suggestions or ideas on how we can do better, we would love to hear

from you. You can give feedback verbally, or in writing to the member of staff who you are most familiar with, or you contact BCT through the details below. Feedback can also be given to us through completing our feedback form after receiving our service.

APPENDIX 2

CONTACT DETAILS:

Clinical Director: Mr Neil Platt

Tel: 0151 226 0696

Email: admin@beaconcounsellingtrust.co.uk

Clinical Manager: Mrs Kathy Devlin

Tel: 0151 226 0696

Email: admin@beaconcounsellingtrust.co.uk

Chair of Trustees: Mr Darren Mealia

C/O Beacon Counselling Trust

Address Details:

Beacon Counselling Trust

263 Townsend Lane

Liverpool

L13 9DG

APPENDIX 3

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE (AVAILABLE ON THE WEBSITE):

Please see original copy [BCT-Complaints-and-Compliments-Policy-and-Procedure guide for website.pdf](#)



Policy statement

Beacon Counselling Trust (BCT) is committed to providing a high quality, client-led range of services. We actively welcome and seek feedback especially from people who use our services. Feedback can be provided to us in a variety of ways. It can be done formally through completing our feedback form after receiving a service or through a complaint when someone is not satisfied with the service they have received. Feedback can also be provided informally by suggesting ways we can change or improve services or through a compliment if a person feels they have received a particularly good service.

All types of feedback are welcomed as it gives us the opportunity to listen to people and improve what we do and the way we do it.

Complaints

We do not look on complaints as unwanted. In fact, they may help us to see where our services may be improved. We welcome suggestions where we have room for improvements or when we have made a mistake.

Any complaints made will be treated in confidence and given serious attention before appropriate action is taken. We aim to respond to verbal or written complaints within fourteen (14) working days if at all possible or give a reason for the delay.

Procedure - How to Complain

Contacting Us

You should make your complaint as soon as possible and usually within **three months** of the date of the event you're complaining about. We hope that you will complain informally to the person dealing with the matter first to give them a chance to put things right. We hope you will be able to resolve your issue informally and only feel the need to make a formal complaint as a last resort.

Stage One: Informal Complaint

The first step is to talk to a member of BCT staff. This can be done quite informally, either directly or by telephone.

Usually, the best staff member to talk to will be the person who dealt with the matter you are concerned about, as they will be in the best position to help you quickly and to put things right. If they are not available, or you would prefer to approach someone else, then ask for their relevant line manager.

We will try to resolve the problem on the spot if we can. If we can't do this, for example, because information we need is not to hand, then we will take a record of your concern and arrange the best way and time for getting back to you. This will normally be within **five working days** or we will make some other arrangement acceptable to you.

**Stage Two:
Formal Complaint**

**Taking your complaint
further**

If you are unhappy with the response you received at Stage 1, the next stage is to put your complaint in writing to the BCT Clinical Manager, setting out the details, explaining what you think went wrong and what you feel would put things right. If you are not happy about writing a letter, you can always ask a member of staff or an independent advocate to take notes of your complaint. You should make sure you agree with what they have recorded and that they provide you with your own copy for reference. This record will be passed promptly to the Clinical Manager to deal with.

Once we receive a written complaint, we will arrange for it to be fully investigated. Your complaint will be acknowledged in writing by the Clinical Manager within **five working days** of receiving it and the letter will say when you can expect a full response. This should normally be within **14 days** unless the matter is very complicated, such as where other organisations need to be contacted. Where this is the case, we will still let you know what action is being taken and tell you when we expect to provide you with a full response.

**Stage Three:
Formal Complaint to
the Clinical Director**

If you are not satisfied with the Clinical Manager's investigation you can take your complaint to the BCT Service Director. She/he will conduct an independent review and will contact you as part of that review. When she/he has reviewed the incident and subsequent investigation she/he will write to you to let you know the outcome **within three weeks**.

**Stage Four:
Formal Complaint to
the Trustee Board**

If you were still unhappy about the decision or any aspect of the way the complaint has been dealt with you can ask BCT's Trustee's board to consider your complaint. BCT is a registered charity and as such is managed by a Board of Trustees. All materials relating to your complaint and to the investigation will be sent to the Chair of the Board (contact details will be provided for you). He/she will let you know within **seven working days** that they have received your complaint and tell you when to expect a full response from them.

Taking your complaint outside the organisation

If you are not satisfied with the Board's response, you can always seek advice from outside the organisation. It may be possible to seek help from an advice agency or other organisation. BCT will provide you with details of any services local to your area if we can.

Compliments

We welcome any positive feedback or compliments from service users about the help and support they have received from us. We are delighted to receive letters or cards saying how beneficial our service has been to you.

We are pleased to communicate all compliments within the organisation so that recognition can be given.

Suggestions

We also welcome suggestions, especially from people who have used our services. You can provide this verbally or in writing and give it to the member of staff who you are most familiar with or mail/email it to BCT (contact details will be provided).

