

## 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.



BEACON COUNSELLING TRUST

Reg. Charity No. 1140011

### 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).