

Client Complaints Procedure

At Hope Therapy & Counselling Services, we are committed to ensuring that our clients receive high-quality support. However, we understand that, on occasion, issues or concerns may arise. This procedure is designed to help guide you through the process of raising and resolving complaints in a way that is efficient, respectful, and aimed at improving your experience.

1. Our Role

Hope Therapy & Counselling Services operates as a referral and administrative service. Our responsibilities include:

- Conducting the initial assessment to match you with an appropriate counsellor.
- Administering session payments and scheduling appointments.
- Ensuring that you are matched with a qualified counsellor.
- Providing ongoing administrative support throughout your counselling relationship.

It is important to note that while we oversee the administrative aspects, clinical matters are the responsibility of the individual counsellor.

2. Counsellor's Responsibility

We ensure that all counsellors on our affiliate panel are fully qualified and members of an appropriate professional counselling body, with clear ethical guidelines they are expected to follow. However, it is the client's responsibility to ensure that they feel the counsellor is the right fit for them.

3. Addressing Issues Informally

We encourage clients to address any concerns informally in the first instance, as this can often resolve matters swiftly and amicably.

When to address issues directly with your counsellor:

As clinical matters fall under the responsibility of the counsellor, we recommend addressing any concerns related to therapy directly with them. If you feel unsure about how to approach the conversation or would like support in doing so, we are happy to offer guidance.

Below are the issues that should, in the first instance, be addressed with your counsellor:

- Clinical Concerns or Therapy-related Issues:
 - Any dissatisfaction with the therapeutic techniques or approach used during sessions.
 - Concerns about the progress of therapy, treatment plans, or goals.
 - Questions or feedback about how the counsellor is conducting sessions or structuring therapy.
 - Concerns regarding the counsellor's clinical approach, methods, or effectiveness.
- Therapeutic Relationship:
 - If the therapeutic relationship doesn't seem to be working or the counsellor's style doesn't suit you.
 - Issues with communication during sessions or how the counsellor engages with you.
 - Clarifications or adjustments you may need regarding session content or your needs during therapy.
- Ethical Concerns:
 - Issues related to breaches of confidentiality, inappropriate conduct during sessions, or other Ethical concerns.

- If you believe the counsellor is not adhering to their professional ethical guidelines.

When to address issues directly with Hope Therapy & Counselling Services:

For any matters outside the clinical nature or those related to your experience with our services, please reach out to us:

- **Administrative Concerns:**
 - Payment issues (e.g., incorrect billing, payment delays, or refunds).
 - Technical issues with the website or platforms (e.g., access to online platforms, technical support).
 - General inquiries about our services or processes.
- **Concerns About the Counsellor's Conduct:**
 - If you feel uncomfortable raising an issue directly with the counsellor.
 - Reports of behaviour or conduct that makes you feel unsafe or uncomfortable, including unethical behaviour or breaches of confidentiality.
 - If you need assistance in formally addressing a complaint about the counsellor's conduct.
- **General Feedback:**
 - If you wish to provide feedback about your experience with Hope Therapy & Counselling Services (not directly with the counsellor).
 - Suggestions for improving the service or process.

4. Raising a Formal Complaint

If informal attempts to resolve the issue are unsuccessful, you may submit a formal complaint in writing either to us or to your counsellor, depending on the nature of the complaint.

Please provide as much detail as possible, including the nature of your complaint and any attempts made to resolve the matter informally.

If you are raising a complaint about the counsellor, we ask that you also send a copy to Hope Therapy & Counselling Services to allow us to support the process.

If you are raising a complaint against Hope Therapy & Counselling Services, please submit it to:

Email: contact@hopefulminds.co.uk

Phone: 07379 538411

Mark for Attention: Ian Stockbridge, Director.

Once we receive your complaint, we will acknowledge it within three business days (Monday to Friday) and will work to resolve the issue as quickly as possible. If your complaint pertains to the counsellor we will notify the counsellor to support the resolution process.

We aim to respond to complaints within a maximum of 28 days. If, for any reason, this timeframe cannot be met, we will notify you and provide an update.

5. Confidentiality and Respect

All complaints will be handled confidentially, with respect for all parties involved. We encourage open communication to ensure the highest standards of care and to maintain a supportive environment for all involved.