



Pregnancy Counselling & Care (Scotland)

Complaints Procedure & Policy

Purpose

If you feel dissatisfied with any matter relating to your involvement with Pregnancy Counselling & Care (Scotland), hereafter referred to as PCC(S), it is important that you have a clear and effective means by which your grievance may be aired and resolved. This Policy is available on our website www.counsellingandcare.co.uk. At present, this document is unavailable in other languages however we will offer help in whatever way we can.

These procedures apply to all employees, volunteers, clients and customers of Pregnancy Counselling & Care (Scotland). The relevant Manager is designated as the person responsible for following through on any complaint. The Manager will be both independent and impartial throughout any complaint inquiry and will act confidentially at all times.

Our counselling service is recognised through COSCA, Scotland's professional body for counselling and psychotherapy. Information of COSCA's complaints procedure is available on their website www.cosca.org.uk

Our charitable status comes from the Office of Scottish Charity Regulator. For more information about OSCR and making complaints please visit their website www.oscr.org.uk

Procedure

Informal complaint

In the first instance, and if it feels appropriate, you should raise your complaint informally with the member of staff or volunteer concerned or the manager of that service. It may be possible to resolve the issue through informal discussion.

If you are working or volunteering with PCC(S) and the complaint is about your line manager, then you can also speak informally to the Operations Manager or the Board Member responsible for Safeguarding & HR. If you are unable to speak to either person directly, please telephone, email or write making it clear you are contacting them informally.

Formal complaint

If informal discussion is unsatisfactory, or if your complaint is sufficiently serious, you should put your complaint in writing to the relevant Manager or the Board member responsible for overseeing HR matters, as appropriate. Please fully explain the nature and extent of your grievance. You will receive a written acknowledgement of your letter within seven days.

Assistance can be offered by the staff or Board member contacted, to enable any complainant to fully understand the complaints procedure. They can also help any complainant who has difficulty in completing a written complaint. Further assistance may be required from an external support group (eg. Citizens Advice) and information on how to contact groups will be offered.

PCC(S) will accept any complaint made by a defined third party and/or representative. All parties involved in the complaint can, where relevant, declare a conflict of interest to the Manager or Board Member. Should the conflict exist with the Board's ability to remain impartial, the complaint will be passed onto an independent and impartial person with relevant experience. Any anonymous complaint will be appropriately logged by the Manager, and raised at the next Board Meeting for any further action.

What will happen?

The complaint will be investigated thoroughly and fairly by the complaint manager. All evidence will be heard separately, and not together, from both parties concerned. As far as possible the complaint will be dealt with in confidence and information shared only with those involved. A report will be produced which will be passed to a sub-group of the Board of Trustees of at least three members including the HR Member. The sub-group will be asked to approve the report. Once approved, a letter will be sent to the complainant stating the outcome. The process should be completed wherever possible within 28 working days of receipt of the written complaint. Where necessary, the PCC(S) Disciplinary Rules and Procedures will be implemented. Actions taken in accordance with the Disciplinary Rules and Procedures may include further training for those involved, a formal written apology or termination of work or volunteering contract.

During this time the complainant will be regularly updated by email or telephone as to the progress of the inquiry. Should the complainant or party complained against wish to attend the sub-group meeting of the Board, they may do so, and be accompanied by and/or represented by a supportive

person of their choice. Should any legal action (pending or intended) begin during this process, the Manager can halt the complaints procedure until such legal process is complete.

A complaint must be received by email or letter within six months of the initial grievance.

Appeal

An appeal may be requested and granted if you are not satisfied with how the original investigation was managed or if new evidence is cited. An appeal must be requested within six months of the original findings report in writing to the HR Board member. You will receive a written acknowledgement of your letter within seven days. The appeal would take place at a hearing in front of a new sub-section of the board who did not review the original complaint within 4 weeks of our request for an appeal.

If you are unsatisfied with the way your complaint was dealt with you can escalate it beyond our Board of Directors. This process involves COSCA or the Office of Scottish Charity Regulator and is only possible once all avenues of consultation have been exhausted.

For counselling clients, you can submit a complaint to COSCA, the professional organisation for counselling in Scotland. The COSCA Complaints Procedure can be viewed from their website at www.cosca.org.uk.

All COSCA Registered Members are now required to submit to COSCA the Final Report at the conclusion of their complaints proceedings related to counselling and psychotherapy and notify COSCA of any sanctions applied to individual members of COSCA working for them. COSCA will consider taking appropriate action on receipt of notifications about sanctions.

COSCA (Counselling & Psychotherapy in Scotland)
16 Melville Terrace
Stirling
FK8 2NE

Telephone: 01786 475140

For other complaints you can submit a complaint to OSCR, the Scottish Charity Regulator. You can find their complaints procedure on their website www.oscr.org.uk

OSCR
Quadrant House
9 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

Telephone: 01382 220446

PCC(S) Staff and Board Member Contact Information

Operations Manager: Lucy Aitchison

lucy.aitchison@counsellingandcare.co.uk

0131 553 5565

Counselling Lead: Sophie Temple

Sophie.temple@counsellingandcare.co.uk

0131 553 5565

Community Development Worker (managing Baby Bank service): Sarah Brown

sarah.brown@counsellingandcare.co.uk

0131 553 5565

Board Member leading on HR matters:

theresajsutherland@gmail.com

Produced by Alice Dickson: 09.08.2016

Reviewed & amended by Emilie Rousseau: 12.07.2021

Reviewed & amended by Sophie Temple 23.01.23