



*Agreed Date: 2 February 2022*  
*Review Date: 2 February 2025*

## **WPF Therapy Complaints Policy**

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### **Our Aims and Objectives**

WPF Therapy strives to provide a high-quality service always and we hope that you will find no cause for complaint. However, we understand that things don't always go to plan and under those circumstances we have a complaints process which is available to you.

We aim to resolve complaints promptly and we take all complaints seriously, recognising that complaining is not an easy thing to do.

We recognise that most complaints can be resolved informally and may involve an explanation or a simple apology. More serious complaints or those that are not so easily resolved may require the involvement of a senior manager and may take longer to conclude.

We aim to make our complaints process:

- fair, accessible and transparent
- resolve any issues as quickly as possible
- learn from the issues raised

### **Scope**

This policy applies to complaints received from service users, students/trainees, course participants and members of the public.

The following complaints normally fall outside the scope of this complaints procedure:

- complaints by staff (which will normally be dealt with through the staff grievances procedure)
- Complaints by employers who engage WPF Therapy to provide therapy to employees
- Complaints by consultants or contractors
- Student appeal against assessment outcomes
- Complaints relating to matters of WPF Therapy's governance, the exercise of WPF Therapy's powers of the performance of WPF Therapy against its governing document

WPF Therapy will normally expect you to bring a complaint or an appeal yourself and not through someone else (e.g. a family member, friend or representative) but we may make exceptions to this (e.g. where you have a disability and allowing this would be a reasonable adjustment and you have given your consent to their involvement).

If a complaint received under this procedure relates to a safeguarding matter or is a matter currently under investigation or consideration by the police, this policy will be suspended for the duration of any such investigation, notwithstanding anything to the contrary set out in this policy.

Where you bring more than one complaint against WPF Therapy under this policy, the relevant member of the Executive Team will have the discretion to appoint the same individual to consider all such complaints and deal with them concurrently under this procedure.

Where a complaint made by an individual falls within the scope of consumer protection regulations, including the Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008, the relevant member of the Executive Team should be alerted to this by the member of WPF Therapy staff dealing with the complaint at the relevant stage and should consider the most appropriate course of action in the circumstances, including whether use of this complaints procedure should be suspended whilst any breaches of consumer protection regulations are investigated.

## Timeframes

You should raise any issues that you may have as soon as possible and no later than **three weeks** after the event has occurred. WPF Therapy will only consider complaints made after this time in exceptional cases.

In this policy we have provided an estimate of the timescales involved at each stage of the process. We will try to the best of our ability to adhere to the timescales set out in this policy. However, in some circumstances resolving a complaint under this policy may take longer than envisaged. Where this is the case, we will endeavour to update you in a timely manner of any delays and the reason(s) for such delays, if appropriate.

## The Process

### Stage 1 – Informal resolution

Ordinarily, the best way to raise an issue or concern is to speak to a member of staff about it either verbally or via email. Misunderstandings and frustrations are best dealt with by raising concerns with the staff directly involved at an early and informal stage.

Where this is not possible, or you do not feel comfortable raising your complaint directly with your primary staff contact, you should arrange to speak to a Manager including a Clinic Manager, relevant Programme Manager or a Line Manager. If you are unsure which manager to contact, please contact the PA to CEO in the first instance ([patoceo@wpf.org.uk](mailto:patoceo@wpf.org.uk)).

In each case, the concerns you raise will be investigated by a member of WPF Therapy staff in line with our established process and we aim to resolve the issues raised within three weeks of receiving your complaint.

The person handling your complaint will liaise with you to try and find a suitable solution to the issues you have raised.

If, after this discussion, a resolution is agreed the matter will be closed. A record of the complaint will be kept as per our record retention provisions below, indicating the complaint and the outcome of the Stage 1 resolution.

### **Stage 2 – Formal Complaint**

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of the Stage 1 process, you may make a formal complaint. You should complete and submit the Complaints Form and attach any evidence that you feel supports your case **within three weeks** from the date of the receipt of the outcome of the Stage 1.

The Complaints Form is available online [[click here](#)] or email a request to [complaints@wpf.org.uk](mailto:complaints@wpf.org.uk). The Complaint Form and supporting documentation should be returned to [complaints@wpf.org.uk](mailto:complaints@wpf.org.uk).

When making a complaint, where possible please tell us your preferred outcome as a result of your complaint. For example, you may want an apology, someone to explain what has happened or to hear about changes we will make to ensure that the same thing does not happen again.

We aim to **contact you within two weeks** of receiving your formal complaint, via the contact details you have provided on the form, to acknowledge receipt and to give an indication of when we will have concluded our investigation.

Your complaint will be allocated to a Complaint Investigator who will look into the issues you have raised. The Complaint Investigator will be a different individual from the person who dealt with your complaint at Stage 1 and, where possible, will not be directly or personally connected to the subject matter of your complaint.

Once the Complaint Investigator has considered your complaint, they will provide a report outlining the findings of the investigation together with a set of recommendations to a member of the WPF Therapy Executive Team for a final decision. The WPF Therapy Executive Team member allocated to consider and decide on your complaint will be the team member responsible for overseeing the area of WPF Therapy's operations about which your complaint relates, unless your complaint is about that individual specifically, in which case this will be considered by someone WPF Therapy considers able to decide on this matter.

We will then send you an email or letter, to the address provided to us on your complaint form, detailing the outcome of your complaint. We aim to complete this stage of the process **within six weeks** of acknowledging your complaint. Where this is not possible, we will keep you updated of any delay and revised timescales.

### **Stage 3 – Appeal to CEO**

If you are not satisfied by the outcome of a Stage 2 Formal Complaint you have the right to request an appeal against the decision by setting out your grounds for appeal in writing to WPF Therapy's Chief Executive Officer who will decide if your appeal is eligible for consideration. Appeals should be sent to [complaints@wpf.org.uk](mailto:complaints@wpf.org.uk)

You may appeal on the following grounds only:

- There was a procedural error at Stage 2
- There is new evidence to support your case which was not available at Stage 2 (you must state why this was not available).

Where the CEO is unable to consider your appeal (for example because the complaint is about the CEO, or the CEO undertook the Stage 2 investigation), this will instead be considered by a Trustee.

You must submit your request for an appeal **within three weeks of receipt of the outcome** of Stage 2.

WPF Therapy will assess whether your complaint is eligible for appeal, on the basis that it falls within one of the grounds listed above and will notify you **within four weeks** of submitting your appeal request whether your appeal will be progressed. is eligible for appeal.

If the substance of your appeal is considered, a Trustee or external investigator will be assigned to review this. We will aim to complete this **within six weeks** of notifying you we have accepted the appeal. Where this is not possible, we will keep you updated of any delay and revised timescales.

### **Further determination**

Provided WPF Therapy has followed the procedures set out in this policy, you will have no right under this policy to have your complaint reinvestigated. Likewise, any subsequent dealings or correspondence with any third party relating to the complaint shall not create grounds for the complaint to be reconsidered, provided that this procedure has been properly followed (unless WPF Therapy is legally required to reconsider any matter relating to this complaint in law or by any regulatory body acting within its powers).

This does not prevent you from making a complaint to the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy, in accordance with their published procedures, where you are eligible to do so.

## Retention of records

We will keep a written record of each stage of your complaint, which we will keep for a period of 6 years from the date of our final communication with you under this complaints process. All personal data will be processed and stored in accordance with our privacy policy, which is available [here](#).

### Anonymous complaints or contact details anonymous

We do not encourage complaints and will not normally consider complaints made anonymously, as our proper investigation of the complaint may be impossible where we are unable to obtain further information about the complainant or establish the credibility of the complaint. In these circumstances, we will therefore be likely to conclude that the complaint does not warrant further investigation.

Please note that if no contact details are provided on your complaint form or where requested during the Stage 1 process, or where the details you have provided are incomplete or incorrect, we may be unable to properly investigate your complaint or communicate our findings with you.

## Support

If you are invited to meet with any WPF Therapy member of staff to discuss your complaint or appeal, you may be accompanied by a relative, friend or carer by way of support. Due to the nature of the complaints dealt with under this policy, and the manner in which we will seek to resolve complaints, we consider that in most circumstances it will not be appropriate for you to be accompanied by a legal representative, and any request to be accompanied by such a representative should be submitted to WPF Therapy in writing in advance of the meeting. WPF Therapy shall decide, in its discretion, whether to permit such representation.

## Third party information

Where your complaint involves another student, therapist, member of our staff team or other individuals, for reasons of confidentiality and data protection legislation we may not be able to provide you with detailed information in response to your complaint. We will, however, always endeavour to ensure that we can respond to you in a meaningful way.

## Complaint Handling

This policy is intended to resolve issues in a timely and proportionate manner. However, we recognise that situations may arise where following the stages and timeframes set out in this policy would not be appropriate or practicable in the circumstances. Where WPF Therapy determines this to be the case, we therefore reserve the right, acting reasonably, to deal with a complaint outside of this procedure. Where we decide it is necessary in the circumstances to deal with a complaint outside of this procedure, we will nevertheless be mindful of the complainant's need for a fair hearing.

Where WPF Therapy is dealing with your complaint under this policy, we request that you do not publish, discuss, or otherwise refer to the complaint or its subject matter on any form of media, including social media, or encourage or facilitate any third party to do so. Any contravention of this restriction may impact on our ability to investigate the matter independently and in accordance with this policy.

## WPF Therapy Complaints Policy at a glance

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WPF Therapy strives to provide a high-quality service always and we hope that you will find no cause for complaint. However, we understand that things don't always go to plan and under those circumstances we have a complaints process which is available to you.

### STAGE 1: Raise an issue or concern informally

- Concerns are best dealt with at an early and informal stage by speaking with a member of staff or Manager.
- If you are unsure which manager to contact, please contact the PA to CEO in the first instance ([patoceo@wpf.org.uk](mailto:patoceo@wpf.org.uk)).
- You should aim to raise any concerns or issues within three weeks of the event.
- We aim to resolve any concerns within three weeks.



### STAGE 2: Formal Complaint

- If you are still unhappy you can make a formal complaint by using the Complaints Form ([click here](#) or via email to [complaints@wpf.org.uk](mailto:complaints@wpf.org.uk)) within three weeks from the date of the outcome of the Stage 1.
- Your complaint will be acknowledged within two weeks and an investigation by a suitable Manager or member of the Executive team will take place.
- We aim to respond to you within six weeks of acknowledging your complaint.



### STAGE 3: Appeal to CEO

- If you are not satisfied by the outcome of a Stage 2 Formal Complaint you have the right to request an appeal against the decision by setting out your grounds for appeal in writing to WPF Therapy's Chief Executive Officer who will decide if your appeal is eligible for consideration.
- Your appeal must be submitted within three weeks of receipt of the outcome of Stage 2.
- A decision will be made within four weeks on whether your complaint is eligible for review.
- If a review is undertaken, we will aim to complete this within six weeks of accepting the appeal.