

Honorary President:
Chair:
Chief Executive:

Bishop Richard Holloway
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COSCA Complaints Procedure

Attending COSCA Complaints Panel Meeting

Information for Witnesses

1. Introduction

COSCA (Counselling & Psychotherapy in Scotland) supports people whom we ask to be a witness in a complaint. We encourage you to contact us if you have any questions about your role as a witness.

COSCA understands that as a witness, you may be anxious about giving evidence and/or attending a meeting of COSCA's Complaints Panel. We hope that the information below will provide you with everything you need to know before, during and after the Complaints Panel meeting.

2. Providing a Witness Statement

On being invited to be a witness in a complaint, we will ask you to provide a witness statement. At this point, we will explain to you the COSCA Complaints Procedure.

You will then be asked to submit a statement in writing which will include what you saw or heard about the complaint, or how you are involved in the complaint.

3. Attending Complaints Panel Meetings

We may also ask you to attend the relevant meeting of the Complaints Panel. We will let you know what to expect if you are invited to attend a meeting of the Complaints Panel.

If invited to attend, you will be informed whether you need to attend all or part of the meeting, and provided with the date of the meeting in accord with the COSCA Complaints Procedure.

We will send you details of when and where the Complaints Panel meeting will be held. We will cover any agreed in advance out of pocket expenses for attending the above meeting and explain how to claim the above expenses.

You can bring a friend or family member with you to the Complaints Panel meeting to give you support. However, we will not usually pay their expenses.

If you or your supporter has a disability, or any other needs, please discuss these with us on receipt of the invitation to attend the above meeting, and we will endeavour to make appropriate arrangements, if this is possible. If you have a disability that prevents written submissions, please also discuss this with us so that we can make arrangements, if possible, for recording your evidence in another format or arranging for the transcription of your witness statement.

If you are unable to attend in person due to your personal circumstances and wish to do so by video conferencing, Skype or some other electronic means, please let me know.

You should arrive in good time for the meeting. You will be met and welcomed by a COSCA representative who will explain the venue's facilities and show you the waiting room for witnesses. You will be provided with refreshments. Please bring a copy of your written statement with you for your reference. As you may have to wait before being called to give evidence, you are advised to prepare for this.

Complaints Panel meetings are held in private due to the confidential information involved. What you say as a witness will also be held confidential and no witness evidence is published by COSCA.

4. Giving Evidence at Complaints Panel Meetings

None of the other parties involved in the complaint will be in the room with you when you attend Complaints Panel Meetings.

The Complaints Panel will ask you questions based on the information provided in your written statement. You may, however, be only asked to confirm the information therein.

You should consider your answer to the questions asked before replying. If you do not understand a question or do not know the answer, you should tell the Complaints Panel.

You should speak clearly and slowly, and address your answers to the Complaints Panel.

5. After Giving Evidence

Once you have given your evidence you are free to leave the venue. You should not talk to other witnesses who have not yet given evidence. We will endeavour to make it possible for you to leave the venue by a route that does not require you to have contact with other witnesses or parties to the complaint.

Brian Magee
Chief Executive
COSCA (Counselling & Psychotherapy in Scotland)
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