



**COSCA (Counselling & Psychotherapy in Scotland)**  
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## Complaints Procedure FAQs

### ➤ **How can I make a complaint about a member organisation of COSCA?**

Member organisations are required to adhere to COSCA's Statement of Ethics and Code of Practice.

When people decide that a member organisation has breached the above Statement then they must in the first instance submit a complaint directly to the member organisation.

When doing so, complainants need to follow the process for submitting complaints laid down in the member organisation's own complaints procedure. The procedure, or information about how to obtain a copy of this procedure, will be on the member organisation's website, if it has one. If not, the procedure can be requested directly from the member organisation. COSCA can act as a first point of contact to those considering a complaint against the above members to provide advice and, at COSCA's discretion, to offer to submit the complaint to the above member to be dealt with under its own complaints procedure.

Member organisations' own complaints procedure must comply with COSCA's standards for complaints procedures – [www.cosca.org.uk](http://www.cosca.org.uk) - Complaints.

Following the exhaustion of the member organisation's own complaints procedure the complainant, if still not satisfied, can submit the complaint to COSCA. Before doing so, the member organisation's appeals procedure needs to have been used by the complainant.

On receipt of the above complaint, the role of COSCA is to verify:

- that the above member's procedure has been followed and that there has not been a breach of the COSCA Statement of Ethics and Code of Practice in the course of investigating the complaint
- that the outcome of its procedures is not unlawful, unreasonable, unjust, oppressive, discriminatory or otherwise wrong
- that the above outcome is based on policies and practices that are not unreasonable, unjust, oppressive or discriminatory
- that the above outcome was explained properly to the complainant.

➤ **How can I make a complaint about an individual working for a member organisation of COSCA?**

Individuals do not need to be individual members of COSCA to work for member organisations. When this is the case they are referred to below as individual non-members.

Individual non-members, registrants and individual members working for member organisations require to adhere to COSCA's Statement of Ethics and Code of Practice.

Registrants are those individual members of COSCA who are listed on the COSCA Register of Counsellors and Psychotherapists and include the following categories of membership: counsellor member (organisations), counsellor, practitioner and accredited member.

Not all individual members are registrants. Those who hold student, counselling skills and associate membership are not registrants but are individual members.

When people decide that any of the above individuals have breached the above Statement then they must in the first instance submit a complaint directly to the member organisation for whom they work. COSCA can act as a first point of contact to those considering a complaint against the above members to provide advice and, at COSCA's discretion, to offer to submit the complaint to the above member to be dealt with under its own complaints procedure.

Following the exhaustion of the member organisation's own complaints procedure the complainant, if still not satisfied, can submit the complaint to COSCA. Before doing so, the member organisation's appeals procedure needs to have been used by the complainant.

On receipt of the above complaint, the role of COSCA is to verify:

- that the above member's procedure has been followed and that there has not been a breach of the COSCA Statement of Ethics and Code of Practice in the course of investigating the complaint
- that the outcome of its procedures is not unlawful, unreasonable, unjust, oppressive, discriminatory or otherwise wrong
- that the above outcome is based on policies and practices that are not unreasonable, unjust, oppressive or discriminatory
- that the above outcome was explained properly to the complainant.

➤ **How can I make a complaint about an individual member of COSCA who practises independently?**

Individual members of COSCA can practise independent of member organisations. This means that they can work as counsellors, psychotherapists, trainers and supervisors on their own or in organisations that are not members of COSCA.

These individual members include those listed as registrants on the COSCA Register of Counsellors and Psychotherapists and those individual members who are not listed on the Register (student, counselling skills and associate members).

All individual members working independently are required to adhere to COSCA's Statement of Ethics and Code of Practice.

***Individual Members with their own complaints procedure and who practise independently***

These individual members can choose to have their own complaints procedure that must comply with COSCA's standards for complaints procedures – [www.cosca.org.uk](http://www.cosca.org.uk) - Complaints. If these individual members have their own complaints procedure then it must in the first instance be used by a complainant to submit their complaint. The individual member's procedure, or information about how to obtain a copy of this procedure, will be on the member organisation's website, if he/she has one. If not, the procedure can be requested directly from the individual member. COSCA can act as a first point of contact to those considering a complaint against the above members to provide advice and, at COSCA's discretion, to offer to submit the complaint to the above members to be dealt with under its own complaints procedure.

When people decide that any of the above individual members who have their own complaints procedure have breached the above Statement they must in the first instance submit a complaint against the individual member by following the process for doing so laid down in the member's own complaints procedure.

Following the exhaustion of the individual member's own complaints procedure the complainant, if still not satisfied, can submit the complaint to COSCA. Before doing so, the individual member's appeals procedure needs to have been used by the complainant.

On receipt of the above complaint, the role of COSCA is to verify:

- that the above member's procedure has been followed and that there has not been a breach of the COSCA Statement of Ethics and Code of Practice in the course of investigating the complaint
- that the outcome of its procedures is not unlawful, unreasonable, unjust, oppressive, discriminatory or otherwise wrong
- that the above outcome is based on policies and practices that are not unreasonable, unjust, oppressive or discriminatory
- that the above outcome was explained properly to the complainant.

### ***Individual Members practising independently covered under COSCA's Complaints Procedure***

As an alternative to having their own complaints procedure, individual members working independently can instead choose to be subject to COSCA's Complaints Procedure and not have their own complaints procedure.

If the individual member does not have their own complaints procedure, then the complaint can be submitted directly to COSCA under its Complaints Procedure – [www.cosca.org.uk](http://www.cosca.org.uk) - Complaints. This means that complaints can be submitted direct to COSCA, but only if the individual member does not have their own complaints procedure.

#### **➤ *How can I make a complaint about an Individual Member who works for an organisation that is not a member organisation?***

Where the complaint is made against an individual member of COSCA who is employed by, volunteers for, or works on a self-employed basis for an organisation that is not an organisational member of COSCA, then COSCA can consider the above complaint.

The complaint should be submitted direct to COSCA and COSCA can proceed with the complaint. The role of COSCA then is to determine the extent of the responsibility of the individual member of COSCA in the complaint as opposed to that of the non-member organisation.

#### **➤ *How can I make a complaint against individual non-members who do not work for a member organisation?***

It is not possible to make a complaint to COSCA about individual non-members who do not work for a member organisation.

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