



COSCA (Counselling & Psychotherapy in Scotland)
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COSCA'S Member Organisations and How to Raise a Complaint

Member organisations and Individual members must abide by and are accountable under COSCA's Statement of Ethics and Code of Practice.

Individuals working for member organisations can be registrants, members and non-members of COSCA.

Individuals working for member organisations

- ✓ are covered by COSCA's Statement of Ethics and Code of Practice and the organisation's membership of COSCA, whether they are individual registrants, members or non-members of COSCA
- ✓ are listed on the COSCA Register of Counsellors and Psychotherapists if they are COSCA registrants
- ✓ can be individual members of COSCA and not listed on the above Register e.g. if they are student, counselling skills or associate members
- ✓ can have complaints submitted directly to them if they are individual registrants or members of COSCA, and who work independently, and have their own complaints procedure
- ✓ can have complaints submitted against them made direct to the member organisations for whom they work
- ✓ can only have complaints made against them submitted direct to COSCA if complainants are not satisfied after the exhaustion of the complaints procedure of the member organisation or individual member, if they work independently.

In the event that a complaint is submitted to COSCA following the exhaustion of the complaints procedure of the member organisation or the individual member, if they work independently, the role of COSCA is to verify:

- that the above members' procedures have 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 their procedures is not unlawful, unreasonable, unjust, oppressive, discriminatory or otherwise wrong.

Examples of How to Complain

Example 1: Counsellor is a registrant

A client is seeing a counsellor who works for a COSCA member organisation. The counsellor is a registrant whose name is listed on the COSCA Register of Counsellors and Psychotherapists. Although he does not have to have his own complaints procedure, this counsellor has opted to have his own complaints procedure. The client feels that the counsellor has harmed her in some way and decides to submit a complaint against the counsellor.

The client must submit a complaint to the member organisation by following the organisational member's complaints procedure. Only after this complaints procedure has been exhausted, and only if the client is still not satisfied, can the client submit a complaint direct to COSCA under its Complaints Procedure. COSCA does not re-investigate the complaint received but checks that the organisational member's complaint procedure was followed, that the COSCA Statement of Ethics and Code of Practice was not breached in the course of the organisational member's investigation of the complaint, and the outcome meets COSCA's standards.

Example 2: Counsellor is not an individual member

A client is seeing a counsellor who works for a COSCA member organisation. The counsellor is not an individual member of COSCA. The client decides to raise a complaint against the counsellor. The client must do this under the member organisation's complaints procedure and not directly with COSCA until the organisational member's complaints procedure has been exhausted.

Example 3: Counsellor is a Student Member

A client is seeing a counsellor in training who works for a COSCA member organisation. The counsellor in training is not a registrant but is a student member of COSCA. The counsellor in training does not have his own complaints procedure. The client decides to raise a complaint against the counsellor in training. The client must do this under the member organisation's complaints procedure and not directly with COSCA until the organisational member's complaints procedure has been exhausted.

Brian Magee
COSCA Chief Executive