COMPLAINTS POLICY
BCTIWC
British Council for Therapeutic Interventions with Children

This policy contains the following sections:

1. The purpose and scope of this policy
2. What is a complaint?
3. How to complain
4. What you can expect from us when handling a complaint
5. Other information

1. The purpose and scope of this policy

1.1. This policy outlines how we deal with and resolve any complaints relating to The British Council for Therapeutic Interventions With Children (hereinafter referred to as BCTIWC) and The UK Society for Play and Creative Arts Therapies (hereinafter referred to as PTUK).

1.2. The BCTIWC has been established to protect the public's interest in the use of play, creative arts and related therapies when used with children. Our intention, at all times, is to deal with people fairly and properly. Where there is reason to believe that the BCTIWC has not met this standard, we aim to resolve any issues in a fair and timely manner and to learn from what has happened so that we can continuously improve and adapt our practice.

1.3. The BCTIWC is responsible for independently auditing complaints for PTUK, on an annual basis, and reporting our findings to the PSA. Complaints against the PTUK and the Academy of Play and Child Psychotherapy (APAC) CEO and the Executive Directors of PTUK can be made directly to the Chair of BCTIWC, Helen Tozer, at helen@bctiwc.org. For details of how to make other complaints to the PTUK please see the following page of their website: https://playtherapy.org.uk/complaints-concerns-procedure/.

2. What is a complaint?

2.1. The BCTIWC sees complaints as an important tool in continually improving our service. We believe that all complaints should be addressed in a proportionate, fair and transparent manner, in a way which protects the public. If you are dissatisfied by the way that you have been treated by BCTIWC you are entitled to make a complaint.

2.2. It may be the case that we receive correspondence that, in our view, does not fall under our definition of a complaint or does not raise any issue that calls for in-depth investigation. This may apply, for instance, to:

2.2.1 complaints made about staff concerning issues related to their personal lives;
2.2.2. objections to certain steps, recommendations or decisions we have taken in compliance with a legal requirement;
2.2.3. disapproval of the BCTIWC's refusal to take action in a matter where we have no legal power to act;
2.2.4. complaints which relate to events which are over three years old;
2.2.5. malicious harassment of staff or repeated submissions of a complaint to which a response has been provided.

2.3. If we do not think your correspondence constitutes a complaint we will give the reasons for our views but, having done so once, will not normally engage in further correspondence on the merits of the position we have taken.

2.4. This policy covers complaints about:
2.4.1. how you or others have been treated by BCTIWC;
2.4.2. the professional conduct of BCTIWC members;
2.4.3. the BCTIWC's conduct and compliance with its own procedures processes and policies;
2.4.4. the BCTIWC's conduct in performing statutory functions in line with legal duties.

3. How to complain:

3.1. Complaints regarding PTUK should be addressed to PTUK, unless the complaint is regarding the CEO of PTUK and APAC or the Executive Directors of PTUK, in which case it should be addressed to the BCTIWC.

3.2. How to complain to PTUK: Complaints can be addressed PTUK's Professional Conduct Officer (the "PCO") by emailing pco@ptukorg.com, telephoning 01825 761143 or PCO, PTUK, The Coach House, Belmont Road, Uckfield, TN22 1BP. Please mark the envelope "Strictly Private and Confidential". More information can be found on the PTUK website https://playtherapy.org.uk.

3.3.How to complain to BCTIWC: Contact the Chair of BCTIWC Helen Tozer at helen@bctiwc.org or by writing to The Chair, BCTIWC, 5 Brayford Square, Brayford Square, London, England, E1 0SG.

3.4. If your complaint is regarding the Chair of BCTIWC you can contact Lay Member Lorna Lewis at lol855@gmail.com. In that case, the Complaints Panel would be formed of other members of the BCTIWC.

3.7. It will help us to deal quickly and fully with your complaint if you can state that you are making a complaint, set out your concern in writing as clearly as possible, and provide your contact details.

4. What you can expect from us when handling a complaint

4.1. Our policy is to take all complaints seriously and deal with them according to the procedures set out in this policy. If you make a complaint, we will investigate it thoroughly and impartially, without discrimination or prejudice. We aim to resolve matters as promptly as we can, but if a complaint gives rise to serious issues, we may need to take extra time in order to investigate it fully and properly.

4.2. If your complaint relates to alleged discrimination, BCTIWC will ensure that you are given access to support, and you will be advised to contact the Equality Advisory Support Service (open Monday to Friday 9.00am to 7pm, Saturday 10.00am to 2.00pm), telephone 0808 8000082, http://www.equalityadvisoryservice.com for further advice and support.

4.3. Your complaint will be handled in the following way:

Stage 1: Receiving the Complaint

The Chair of BCTIWC will communicate with you directly either by phone, in person or in writing to you. The Chair will listen to your complaint and notes will be taken. The Chair of BCTIWC will electronically store all records of the complaint in line with Data Protection procedures.

4.4. Confidentiality and record keeping of complaints are key, as complaints can be of a sensitive nature. All parties will be informed, in writing, how the information relating to the complaint, will be shared and with whom it will be shared. If you have supplied your contact details, we will send an acknowledgment of your complaint within five working days.

4.5 **Stage 2: Reviewing the Complaint** If your complaint is regarding the conduct of the BCTIWC or of any of its members, your complaint will be passed to an appropriate person who was not involved in the events BCTIWC: Complaints Policy 3 which led to the complaint and who is in a position and has the relevant experience to consider the complaint.

4.6. If there is any evidence of any criminal offence towards a child or vulnerable adult, the BCTIWC will advise you to contact both the police and local safeguarding children or adults' team. The BCTIWC will also inform you that they will be contacting both the police, the local safeguarding children or adults' team. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) of the relevant school or college will also be contacted, if applicable. If an investigation is undertaken, either by the police or the Safeguarding Children's Partnership, then the BCTIWC complaints process will pause until there is an outcome to those investigations.

4.7. **Stage 3: Assessing the Complaint**

Complaints will be assessed initially by a panel of 3 BCTIWC members. The panel should be made up of at least one lay person and one professional member of BCTIWC. No members with a personal connection, or conflict of interest, with the complaint will sit on the panel, as per the BCTIWC Conflict of Interest Policy. The panel will review the information collected by the Chair of BCTIWC and decide if there are valid grounds for a complaint. If necessary, the BCTIWC may recruit professionals with the competencies applicable to the case in order to review it further.

4.8. If your complaint reaches this stage, you may wish to consider other options and engage professional advisers, the cost for any such advice will not be met by BCTIWC.

4.9. The complaint will be checked against current best practices, applicable policies and procedures and relevant laws and regulations.

4.11. If the complaint is proven and upheld, the panel will decide whether or not any sanction should be imposed upon any member of BCTIWC.

4.12 **How long will this process take?**

We will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within five working days of receipt. We may need to contact you to ask for more information or clarity before making a final decision. We will aim to respond to complaints within 30 working days of receipt of any additional information.

4.13. We aim to complete all complaints within the timescales above; however, if a complaint is complex it may occasionally be necessary to extend the time limit. If this is the case, we will keep the complainant informed of progress with the investigation, the reasons for the delay, and the new deadline.

5. Annual review of PTUK's complaints process

5.1. The BCTIWC undertakes an annual review of PTUK's complaints process and their response to any complaints they have received. We act as an independent advisor to the PTUK by highlighting areas for improvement and we share our reports with the PSA. Our report is available for the public to view on our website: https://www.bctiwc.org/.

6. Other information

6.1. The BCTIWC Board is informed of any complaints received about the BCTIWC or its staff at each meeting.

6.2. The BCTIWC welcomes any comments or suggestions about our complaints procedure, to make sure it operates as efficiently and effectively as possible. Please send any comments to us by email or post.

DOCUMENT INFORMATION:	
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