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TERAPIA STUDENTS' COMPLAINT RESOLUTION PROCEDURE



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1. WHO DOES THIS PROCEDURE APPLY TO?

This procedure applies to current students of Terapia.

2. TERAPIA ETHOS

Terapia encourages an atmosphere of open communication where differences of opinion, perception and experience are acknowledged. In this environment it is common that a student will give feedback or seek clarification about something that may not have been as they hoped or expected. There may be ongoing discussions about a range of issues that take place in this context, this is different from clearly raising an issue as a complaint.

The formal complaints procedure begins at Stage 1 which is an Early Resolution process. Even within this initial stage a student needs to make it clear that they are raising an issue as a formal complaint; in-line with the procedure outlined below it will be recorded as such.

3. WHEN CAN A COMPLAINT BE BROUGHT?

For a formal process to take place an issue needs to have been raised within three (3) months of an event taking place, or within three (3) months of the last of a series of events having taken place. Three (3) months after an event, or the last of a series of events, no formal complaint can be submitted.

Before instigating a complaint it is assumed that a student will have already raised the issue with the person concerned, either in person, by telephone or via email.

The timescales for any complaints that are escalated through the formal procedures are given below.

4. WHO OR WHAT CAN BE THE SUBJECT OF A COMPLAINT?

Terapia, or anyone acting within the scope of their work for Terapia, may be the subject of a complaint.

If a student has a complaint about another student that they cannot resolve themselves they should seek support from the Pastoral Support Tutor, another Tutor, Supervisor, or member of Staff. This situation is not covered by this policy.

5. THE PURPOSE OF THE COMPLAINT'S RESOLUTION PROCEDURE

The aims of the complaints process are:

1. To resolve an issue so that all parties can have good working relationships and so that there is no barrier to a student being able to access and engage with the course.
2. For anyone involved in the 'Terapia Community' (staff, students, tutors, supervisors) who has not kept to policies, procedures, or good practice to learn and modify behaviour or actions.
3. For Terapia as an organisation to receive constructive feedback, to improve procedures, correct mistakes and learn from students' experiences.

6. HOW WILL COMPLAINTS BE HANDLED?

Complaints will be:

1. Treated confidentially with information only shared on a need-to-know basis in line with Terapia's Data Protection Policy.
2. Responded to in a timely fashion (see Stages below – section 8); everyone involved will be informed about the progress of a complaint.

If there is a delay for any reason, then all parties will be informed of the reason and the new timescale.

Any person making a complaint will not compromise their rights, be intimidated, or treated unfairly, in-line with Terapia's Equal Opportunity Policy.

We will monitor complaints to identify any common themes or patterns and also on the basis of race, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, religion, cultural and ethnic origin, or disability.

Standard practice will be for Terapia's CEO to be informed of details of a complaint and kept up to date with the process unless they are the subject of a complaint. The Clinical Training Lead will be sighted on a complaint if the complaint pertains to training and the Clinical Services Lead will be sighted on a complaint when it pertains to services unless they are themselves the subject of a complaint.

The Complaints and Ethics Committee will be informed that a formal complaint has been raised and kept up to date with where it is procedurally. They will only learn about the details of a complaint when resolved, or if it reaches Stage 3.

7. WHO SHOULD COMPLAINTS BE ADDRESSED TO?

Terapia's Complaints Handler has oversight of Terapia's complaints process and has responsibility for tracking, recording, monitoring and making sure all relevant parties are notified of complaints. Complaint Forms for submission at Stage 2 and Stage 3 can be obtained from the Complaints Handler. When completed they should be sent to the Complaints Handler.

Anonymous complaints will not be considered.

8. COMPLAINT STAGES

8.1. STAGE 1 – EARLY RESOLUTION

Stage 1 must take place within three (3) months of an event or action that is the cause of the complaint, or within three (3) months of the last of a series of related events or actions.

Before instigating a complaint it is assumed that a student will have already raised the issue with the person concerned, either in person, by telephone or via email.

If you are considering making a formal complaint, you may wish to arrange a meeting with the Pastoral Support Tutor for support. If the Pastoral Support Tutor is the subject of a complaint or has dual relationships with anyone involved in the complaint, then the Academic Support Tutor or another member of Terapia staff can be approached for support.

The person who is the subject of the complaint may wish to arrange a meeting with the Clinical Training Lead for support. If the Clinical Training Lead is the subject of a complaint or has dual relationships with anyone involved in the complaint, then the Director of Training or another member of staff can be approached.

Early Resolution Meeting

Terapia's Complaints Handler will help to arrange an Early Resolution meeting. The Complaints Handler will appoint an impartial person to facilitate the meeting, advising all parties on who is appointed. All sides have a right to raise an objection about the facilitator if it is felt they would be biased or are involved in the complaint. Someone who is the subject of a complaint must reply to a request to hold a meeting within five (5) working days. The meeting should ideally be held within fourteen (14) working days. All parties must attend meetings in person.

Where it is helpful a student may ask for a friend or family member who has no direct connection with Terapia (i.e. not a member of staff, current or previous student or tutor or supervisor) to attend the meeting for support. Similarly, the person who the complaint is about, may ask for a friend or family member with no direct connection to Terapia, to attend a meeting.

Anyone attending the meeting as a friend or family member cannot attend in a professional capacity. Terapia's Complaints Handler should have the name of anyone accompanying at a meeting at least 48 hours before the Early Resolution meeting. Those accompanying must also attend in person.

More than one meeting may be held to help resolve the complaint.

Please note a meeting or conversation that is part of the Early Resolution process always requires a written (email or paper) dated note evidencing that the meeting has taken place.

A summary note of the meeting(s) and any outcome(s) needs to be produced within three (3) working days by the meeting facilitator. A simple template for recording the meeting will be provided by the Complaints Handler (details above). A copy of the summary note must be sent to Terapia's Complaints Handler who will send this on to the student and the subject of the complaint.

Notes of meetings will be kept confidential.

The Early Resolution meeting will be recorded by Terapia for the sole purpose of having a full and accurate record of the meeting. The recording itself will not be sent out but can be listened to on Terapia's premises by the meeting attendees. This would be deleted once the process is completed. Only a recording by Terapia is permissible, recordings by the complainant or friends/family members are not permitted.

8.2. STAGE 2 – INVESTIGATION LED BY SENIOR MEMBER OF TERAPIA STAFF

If dissatisfied by the outcome of Stage 1 then a Terapia Complaint Form may be submitted. The form includes notes about how to complete the form which must be read prior to completion.

Stage 2 must be initiated by the complainant within two (2) weeks of the last Early Resolution meeting or within two (2) weeks of the report of this meeting being issued.

All complaints forms should be sent to Terapia's Complaints Handler. Mark the subject as 'COMPLAINT – PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL' and of High Importance. Complaints received must be acknowledged within seven (7) days and an investigation will normally be completed within twenty-eight (28) days. If for any reason the investigation is delayed all parties will be notified.

A Senior Member of Staff who has not been involved in the Early Resolution process and is not the subject of complaint will be appointed as the complaint lead. In exceptional circumstances this role will be taken by the Chair of Trustees.

The complaint lead investigates the complaint or appoints a member of staff to act as an investigator. If another member of staff is appointed, they must not be the subject of the complaint, nor have been involved in Stage 1. In exceptional circumstances, at the discretion of the complaint lead, an independent investigator who is not a member of Terapia's staff team may be appointed. The Complaints Handler will attend any formal meetings that take place as part of this investigation to take notes.

The investigator talks to all relevant parties and gathers evidence, which is all kept in strictest confidence. They will determine the outcome of the complaint on the balance of probabilities and produce a written report. The complaint lead writes to the complainant and other parties with the outcome of the process. A copy of the outcome is sent to the Complaints Handler.

8.3. STAGE 3 - APPEAL

If unsatisfied by the outcome of stage 2 an appeal can be made on specific grounds to the Chair of Terapia's Ethics and Complaints committee.

Stage 3 must be initiated by the complainant within six weeks of the outcome of stage 2 but no earlier than two weeks after the outcome of stage 2.

There are three grounds for appeal:

- (a) there has been material procedural irregularity in the conduct of the Stage 2 investigation;

and/or

- (b) new information has come to light, which you were unable to disclose previously, and which would have had a material impact upon the investigation previously undertaken; and/or
- (c) the decision reached was unreasonable based on the information that had been available to Terapia when the case was considered.

A Terapia Appeal Form needs to be submitted by the complainant to the Complaints Handler outlining the grounds and detailing the evidence and reasoning.

The Complaints Handler will forward the Appeal Form to the Chair of Terapia’s Ethics and Complaints Committee who will convene a panel of the committee and appoint a case lead (this may be the Chair themselves). The panel shall consist largely of members who are independent of Terapia. The panel may choose to adjudicate on the basis of written evidence, or request to speak to relevant parties directly. The appeal process will be completed within forty (40) working days, if there is a delay for any reason all parties will be notified about the reason for the delay.

The panel will come to a decision based on the balance of probabilities. If the panel upholds one or more of the grounds of appeal it may substitute its own decision and, if appropriate, recommend remedial action. The Chair will make sure that a completion of procedures letter is written to all parties notifying them of the outcome.

Appendix 1

CONTACT INFORMATION

Position	Number	Email
Complaints Handler	020 8201 6101	maggie@terapia.co.uk
Clinical Training Lead	020 8201 6101	andrea@terapia.co.uk
Pastoral Support Tutor	020 8201 6101	tanya@terapia.co.uk
Chief Executive Officer	020 8201 6101	bozena.merrick@terapia.co.uk
Course Director	020 8201 6101	kiran@terapia.co.uk
Clinical Services Lead	020 8201 6101	pamela@terapia.co.uk
Academic Support Tutor	020 8201 6101	lisa@terapia.co.uk