



NEW ROMNEY COUNSELLING SERVICES

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Complaint procedure – For NRCS Staff & Volunteers

Introduction

New Romney Counselling Services is fully committed to the well-being of its Staff and Volunteers. In the event that you wish to make a complaint, we are always ready to listen. If you are unhappy it is important that you let us know.

Making a complaint

We aim to handle complaints quickly, effectively and in a fair and honest way. We take all complaints seriously and use valuable information from investigating to help us improve the service we provide or where practicable and necessary, to improve working conditions and relationships. We treat all complaints in confidence and only those directly involved with the complaint process, in accordance with our complaint procedure, will have access to relevant information regarding the complaint.

In accordance with GDPR 2018 regulations, it is important to inform you of the information that will be kept on file relating to a complaint. Your name and contact details, together with details of the complaint and if formally dealt with, our written report detailing our findings and conclusions following an investigation, will be held confidentially, for seven years for the purposes of fulfilling our Management standards, professional requirements and or legal obligations. We will not share the information with any third party, with the exception of any lawful court order or legal proceedings, requiring us to do so.

How you can make a complaint

There are a number of ways you can make a complaint:

- In person.
- Through your line Manager/Centre Coordinator/Director
- By letter.
- By email (*email address at the top of page 1*).

If a complaint is made verbally, and it is the Complainant's wish to resolve the matter informally, we may make a written record and provide a copy to the complainant. This is done to ensure that the complaint is actioned fully, properly and satisfactorily resolved,

albeit informally. If agreed by all parties, in this instance the formal complaint procedure may not be required and so unlikely that any further written correspondence necessary.

Making a suggestion

Depending on the nature and details of a complaint, some people feel more comfortable making a 'suggestion' rather than escalating to a formal complaint. In this instance we will verbally clarify with you whether this is a suggestion or a complaint. If it is a suggestion, the management team will be notified for due consideration and it is unlikely that there will be any further correspondence. If it is confirmed as a complaint, then our complaint procedure will be initiated.

How we handle your complaint

Informally

In the first instance you should raise your complaint to your line Manager. If the complaint is directed against the line Manager or, the line Manager is unavailable or, you are unsure who your line Manager is, the complaint should be made to the Centre Coordinator or a Director. In the event that a line Manager or Centre Coordinator wishes to make a complaint, a Director should be selected to receive and handle the complaint.

Every effort will be made to resolve the matter swiftly and if appropriate, informally to the satisfaction of all parties. In this way the matter can be resolved more quickly.

Formally

If the complaint cannot be resolved informally, is of a more serious nature or a written complaint is received, it will then be escalated to a formal complaint and we will follow our complaint procedure accordingly.

- 1** The complaint will be passed to the Chairman of the Board of Directors or, if the complaint is directed against the Chairman or the Chairman is currently unavailable, the Centre Co-ordinator will select another director to oversee the complaint. The director selected is here after referred to as the designated director.
- 2** The designated Director will acknowledge receipt to the complainant within seven working days.
- 3** The designated Director will form and Chair a Sub-Committee of the Board of Directors having three members in total. The Complainant will be notified of the existence of the Sub-Committee as soon as it has been formed.
- 4** The Sub-Committee will meet as soon as possible to establish, in the first instance, that the complaint has merit. The designated Director will write to the Complainant advising of the outcome of this meeting and of the Sub-Committee's reasons for their decision.

- 5 In the event that the complaint is to be taken forward, the designated Director will arrange for the Sub-Committee to interview the Complainant, the individual(s) complained against and any person(s) mentioned as a witness.
- 6 The Sub-Committee will produce a report of its findings and conclusions. It will identify any issues it considers must be addressed by the individuals involved and/or NRCS as an Organisation. It will also identify any actions that it considers must be taken against individuals and/or NRCS as an Organisation.
- 7 The report will be made available to the Complainant, the individual(s) against whom the complaint was made and the full Board of Directors of NRCS.
- 8 If the Complainant is dissatisfied with the outcomes detailed in the report, they may appeal to the full Board of Directors, in writing.

Timescales

We know that matters of complaint can cause a great deal of anxiety for all involved and we will endeavour to resolve complaints as quickly as possible. It should be noted that we are a volunteer run Charity and that appropriate notice periods of impending interviews for the purposes of investigating a complaint, may need to be given.

Depending on the complexity and scope of the complaint and the investigation process, it may be necessary to conduct a number of interviews. For this reason, it is not possible to definitively establish exact timescales for any particular complaint. We are however determined to investigate all complaints thoroughly and robustly and aim to update complainants as to the progress of the matter from time to time. We appreciate your patience.

Where to send your complaint

Letters of complaint or complaints submitted by the complaint form (downloaded from the website), should be sent to the address below.

New Romney Counselling Services. 45a High Street, New Romney, Kent. TN28 8AH

Addressed F.A.O Rosalind Russell.