



EMPOWERED MIND SERVICES COMPLAINTS POLICY

Empowered Mind Services (EMS) is committed to providing a quality service for our clients and private therapists and a supportive learning environment for placement therapists. We encourage constructive feedback from everyone who uses our services, and we invite all stakeholders to tell us about their experiences- including complaints. If anyone is unhappy with the service they receive from EMS or they have a complaint to make we will endeavour to respond within a reasonable time, taking each complaint on its own merit and treating the issue seriously and confidentiality. This means we will do everything we can to put things right and reach a satisfactory outcome for all.

Aim of the Complaints Procedure is:

- To provide a fair complaints procedure which is clear and easy to use for anyone wishing to make a complaint
- To publicise our complaints policy so that people know how to contact us if ever they had a complaint
- To enable complaints to be resolved as speedily as possible
- To ensure everyone at EMS knows what to do if a complaint is received
- To ensure that, wherever possible complaints are resolved and relationships are repaired
- To improve the quality of our service

Access Complaints Procedure Document:

This complaints procedure can be accessed as follows:

- It can be viewed and downloaded as a PDF from the EMS Intranet and on our website
- A copy can be requested by email
- Information in our Client Agreement document, Therapist Agreement and Volunteer Induction ensures that everyone we work with knows about the complaints procedure

Time Limit For Complaints

Complaints can be accepted up to 3 years from the time of the problem arising. If the complaint refers to specific client work the maximum is three years from the date the client ended the therapeutic work with the therapist working alongside EMS.

However, we encourage all complainants to bring their complaint to EMS's attention by email or in writing within 4 weeks of the issue arising and explain the concern as clearly and as fully as possible, including any action taken to date.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Making a Complaint

If you have a complaint – whether it's about EMS, a Counsellor, or a Member of our Team– please speak to the individual directly in the first instance, where possible.

Alternatively, you can put a complaint in writing:

By post to:

Empowered Mind Services,
Studio 1,
34-44 Tunstall Studios
Tunstall Road
SW9 8DA

Via email to complaints@empoweredmindservices.co.uk- When emailing, please mention in the subject bar the department to which your complaint applies.

Front of House Complaints

If your complaint relates to front of house services or the building, the Front of House Lead is the person to contact. Please set out your reasons – including any relevant supporting evidence – and indicate the outcome you desire.

Therapeutic Services Complaints

If your complaint is about a private therapist, please contact your therapist first to discuss the issue. Private practitioners hire rooms from EMS and maintain their own professional indemnity insurance. They are registered/accredited with a professional body (BACP, UKCP and BPS) and you can also make a complaint through their professional body. Alternatively contact EMS Counselling Manager, by email- complaints@empoweredmindservices.co.uk and you will receive acknowledgment within five working days.

If your complaint is about NHS or Low-Cost Counselling, the Counselling Manager or our Clinical Lead is the person to contact. Please set out your reasons – including any relevant supporting evidence – and indicate the outcome you desire. You will receive an acknowledgment within five working days.

Email: complaints@empoweredmindservices.co.uk

If you are unhappy with the response to your therapeutic services complaint, you can escalate it to the Clinical Lead by emailing the complaints inbox:

complaints@empoweredmindservices.co.uk

Treatment of Complainants

You may have reservations about making a complaint. However, at EMS we take complaints seriously and view them as a means of improving the services we provide.

All employees involved in a complaint are required to respect the confidentiality of information and documents generated as a result of the complaint, and not to disclose any information to people who are not involved with the matters in question.

How To Make A Complaint

Stage 1

If you wish to make a complaint, you must do so within one month of the date on which the event occurred – or within one month of the date on which you could reasonably be expected to have known about the matter.

A complaint may only be made by a service user or a group of service users, not by a third party or representative, and can only be made anonymously if there is sufficient evidence to support it. Anonymous complaints are rare and treated with caution.

You are encouraged to raise matters less formally with the individual concerned. For example, if you have a complaint about the building, please speak to the front of house team. If you have a problem with your counsellor, supervisor, tutor, facilitator or member of staff, please discuss it with them in the first instance. They will take your complaint seriously and will do everything they can to resolve the matter.

Stage 2

If the matter has not been resolved informally. The next step is to make a formal complaint and this should be done via email or in writing. Details of the complaint should be set out, the consequences for the complainant as a result and the remedy being sought.

The Complaints Manager or an appropriate person will investigate the issue and take appropriate action. If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a fair opportunity to respond. Complaints should be acknowledged by the person handling the complaint within five working days. The acknowledgement should say who is dealing with the complaint and when the person complaining can expect a reply.

Complainants should receive a definitive reply in writing or a report within a month. If this is not possible because, for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report should be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given. They may wish to interview you and any other person they deem relevant (unless you do not wish to be interviewed). All complaints should be recorded in the EMS Complaints Log.

Getting Advice

At the interview you have the right to be accompanied by a person of your choosing.

Outcome of the Complaint

The report from the Manager will describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation and the actions they deem appropriate if the complaint is upheld, or partially upheld.

Stage 3 Making An Appeal

If you have received the Manager's formal report and are dissatisfied with the outcome of your complaint, you have the right to take the matter further by writing to the Clinical Lead within 21 days of receiving the report. You must include a copy of the report and state the reasons why you are not satisfied.

The Clinical Lead will undertake a further investigation, again interviewing you (unless you do not wish to be interviewed) and receiving further information as they deem appropriate.

The Clinical Lead or Training Lead will write a report within one month of receiving your complaint – setting out their conclusions, whether the complaint is upheld, and any further actions to be taken.

Please note that if you have **not** received the report from the Clinical Lead within the one month required – and they have not informed you of the need to extend that date, and the reasons for extending – you are entitled to raise your complaint with the Managing Director.

If you are still not satisfied, you can contact the BACP directly if it is a clinical complaint. BACP, 15 St Johns Business Park, Lutterworth, Leicestershire LE17 4HB.

www.bacp.co.uk

Please note:

Any party may appeal against the findings of the investigator(s) on the following grounds:

- **that the complaints procedure had not been followed**
- **that there was new evidence which the investigator(s) did not have access to in the investigation.**

The complainant can complain to an external organisation or regulator at any stage.

More information about how to complain can be found here:

<https://www.ombudsman-services.org/>

Monitoring of Complaints

A record will be kept of all complaints received. Anonymous complaints will also be recorded, including the reasons for any decision to pursue or not to pursue the complaint. Complaints will be monitored regularly by The Head of Clinical Governance. Once a complaint has been concluded, a record will be kept on file for five years.

A complaint will be discontinued if the complainant fails or refuses to participate at any stage of the complaint procedure without good reason or the complainant formally withdraws the complaint. In these circumstances, all both parties will be informed.

Further information

If you require further information about our complaint's procedures, you can contact the Counselling Manager via complaints@empoweredmindservices.co.uk

As a member of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) we are aided by the BACP's Ethical Framework for the Counselling Professions, which includes the Professional Conduct Procedure.

If you do not feel that the above options are appropriate, or you wish to take things further, please contact BACP directly:

15 St Johns Business Park, Lutterworth, Leicestershire LE17 4HB.

www.bacp.co.uk