

## **Dreams to Realities (DTR) Counselling Services Complaints Procedure**

### **Complaints Procedure**

It is hoped that DTR service users never feel the need to complain but if any service user is unhappy or dissatisfied with our counselling services then we would like to know in the first instance in-order to resolve this matter. All complaints will be treated confidentially, seriously and with sensitivity.

### **Complaints Procedure Aims:**

DTR complaints will be investigated in the fairest possible way and dealt with in a timely manner.

DTR will investigate the consequences of mistakes in need of resolution, avoiding any unnecessary conflict.

Assist DTR in development of our counselling services

### **How to access DTR's Complaints Procedure document**

It can be viewed and downloaded as a PDF from DTR's website

A hard copy for viewing is available in DTR's office's – On clinic table or notice board

A hard copy can be requested by phone, email, letter or in person by contacting DTR

In relation to multiple languages and formats, DTR do not have the resources available to produce this procedure but it can be translated, read out loud or viewed in larger text using standard online tools.

**The above is in line with COSCA's Standards for Complaints Procedures, item 1.**

### **Who can complain?**

Any DTR service user who is receiving therapy

Anyone who has used DTR's counselling services in the last six months

Any third party who is working with or representing someone who is using or has used DTR's services

Anonymous complaints will be investigated by William Shaw DTR Director, who will use the utmost discretion in deciding what action, should be taken.

**This is in line with COSCA's Standards for Complaints Procedures, item 21.**

## **Time limits**

It is obviously more beneficial for all concerned if the complaint is brought to DTR's attention as soon as possible. If this is not possible for whatever reason then, DTR's maximum time limit for service users to make a complaint is six months.

**This is in line with COSCA's Standards for Complaints Procedures, item 21.**

## **How to Complain**

Please contact William Shaw Director DTR in the first instance. This can be via telephone, in writing by email, letter, or in person by appointment.

William Shaw (Director)

Dreams to Realities

1<sup>st</sup> Floor Rothesay House

134 Douglas Street

Glasgow

G2 4HF

**Office:** 01360 771467

**Mobile:** 07814 156504

**Email:** [informationdtr@gmail.com](mailto:informationdtr@gmail.com)

**Website:** [www.dreamstorealities.uk](http://www.dreamstorealities.uk)

If for any reason you have difficulty in making a complaint to DTR in person or in writing and think you may benefit from other support then please contact:

The Advocacy Project

Cumbræ House

15 Carlton Court

Glasgow

G5 9JP

**Tel:** 0141 420 0961

### **Who is covered by the DTR complaints procedure?**

This complaints procedure covers all service users and therapists of DTR. The safety of our clients and therapists is of DTR's utmost importance. If necessary, suspension of the service user's sessions or therapist counselling practice may take place during the complaints process until a full investigation has taken place.

### **Stage 1 - Informal Complaint**

After the complaint has been received by DTR, an informal resolution will be sought. This may involve a written explanation or even face to face discussion. The complaint will be dealt with by William Shaw DTR Director. If the complaint is about William Shaw Director then a DTR Counsellor/Psychotherapist will be chosen to manage the complaint. If the complainant is not happy with the outcome then a formal complaint may be made.

### **Stage 2 - Formal Complaint**

When DTR receive a formal complaint, it will initially be acknowledged by William Shaw Director DTR within 7 working days of it being received.

**This is in line with COSCA's Standards for Complaints Procedures, item 21.**

All named parties will receive a copy of the complaint as well as a copy of the complaints procedure.

## **Investigation of the Complaint**

DTR will appoint an impartial investigator with relevant experience of conflict/complaint resolution. This will then lead to a thorough and confidential investigation of the complaint. The appointed impartial investigator will contact all relevant parties, to ensure that all information relating to the complaint is attained.

The investigator will have full access to all relevant documentation, policies and procedures. Any relevant third parties may also be interviewed, if appropriate. Evidence will be gathered from all parties. If this is sought in person then each party will be met separately. If required, all parties have the right to be accompanied and/or represented, by a person of their choice.

The investigator will make a written response to the complainant within twenty-eight working days. A copy of this written response will be sent to William Shaw Director DTR as well as the person complained against. The maximum time-period allowed to investigate and respond to the complaint is six months.

**This is in line with COSCA's Standards for Complaints Procedures, item 21.**

Recommendations will be made by the investigator regarding the best course of action to be taken to bring about a resolution, sanctions which she/he may consider appropriate will also be detailed.

Unless William Shaw Director DTR decides upon a formal appeal to COSCA within fourteen days, then the decisions and recommendations of the investigator will be upheld. At this point a full report of the conclusion of complaints proceedings will be sent to COSCA by the investigator.

William Shaw Director DTR, may halt the procedure at any point if it emerges that legal action is under way, either pending or intended, until any legal process is complete.

### **Stage 3 - Making an Appeal**

A complainant may appeal against the findings of the investigator on the following grounds:

1. New evidence which the investigator did not have access to during the initial investigation.
2. The complaints procedure was not followed correctly

The appeal will not be accepted if the appeal is in relation to the complainant disagreeing with the investigators report.

## **How to make an Appeal**

An appeal in writing from the complainant will be accepted if within fourteen days of the receipt of the investigators report.

The reasons for the appeal must be evidence based, factual and clearly set out in writing.

William Shaw Director DTR will acknowledge the appeal letter and confirm this with the complainant in writing.

The complainant will be informed in writing by William Shaw Director DTR within twenty-one days whether the appeal has been accepted.

**This is in line with COSCA's Standards for Complaints Procedures, item 21.**

## **The Appeal Panel**

If William Shaw Director DTR decides to accept the appeal then a panel will be set up to consider it. The panel will consist of William Shaw Director DTR and 2 members from out-with DTR with experience and knowledge related to the appeal. Panel members will meet within twenty-eight days of the notification of the acceptance of the appeal to the complainant.

**This is in line with COSCA's Standards for Complaints Procedures, item 21.**

No members of the panel will have been involved in the investigation of the initial complaint.

## **The Appeal Hearing**

All parties involved in the appeal hearing will be provided with fourteen days' notice of the date of the hearing.

**This is in line with COSCA's Standards for Complaints Procedures, item 21.**

All involved will also be informed of who will sit on the appeal panel. All necessary documentation will be sent to all parties fourteen days before the hearing takes place.

**This is in line with COSCA's Standards for Complaints Procedures, item 21.**

The complainant and the person being complained against will be asked to make a written statement to the panel which will be circulated seven days before the hearing takes place.

The complainant and the person being complained against may be required to attend the hearing and if they so wish may be accompanied, and/or be represented by a person of their choice.

The investigator of the original complaint will be available to give information to the panel. The appeal hearing will be recorded and minutes taken. The appeals panel will have the authority to adjourn the hearing.

The panel's decision will be reached during a private discussion and a written record of this discussion will be taken. The panel's decision will be provided within seven days.

**This is in line with COSCA's Standards for Complaints Procedures, item 21.**

DTR Counselling Services will abide by the decision and recommendations of the appeal panel. If the complainant remains dissatisfied after the decision of the appeals panel or remains dissatisfied about the content of the investigators report he/she will be advised to contact COSCA to discuss this matter further.

### **Records of Complaints**

A record of all complaints received will be kept by DTR. Anonymous complaints will also be recorded, including the reasons for any decision to pursue or not to pursue the complaint. Records of complaints will be kept for a period of five years. A report of the complaint, procedure and outcome will also be submitted to COSCA.

**This is in line with COSCA's Standards for Complaints Procedures, item 26.**

## **Complaints to COSCA**

COSCA is the professional body for Counselling and Psychotherapy in Scotland. DTR Counselling Services is a member and we are therefore also covered by the COSCA Complaints Procedure.

In the unlikely event that a complaint is not resolved satisfactorily by DTR Counselling Services Complaints Procedure then please refer the complaint directly to COSCA.

COSCA

16 Melville Terrace

Stirling

FK8 2NE

**Tel:** 01786 475140

**Email:** [www.cosca.org.uk](http://www.cosca.org.uk)

**This is in line with COSCA's Standards for Complaints Procedures, item 14.**