



COMPLAINTS

The members of the Board of Trustees are aware that a person considering a formal complaint against Mersey Counselling and Therapy Centre (MCTC) as a whole, or against a particular person or persons representing the organisation, is likely to be feeling hurt or angry about something that has happened during their therapy or training. Therefore, before you begin the process of a formal complaint, the Trustees would like to invite you, if possible, to meet informally with the person with whom you have an issue. The person concerned would be accompanied by a trustee and you may bring someone with you for support. The details of the meeting would be recorded by the Trustee present and subsequently sent to both parties. Both parties would then have the opportunity to correct any inaccuracies within 7 days of receiving the written record. You can request such a meeting by phoning or emailing the MCTC office or by contacting the Chair of the Trustees.

If, having attended such a meeting, you wish to pursue a formal complaint, then please use the following procedure:

FORMAL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Any person wishing to make a complaint (a 'complainant') about the professional conduct of an individual working in any capacity for or in the administration of MCTC shall do so through the following procedure:

1. The complainant should first submit, in writing, a letter setting out the circumstances on which the complaint is based, including copies of any and all relevant documents supporting the complaint. Complaint letters and enclosures should be posted to the Chair of Trustees of MCTC at the Charity's company address and should be of a quality easy to photocopy.
2. The letter of complaint should also contain details of the outcome or resolution being sought by the complainant.
3. The Chair of Trustees will write to the complainant to acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 7 days of receipt.
The Chair of Trustees may also request further information or clarification.
4. Once the required information has been received from the complainant, the Chair of Trustees will write to the person/s who is/are the subject of the complaint, enclosing a copy of the complaint materials and requesting a written response to the complaint within 14 days of receipt.
5. Upon receipt of the response from the person/s who is/are the subject of the complaint, the Chair of Trustees will forward it to the complainant and ask if the complainant wishes to make any reply to the response or if the complainant is satisfied with this response and now wishes to withdraw the complaint.
However, the Chair of Trustees may, at their discretion, decide to pursue a complaint even if the complainant chooses to withdraw it.

6. The Chair of Trustees may also request or obtain documents from other sources, as necessary.
Once the Chair of Trustees has all the required documents and information in his/her possession, s/he will meet with the Board of Trustees to review all the documentation.
7. If, after a review of all the documentation, the Board of Trustees considers that further investigation of the complaint is not warranted, the complainant and the person/s who is/are the subject of the complaint will be informed, in writing, of the reasons for this decision.
8. If the Board of Trustees considers that further investigation of the complaint is warranted, it may then conduct a further investigation and request additional information from the complainant, or others with knowledge of the circumstances relating to the complaint and may, at the Board of Trustees' discretion, include an enquiry where oral submissions are received.
9. Should oral submissions be required by the Board of Trustees as part of their investigations, the complainant and the person/s who is/are the subject of the complaint will have their submissions heard separately and in private. If an informal meeting relating to the complaint took place prior to the opening of the Complaints Procedure, the Trustee who was present at that meeting will not attend the meeting at which oral submissions are heard.
10. Both the complainant and the person/s who is/are the subject of the complaint may be accompanied by another person, for support only. These persons may not speak on behalf of the complainant or on behalf of the person/s who is/are the subject of the complaint.
11. Any and all meetings of the Board of Trustees where oral submissions relating to the complaint are to be heard will be recorded in writing and the record made available to both parties within 7 days of the meeting.
12. If, following all its investigations, the Board of Trustees determines that the file should be closed with no further action, the complainant and the person/s who is/are the subject of the complaint will be informed, in writing, of the reasons for this decision.
13. If, following all its investigations, the Board of Trustees determines that further action is required, eg recommendations to individuals or disciplinary action, the complainant and the person/s who is/are the subject of the complaint will be informed, in writing, both of the decision and of the action to be taken by the Board of Trustees.
14. All deliberations of the Board of Trustees in respect of a complaint (except those where oral submissions are being heard) will be held in closed session that will not be open to the public, the complainant, or the person/s who is/are the subject of the complaint.
15. The decision of the Board of Trustees of MCTC in respect to a complaint is final and not subject to further appeal within MCTC.