



**The Ellesmere Centre for Psychotherapy Training
Complaints Procedure**

**861 Holderness Road
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Introduction and General Principles

ECPT aims to provide a service of the highest standard to all of our users but we realise that sometimes things go wrong and people may want to make a complaint. The purpose of this complaints policy and procedure is to provide a framework to assist any individual who is not satisfied with the services of the ECPT and wishes to make a complaint. Our aim in this policy and procedure is to provide an open and transparent process which is easy to understand, fair and respects difference. We include timeframes and aim to respect confidentiality as far as possible. We will act with integrity, honesty and will listen and learn.

All complaints will be investigated by members of the ethics committee and will be documented with the rationale for coming to any decision regarding ethics policy or code of practice.

All practitioners and trainee practitioners are expected to adhere to the professional standards laid out in the ECPT Ethical Principles and Code of Professional Conduct Policy which can be found on our website. Complaints made against qualified practitioners should be made to the organisation they are a member or accredited to:

UKCP <https://www.psychotherapy.org.uk/registers-standards/complaints/>

UKATA <https://www.uktransactionalanalysis.co.uk/contact/complaints>

BACP <https://www.bacp.co.uk/about-us/protecting-the-public/professional-conduct/>

NCS <https://nationalcounsellingsociety.org/have-a-concern/complaints-process>

(Please see relevant organisation websites for complaints procedure if not listed above).

Trainee practitioners currently in training with the ECPT will fall under this policy and procedure.

About this policy

If you are a member of the public who wishes to register a concern or complaint about an ECPT Qualified Practitioner, please see section A.

If you are a member of the public who wishes to register a concern or a complaint about an ECPT Trainee Practitioner, please see section B.

For all other concerns or complaints see sections C and D.

If you are unsure how to proceed you may contact our ethics committee on ethics@ellesmere.uk or call 01482 702571 for further guidance.

Section A: Complaints against Qualified Practitioners

The ECPT Ethics Committee is responsible for dealing with concerns or complaints relating to our trainee practitioners in the first instance.

ECPT can deal with complaints against qualified practitioners on an informal basis only. Anyone who is clear they wish to make a formal complaint should approach the appropriate regulatory body the practitioner is registered or accredited with eg UKCP, UKATA, BACP etc and follow their complaints procedure (see links on previous page).

If the ECPT Ethics Committee receives a complaint with allegations of gross negligence or professional misconduct, they may wish to take action and will assist in helping the process move forward through the appropriate channels.

1.0 Initiating a Complaint

- 1.1 We recognise that many difficulties arise through miscommunication, and and conflict can quickly escalate. The first stage, wherever possible, is for an individual experiencing a difficulty to speak directly to the person concerned.
- 1.2 If the matter is not resolved through direct communication, or where this is too difficult or challenging for the complainant the next step is to contact the ECPT Ethics Committee. Please contact the ECPT committee via ethics@ellesmere.uk.
- 1.3 The complainant will receive a response from the Ethics Committee within two weeks and will be offered the opportunity to explain the details of their complaint in a confidential setting which may be via telephone or online video call.
- 1.4 Following this, if the complainant decides that they would like to make a complaint and they would like ECPT to investigate internally, a record will be made of when the issue arose and how the matter was addressed. This record and all correspondence and written material regarding this process will be dealt with confidentially.
- 1.5 The complainant will be provided with a copy of the ECPT Ethical Principles and Code of Conduct Policy. He/she may request further assistance to consider the complaint to decide if there has been a clear breach of the code. If a breach has occurred, the complainant should be reminded that they are able to take the issue directly to the appropriate regulatory body and follow their complaints procedure.

2.0 Next Steps

- 2.1 At this point, if the complainant agrees, the practitioner who is being complained against may be advised of the complaint and be sent a copy

of all documentation as well as a copy of this policy and procedure.

- 2.2 The practitioner is invited to respond to the Ethics Committee in writing within two weeks. Should the practitioner decline to give their account the procedure will move on regardless.
- 2.3 The complainant then has an opportunity to consider the response of the practitioner and to discuss this with a member of the Ethics Committee. This may be sufficient to allow for direct communication to take place between the complainant and practitioner to decide together how to achieve completion.
- 2.4 If resolution has not been possible, both parties, with the Ethics Committee member may suggest alternative solutions.

3.0 Mediation

- 3.1 If mediation is an acceptable way forward for both parties, a meeting is arranged at a mutually agreed time and location. This is an opportunity for dialogue, response and restoration of the relationship.
- 3.2 The intention of mediation is to repair the harm done to the relationship and to move forward.
- 3.3 The mediator will only be appointed with the agreement of both parties and will be a member of the Ethics Committee. The member's impartiality will be regarded as paramount.
- 3.4 If the mediation procedure does not lead to a mutually agreed outcome, both parties will be offered options on how to move forward. One option is to consider if another meeting might bring about satisfactory resolution. Another option is for a complaint to become formal through the mechanisms of the regulatory bodies referred to above.

4.0 External Complaint

- 4.1 If the above process has been followed and no satisfactory outcome been achieved, the complainant should be advised to contact the regulatory body the practitioner is registered or accredited with and follow their complaints procedures. The Ethics Committee can offer guidance on how to initiate this process.

5.0 Appeals

- 5.1 In the case of complaints undertaken through formal processes of the regulatory bodies UKATA, UKCP, NCS, BACP etc, any appeal against the outcome or process will be dealt with through those same bodies accordingly.
- 5.2 The Ethics Committee of ECPT is entrusted with the process of dealing with informal complaints as stated above; if a complainant is not

satisfied with the way a complaint has been handled they may write to the Directors of ECPT.

- 5.3 After the complaints procedure has been completed, the parties involved will be invited to give feedback on the process.

Section B: Complaints against any trainee practitioners

The ECPT Ethics Committee are responsible for dealing with all concerns and complaints from members of the public about any ECPT trainee practitioner. The ethics committee can be contacted by emailing ethics@ellesmerecentre.uk.

The Process

1. Following discussion, a written account will be taken and the trainee will be contacted. A member of the Ethics Committee will discuss the complaint with the trainee and ask them for a written response.
2. The Ethics Committee representative will contact the trainee's supervisor to ask for their input.
3. The Ethics Committee (a minimum of three participants) will consider next steps. This may involve conditions on the trainees' practice such as extra supervision.
4. The Ethics Committee will inform the complainant of the outcome of this initial investigation within 4 weeks.
5. The Ethics Committee may consult with ECPT Board of Directors should it be appropriate to do so; for advice or additional perspective should the matter be a serious breach of ethics.
6. If the matter is considered to be a serious breach of ethics the ECPT Board of Directors will be informed and the trainee may be asked to leave training.

Section C: Complaints about training issues

From time to time a trainee may be dissatisfied with some aspect of their training at ECPT and wishes to lodge a complaint. Trainees who wish to appeal against assessment outcomes should email the admin office providing details of their appeal who will forward to the original marker/s for consideration.

All other complaints about training should follow the procedure outlined in the course handbooks – first raising their concern with the main trainer.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE (From Course Handbooks)

The aim of the complaints procedure is to provide a means of examining a complaint about an alleged breach of the Centre's code of ethics and or professional practices.

Initiating a Complaint

1. The complaint should be made as near as possible to the time of origin. Complaints concerning events that occurred more than three years prior to the first contact with the Director of Training will not normally be heard.
2. The complainant will be advised to meet with the complained against trainer with a third party present if so desired by the complainant and/or the centre member concerned.
3. If an informal resolution cannot be found then the complainant will be advised to make the complaint in writing detailing the nature of the alleged problem and send it to the Ethics Committee.
4. Should the complaint be made against the Director of Training of the ECPT, initial steps of the complaints procedure will be followed with a member of the Ethics Committee fulfilling the role of Director of Training in the process if necessary.
5. When the complaint is received it will be examined against the code of ethics laid down by the ECPT, (ECPT Ethical Principles and Code of Conduct and UKCP codes of ethics).
6. The complaint will be assessed by the Director of Training in collaboration with a member of the Ethics Committee and where deemed necessary, the External Moderator prior to consideration for proceeding further.
7. Should the complaint relate to a breach of ethics, then the Ethics Committee will consider the complaint in order to give an opinion as to whether there has been a breach of ethics.
8. As a training provider we take complaints seriously and, as such, we have an Independent Training Collaborative to assess complaints should there be a dissatisfaction with the handling or outcome of a complaint.

The member complained about must have been a contracted and practicing therapist/supervisor/trainer at the Centre at the time of the alleged breach of the Code of Ethics.

ECPT may seek legal advice concerning a complaint.

ECPT will not be responsible for any expenses incurred by either party involved in a complaint.

Acceptance of a Formal Written Complaint

1. Complaints should be in writing and addressed to the Chair of the Ethics Committee, marked 'Private and Confidential' to ECPT. Written acknowledgement will be sent out within two weeks of receipt.
2. The complaint should include references to specific sections and give details of the alleged incidence.
3. The therapist/supervisor/trainer complained about will provide a written response within 6 weeks.
4. The Ethics Committee will meet to consider the matter. This will normally be within 4 weeks of receipt of the above response.
5. The Ethics Committee may decide that
 - 5.1 there may be a case to answer
 - 5.2 there is no case to answer
 - 5.3 that the matter is not within the remit of the Ethics Committee and the Committee will indicate this either by writing or in a meeting with the parties concerned.
6. A member of the Independent Training Collaborative who is independent to the Ellesmere Centre will be the designated as the Independent Complaints Reviewer for students requesting an independent review should there be a dissatisfaction with the handling or outcome of a complaint.

If the complaint is upheld

One of the following courses of action may be taken should a complaint be upheld

1. An apology is given to the complainant by the therapist/supervisor/trainer concerned.

2. The therapist/supervisor/trainer is required to give an undertaking that they cease to practice in a particular manner and/or cease to work with particular clients, students or other types of persons.
3. The therapist/supervisor/trainer may be required to undertake therapy and/or supervision and/or further training at their own cost. A method of verifying successful completion of the requirements will be agreed between the Ethics Committee and the therapist such as a written piece demonstrating reflections and learning.
4. An informal warning may be given.
5. A formal warning indicating that further breaches of the Code of Ethics may lead to removal from the ECPT register.
6. Removal of ability to practice from ECPT.

Appeals

1. If either party wishes to make an application to appeal, this must be made in writing to the Chair of the Ethics Committee within 4 weeks of notification of findings.
2. Leave to appeal will only be granted if the party making the application to appeal will be able to demonstrate new evidence in terms of new information, which would support the appeal. The Chair of the Ethics Committee will decide along with 2 other members of the committee that there are adequate grounds for granting leave to appeal.
3. Should it be decided there are adequate grounds for granting leave to appeal the matter will be passed to the Independent Reviewer for consideration.

Professional Misconduct

Therapists should be aware that professional practice which falls short of the standards expected of a practitioner, violations of ethical conduct or conduct that brings the professions of psychotherapy and/or counselling into disrepute constitutes professional misconduct.

Behaviour which may result in a termination of the ability to practice at the ECPT includes

1. Exploitation of a client, supervisee or trainee
2. Repeated breaches in the Code of Ethics or expected standards, despite warnings.

Section D: All other complaints

If there is a concern about the fitness to practice of a colleague, a member may write to the Chair of the Ethics Committee with their concerns and will follow the procedure and time frames outlined in Section A of this document.

If you have a grievance or complaint against a Director of ECPT or the Chair of one of the ECPT Committees that you feel unable to resolve within the ECPT, you may contact a member of the Independent Trainers Collaborative (ITC) who will act as an independent contact outside of ECPT to investigate the grievance or complaint for you. Please email the details to one of the following contacts:

Leilani Mitchell leilani@thelinkcentre.co.uk

Mark Head mark@thelinkcentre.co.uk

Frances Townsend francestownsend@me.com

The ITC will respond to the grievance or complaint within 4 weeks and will provide details of how the investigation will proceed including a time frame. They may also request further information from you.

Staff of ECPT wishing to complain about any aspect of their employment should contact the ECPT Directors via the admin office.

Reporting

ECPT hold a record of all complaints made on a secure, cloud based system. Any complaint received should be recorded on the complaints reporting record at the end of this document and forwarded to ethics@ellesmerecentre.uk as soon as is reasonably possible following receipt of the complaint. Any subsequent action or information regarding the complaint should be also be passed on to ensure a full record of the complaint. It is the responsibility of the person/people who receive and deal with a complaint to ensure that the complaints procedure is followed to an outcome and this is recorded.

Last reviewed: January 2023

Complaints Reporting Record

Date Complaint received	
Complainant	
Nature of complaint Please include dates	
Outcome	
Status (ongoing/complete)	
Date Complete	