



Training Council Complaints Process

1. Purpose

- 1.1 This document sets out the circumstances in which a complaint can be made by a Stakeholder to the Training Council of the Association of Child Psychotherapists (ACP) about a Training School.
 - 1.1.1 If a stakeholder wishes to complain about the work undertaken by **Training Council**, they should put their concerns in writing to the Chair of the ACP, to be dealt with under the complaint procedure of the ACP.
- 1.2 For the purposes of this document a Stakeholder includes:
 - 1.2.1 Trainees;
 - 1.2.2 Training School staff/ employees;
 - 1.2.3 Service supervisors;
 - 1.2.4 Service users;
 - 1.2.5 Employees of a placement commissioned by the Training School.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Training Council of the ACP is a committee charged by the ACP with the duty of developing, monitoring and maintaining standards in the training of child and adolescent psychotherapists. It is responsible for promoting good standards of training.
- 2.2 Two of the Training Council's functions are:
 - 2.2.1 The definition of the ACP Quality Standards for the training of child psychotherapists; and
 - 2.2.2 Accreditation and monitoring of Training Schools against the ACP Quality Standards.
- 2.3 The standard and processes for the accreditation and monitoring of Training Schools by the Training Council is laid out in the ACP's Quality Assurance Framework (QAF).

3. Making a complaint

This section outlines the procedure for making a complaint about a Training School. It should be noted that even if this procedure is not followed to the letter this does not invalidate the whole process.

3.1 If a Stakeholder wishes to complain about a Training School, the following initial steps are to be taken:

a) Where possible, the Stakeholder should first follow the Training School's complaints procedure, including any appeals process.

b) If the complaint is not resolved to the Stakeholder's satisfaction and depending on the type of complaint, the Stakeholder should then satisfy themselves that their complaint falls within the remit of the ACP's role in setting and monitoring the standards for the training of child psychotherapists in the UK, as set out in the Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) published on the ACP website.

3.2 The Stakeholder may make a complaint in confidence, in writing, after the final decision of the training school/appeals panel has been made. The complaint should be sent to the Director of Training at Association of Child Psychotherapists, CAN Mezzanine, 32-36 Loman Street, London, SE1 0EH or trainingdirector@childpsychotherapy.org.uk. The complaint should include the following information from the Stakeholder:

- that they have read the QAF and understood the ACP's role in relation to maintaining the standards of training in Training Schools;
- which aspect of the QAF the complaint relates to, giving the relevant section reference;
- where relevant, that the Training School's complaints process has been exhausted, giving details of the process with dates, and any findings and consequences for all parties;
- what evidence there is that the Training School does not meet the relevant aspect of the QAF; any documentary evidence should be attached.

3.3 The Director of Training or their representative will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within four weeks.

3.4 The Director of Training will appoint a panel to consider the complaint and whether to deal with it through the formal procedures, or informally.

The panel will consist of three members, one to be member of Training Council, and one a member of the ACP Board; one panel member will be a lay person and none should have a conflict of interest in relation to any party involved in the complaint, nor any interest in the matter under investigation.

The panel will notify the Stakeholder of their decision as to how they propose to deal with the complaint (formally or informally) within 6 weeks of the acknowledgement of the receipt of the complaint.

3.5 The panel will discuss questions of confidentiality with the stakeholder as part of this process. The panel will seek to respect the stakeholder's concerns relating to

confidentiality and other areas of concern they may have in relation to bringing this complaint to the attention of the Training School.

It is important to acknowledge that the process of following up a complaint may require the disclosure of confidential information in order to address the specific details and concerns raised in the complaint.

Where it seems possible, the panel will conduct its enquiries and investigation without revealing confidential information. If the panel believes that this is not possible, they will inform the stakeholder to allow the stakeholder to re-consider whether they wish the panel to continue to follow-up on the complaint raised.

If a stakeholder decides to withdraw their complaint because of their concerns regarding the revealing of confidential information, the panel will inform the Training Council of this outcome. The Training Council will consider this matter, in confidence, and decide whether any further action may be needed.

- 3.6 If an **informal approach** seems possible, the panel will ask the Stakeholder to state what outcome they want from the process. They will then speak to the Training School to see if this or another mutually satisfactory outcome is achievable.
- 3.7 If the informal approach is not successful, or a **formal approach** is required, the panel will embark on the following procedure for investigation. Note: complaints that indicate a Training School may be falling significantly below the standards set out in the QAF must be dealt with formally.

The panel will first consider the complaint in the context of the timetable for re-accreditation visits. If the next accreditation visit is due within the next 12 months, the panel may recommend that the complaint is looked into as part of the upcoming re-accreditation visit. If the next re-accreditation visit is more than 12 months away, then the panel can:

- i. ask Training Council to bring forward the date of the re-accreditation visit, so that the complaint can be looked into as part of that visit; or
- ii. proceed to investigate the complaint themselves.

If investigating the complaint themselves, the panel will write to the Training School about the complaint and ask the Training School to respond in writing to the matters of the complaint within four weeks.

The panel will consider the response of the Training School and, if needed, will write to the stakeholder to ask for further information, requesting this is provided within four weeks.

If needed, the panel will then proceed with its own investigation. The processes to be used for the investigation could include one or more of the following approaches:

- a) Telephone calls;
- b) Meetings in person or by video-conferencing;
- c) A mini-accreditation visit
- d) Looking at documentary material.

The panel will aim to complete their investigation within twelve weeks and to present their written decision, summarising the evidence upon which they have relied, to the next Training Council meeting.

The panel's decision is final. The Training Council meeting that hears the report of the panel will consider what further action needs to be implemented on the basis of the panel's decision.

Training Council will provide the Stakeholder and Training School with the panel's decision, and the action requested by Training Council, within 2 weeks of hearing the report of the investigation.

- 3.8 If the complaint is upheld, Training Council may impose on the Training School a condition of accreditation and work with the Training School to ensure that the Training School develops and implements an action plan and any associated processes to remedy the situation that gave rise to the complaint in the first place.

The action plan should, in so far as is reasonably practicable:

- a) where possible, resolve the specific complaint;
- b) where possible ensure that a process is put in place to remedy the situation that gave rise to the complaint in the first place;
- c) be included in Annual Reports by the Training School until the next re-accreditation visit.

- 3.9 The Training Council will:

- a) publish the report of the investigation of the complaint as an addendum to the last re-accreditation report;
- b) monitor the implementation of the action plan on a quarterly basis until the situation is resolved;
- c) inform the Stakeholder of progress against the action plan and resolution of the complaint.