



Complaints Policy

1. Purpose

To provide clients with a clear, fair and confidential process for raising concerns or complaints about the counselling service.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all clients receiving counselling services from the practice, including those who have recently ended therapy.

3. Definitions

Concern: An issue that may be resolved informally through discussion.

Complaint: A formal expression of dissatisfaction about the service or conduct of the counsellor.

4. Guiding Principles

Respect, confidentiality and fairness.

Timely resolution.

Learning and improvement from feedback.

Clients will never be disadvantaged for raising a concern or complaint.

5. Informal Resolution

Clients are encouraged to raise concerns directly with me if they feel comfortable. Many issues can be resolved through open, honest conversation.

6. Formal Complaints Procedure

Complaints should be submitted in writing (email or letter) and include:

- a description of the issue
- the desired outcome
- relevant dates or communications

I will acknowledge receipt within 5 working days and provide a full response within 21 working days after investigation. As a sole-trader practitioner, I handle complaints myself. If a complaint raises ethical or professional concerns, I may discuss it in supervision to ensure safe practice.

7. Confidentiality

All complaints are handled confidentially and shared only with those directly involved in resolving the issue. Complaints may be discussed in supervision, which is itself confidential and used to support safe and ethical practice.

8. Record Keeping

Complaint records are stored securely in encrypted, password-protected digital files. They are retained for 18 months for quality assurance. The lawful basis for holding complaint information is legitimate interests under UK GDPR.

9. External Bodies

If a complaint involves ethical or professional misconduct, clients may contact my professional body:

BACP – Professional Conduct Procedure

Clients have the right to raise concerns directly with BACP if they feel the issue has not been resolved or relates to professional standards.

10. Contact

If you have any concerns or questions about this policy, please speak to me (Nicola Simson) or email nic@thelistening-ear.co.uk.