

IACP Complaints Committee: Notes for Members Facing a Complaint

Some important information about complaints

1. The Complaints Committee is mandated to investigate complaints only in relation to IACP Accredited or Pre-Accredited Members. If we are unsure of your status within our organisation, the Complaints Administrator will ask you for clarification.
2. We do not investigate complaints from clients about Counselling or Psychotherapy undertaken more than 3 years ago. (Exceptions are specified in the Complaints Procedure)
3. Clients must specify the date or dates of the Counselling / Psychotherapy work being complained about and the complaint must be submitted to us in writing.
4. We do not investigate frivolous complaints. Complaints must clearly be connected to one or more sections of the IACP Code of Ethics and Practice.
5. We recommend that Members should contact their insurance provider when a complaint has been received. It is the responsibility of the Member to inquire if their insurance company needs to note this information on their policy.
6. You are required to respond to the complaint in writing. We strongly recommend that you consult your Supervisor before doing so. Responses are required within 4 weeks of the receipt of the complaint. If there is sufficient reason you may ask for an extension to this timeframe.
7. While the Complaints Committee is required to investigate all complaints which are deemed legitimate, this does not mean that the complaint is necessarily valid or that the Complaints Committee will find in favour of the complainant.
8. At the same time, we cannot guarantee that a complaint will be dismissed. You need to be aware of the possibility that, after much deliberation and careful consideration of the issues involved, we may uphold some or all elements of the complaint and may impose one or more sanctions or requirements on you.
9. As you see from these notes, the Complaints Committee, while part of your representative body, is a neutral committee charged with the responsibility to process and investigate both sides of a legitimate complaint in a fair, unbiased and transparent manner according to established procedures. This means that you will have the opportunity to respond in full and in detail to a complaint made against you and will be assured of your right to an impartial evaluation of your response.

10. An Appeals Procedure is in place for the Member wanting to appeal. Details for the Appeals Procedure for Members are available on our website (www.iacp.ie).

Guidelines for responding to a complaint

- Read the letter of complaint carefully
- Note the complaint/s
- Consult with your supervisor
- Refer to your contract with the client and your case notes
- Refer to the IACP Code of Ethics and Practice
- If appropriate include a copy of your contract with your response
- In writing the response be brief, succinct, respectful and honest. Restrict your response to relevant information
- Answer the complaint/s – the Complaints Committee does not need a history of the case
- Avoid remarks or comments that could be regarded as disrespectful

Important documents available on the website:

- The IACP Code of Ethics and Practice
- The IACP Complaints Procedure
- Guidelines for your supervisor