



The Guild of Psychotherapists

Non-Clinical Complaints Policy and Procedure – complaints by third-parties

V6

POLICY OWNER:	Honorary Secretary
Dates of Approval	
Approved by Policy Committee	
Approved by Council	April 2026
Locations	
Places on Sharepoint and website where this policy is stored and need to be replaced by subsequent versions	• Sharepoint policy folder • Guild website • Members area of website
Review frequency	Annual
Next review date	March 2027

Introduction

This document contains the Guild's policy and procedure as it relates to Complaints raised by third-parties.

This policy does not relate to:

1. Employment Grievances, which are dealt with in the Employee Grievance policy.
2. Clinical Complaints, which are dealt with in the Guild clinical Complaints policy.
3. Complaints by Members, which are dealt with in the Non-Clinical Complaints policy (Members)
4. Complaints by a Trainee, which are dealt with in the Non-Clinical Complaints policy (Trainees)

The Policy and Procedures should be reviewed according to the Policy Review cycle.

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Section A: Complaints Policy

1. Introduction

Non-clinical complaints relate to an action or event which has already occurred, or which is being contemplated. Such an action may be raised by someone who is not an employee, Member or Trainee at the Guild relating to something the Guild as an organisation has done, or something an employee, Member or Trainee of the Guild has done which is alleged to have contravened an aspect of our constitution and organisational objectives, or our duties towards members of the public (for example a health and safety issue). A non-clinical complaint about the Guild may be brought by a third-party such as a member of the public, a service-provider or a service-user.

The focus of the Non-Clinical Complaints Policy (complaints about the Guild) is to achieve resolution and not to apportion blame. The Guild will not tolerate any retaliation in relation to a complaint being raised.

2. Scope

The Guild's Non-Clinical Complaints policy and related procedure (third-parties) is designed to provide pathways for concerns and complaints as they relate to the conduct of the Guild as an organisation, an employee, Member or Trainee to be reported by a third-party.

3. Applicability:

This policy applies to all contractors, room-renters, course attendees, visitors and members of the public.

4. Equality, Equity, Diversity and Respect

The Guild encourages reporting of any concerns or incidents which are felt to breach our Equality, Equity, Diversity and Respect policy.

5. Statutory and Regulatory Requirements:

The Guild's Complaint Policy and associated procedures are informed by the following relevant legislation:

- a) The Employment Rights Act 1996
- b) The Employment Rights Act 2025
- c) The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998

All information processed during the investigation of a complaint, including any recordings or transcripts of meetings, will be handled in line with the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

6. Responsibilities

The Guild places responsibilities for reporting complaints and cooperating with investigations on personnel at all levels.

The Council has overall and final responsibility for the Complaint policy and should ensure the policy is made available, that complaints are dealt with promptly and in confidence, and the complainants are protected from retaliation.

The Council delegates the responsibility for the implementation of the Policy to the Chair in consultation with The Officers, The Senior Administrator and the Chairs of Standing Committees, for the provision of assurance to the Council on all aspects of policy implementation.

The Guild reserves the right to seek assistance from external facilitators or advisors at any stage in the procedure, in the interests of seeking a satisfactory outcome for all those concerned.

7. Communication

The Guild will communicate this policy regularly and through appropriate channels, such as the website, the bulletin, offers of training, offers of employment, and contracts for services and relevant policies and procedures.

9. Monitoring and Auditing

The Guild will monitor the implementation of this policy in the following ways. It will ensure:

- That the policy is reviewed according to the review cycle
- That findings from complaints which are upheld in whole or in part are brought retrospectively to the Council so that we can take opportunities to learn from our mistakes

Section B: Guidance

Complaints about the conduct of the Guild as an organisation

This procedure is for third-parties (including contractors, room-renters, course attendees, and visitors) who have a complaint about the Guild as an organisation in relation to something we as an organisation have done which is alleged to have contravened an aspect of our constitution and organisational objectives, or our duties towards members of the public (for example a health and safety issue).

Procedure

Many complaints can be resolved quickly and informally through discussion and people are strongly encouraged to try to do so. If this does not resolve the problem, the procedure will be as follows:

1. The complainant should put the complaint into writing and submit it to admin@guildofpsychotherapists.org.uk for the attention of the Honorary Secretary. The written complaint should set out the nature of the complaint, including any relevant facts, dates, and names of individuals involved, and what (if anything) you have attempted to do to resolve the matter so far.
2. Complaints should be submitted as promptly as possible following the action or event. Late reporting may impair the ability of the Guild to investigate. At the latest, the complaint should be lodged within 60 calendar days of the original problem.
3. Once the Guild receives a written complaint, the Honorary Secretary will consult with the Chair and Treasurer to make an initial evaluation of whether the nature and gravity of the complaint merits further investigation. At this stage, the Complainant may be referred to an informal resolution process such as a facilitated discussion to attempt to resolve the matter, or to an alternative party to hear the complaint if the matters are outside the reasonable control of the Guild.
4. The complainant will be provided with a copy of this process.
5. If further investigation is required, the Guild will appoint a suitable person to look into the complaint.
6. The Guild will provide a written response to the Complainant, explaining the findings and any actions to be taken to resolve the concerns raised. The Guild will keep the Complainant updated on the likely timescale to receive the written response.
7. There is no right of appeal.
8. The Guild may, if it considers it appropriate, notify any relevant professional body of the complaint and its outcome.
9. Any matters which are subject to a legal challenge or ongoing legal action cannot be considered under this policy.

The procedure may be amended at any time or departed from depending on the circumstances of the case.

Section C: Vexatious complaints

The Guild is committed to the serious consideration of all complaints. Very occasionally there may be complaints that are vexatious in nature that can cause substantial disruption to our work and can take up a disproportionate cost and time to handle. Vexatious is a term that may also be used to describe complaints that are persistent, frivolous or malicious. The Guild's approach to recognising and handling vexatious complaints about our work, staff, or members recognises that the person making a complaint cannot themselves be considered vexatious. Even if a person's complaint is found to be vexatious this doesn't preclude that same person from raising a separate complaint. This is important as we may deal with individuals who may be going through a difficult time or who are unwell and may genuinely not think that their complaint is vexatious.

Whether a complaint is vexatious will be determined on a case-by-case basis. In assessing this we will have regard to:

- whether its primary purpose is to cause distress, disturb or pressurise

- whether the complaint seeks to revisit matter(s) already responded to. This includes situations where multiple associated complaints are received with minor variations
- whether there is an unwillingness to follow normal procedures and/or repeated attempts to contact senior staff or officers
- whether there is a refusal to provide information requested relevant to the complaint
- whether the administrative burdens are proportionate to the issues raised
- any intimidating, aggressive or threatening behaviour

If the Guild decides that a complaint is vexatious the person making the complaint will be informed in writing and reasons will be provided for this decision within 28 days. They will be informed that further correspondence will not be entered into concerning the complaint. All correspondence received by them will be retained in accordance with the Guild's data retention policy.