

Attending COSCA Complaints Panel meeting

Information for Complainants



1. Introduction

COSCA (Counselling & Psychotherapy in Scotland) supports complainants who will be attending a meeting of the COSCA Complaints Panel. We realise that making a complaint can be stressful, tiring and time consuming and that the alleged event complained about may have a large impact on you.

We encourage you to contact us if you have any questions about your attendance at the above meeting. COSCA understands that as a complainant you may be anxious about giving evidence. We hope that the information below will provide you with everything you need to know before, during and after the Complaints Panel meeting.

2. Attending Complaints Panel Meetings

In the event of your complaint proceeding to the Complaints Panel Stage, COSCA will invite you to attend the Complaints Panel. If you are unable to attend the above meeting, you can nominate someone else to represent you.

If you cannot attend the above meeting, decide not to attend, and/or do not nominate someone else to represent you, then the Complaints Panel will proceed in your absence. In this event, any written evidence that has been previously submitted by you will be used at the Complaints Panel hearing.

You will be provided with the date of the meeting in accord with the COSCA Complaints Procedure. We will also send you details of when and where the Complaints Panel meeting will be held.

Once invited to attend the above meeting, you will need to notify the Chief Executive of your attendance within two weeks of receiving the letter requesting you to attend.

When attending a Complaints Panel meeting you have a right to be accompanied and/or represented by a supportive person of your choice.

If you or your supporter has a disability, or any other needs, please discuss these with us on receipt of the invitation to attend the above meeting, and we will endeavour to make

appropriate arrangements, if this is possible. If you have a disability that prevents written submissions, please also discuss this with us so that we can make arrangements, if possible, for recording your evidence in another format or arranging for the transcription of your witness statement.

If you are unable to attend in person due to your personal circumstances and wish to do so by video conferencing, Skype or some other electronic means, please let me know.

You should arrive in good time for the meeting. You will be met and welcomed by a COSCA representative who will explain the venue's facilities and show you a waiting room. You will be provided with refreshments.

Please bring a copy of your written complaint with you for your reference. As you may have to wait a while before being called to give evidence, you are advised to come prepared for this.

3. Giving Evidence at Complaints Panel Meetings

Complaints Panel meetings are held in private due to the confidential information involved. However, some decisions and recommendations made by the Complaints Panel, and the reasons for them, subject to the conditions laid down in COSCA's Complaints Procedure, can be published.

The Complaints Panel will hear your evidence separately and not together with the evidence from any other party involved in the complaint. None of the other parties in the complaint will be in the room with you when you give evidence at Complaints Panel Meetings.

The Complaints Panel will ask you questions based on the information provided in your complaint and on other information received. You may, however, be only asked to confirm the information therein.

You should consider your answer to the questions asked before replying. If you do not understand a question or do not know the answer, you should tell the Complaints Panel.

You should speak clearly and slowly, and address your answers to the Complaints Panel.

4. After Giving Evidence

Once you have given your evidence you are free to leave the venue. You should not talk to other parties in the complaint who have not yet given evidence. We will endeavour to make it possible for you to leave the venue by a route that does not require you to have contact with other witnesses or parties to the complaint.

Brian Magee
Chief Executive
COSCA (Counselling & Psychotherapy in Scotland)
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