

Complaints Policy

Version: 1.0

Effective Date: 01 July 2026

Review Date: 01 July 2027

1. Purpose

Path to Balance is committed to providing counselling and coaching services that are safe, respectful, ethical and of a high professional standard.

I value openness, honesty and constructive feedback. If you are dissatisfied with any aspect of the service you receive, I encourage you to raise your concerns so that they can be listened to, understood and, where possible, resolved fairly and promptly.

Complaints are viewed as an opportunity to improve the quality of services and strengthen professional practice.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all counselling, coaching and related services provided by Path to Balance.

It covers concerns relating to:

- the quality of the service provided;
 - professional conduct;
 - communication;
 - confidentiality;
 - administration;
 - appointments;
 - fees;
 - data protection;
 - any other aspect of the service.
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3. Informal Resolution

Many concerns can be resolved through open and respectful conversation.

Where appropriate, clients are encouraged to discuss any concerns directly with me during a counselling session or by contacting me using the details provided within the Counselling Agreement.

I will always aim to:

- listen carefully;
- understand your concerns;
- respond respectfully;
- explore possible solutions together.

Whenever possible, concerns will be resolved informally.

4. Formal Complaints

If a concern cannot be resolved informally, or you feel unable to raise it directly with me, you may make a formal complaint.

Complaints should ideally be submitted in writing by email or letter and include:

- your name;
 - the nature of your complaint;
 - relevant dates;
 - any supporting information;
 - the outcome you are seeking.
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5. Complaint Process

Upon receiving a formal complaint I will:

- acknowledge receipt within **five working days**;
- review the information provided;
- consider any relevant records or documentation;
- seek supervision or professional advice where appropriate;
- provide a written response, normally within **twenty working days**.

If additional time is required due to the complexity of the complaint or unforeseen circumstances, you will be informed and provided with an updated timescale.

6. Learning and Continuous Improvement

Complaints provide valuable opportunities to reflect on practice and improve the quality of services.

Where appropriate, learning arising from complaints will be discussed within clinical supervision and may lead to:

- updates to policies;
- improvements to documentation;
- changes to procedures;
- additional professional development;
- service improvements.

Personal information relating to complaints will remain confidential unless disclosure is legally required.

7. Independent Complaints

As a registered member of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP), I work in accordance with the BACP Ethical Framework for the Counselling Professions.

If you believe your concern has not been satisfactorily resolved, or if your complaint relates to my professional conduct, you may also contact the BACP to request information about their Professional Conduct Procedure.

Using the BACP complaints process does not prevent you from exercising any other legal rights that may be available to you.

8. Record Keeping

Complaints will be recorded and managed confidentially.

Where appropriate, records may include:

- correspondence;
- complaint summaries;
- investigation notes;
- actions taken;

- outcomes;
- learning identified.

Complaints will be recorded within the Path to Balance Complaints Register and retained in accordance with the Data Retention and Record Management Policy.

9. Equality and Fairness

Every complaint will be treated fairly, respectfully and without discrimination.

Making a complaint will not adversely affect a person's right to access counselling or coaching services, unless there are exceptional circumstances that make continuation of the professional relationship inappropriate or unsafe.

Reasonable adjustments will be made wherever possible to support individuals in raising concerns or making complaints.

10. Related Policies and Documents

This policy should be read alongside:

- Counselling Agreement
 - Privacy Notice
 - Data Retention and Record Management Policy
 - Safeguarding Policy
 - Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
 - Clinical Risk Management Policy
 - Client Register
 - Complaints Register
 - Reflective Practice Log
 - Clinical Governance Register
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11. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if:

- legislation changes;
- BACP guidance changes;
- learning from complaints indicates improvements are required;

- practice procedures change.

Dr Amber Gintare Andrews

Path to Balance