
Policy on Complaints

Purpose of this document

This document sets out the way that Catalyse CAT Ltd (trading as Catalyse) will respond to, investigate and resolve complaints from any of our clients about our conduct or our services.

Statement of intent

We understand that if a client makes a complaint, it is a signal that something has gone wrong and we welcome this feedback. We want to provide a very high quality service and all feedback is helpful for us to learn how to improve what we do. We also want to preserve our good reputation, and we aim to respond to any complaints promptly, transparently, empathically. Our clients have no reason to understand the complex nature of our organisation, where there are several levels of accountability, in terms of the Associates, work streams, executive and board. At every level of response, the aim is to help the aggrieved person resolve their difficulty in a way that satisfies them and is also fair and just.

Associates' accountability

Every Associate is a fully qualified professional, who has agreed to practise in line with the ethical codes of their core profession and of ACAT. Each Associate is accountable for his or her own practice standards. If an individual Associate receives a complaint, he or she should try to resolve it but must also make it clear to their client that if they are not satisfied, their complaint will be passed on to Catalyse. Associates should also make it clear to clients their right to lodge a formal complaint with the Associate's professional body. (See example Annex A). However, if the relationship between the Associate and the client has broken down, it's likely that the client will not complain directly to the Associate but will contact us.

Workstream accountability

There are six workstreams: Therapy Practice, Personal Reformulations, Practitioner Course, CPD, Other training and Projects (includes Research & Evaluation). It is possible that the workstream lead is first made aware of a complaint about an Associate. If a client contacts the Catalyse Chair, it will be first referred to the workstream lead to resolve. The two workstreams most likely to deal with complaints are the therapy practice and the personal reformulations, as these involve providing a personal service to individual clients. These workstreams already have their own procedures for trying to resolve complaints. However, it is possible that other workstreams encounter a problem. The workstream lead must inform the Executive that a complaint has been received. If the issue is not resolved within the workstream, the Executive group will then convene a more formal investigation.

Executive accountability

The Executive group will inform the Catalyse Board that a complaint has been received. They convene a panel of three members who are entirely independent of the workstream and the Associate involved. The panel will take evidence from the complainant and the Associate and will attempt to resolve the complaint, giving a written response; this will be communicated to the Complainant, the Associate and the Board. If the panel feels there is an issue of *malpractice* or *unethical behaviour*, this must immediately proceed to the Board for a second stage hearing and a final decision. The second stage will also be invoked if the complainant or the Associate appeals against the Executive decision.

Board accountability

The Board will have full oversight of each stage of the complaint procedure and will consider cases referred from the Executive group or through appeal. The Catalyse Board is the only body constituted in Catalyse to decide on a final response, e.g. whether to remove an Associate from Catalyse, or to report an Associate to their professional body or to ACAT.

Conflicts of interest

If a member of the Executive group or the Board is the subject of a complaint, they will be excluded from the management of the complaint and any discussion arising. All Catalyse Associates including Executive or Board members who are asked to investigate a complaint are required to declare any other conflict of interest (e.g. a close personal friendship) and to recuse themselves.

Appeals

Complaints which are not satisfactorily resolved within a workstream are automatically referred to the Executive Group. A complainant or Associate who is unsatisfied by the Executive's judgement may appeal the decision, which will then go to the Board. The Board's decision is final. Complainants are always informed of their right to complain to the Associate's registration body and professional association and nothing in this policy affects that.

Reporting

Numbers of complaints received and the actions taken will be reported at the Catalyse AGM, together with any lessons learned. All personal details will be anonymised.

Summary of process

Workstreams inform the Executive of a complaint being processed, and if resolved, report back with no further action. These matters are taken under Reserved Business.

Executive action is only taken when a workstream is unable to resolve the complaint to mutual satisfaction. A formal panel is constituted, and the Board is informed.

The Board gets involved if the Executive panel suggests malpractice or a violation of the ACAT code of ethics, or if an appeal is received. The Non-Executive members involved should include *external* non-Executive Directors.

Annex A

Example of wording in pre-therapy agreement used in Therapy Workstream:

“I welcome all feedback, both during and after therapy. My aim is to give you a good therapeutic experience and to act in your best interests at all times. Sometimes therapy is emotionally distressing, but it should also feel constructive and our therapy relationship should feel safe. If you have any concerns or worries about the therapy process, please raise them with me. I will do my best to respond and resolve the issue. I hope you never need to make a formal complaint, but if you do, you should contact the Chair of Catalyse via info@catalyse.uk.com who will instigate the independent complaint procedure. You may also complain about unprofessional conduct to one of my professional bodies: Health Care Professions Council (HCPC), British Psychological Society (BPS) or Association for Cognitive Analytic Therapy (ACAT)”.

Example of wording in pre-PR agreement used in PR Workstream:

“I welcome all feedback, both during and after personal reformulation. My aim is to give you a good therapeutic experience and to act in your best interests at all times. Sometimes a personal reformulation is emotionally distressing, but it should also feel constructive and our therapeutic relationship should feel safe. If you have any concerns or worries about the personal reformulation process, please raise them with me. I will do my best to respond and resolve the issue. I hope you never need to make a formal complaint, but if you do, you should contact the Chair of Catalyse via info@catalyse.uk.com who will instigate the independent complaint procedure. You may also complain about unprofessional conduct to one of my professional bodies: Health Care Professions Council (HCPC), British Psychological Society (BPS) or Association for Cognitive Analytic Therapy (ACAT)”.