



## Bridge Pastoral Foundation

(Est 1962 as Clinical Theology Association)

# **BPF Complaints Procedures**

The purpose of these Complaint Procedures is to provide a means of examining a complaint made against any member of BPF. It is intended that the procedure should be consistent, fair, impartial and confidential. It is also intended that the complaint be heard and responded to within 6 months of the receipt of the formal complaint. The Complaints Procedures should also be read alongside BPF's own Terms and Conditions for participating at any BPF event and its Statement of Ethics and Code of Practice, both available from the Administrator.

1. Any person wishing to make a complaint (a "complainant") about the conduct, behaviour or decision of a participant at a BPF or in the administration of the organisation must do so within a period of 3 years from the date of the incident.
2. Persons taking part in the Complaints Procedure should act in a manner that does not breach confidentiality.
3. It is the responsibility of all Members and Complainants to ensure that they fully understand BPF's Complaint Procedure and the associated BPF's Terms and Conditions.
4. Where a complainant incurs costs associated with travel, subsistence, overnight accommodation and other similar costs, these costs will be required to be met by the complainant, EXCEPT in the case where the BPF upholds the complainant's case. In this case all reasonable expenses can be submitted by the complainant retrospectively, and will be paid by BPF to the complainant within 30 days of submission.
5. The complaint shall be dealt with in line with the following procedures.

### **A. INFORMAL PROCEDURE:**

The informal procedure consists of raising the issue or complaint directly with a tutor, group facilitator, supervisor or trustee. A written record of all discussions will be made and maintained. If deemed necessary and subsequent to the initial discussion, a meeting of the parties concerned chaired by an independent facilitator/mediator may be arranged with the agreement of the complainant to discuss and explore the complaint and each party may bring a support person with them. If these steps do not resolve the issue the formal stage should be entered into. However, where the parties reach a resolution BPF reserves the right to pursue the complaint into the formal procedure.



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### **B. FORMAL PROCEDURE:**

Please note in the formal stages all complaints must be writing.

#### **1. Stage 1**

- 1.1 Submit in writing, a letter setting out the circumstances on which the complaint is based including copies of any and all relevant documents supporting the complaint. Complaint letters and enclosures should be posted to any trustee of BPF at the Organisation's company address and should be of a quality easy to photocopy.
- 1.2 The trustee will write to the complainant to acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 21 days of receipt. The trustee may request further information or clarification.
- 1.3 Once the required information has been received from the complainant, the trustee will write to the member who is the subject of the complaint, enclosing a copy of the complaint materials and requesting a written response to the complaint. A time limit of 30 days will be set by BPF for receipt of the member's response.
- 1.4 Upon receipt of the member's response, the trustee will forward the member's response to the complainant and ask if the complainant wishes to make any reply to the member's response or if the complainant is satisfied with the member's response to the complaint and wishes to withdraw it.
- 1.5 BPF reserves the right to pursue a complaint on to stage 2 even if the complainant wishes to withdraw it.

#### **End Stage 1**

#### **2. Stage 2**

- 2.1 The trustee may request or obtain documents from other sources, as necessary. Once the trustee has all the required documents and information, the file is given to the Ethics Committee.
- 2.2 Within 14 days the Ethics Committee will establish a Complaint Panel to review the complaint documents and any report by the trustee.
- 2.3 Membership of the Complaint Panel is decided by the Ethics Committee with regard to the nature of the complaint and the parties involved.



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- 2.4 The trustee first contacted by the complainant may not sit on the Complaint Panel and no trustee or member can sit on the Complaint Panel if the complaint is raised against him/her.
- 2.5 If after the review, the Complaint Panel considers that further investigation of the complaint is not warranted, the complainant and the member are informed within 14 days in writing, of the reasons.

### End Stage 2

### 3. Stage 3

- 3.1 If the Complaint Panel considers that further investigation of the complaint is warranted it may then conduct a further investigation and request additional information from the complainant, the member or others with knowledge of the circumstances relating to the complaint and may, at the Complaint Panel's discretion, include an enquiry where oral submissions are received.
- 3.2 If the Complaint Panel determines that the file should be closed with no further action, the complainant and the member are informed within 14 days in writing, of the reasons why. The Complaint Panel may also make recommendations to the member.
- 3.3 If the Complaint Panel determines there are reasonable and probable grounds to believe that the member has breached BPF's Code of Ethics one or more of the following recommendations to the Ethics Committee may be made.
  - (a) give written advise to the member;
  - (b) impose conditions on the membership of the member;
  - (c) recommend that the member be expelled from BPF (under article 7f(iv) of the Constitution).
- 3.4 The Ethics Committee will give effect to the recommendations of the Complaint Panel. However, if in the opinion of the Ethics Committee the breach of BPF's Code of Ethics is serious a recommendation will be made to the Board of Trustees of BPF, who may
  - (a) adopt a resolution recommending that the member be expelled from BPF(under article 7f(iv) of the Constitution).
- 3.5 Where a member, against whom the original complaint was made, has not, in the opinion of the Ethics Committee, complied with the decision of the Ethics Committee then that member may be subject to a resolution under Article 7 f(iv) of the Constitution.



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- 3.6 If the member complaint against is a trustee or sits on the Ethics Committee except in regard to 3.1 above, they are barred from taking part in any, discussions, decisions or votes in respect of the complaint.
- 3.7 Where a member has been the subject to a decision under Article 7f(iv) of the Constitution that member has a period of 30 days in which to make a written appeal to the Board of Trustees of BPF.
- 3.8 All deliberations of the Complaint Panel, the Ethics Committee and the Board of Trustees of BPF in respect to a Code of Ethics complaint will be held in closed session that will not be open to the public, the complainant, or the member subject to the complaint.
- 3.9 The decision of the Trustees and Ethics Committee in respect to a matter under the Code of Ethics is final and not subject to appeal within BPF except in respect of 3.7 above.

### End Stage 3

#### C. COMPLAINTS MADE AGAINST A PRACTITIONER OR TRUSTEE OF BPF

- C.1 If the Complaint is made against a practitioner or trustee it should be referred directly to the Ethics Committee.
- C.2 The Ethics Committee will carry out an investigation of the complaint. It may request additional information from the complainant, the member or others with knowledge of the circumstances relating to the complaint and may, at the Ethics Committee discretion, include an enquiry where oral submissions are received.
- C.3 If the Ethics Committee determines that the file should be closed with no further action, the complainant and the member are informed within 14 days in writing, of the reasons why. The Ethics Committee may also make recommendations to the member.
- C.4 Where the Ethics Committee determines there are reasonable and probable grounds to believe that the member has breached BPF's Statement of Ethics and Code of Practice one or more of the following recommendations may be made.
  - (a) give written advise to the member;
  - (b) impose conditions on the membership of the member;
  - (c) refer the matter to the appropriate professional body.
  - (d) recommend that the member be expelled from BPF (under article 7f(iv) of the Constitution).



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- C.5 The Ethics Committee will give effect to these recommendations. However, if in the opinion of the Ethics Committee the breach of BPF's Code of Ethics is serious a recommendation will be made to the Board of Trustees of BPF, who may
- (a) adopt a resolution recommending that the member be expelled from BPF (under article 7f(iv) of the Constitution).
- C.6 Where a member, against whom the original complaint was made, has not, in the opinion of the Ethics Committee, complied with the decision of the Ethics Committee then that member may be subject to a resolution under Article 7 f(iv) of the Constitution.
- C.7 If the member complaint against is a trustee or sits on the Ethics Committee except in regard to 5.2 above, they are barred from taking part in any, discussions, decisions or votes in respect of the complaint.
- C.8 Where a member has been the subject to a decision under Article 7f(iv) of the Constitution that member has a period of 30 days in which to make a written appeal to the Board of Trustees of BPF.
- C.9 All deliberations of the Ethics Committee and the Board of Trustees of BPF in respect to a Code of Ethics complaint against a practitioner and/or trustee will be held in closed session that will not be open to the public, the complainant, or the member subject to the complaint.
- C.10 The decision of the Trustees and Ethics Committee in respect to a matter under the Code of Ethics is final and not subject to appeal within BPF except in respect of 5.7 above.

### Definitions:

**BPF** – Bridge Pastoral Foundation.

**Complainant** - The person making the complaint.

**Member Complained Against** - Sometimes referred to as "Member" and against whom a complaint is now being raised.

**Parties to the Complaint** - The Complainant and/or the Member complained against.

**Ethics Committee** – A standing sub-committee who oversees the process of the complaint and appoints and supervises the Complaint Panel.

**Complaint Panel** – At least three members of BPF, appointed by the Ethics Committee, who determine if there is a case to answer by examining evidence submitted by the Parties in writing and/or orally.



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**Friend of the Complainant & Friend of the Member** - Each Party may elect to be accompanied by a 'friend' to provide support and who may also speak on their behalf.

**UKCP** (UK Council for Psychotherapy) BPFPC is an Organisational Member of UKCP. The UKCP can hear appeals against the conduct of the complaint, but not on the decision itself if this was properly reached. Some psychotherapy members of BPFPC are individually registered with UKCP via BPFPC.