

Complaints Policy – Berkshire Family Mediation

Introduction:

The service complies with the requirements of the Family Mediation Council.

1. The service will deal promptly and courteously with any complaint, formal or informal, made to the service. The cause of any problem which a client has complained about will be investigated. If appropriate, redress will be offered, and any unsatisfactory procedure will be corrected.
2. The service values the views of service users and will endeavour always to engage with views in a constructive and responsive manner. We recognise that mediation can be a painful experience for users and will strive to take individual situations into account when responding to comments or complaints about the service. It is therefore appropriate to acknowledge the client's complaint, whether or not the complaint is justified.
3. All users are invited to comment on the service received by means of a feedback questionnaire when the case is closed.
4. All users are made aware of the opportunity to complain. Basic information about the service's complaints procedure is held on our website and provided at the bottom of all email communications. The service's detailed procedure is available on request.
5. A complaint is defined as an 'expression of dissatisfaction'. This might include a written complaint, a verbal complaint or a verbal comment on the feedback questionnaire. It does not include 'tick box' responses on the questionnaire. All 'expressions of dissatisfaction' will be responded to in the way outlined in this complaints procedure.

Person appointed to handle each complaint:

1. Complaints about the logistics or handling of referrals, appointments and/or correspondence will be dealt with by the Service Manager in consultation with any relevant members of staff.
2. Complaints about the mediation information and assessment meeting process or mediation standards will be handled by the Professional Practice Consultants Aideen Mattimore or Jill Redshaw, in consultation with any staff involved.

3. Complaints about the Service Manager will be handled by the Chair of the Board and any complaints regarding the Professional Practice Consultant will be handled by the Service Manager.

In all cases, if the complaint is addressed to a staff member, the relevant manager will decide, in consultation with that staff member, who is the most appropriate person to respond to the complainant, what the response should be and how the complainant will be contacted. If the complaint is addressed to the Service Manager, he or she will respond to the complainant.

Timescale

The complaint should be acknowledged in the first instance within 3 working days, and a timescale given for investigation and response. This should not normally exceed 15 working days. There may be occasion that further time is required to investigate the complaint and the complainant will be notified in writing. There will be scope for mediation of the complaint where both the mediator and complainant wish this to happen

Unresolved complaints

Where a complaint remains unresolved, the matter should be referred to the Chair of the Board, who will decide on the appropriate action, in consultation with any staff member and manager involved. A further response should be made within one month.

If the matter remains unresolved, the complainant can ask the Family Mediation Standards Board to consider the complaint if certain standards are met. Details can be found at <https://www.familymediationcouncil.org.uk/complaints-about-mediators/>

Upheld complaints

If a complaint is found to be justified, BFM will offer appropriate redress, and/or correct its practices as necessary.

If a complaint is upheld such that disciplinary proceedings are activated against a mediator, the member organisation will be notified.