

Complaints Procedure

1. Introduction

1.1. The aim of this Complaints Procedure is to provide complainants with an open and transparent route of remedy where complaints are made against Members of EGCBT. In processing such complaints EGCBT aims to protect members of the public and the name and reputation of EGCBT.

1.2. The procedures outlined in this document are not contractual but are intended as a statement of current policy. EGCBT reserves the right to amend the document as necessary to meet any changes in requirements.

2. General

2.1. The right to admit or to expel a Member to/from EGCBT lies exclusively within the discretion of the Committee.

2.2. The Committee may exclude from membership anyone who in their view acts in a manner considered to be serious professional misconduct or conduct detrimental to the interests of EGCBT, fails to maintain the standards, ethics or codes of practice, or otherwise fails to subscribe thereto.

2.3. Unless there are exceptional circumstances, the Committee will not consider complaints about something that happened more than a year previously.

2.4. The Committee cannot deal with complaints about companies or clinics (only individual Members).

2.5. The Committee cannot deal with complaints against individuals who were not Members of EGCBT at the time of the alleged misconduct.

2.6. The Committee cannot deal with claims for compensation.

(All EGCBT Members are required to have Professional Indemnity insurance to cover claims made against them.)

3. Receiving Complaints

3.1. In the event of a Member receiving a complaint relating to their practice of *Canine Bowen Technique* the member must inform the Committee within 7 days of receipt of the complaint providing the name and contact details of the complainant.

3.2. In the event of the Committee receiving a complaint against one of the Members, particulars of the complaint shall be communicated to the Member within 7 days of receipt of the complaint.

4. Complaints Procedure

In the case of any complaint the following procedure shall be followed:

4.1. The Committee will send an acknowledgement of receipt of the complaint to the complainant within three days of receiving it.

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4.2. The Committee will discuss with the complainant whether to deal with the complaint informally, or by following a more formal process. Dealing with the complaint informally means, in general, that the Committee will ask the complainant what they want the Member to do, and then ask the Member to agree to do it. For example, the complainant may just want the Member to apologise for something that occurred. Such informal complaints will be handled according to the processes outlined in Section 5.

4.3. There are some types of complaint that cannot be deal with informally and will be handled according to the processes outlined in Section 6. These include (among other things) complaints about:

- 4.3.1. conduct that falls well below the standard expected of a Member
- 4.3.2. abuse of trust (including financial exploitation), breaking client confidentiality
- 4.3.3. giving advice to clients in areas outside of the Member's professional qualifications
- 4.3.4. lapses in professional competence
- 4.3.5. dishonesty, fraud or other criminal acts
- 4.3.6. not working within current animal treatment laws
- 4.3.7. disrespectful, predatory, or manipulative behaviour toward other Members
- 4.3.8. serious problems caused by the health of the Member
- 4.3.9. alcohol or substance abuse
- 4.3.10. a Member who has been the subject of more than two complaints of a similar kind, that were dealt with informally at the time they were made.

4.4. All records will be kept for a period of seven years. The Committee reserves the right to reconsider complaints previously submitted if a similar/other complaint is made against a Member at a later date.

5. Informal Complaints Procedure

5.1. If a complaint is not one of the types listed in paragraph 4.3 above, and it does not include any suggestion that a client or dog or other member of the public might have been at risk of harm, the complainant will first be asked if they agree to deal with the complaint informally and then the Member will be asked to agree to this process.

5.2. If the complainant or the Member does not agree that the complaint should be dealt with informally, or if other information comes to light that changes the nature of the complaint, then the Committee will start the formal procedures outlined in Section 6.

5.3. When the complainant and the Member do agree that the complaint should be dealt with informally, the Committee will expect the matter to be settled within four weeks. If not the Committee will start the formal procedures outlined in Section 6.

6. Formal Complaints Procedure

6.1. The Committee will request that the complainant put the complaint in writing giving adequate details of the complaint against the Member, together with such supporting evidence as may be available.

6.2. The Committee will send the Member a copy of the complaint, seeking agreement or rebuttal, and invite the Member to reply in writing.

The Committee will send the complainant a copy of the Member's reply so that they can comment on it if they wish.

The Member will in turn be given a copy of the complainant's subsequent comments.

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The Committee will also ask the complainant to agree to the Committee approaching the complainant's veterinary surgeon for a copy of the dog's health records, if they consider it to be relevant to the complaint.

6.3. The Committee will decide whether to convene a meeting of the Committee to discuss the complaint further. If such a meeting takes place, the Member against whom the complaint is brought shall be invited to present their case and to answer questions.

6.4. If the complainant or Member, without good reason or notice, fails to give their written evidence or to reply when invited, or fails to attend the meeting with the Committee when invited, then the Committee has the power to decide either:

- 6.4.1. to proceed with the investigation in the absence of one of the parties, or
- 6.4.2. to terminate the proceedings.

What constitutes good reason shall be solely at the discretion of the Committee.

6.5. The Committee will investigate the complaint and write a full report.

6.6. The decision of the Committee shall be communicated to the complainant and the Member within 60 days of the initial acknowledgement of receipt.

6.7. In the event of an adverse decision the Committee will consider applying sanctions against the Member. These sanctions may include :-

- 6.7.1. issuing a caution to the Member that their behaviour was deemed unacceptable and if repeated will invoke immediate expulsion from EGCBT.
- 6.7.2. requiring the Member to undergo further training to correct errors of practice.
- 6.7.3. in cases concerning serious professional misconduct or conduct detrimental to the interests of EGCBT, or a failure to maintain the standards, ethics or codes of practice, the Member shall immediately cease to be a member of EGCBT.

6.8. No liability for any loss suffered, or expenses incurred, will attach to the Committee for the termination of membership or for the processes of investigating a complaint, even if it is not upheld.

7. Appeals

7.1. A member who has been expelled from EGCBT may appeal against this decision to members at a General Meeting. The Committee must be told of any intention to appeal within 14 days after expulsion.

7.2. The Committee shall only reinstate an expelled member of EGCBT if a majority of voting members at a General Meeting decide that the expulsion was without good reason.