

SMTO Clinical Practice Complaints Procedure

This complaints procedure is intended to help clients understand how to raise a concern directly with the therapist or clinic. It is not the SMTO complaints procedure, and it does not replace advice from your professional indemnity insurer, broker, legal adviser or professional association.

Business name

Core

Therapist name

Jennifer Ainslie

Clinic address, if applicable

49 High Street, Dunbar, East Lothian, EH42 1EW

Complaint contact email

info@coredunbar.co.uk

Telephone number, if used for clinic contact

07890618755

Professional association: Scottish Manual Therapists Organisation, SMTO

Professional indemnity insurer or broker: Balans

Date policy created

7/10/26

Review date

7/10/29

Complaints Procedure

Purpose of this complaints procedure

I aim to provide a professional, respectful and safe service for all clients. If you are unhappy with any part of your appointment, treatment, communication or service, I ask that you let me know so that your concern can be reviewed properly.

This procedure explains how to raise a complaint, what information I need, how your complaint will be reviewed, expected timescales, who will deal with the complaint and what may happen next.

The purpose of this procedure is to provide a clear, fair and transparent process. It does not guarantee a specific outcome, refund, compensation or agreement with every concern raised.

What this procedure covers

You may use this complaints procedure to raise concerns about:

- Your appointment, class or treatment experience.
- Communication before, during or after your appointment or class.
- Consent, comfort, dignity, draping, privacy or professional boundaries.
- Booking, cancellation, payment or refund issues.
- The information given to you before, during or after treatment or class.
- Clinical notes, aftercare advice or treatment records.
- Any other concern about the professional service you received.

If your concern includes an allegation of injury, harm, negligence, professional misconduct, breach of privacy, compensation, legal action or anything that may become a claim, I may need to contact my professional indemnity insurer, broker, professional association or legal adviser before responding further.

How to make a complaint

Complaints should normally be made in writing by email.

Please send your complaint to:

info@coredunbar.co.uk

If you first raise a concern by text, WhatsApp, Messenger, social media message, phone call or in person, I may ask you to put the details in writing by email. This helps ensure there is a clear record of your concern and my response.

If you are unable to make a complaint in writing, please contact me and I will consider a reasonable alternative.

Information to include in your complaint

Please include as much relevant information as possible, including:

- Your full name.
- Your contact details.
- The date and time of your appointment.
- Where the appointment took place.
- A clear description of your concern.
- What you believe happened.
- Whether you raised the concern at the time or afterwards.
- Any emails, messages, photographs, documents or other information you want me to consider.
- Whether anyone else was present or may have relevant information.
- The outcome you would like me to consider.

Please do not include confidential information about another person unless it is directly relevant and you have permission to share it.

Who will deal with the complaint?

If I am a sole practitioner, I will usually review the complaint myself.

If the complaint involves another therapist working within the clinic, the complaint will usually be reviewed by:

Jennifer Ainslie

If the complaint raises a serious allegation, possible injury, compensation request, legal issue, professional conduct issue, safeguarding concern, police matter or insurance issue, I may need to seek advice before responding. This may include contacting my professional indemnity insurer, broker, SMT, legal adviser or another appropriate organisation.

Acknowledging your complaint

I will aim to acknowledge your complaint within 5 working days of receiving it.

The acknowledgement will usually confirm:

- That your complaint has been received.
- The date it was received.
- Whether I need any further information from you.
- The process I will follow.
- When I aim to provide a response.

If the complaint is unclear or incomplete, I may ask you to provide further details before I can review it fully.

Reviewing your complaint

I will review your complaint carefully and fairly.

This may include reviewing:

- Your consultation form.
- Consent records.
- Treatment notes.
- Booking information.
- Payment or cancellation records.
- Emails, texts or other written messages.
- Any aftercare advice or information provided.
- Any relevant clinic policies.
- Any factual timeline of events.
- Any information you provide with your complaint.

The review will consider what was raised, what records show, what was agreed, what was communicated and whether any action is appropriate.

Response timescale

I will aim to provide a written response within 20 working days of acknowledging your complaint.

If I need more time, I will let you know and explain the reason for the delay. This may happen if I need further information, need to review records, need to seek professional

advice, or if the matter involves insurance, legal, safeguarding or professional conduct issues.

How the response will be sent

The response will usually be sent by email.

The response may include:

- A summary of the complaint.
- What information has been reviewed.
- Clarification of what my records show.
- An explanation of my professional position.
- An apology where appropriate.
- Any action I intend to take.
- Any goodwill gesture, if appropriate.
- A decision that the complaint is upheld, partly upheld or not upheld.
- The next step if you remain dissatisfied.

Taking a complaint seriously does not always mean accepting every allegation. If my records or recollection differ from your account, I will explain this respectfully and factually where appropriate.

Possible outcomes

Depending on the circumstances, the outcome may include:

- An explanation or clarification.
- An apology for your experience.
- A correction of an administrative error.
- A change to clinic process or communication.
- A goodwill gesture, where appropriate.
- A refund or partial refund, where appropriate.
- A decision that no further action will be taken.
- A decision that the complaint is not upheld.
- Referral to an insurer, professional association, legal adviser or another appropriate route.
- Any apology, refund, partial refund or goodwill gesture will be considered carefully and does not automatically mean that professional fault, negligence or liability is accepted.

Insurance and legal issues

If your complaint includes an allegation of injury, harm, negligence, professional misconduct, breach of privacy, compensation, legal action or anything that may become a claim, I may need to contact my professional indemnity insurer or broker before responding in detail.

My insurer or broker may ask me to provide relevant records, correspondence, my account of events and any other information needed to assess the matter.

If legal support is required, my insurer or broker may involve their own legal provider, depending on the policy terms.

If insurance or legal advice is needed, the complaint response may be paused or adjusted while advice is obtained.

If my insurer advises that the complaint should be handled directly

Sometimes an insurer or broker may review a complaint and advise that it should be handled directly between the client and therapist through the therapist's own complaints procedure.

If that happens, I will still review the complaint carefully and respond in writing.

This does not mean that every part of the complaint is accepted. It means the complaint will be handled at clinical practice level unless new information changes the position.

If I disagree with part of the complaint, I will explain this respectfully and factually, referring to records where possible.

Communication during a complaint

Complaint correspondence should usually be handled by email.

Text, WhatsApp, Messenger or social media messages may be used only to acknowledge that a concern has been received and to move the matter into the written complaints process.

Phone calls may be followed by a written summary so that there is a clear record of what was discussed.

I will not manage a formal complaint through repeated informal messages, voice notes, social media comments or ongoing casual conversation.

Inappropriate, abusive or threatening communication

I will consider complaints fairly and respectfully. However, abusive, threatening, discriminatory, sexualised or inappropriate communication will not be accepted.

If communication becomes inappropriate, I may:

- Ask that all further contact is made only by email.
- Limit communication to the complaint issue only.
- End a phone call or meeting.
- Decline further treatment.
- End professional contact.
- Seek advice from my professional association, insurer, broker or legal adviser.
- Report serious behaviour to the appropriate authority.

This does not remove your right to raise a complaint, but it does mean the complaint must be raised and managed in a respectful and appropriate way.

If your concern may need to be raised with SMTTO

This procedure is my own clinical practice complaints procedure.

If your concern relates to my professional conduct, competence, fitness to practise or adherence to SMTTO Practice Standards, you may choose to contact the Scottish Manual Therapists Organisation for information about its own complaints process.

SMTTO may only be able to consider certain types of complaints, such as those relating to professional conduct, competence, fitness to practise or breaches of SMTTO Practice Standards.

SMTTO cannot usually help you make a claim for compensation. Compensation claims, negligence claims, injury claims or legal claims may need to be handled through insurance or legal advice.

SMTTO contact details:

Scottish Manual Therapists Organisation

Website: www.smtto.co.uk

Email: info@smtto.co.uk

Confidentiality and data protection

Complaint information will be handled confidentially and in line with data protection requirements.

Relevant information may need to be shared with:

- My professional indemnity insurer or broker.
- A legal adviser.
- SMTTO or another professional association or register.

- Another therapist or clinic owner involved in the complaint.
- A safeguarding, police or statutory authority, where required or appropriate.

Only relevant information will be shared.

A record of the complaint and response will be kept securely in line with my clinical record keeping and data protection policies.

If you remain dissatisfied

If you remain dissatisfied after receiving my response, you may choose to raise the matter through another appropriate route, depending on the nature of the complaint.

This may include:

- SMTO, if the concern relates to professional conduct, competence, fitness to practise or SMTO Practice Standards.
- Your own legal adviser, if the concern relates to legal action or compensation.
- My insurer or broker, where an insurance claim is involved.
- Another relevant professional association, register, safeguarding route, police or statutory authority, where appropriate.
- Closing the complaint at practice level

Once I have acknowledged the complaint, reviewed the relevant information, responded in writing and signposted the next appropriate route, I may consider the matter closed at clinical practice level.

If you provide new relevant information that has not already been considered, I will review whether any further response is needed.

I am not required to continue repeated correspondence where the complaint has already been reviewed and answered, unless new relevant information is provided.

Record keeping

A record of the complaint, correspondence, review and response will be kept securely.

This may include:

- The original complaint.
- Any acknowledgement sent.
- Relevant records reviewed.
- Any advice sought.
- The written response.

- Any outcome or action taken.
- Any further correspondence.

Records will be kept in line with my clinical record keeping and data protection policies.

Policy review

This complaints procedure will be reviewed regularly and updated where needed.

Date of next review:

07/10/29

Therapist name:

Jennifer Ainslie

Business name:

Core

Date:

7/10/26