



**AOTI**

**THE ASSOCIATION OF OCCUPATIONAL  
THERAPISTS OF IRELAND**

**COMPLAINTS POLICY**

**Approved by AOTI Council: April 2009**

## **1. Introduction**

This document sets out the process of addressing a complaint received by the Association of Occupational Therapists of Ireland (AOTI) by a member of AOTI or the general public in relation to the professional conduct or competence of a member of AOTI.

This process is independent of any complaints or disciplinary procedure that may be put in place by the employer of the Occupational Therapist.

AOTI as a professional body reliant on voluntary membership is not an employer and therefore cannot or will not deal with Industrial Relations (IR) issues or grievances or complaints concerning professional misconduct, again an issue for employer and or union. Matters pertaining to these areas are outside the remit of the professional body should be directed to employers and or union reps.

This document should be read in conjunction with the Code of Ethics for the profession.

The maintenance of a high standard of ethical and professional conduct is essential to all those working in the field of Occupational Therapy, both for the welfare of the clients / patients and for the reputation of the profession as a whole. Members of AOTI are bound by a Code of Ethics. At all times, the primary professional obligation for all Occupational Therapists is the welfare of their clients / patients. Occupational Therapists are obliged to maintain and advance their knowledge and keep up with current practices throughout their careers in order to offer their clients / patients the best treatment available.

## **2. Complaints**

A complaint can be brought to the attention of AOTI by a member, an employer, a client / patient, or a member of the public.

A formal complaint must be lodged with AOTI within six months of the event alleged to constitute grounds for the complaint.

A complaint may refer to a failure to adhere to the Code of Ethics of AOTI, to the conditions for membership, or to the rules that are laid down by AOTI, which may be revised from time to time.

### **3. Formal Procedure**

#### **3.1 Notification of the Complaint**

- a) A formal complaint must be in writing and must be signed. It should set out the exact nature of the complaint and contain a full statement of the background and the facts relating to the issue.
- b) The Chairperson and/or Council of AOTI will appoint the officer who will be responsible for processing the complaint.
- c) The complaint will be acknowledged in writing within 15 working days of receipt of the complaint that it has been received.
- d) The member about whom the complaint is made (respondent) will be informed in writing within 15 working days of the receipt of the complaint.

#### **3.2 The Screening Process**

The relevant officer of AOTI (usually the Chairperson of Council) will investigate the complaint and invite the respondent to comment in writing.

All details relating to the complaint and all correspondence will be retained by AOTI in a secure and confidential manner.

Initially, an attempt will be made to resolve the issue by reconciliation:-  
This can include

A '**facilitated**' \* meeting on the case / subject of complaint to gain agreed consensus on what action is agreed on to resolve the issue.

- (*independent facilitator / mediator can be used in circumstances deemed appropriate by the Chair*)

It can also include minutes of meetings that decisions were agreed on.

It may also include 3<sup>rd</sup> party witness evidence to either support or reject 'claims' of alleged complaint to ascertain body of evidence to support or reject complaint.

The respondent and the complainant will be notified of any decision taken within 30 working days of the decision being taken.

If this fails, the formal procedure must begin. AOTI will endeavour to ensure that the procedure will, under normal circumstances, be concluded within six months of receipt of the formal written complaint.

This can include investigative interviews with parties involved including 3<sup>rd</sup> party witnesses (if available) and a report of conclusion / resolution produced with recommendations included on resolution.

### **3.4 Conclusions**

The AOTI Council will agree a conclusion:

This may include any of the following –

- 1) No further action required based on grounds / body of evidence.
  - 2) An agreed course of action between the complainant and the respondent.
  - 3) Agree to an apology for actions.
  - 4) Removal from AOTI membership
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- b) The decision of AOTI Council and the reasons for the decision will be forwarded to the complainant and respondent within 15 working days.
  - c) AOTI will maintain a record of all decisions. The records are retained by the Chair of Council and kept in a secure and confidential manner.

## **4. Appeals**

**4.1** Appeals must be lodged with the Chairperson of AOTI within three months of the decision of AOTI Council.

**4.2** Membership of the Appeals Committee: The Chairperson of AOTI, two members of Council and two members of AOTI who are chosen for their expertise and experience.