



END OF LIFE DOULA UK
Doing Death Differently

VEXATIOUS COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Introduction

End of Life Doula UK are committed to providing person-centred care in all of our dealing with people who receive our support, and our members. We do, however, recognise that we may sometimes get things wrong or be unable to provide support in the way that people request. We have a process in place which allows us to hear and handle complaints in a timely manner and to help identify areas for improvement in our services. We welcome feedback and take all expressions of dissatisfaction seriously.

There may be times when the complaints we receive are vexatious in nature, and this policy is written with the purpose of helping to identify and handle such complaints. Whilst we endeavour to focus on an individual complaint when it is made, it is important that we take into consideration the surrounding circumstances and context, including the complainants' previous interactions with End of Life Doula UK or one of our members.

It is important to note, that if a complaint is found to be vexatious, this is a judgement placed on the complaint itself and not on the individual making the complaint. This policy is in place to ensure that, whilst any complainants making a complaint viewed as vexatious will be treated with respect, there is no detriment to clients, members or officers of End of Life Doula UK. This includes the fact that time spent dealing with complaints should be proportionate to the nature of the complaint and that the outcome of complaints being sought should be realistic and achievable by End of Life Doula UK.

What constitutes a vexatious complaint?

When deciding whether a complaint is vexatious, we will consider the following:

- Whether the main purpose or effect of the complaint itself, or the manner in which the complaint is made, is to pressurise or cause distress to any members or officers of End of Life Doula UK or to disrupt the running of End of Life Doula UK
- Whether the complaint is deemed unreasonable

When deciding whether a complaint is vexatious, we will take into account:

- Whether the complainant is making a high number of unreasonable/unjustified complaints over a short period of time
- The history of interactions between End of Life Doula UK or a member of End of Life Doula UK and the complainant

- Any failures or errors that we have made and whether these have previously been addressed and apologised for
- Whether we have correctly followed our complaints procedure when investigating previous complaints
- Whether the complainant is repeatedly adding further information or alterations to an earlier complaint which has already been investigated
- Whether the complainant is seeking information that has already been provided, or revisiting matters which have already received appropriate explanation
- The tone of correspondence – whether this is abusive or making unreasonable demands
- Whether the complainant is using a ‘scattergun’ approach in complaining to numerous members of End of Life Doula UK
- The extent of the workload required to respond to the complaint and whether this is proportionate
- Whether the complainant is pursuing the complaint after the complaints procedure has already been properly implemented and completed
- Whether the complainant is behaving in a way that causes any one or more of our members to feel distressed, humiliated or threatened

How will a vexatious complaint be dealt with?

A decision about whether a complaint is vexatious will be made by the Chair of End of Life Doula UK who will consider the complaint and may seek advice from one or more other Directors of End of Life Doula UK. If a complaint is not judged to be vexatious it will be dealt with as per End of Life Doula UK’s complaints procedure.

If a complaint is judged to be vexatious

If it is decided that a complaint is vexatious, the Chair of End of Life Doula UK will respond directly to the complainant explaining the reasons for this decision, and explaining that the complaint case will subsequently be closed with no further action being taken. The Chair of End of Life Doula UK, in consultation with the other Directors of End of Life Doula UK, will also make a decision regarding the potential need for applying a restriction on communication from the complainant.

Any decision regarding whether a complaint is vexatious will refer only to the specific complaint. In the event that the complainant continues to be, or goes on to be, offered support from End of Life Doula UK, any further complaints from the same individual will be considered.