

# Service accreditation scheme

## Criteria for accreditation of counselling and psychotherapy services

Applicants should provide clear, concise and appropriate evidence of meeting all these criteria.

### Part A: Eligibility

These criteria **must** be met before an application is accepted for assessment of the operational criteria specified in Part B.

Services making an application for accreditation must:

#### Criterion A1 - BACP membership

Be an organisational member of BACP and subject to its *Ethical Framework for the Counselling Professions* and Professional Conduct Procedure. If the service is part of an organisational member, it is the organisational member that will make the application for the accreditation of its counselling and psychotherapy service.

#### Criterion A2 - Counselling and psychotherapy provision

Provide a counselling or psychotherapy service.

#### Criterion A3 - Number of therapists

Include at least three practitioners who undertake counselling/psychotherapy.

#### Criterion A4 - Insurance

All counsellors and psychotherapists (both voluntary and salaried) should be covered by Professional Indemnity and Public Liability insurance.

#### Criterion A5 - Service structure and accountability

##### Sub-criterion A5.1

There should be clearly defined and effective management and organisational structure, which shows clear lines of accountability and reporting.

##### Sub-criterion A5.2

There is a Head of Service who has knowledge and experience of the counselling and psychotherapy field and who has overall responsibility for management of the service.

**Sub-criterion A5.3**

A specified person must hold clinical responsibility for the service. They should be a member of an appropriate professional body, subject to its complaints procedure and accredited by, or be of an equivalent status, with it.

**Sub-criterion A5.4**

Formal arrangements for financial accountability should be in place.

## **Criterion A6 - Policies and procedures**

**Sub-criterion A6.1**

The service should be committed to equality of opportunity for its staff and for users of the service and comply with all relevant legislation. It must demonstrate a non-discriminatory approach to staff and users, irrespective of age, colour, creed, culture, disability, education, ethnicity, gender, information, knowledge, mobility, money, nationality, race, religion, sexual orientation, social class, status, etc.

**Sub-criterion A6.2**

The service must comply with the current Health and Safety at Work Act and other relevant legislation.

**Sub-criterion A6.3**

All records (whether paper or electronic) should be secure and confidential.

**Sub-criterion A6.4**

The service should comply with the current Data Protection Act and other relevant legislation.

**Sub-criterion A6.5**

Grievance and disciplinary procedures must exist for all staff.

**Sub-criterion A6.6**

An appropriate client or customer complaints procedure should be available.

**Sub-criterion A6.7**

Procedures must exist on how to deal with critical incidents (such as, but not limited to, dangerous or violent behaviour).

**Sub-criterion A6.8**

A training and development policy should exist for all staff

## **Part B: Operational criteria and visit - Practitioners and staff**

### **Criterion B1 - Practitioner recruitment**

**Sub-criterion B1.1**

A clear selection procedure for counsellors or psychotherapists should exist

**Sub-criterion B1.2**

Recruitment panels for counsellors and psychotherapists in the service must include at least one qualified, experienced therapist familiar with the work of the service.

## **Criterion B2 - Staff safety**

Therapists must be given training and best practice guidelines for potential dangerous and violent situations.

## **Criterion B3 - Home visits**

Specific training and guidelines should be provided for those that undertake home visits.

## **Criterion B4 - Practitioner ongoing appraisal**

There should be systems to monitor and manage the quality of therapists' work.

## **Criterion B5 - Practitioner supervision and CPD**

Counsellors and psychotherapists should monitor and develop their professional work through regular supervision and consultation and continuing professional development.

## **Criterion B6 - Staff meetings**

All service staff should have the opportunity to meet on a regular basis and to have access to suitable consultation and feedback.

## **Criterion B7 - Induction & support**

Part-time, newly qualified therapists and trainees must be supported by a permanent member of the counselling and psychotherapy staff, and training in the service systems and procedures must be given.

## **Part B: Operational criteria and visit - Client focus**

### **Criterion B8 - Therapy environment**

Rooms used for counselling and psychotherapy purposes should be private and free from interruption, furnished appropriately and, when counselling is in process, used exclusively for that purpose.

### **Criterion B9 - Appointment systems**

Appointment systems, if used, must be private and confidential.

### **Criterion B10 - Non-practitioners**

#### **Sub-criterion B10.1**

All secretarial, administration and reception support staff should work in a manner that maintains confidentiality. Reception staff must be experienced and confident in working with those in distress.

#### **Sub-criterion B10.2**

Staff undertaking a variety of roles must make it clear to service users and colleagues which one they are in at any given time.

### **Criterion B11 - Safeguarding**

There should be procedures that help all staff identify and deal with clients at risk to themselves or others.

### **Criterion B12 - Client Feedback**

The service should define its target population and survey users using an equal opportunities questionnaire or similar procedure.

### **Criterion B13 - Assessment & onward referral**

Where counselling or psychotherapy is not appropriate, or the service does not have the appropriate skills, users must be referred to suitable agencies eg psychiatric services, GP.

### **Criterion B14 - Record keeping & access**

Ownership of, and access to, service user records should be specified.

### **Criterion B15 - Community links**

Links with referral resources and specialist services in the community should exist.

### **Criterion B16 - Medical & psychiatric links**

Formal links should exist for consultation and referral between counselling and psychotherapy staff and medical and psychiatric services.

## **Part B: Operational criteria and visit - Delivery and evaluation**

### **Criterion B17 - Aims & objectives**

A statement of aims and objectives, available to all staff and service users, must set out clearly:

- a) The purpose of the services provided
- b) The type of counselling or psychotherapy offered
- c) The ethical framework adhered to
- d) The limits of confidentiality
- e) The context and contracting of the work (this includes payment for services, relationships with the host organisation, if relevant, and times of service availability)

### **Criterion B18 - Equality, diversity & inclusion (EDI)**

The service should recognise its accessibility limitations and publish a strategy for addressing this.

### **Criterion B19 - Publicity**

All service publicity material and pre-counselling information should comply with the Ethical Framework for the Counselling Professions and be readily available.

## **Criterion B20 - Service evaluation**

### **Sub-criterion B20.1**

All aspects of the service's work should be formally evaluated by users and staff on a regular basis that is at least annually.

### **Sub-criterion B20.2**

All feedback must maintain users' anonymity.

## **Criterion B21 - Impact of feedback**

Evaluation findings should be reviewed and appropriate changes made.

## **Criterion B22 - Service demand**

Demand on the service should be monitored and managed.

## **Criterion B23 - Sharing feedback results and actions**

Annual feedback should be given to users and other stakeholders.

## **Criterion B24 - Ethical Framework**

The service must be run in accordance with BACP's Ethical Framework for the Counselling Professions.

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