

Counsellors' Expectations of BCS and BCS Expectations of Counsellors

Procedure applies to:	All counsellors
Procedure approved by:	Trustee for Counselling
Procedure start date:	Prior to 2012
Procedure last updated:	March 2026
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Version number:	15
Contact for queries about procedure:	Clinical Services Manager
To be read in conjunction with:	Counsellors' Code of Conduct Policy and Procedure Volunteer Counsellors' Problem Resolution Procedure

This document describes what Basingstoke Counselling Service (BCS) provides for counsellors who undertake counselling of BCS clients, and what BCS in turn expects of such counsellors.

BCS expects all counsellors to signify that they have read a copy of these Expectations and to abide by their provisions. With the passage of time, changes to these Expectations may become appropriate; the Trustees reserve the right to modify them as necessary. Modifications will be notified to all counsellors.

Definitions

BCS Trainee Counsellors – these are counsellors in training studying on the BCS Diploma course.

IC Counsellors – these are counsellors who have completed additional training and undertake initial consultation appointments at BCS

Placement Counsellors – these are counsellors who are training at an external training institution and are on a counselling placement at BCS.

Volunteer Counsellors – these are qualified counsellors who work in a voluntary capacity at BCS.

Counsellors are not employees of BCS, and may, under no circumstances, represent themselves as employees.

Counselling Standards

1. In order that the highest standards of counselling be maintained, and that the professional reputation of BCS is safeguarded, BCS will offer counselling opportunities only to counsellors who have successfully undergone or are currently undertaking a reputable and professional counselling training.

2. It is also necessary that the interview panel, the external assessor appointed by BCS and the supervisor's ongoing assessment, are of the opinion that the counsellor is likely to be able satisfactorily to perform the duties of a counsellor.
3. BCS will maintain the appointment of a Counselling Management team who are responsible for standards within the service and will oversee all aspects of counselling. The appointment of the Clinical Services Manager is the ultimate responsibility of the CEO. The appointment of all other posts within the Counselling Management Team are the responsibility of the Clinical Services Manager.

What BCS Offers to Counsellors

4. BCS offers to counsellors an opportunity to continue to develop counselling skills under the supervision of a suitably qualified supervisor. All counsellors will be given group supervision and one individual appraisal with their supervisor each year. For Placement and Volunteer Counsellors, it is usual for the counsellor to remain with the same supervisor. For BCS Trainee Counsellors their time with one supervisor is limited to a year.
5. BCS will maintain association with a nationally recognised organisation which, in the opinion of the Trustees, will provide appropriate counselling standards under which counsellors will operate. The degree of association and the organisation with which BCS associates may change from time to time, and under these circumstances BCS will provide counsellors with details of the changes made and the rationale behind such changes.
6. BCS will maintain an insurance policy providing professional indemnity for each counsellor. The policy will be taken out with an insurance company which, in the opinion of the CEO, provides a reputable service appropriate to BCS needs.
7. BCS will allocate clients to counsellors according to the availability and stage of development of individual counsellors and the availability of suitable clients. Allocation of clients will be the responsibility of the Counselling Co-ordinator and Clinical Services Manager and at the discretion of the supervisor.
8. BCS will support the decision of any counsellor who feels that the counselling session cannot proceed because the client is under the influence of recreational drugs or alcohol, or poses a high risk of harm to self or others.
9. BCS will provide workshops and further training to counsellors as appropriate and subject to the availability of resources. BCS's intention is to provide two free internal CPD workshops per year, attendance at which is mandatory for BCS Trainee Counsellors and Placement Counsellors. Attendance is optional for Volunteer Counsellors. BCS also aims to provide CPD workshops and courses that are accessible to the public and can also be accessed by BCS Counsellors at subsidised costs.

What BCS Expects of Counsellors

10. All counsellors are expected to commit to the Service for a minimum of two years. Due to the nature of the open-ended work that we offer clients, we also expect counsellor to commit to a minimum of one year from the date of the last allocated client's initial session. Where counsellors are not able to provide this

commitment, it is necessary to discuss this with the counselling team prior to the allocation of any new client.

11. Counsellors are expected to adhere to the BACP Ethical Framework for the Counselling Professions, and to maintain a professional and confidential service to clients. Counsellors are expected to show ongoing commitment to their own personal growth and professional development.
12. It is a requirement for BCS counsellors to be a member of a professional counselling body (BACP for BCS Diploma students).
13. Counsellors are expected to dress professionally, but not corporately, for client sessions. Non-religious or cultural headwear, jeans, shorts, sportswear, trainers and casual or revealing clothing are not considered appropriate attire for BCS Counsellors.
14. Counsellors' meetings are held twice a year to inform counsellors of what is happening in the Service and to enable them to raise issues of importance to them. Counsellors are expected to attend.
15. Clients:
 - a) Trainee counsellors are asked to develop their client load in agreement with their supervisor to a maximum of four clients. External trainees may be able to take on additional clients by arrangement with the counselling team.
 - b) Counsellors are required to fit their client hours into the 'block' system that BCS operates. Morning, afternoon and evening blocks are available Monday to Thursday. Blocks are staggered to avoid overcrowding in the waiting area. Exact timings can be found on Skedda.
 - c) Time must be allocated to each client to complete all necessary administrative procedures, including completing record sheets and closing forms, and any necessary correspondence with GPs and referrers.
 - d) Counsellors are expected to be available for not less than 44 weeks per year. It is expected that counsellors will take holidays of no longer than two weeks' duration at a time, and are asked to inform their supervisor. There may be exceptional circumstances where a longer break is required; this must be discussed with the counsellor's supervisor and the Clinical Services Manager well in advance of any plans being made.
16. Supervision:
 - a) Counsellors are expected to attend group supervision for a period of one and a half hours every week and should inform the supervisor of any anticipated absence. BCS Trainee Counsellors and Placement Counsellors may be required to co-ordinate holidays with their supervisor.
 - b) Counsellors are expected to inform their supervisor of any missed or planned absences from client sessions.
 - c) During supervisor breaks, peer supervision is an expectation across all supervision groups. This is to recognise the importance of continuing to have a reflective space, even if the supervisor is absent.

- d) Counsellors are expected to attend individual appraisal meetings with their supervisor annually on mutually agreed dates.
17. Volunteer Counsellors are expected to attend at least 12 hours of additional suitable training each year at the counsellor's expense. Such training may be undertaken at BCS or elsewhere.
18. BCS Trainee Counsellors are required to undertake weekly personal therapy for the duration of the Diploma course and ideally beyond.

As part of the application process, Placement and Volunteer Counsellors are required to have had a minimum of six months' therapy with a psychodynamic or integrative counsellor prior to applying. Placement Counsellors are required to remain in weekly therapy for the duration of their training whilst on placement at BCS, and ideally beyond.

Qualified counsellors should be prepared to undertake personal therapy if recommended by their supervisor.

19. Each counsellor must adhere to BCS's established policies and procedures as set out in the Service Handbook available on SharePoint. Counsellors should ensure that they are familiar with the contents of the Handbook.
20. Each counsellor must complete and sign the mutual expectations document, confidentiality agreement and emergency contact information and submit to the Office Manager prior to engaging in supervision containing client work.
21. Each counsellor must complete the bi-monthly forms for each open-ended client within two weeks following each eighth client session (whether attended or not); see J02 Counselling administrative procedures for more information.
22. Each counsellor is responsible for ensuring that all documentation (bi-monthlies, closure forms, logbooks) is kept up to date and that strict confidentiality is maintained at all times. Any personally held client notes should be kept in accordance with GDPR.
23. Each counsellor is responsible for managing their client payments to the Service. If a client does not pay for their session, either in advance on a monthly basis or on a weekly basis, it is the responsibility of the counsellor to bring this to their supervisor's attention in order that this can be thought about in a timely manner.
24. Withdrawal from Service

Counsellors are required to give a minimum of six months' notice of withdrawal from counselling. This is to recognise the needs of clients in the time required to terminate the counselling relationship in long-term work. **Please note** that BCS Diploma trainees who are nearing graduation are not able to give notice until they have received a positive outcome from Assessment Panel at the end of June.

It is the responsibility of the counsellor to inform both their supervisor and the Clinical Services Manager of their intention to leave and appropriate ending dates will be discussed in supervision. No conversations with clients should take place before agreement on how and when to inform clients has been reached in

supervision. Discussions may take place at a senior level to ensure the client's welfare.

There are two options available to the affected client(s), i.e. working towards an ending with their present counsellor, or being referred on to another counsellor within the Service. These options will be explored with the client by the departing counsellor, in consultation with their supervisor.

Should a counsellor's departure be unplanned, the Clinical Services Manager will contact the counsellor's clients to offer an opportunity to discuss the situation.

In either case, if the affected client(s) wish(es) to continue with the Service, they will be reallocated to another suitable counsellor as soon as possible, with due regard to boundaries.

The departing counsellor is asked to respect ethical and professional boundaries and should refrain from seeing any client privately who was referred to them within their Service role for a period of at least one year after the counsellor leaves the Service.

Where a Supervisor, Counselling Manager or Counselling Co-ordinator is concerned about a counsellor continuing at BCS, the procedures outlined in the Code of Conduct Policy and Procedure, or the Volunteer Counsellors' Problem Resolution Procedure should be followed as appropriate.

Declaration by Counsellor

I have read and understood the Counsellors' Expectations of BCS and BCS Expectations of Counsellors, and I understand that failure by me to act in accordance with its provisions may result in my services being no longer required.

Signed: _____

Name: _____
Please print

Date: _____

(Please return signed copy to the Office Manager)