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# Introduction

## The Northern School of Art is committed to supporting students and recognises the importance of a student’s health and wellbeing in relation to their progression and wider School experience whilst also ensuring the health, safety and wellbeing of others in the School community.

## The Counselling Service offered by the School may operate with counsellors either employed directly by the School, on a commissioned basis or through an NHS Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) service.

## Students may seek help from the Counselling Service for many reasons. These presenting issues may be having an effect on wellbeing, or students may have noticed a distinct change in their behaviour and emotion at home, School or in their social lives. Examples of presenting issues are bereavement, anxiety, stress, personal and family relationships, personal and sexual identity, eating problems, self-harm, bullying and anger management. Some students seek help due to unresolved issues from their childhood such as physical or sexual abuse, or neglect. Others seek help as they are having suicidal thoughts or have made a suicide attempt.

## The Counselling Service provides students with support at a time when they are most vulnerable and aims to contain the distress of vulnerable students. However, the Counselling Service cannot take responsibility for all mental health issues arising in the School and will work together with other key staff to support students in distressing situations.

## Counselling aims to help students, through individual or group work, to feel they are in control of their own lives, able to make choices and decisions, and to put them into action.

## Students who feel in control of their personal lives are more likely to achieve educationally and contribute to the overall success of the School and in this way the Counselling Service helps to contribute to retention, progression and achievement.

## Counselling allows the student to talk through past events and to come to a greater understanding of them. Counselling offers the opportunity for the student to talk and be heard in a safe, non-judgemental environment.

## The Counsellor will not usually give advice but will help the student find their own answers. Having said this, psycho-education is playing an increasingly bigger part in counselling, empowering students with knowledge around certain psychological theories and self-help interventions.

## Counsellors are also available to advise and support teaching or Student Services staff whose students are experiencing difficult situations, or to help them understand certain behaviours. These could include consultations on the sudden death of a student, suicide, self-harm, depression or anxiety attacks.

## Counsellors also liaise with external agencies and maintain links with these to support the wellbeing of students. These may include GPs, local counselling services and community mental health teams.

## The Counselling Service works in accordance with the guidelines for best policy and practice laid down by the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy BACP) and the Association for University and School Counselling (AUCC) - the BACP’s University and College division.

# Purpose

## The purpose of this policy is to outline the School’s commitment to supporting learners through the provision of a professional counselling service and recognise the contribution of the Counselling Service to participation, retention, progression and achievement.

## The Policy also aims to ensure that the School:

* provides a safe, confidential environment in which an individual can begin to explore and identify issues which could prevent them from completing their studies successfully;
* complies with nationally recognised guidelines on professional practice;
* complies with legislation regarding child protection and meets the requirements of the School policy and procedures related to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.

# Definitions

## Client – a student who is currently accessing School counselling provision.

## Counsellor - An individual holding a recognised qualification at minimum Diploma level in counselling who, in accordance with BACP recognised practice, will facilitate the client’s development in ways which respect his/her values and capacity for self-determination.

# Responsibilities

## Counsellor - it is the counsellor’s responsibility to work according to the BACP Ethical Framework for the Counselling Professions; offer a welcoming environment which facilitates the counselling relationship; be non-judgemental and inclusive; offer clear information and guidelines about the service and the therapy on offer; work within their own boundaries and level of expertise; refer to other support services as required; maintain confidentiality; keep accurate records; refer any safeguarding issues with immediate effect and take own responsibility for continuing personal professional development and training.

## Student Services Manager – it is the responsibility of the Student Services Manager to oversee the Counselling Service and ensure that work is undertaken according to the BACP Ethical Framework for Counselling Professions and School procedures relating to Safeguarding; to monitor the effectiveness of the service through evaluation and feedback and report to Principalship; to ensure opportunities are available for appropriate CPD activities.

# Professional Practice and Standards

## All counsellors are required to have a minimum qualification of a Level 4 Diploma in Counselling and are committed to maintaining their competence through on-going professional development.

## Counsellors are required to be a member of a professional body such as The British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy.

## To fulfil the requirements of the Ethical Framework of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (2018) counsellors must participate in continuous professional development, which may include attendance at training courses, workshops, conference or professional networking. CPD must include a range of activities relevant to working with young people.

## Counsellors are required to have a minimum of 1.5 hours supervision a month.

## The service may provide opportunities for trainee counsellors to work with students on a voluntary basis. Trainees are mentored by a School counsellor to ensure they are supported in their roles, as well as having supervision. Clients have an initial assessment with a School counsellor to identify their needs and goals. At this point, prior to counselling commencing, they may be offered counselling with a trainee counsellor, if appropriate. Clients may decline this offer, in which case they will have counselling with a fully trained counsellor.

# Eligibility

## The Counselling Service is open to any student of the Northern School of Art regardless of age, gender, ethnicity or any other personal characteristic. If, after assessment, the Counselling Service is deemed not appropriate the reasons for this will be fully explained and the Counsellor will refer to alternative support if more appropriate.

# Service Delivery

## The Counselling Service can offer the following:

* One-to-one therapeutic counselling by appointment
* Drop-in sessions for students wanting to see a counsellor at short notice and for a short time
* Mediation between students
* Consultations with teaching and support staff to support them in their roles
* Workshops for students on various topics such as anger management, self-esteem and relaxation
* support with implementation or advice on the Fitness to Study policy and/or mitigation.

## The Counselling Service is not a ‘crisis’ service but is there to provide on-going, assessed support, as appropriate.

## The Counselling Service will be available to all learners during term time subject to the availability of counsellors. All Counselling contracts will cease at the end of the academic year. Students requiring on-going support will be referred to alternative support.

## Counselling will only take place following an assessment where the Counsellor and the client agree the terms of a counselling contract with clear boundaries and limitations.

## Counselling appointments will normally lastup to 50 minutes although where necessary a longer appointment may be offered. All appointments will be held in an appropriate, private room where the session will not be disturbed and as far as possible appointments will be made to fit around timetabled sessions.

## Missed appointments may be re-scheduled but depending on availability there may be a wait before another appointment becomes available. Any missed appointments will be followed up to check whether counselling is still required and/or whether there are any barriers to accessing the service. If appointments are cancelled on a regular basis, the Counsellor will consider whether counselling is appropriate for the student at that time.

## If a student attends an appointment under the influence of alcohol or drugs the Counsellor will terminate the session and re-arrange.

## Mobile phones must be switched to silent, unless prior consent has been requested.

## If the Counsellor is not available for any reason students will be notified by Student Services.

## Counsellors will develop and maintain an effective network of internal and external referral agencies and refer students as appropriate and where in their best interest.

## Counsellors develop and maintain a bank of resources on counselling- related topics for use by the Student Services staff and by students on a self-help basis. These are available in Student Services and online.

## The Counselling Service has a dedicated email address which is accessible to the Counsellors and Student Services Administrators. Communication with students Communication is kept within School hours.

# Contracting

## All Students participating in Counselling sessions will be required to sign a contract that outlines what can be expected from the Counselling Service in terms of service delivery, confidentiality and record keeping.

## The Counsellor will also explain what therapy they will be using and why they think it will be beneficial, along with any limitations. They will also discuss what the student wants to get out of the sessions. Together the Counsellor and the student will agree some realistic goals to work towards and the initial number, and frequency, of sessions.

# Record keeping

## The purpose of record-keeping is explained to all students using the counselling service and is outlined within the contract. Brief notes will be made of the content of sessions to help keep track of discussions and communications. A note of attendance or non-attendance will be recorded on the student’s Individual Learning Plan (ILP) as a record of support accessed within the School.

## Record-keeping will adhere to BACP Ethical Code of Practice and the provisions of GDPR, with written records kept to the minimum, made as soon as possible and secured in the designated place as soon as is practically possible. Records are securely stored within locked cabinets within the Counselling room or the Student Services Office and are only accessible by the Counsellor and, in the case of emergency or Counsellor absence the Student Services Manager/Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead.

## In order to further protect the confidentiality of clients’ information a system of pseudonymisation is used whereby the client’s contact details are kept separate from their session notes which are then only able to be linked back to the client through a coded system.

## All client records including process notes, notes from supervision and any other matters arising from the work will be destroyed in a non-recoverable format 3 years after the intervention has ended.

## Client statistical data is stored electronically on the Student Services database. No individual student is singled out or identified from this data. The database is secure and password protected. Access to the database is restricted to Counsellors, the Student Services Manager and the Student Services Administrator who has access to the information for recording and reporting purposes only.

# Confidentiality

## The BACP Ethical Framework (2018) requires that counsellors offer the highest possible levels of confidentiality in order to respect the client’s privacy and create the trust necessary for counselling, however, for ethical and legal reasons absolute confidentiality cannot be offered. There are some situations where confidentiality may be overridden. These are:

* If the Counsellor believes there is the possibility that the client may harm themselves or another person;
* If the client reveals that a child is being abused or is in danger of abuse;
* Where a crime has been, or is suspected to have been, committed;
* Where the Counsellor is legally obliged to disclose information (more information about this can be found in the School’s Counselling Policy).

## There may be other circumstances where it is beneficial to share information that has been disclosed to other professionals, for example, when referring to another organisation or service. In these circumstances the Counsellor will discuss this with the client and gain explicit consent before disclosing any information. If there is a need for the client to see another Counsellor, for example, in the long-term absence of a Counsellor, permission will be sought prior to any notes being made available to the replacement Counsellor.

# Supervision

## To ensure safe practice there is designated time for the review of the counsellors’’ work. Counsellors monitor and develop their work through regular supervision with an appropriately trained professional. Supervisors are selected using BACP guidelines and services delivered under an agreed Service Level Agreement, reviewed on an annual basis.

## Counsellors are required to have a minimum of 1.5 hours supervision a month regardless of the number of contracted clients.

## Supervision is not offered as therapy for the counsellor or as a system of checking on counsellors, however there are elements of monitoring the counsellors’ practice to ensure clients are safe and have the best possible service. A supervision contract will be agreed between the counsellor and the supervisor.

## Client confidentiality will be protected within supervision. Counsellors will not never disclose client names or anything that may identify them.

# Monitoring, evaluation and feedback

## Statistical information is used to monitor the service and to improve it. No student is personally identifiable from this information.

## Clients will be asked to complete an evaluation form at the end of their intervention which considers the impact and outcomes of the therapy. They will also be given a questionnaire to evaluate more general aspects of the service and their experience of the service delivery.

# Complaints

## A student may make a complaint about a counsellor by following the Student Complaint Procedure for students which is available on Moodle.

## If a student is still unhappy about the outcome of the complaint, a student may contact the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) who will start a professional conduct procedure. The professional conduct procedure may only be activated after all local procedures have been implemented.

# Equality Impact Statement

## The Northern School of Art is committed to providing an inclusive learning and working environment that recognises the value of every individual regardless of their background or personal characteristics. It aims to do this by encouraging a culture which actively welcomes, respects, promotes and embraces diversity; employs fairness in all aspects of employment and teaching and thereby creating and sustaining a positive and supportive environment for all members of its community.

# Document control including archiving arrangements

## Register/Library of Policy and Procedural Documents

### The Vice Principal (Student Experience) is responsible for maintaining policies and procedures in use

### The HE Quality Manager will act as the archivist, maintaining a single library of School policies. Any policies and procedure that are replaced or no longer active will be archived.

### All ‘live’ policies will be accessible to staff and students through the School VLE or published on the School website for external stakeholders.

# Standards/Key Performance Indicators

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Counselling Contacts** | |
| Number of students | * Requesting Counselling appointments * Waiting times * Attending counselling * Referred to outside agencies |
| Retention of students | * Attending counselling * Referred to outside agencies |
| **Staff development** | |
| Participation in CPD in line with BACP requirements | * Minimum of 30 hours CPD in a year |
| **Evaluation** | |
|  | * Client satisfaction as indicated by evaluation forms received from students * CORE 10 and progression |

# Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment Screening

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Under the Equality Act, there are nine protected characteristics: | | | | |
| * age * disability * gender reassignment * marriage and civil partnership * pregnancy and maternity | | | * [race](https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/race-discrimination) * [religion or belief](https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/religion-or-belief-discrimination) * [sex](https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/sex-discrimination) * [sexual orientation](https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/sexual-orientation-discrimination) | |
| **Assessment**: | | |  | |
| Is this policy/procedure relevant to be considered in terms of equality related to the protected characteristics above? Yes  No  If no, please state why not: | | | | |
| Enter text. | | | | |
| Is there potential for any negative or positive impact on people with protected characteristics? Yes  No  If yes, Please provide details: | | | | |
| Positive | | | Negative | |
| Enter text. | | | Enter text. | |
| Could this policy or procedure discriminate or unfairly disadvantage people with protected characteristics? Yes  No  If yes, please provide details: | | | | |
| Enter text. | | | | |
| **Conclusion**: | | | | |
| No barriers identified | | | | |
| Adaptions or changes to the policy or procedure to eliminate bias | | | | |
| Barriers and impact identified, however, having considered all available options carefully there appear to be no other proportionate ways to achieve the aim of the policy or practice (e.g. in extreme cases or where positive action is taken). Therefore, proceed with caution with this policy or practice knowing that it may favour some people less than others, providing justification for this decision. | | | | |
| **Completed by:** | | | | |
| Name: | Teresa Latcham | Job Title: | | Student Services Manager |
| Name: | Enter text | Job Title: | | Enter text |