



Katrina Caslake RM (BSc) Counsellor Children and Young People

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KCC Counselling Children and Young People Policy

- This information will be regularly reviewed and is subject to change according to the needs of the service as it continues to develop, and in line with local or national regulations.
- Katrina Caslake is a registered member of BACP.
- This counselling service runs according to the BACP ethical framework.

- **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**

Every person has the right to fair treatment and adjustments must be made to accommodate their needs.

Inclusion is not about treating everyone the same but accommodating individual needs and making the necessary adjustments to include clients regardless of their race, sex, sexuality, gender, religious belief or disability (this list is not exhaustive).

Adjustments will be made to make sure clients with disabilities have access to the place of practice, that clients understand the engagement of the counselling process and its implications and that the clients have opportunities to speak about any further adjustments needed so they can access therapy.

Barriers due to race, sexuality, gender, religious belief or disability will be engaged and removed so clients feel accepted and safe in the therapeutic space.

- The terms young person, pupil, client and young person are used interchangeably to refer to the individual who will be attending counselling.



1. Definition of Counselling

Counselling is a professional activity, to help young people who are experiencing behavioural, social, and emotional difficulties. Counselling is based on the provision of a genuine, authentic relationship between client and counsellor.

Counselling can involve working with developmental and attachment issues, addressing and resolving specific problems, facilitating personal autonomy and decision making, enabling emotional literacy, supporting and promoting personal insight and self-reflection, improving relationships with self and with others and working through past or current traumas, distress and/or conflicts experienced in school or at home.

In accordance with BACP Good Practice Guidance for Counselling children and young people, young people can only benefit from counselling if they want to be involved in the process. It is not acceptable for children to be referred to the counselling service against their wishes.' (BACP, 2006, p.16) It is important that they understand what they are turning down if they have never experienced counselling before.

A meeting will be set up to talk through what counselling is about, offering and enabling the young person the opportunity to make an informed choice.

Gillick competency enables young people over 14 to access counselling without parental permission.

2. Client Referral

Counselling referrals can be accepted from individuals who may self-refer, parents, schools, organisations, other professionals or agencies.

Reasons for referral can include issues such as family breakdown, bereavement, friendship and/or relationship problems, bullying, transitional life stage difficulties, anxieties, depression and stress.

Young people can show their distress in several ways; some become disruptive and truant or disengage with education, work and family which can lead to other complex issues.

Some young people's distress can be obvious to those around them in ways such as crying openly, having panic attacks or showing signs of self-harming.

Other young people can become withdrawn and isolate themselves when things are troubling them.

If you are aware of a young person who may regularly be displaying such signs, it is possible they could benefit from counselling.



3. INITIAL ASSESSMENT SESSION

Initial assessment sessions are an important part of the counselling process as an introduction into counselling for the young person they help the young person understand the service which is being offered and give them the opportunity to decide if counselling feels right for them.

They are also an opportunity for the counsellor to assess the needs of the individual and fulfil the necessary professional and ethical conditions of counselling, creating a counselling 'contract' between client and counsellor.

During an initial assessment session:

- Further information relevant to counselling will be established, such as the client's familial situation.
- Details of their presenting problem which will be recorded and kept securely.
- An initial risk appraisal will be completed and the immediacy of the clients presenting problems will be assessed.
- The client will be explicitly and clearly informed of the nature of the counselling service which includes clearly defining:
 1. Confidentiality offered and its limitations. (sec 5)
 2. The counsellor's duty of care re information sharing (sec 5)
 3. Record keeping per the Data Protection Act (sec 11)
 4. The counselling service's use of statistical data (sec 11)
 5. The client will also be informed of the procedures in place for missed sessions and cancellations. (sec 9)

If the above terms and conditions of service are agreeable, clients will then be asked to sign a counselling contract.



4. CONSENT

During an initial assessment session, consent for counselling needs to be established. Parental consent must be obtained for all pupils under the age of 14. A counselling agreement will be signed once the young person and parents (if appropriate) consent.

Clients over 14 years old can access counselling without parental consent, if necessary.

Gillick Competency and consent for counselling

Parental consent is not required for counselling a child under 16 who is judged as an individual to be Gillick-competent (BACP, 2006.)

If a young person over the age of 14 wants to access counselling but refuses to seek the consent of their parent/carer the counsellor will establish client suitability according to the requirements of Gillick Competency using criteria such as:

- Does this young person have a sense of their own identity?
- Does this young person have a sense of time, past, present and future?
- Does this young person understand the nature of their issue/problem, their own needs and the needs of others?
- Does the young person understand the counselling service which is being offered?
- Is it in this young person's best interests to access counselling without parental consent? (BACP, 2006, p.19)

If Gillick Competency is deemed appropriate/applicable, the client will be asked to sign the client consent section of the counselling contract.

Risk Assessment and Gillick competency are both on-going issues for consideration throughout counselling where the client's wellbeing and refusal to inform parents will be continually monitored throughout the counselling process.



5. Safeguarding, Confidentiality and Information Sharing

- The Local Authority and Police must lead in any investigation to any allegation regarding safeguarding.
- Child protection and safeguarding referrals should be made to the Children's Advice and Duty Service (CADS) by contacting the service directly with the numbers below:
- -Telephone: 0344 800 8021 and ask for the consultation line
- -Out of hours: 0344 800 8020 for Emergency Duty Team
- The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (referred to as MASH) should be used in the event of adult safeguarding concerns. A young person who is 18+ will be covered by MASH.
- -Telephone: 0344 800 8020 and ask for MASH.
- If I have concerns about a child or young person's care, and that child or young person was leaving the county and moving to a different local authority area then I would inform the CAD's service of my concerns to reduce the risk to the child or young person.

Confidentiality in counselling is considered an essential element in enabling trust to develop between client and counsellor and deemed a necessary condition for enabling young people to express their problems and feelings.

- Whatever the age of the client, confidentiality in counselling can never be guaranteed as absolute. (BACP, 2006)
- The Children's Act (1989 & 2004) and the Working together to safeguard Children, states a statutory obligation to actively cooperate in information sharing and working with other agencies to promote the wellbeing and safety of children.
- Best practice protocol dictates the need for a clear contract between client and counsellor which explicitly explains the levels and limitations of confidentiality that the counselling service can offer.
- The counsellor will explain what agencies are aware of them attending counselling as they have an overall duty of care. However, as part of counselling ethics the team does not routinely discuss or disclose that the young person is attending counselling unless required by safeguarding procedures.
- The counsellor will actively seek the young person's consent prior to disclosing any information to other professionals/services. The counsellor will fully discuss the rationale and implications of the process to the young person involved. This is in full support of the young person's right to autonomy and in respect of the client's right to be self-governing in accordance with the BACP Ethical Framework for Good Practice Guidelines (BACP, 2012, p.3). The only time this would not apply if by doing so would put them at risk, as explained later.



During initial assessment and subsequent sessions as appropriate, the client will be informed that the counsellor has a duty of care to share information with other professionals/services, if necessary, without the client's consent

- If the counsellor is concerned that the client is at significant risk of harm to or from others or themselves which indicates that it is in the client's best interests for the counsellor to take appropriate action.
- The young person's safety is paramount in any decisions taken to breach confidentiality.
- To ensure transparency and respect of the client's autonomy and therapeutic relationship, if the counsellor takes the decision to breach confidentiality without client consent due to serious risk, the counsellor will explore this with the client after the immediate danger has been dealt with.
- The counsellor's decision to breach confidentiality without the client's consent will relate to the immediate situation and or events and will be relayed to the appropriate services that can provide the necessary support required by the young person.
- In instances where there is suspected risk of harm or client disclosure of abuse the counsellor will seek consultation with the local safeguarding team and notify the referring organisation.
- Instances where the counsellor believes the client might not have the capacity to make an informed choice about their safety the counsellor will inform the local safeguarding authority and notify the referrer.

The Counsellor will constantly assess and evaluate client's wellbeing to ensure that the support is meeting the needs of the client; this will be done in accordance with the CAMHS tier system or referring agencies system. Ensuring clients have fair access to support as soon as possible, when severe/risky mental health symptoms are starting to emerge.

The young person can request that their counsellor share agreed information with other parties on the client's behalf where appropriate (such as attending meeting etc.) and the counsellor will carefully consider the potential merits and implications of each request and endeavour to work, within the law, with transparency and in the best interests of the young person accordingly.

It is possible that parents who are aware their child is attending counselling may contact the service and/or counsellor requesting information regarding the nature of their child counselling session/s. While holding a sensitive awareness that it is natural parents may be curious and/or concerned for their child, the counsellor is not obliged to share information regarding the nature



or content of the young person's counselling sessions with a client's parents. The counsellor will as far as possible support and reassure the parents.

To ensure transparency of service, clients will be informed of any contact made by their parents with regards to their counselling, accordingly.

Protocols for confidentiality and its limitations, onwards referrals or breaches of confidentiality as specified in section 5, are still applicable with or without parental permission to attend counselling.

Where a young person is accessing counselling without parental consent the counsellor will clearly inform the pastoral worker that this is the case so the pastoral worker can ensure confidentiality is maintained in future dealings and correspondence with the young person's parents.

The young person will also be informed that the pastoral worker has been asked to uphold and maintain their right to confidentiality and will not disclose their attending counselling to parents inappropriately.

6. COUNSELLING CONTRACT

Counselling is considered a professional service and as such, a written contract between client and counsellor needs to be established and signed.

At the end of an initial assessment session the client will be asked to sign the counselling contract form. The counselling contract includes confidentiality agreements, permissions for information sharing, data usage, record keeping and access to records and consent.



7. DURATION OF COUNSELLING

Counselling is a boundaried, considered activity it requires sufficient time to ensure an appropriate beginning for relationship building to take place, time for counselling to take place and time to consolidate a satisfactory ending.

The duration of the counselling will be assessed, discussed and contracted between the client and counsellor during the initial assessment session.

Depending on individual needs, a block of 12 counselling sessions (including the initial assessment session) will be planned with regular reviews to monitor the client's current and on-going progress, wishes and needs.

In private practice there is no limitation of sessions but regular reviews with parent input will be in place as well as an overview of the work undertaken.

Referring organisations will have their own process and number of sessions that the counsellor will follow.

The client will be offered a regular weekly or fortnightly 50-minute counselling session throughout the duration of their counselling.

8. APPOINTMENTS SYSTEM

Attending counselling should not disrupt the young person's education, family schedule or work, as this could be detrimental to their wellbeing.

Counselling needs to be recognised as an important, integral aspect of the young person's current needs and requires investing in by the school and family accordingly.

Clients are encouraged to take responsibility for their own session and times will be arranged at the end of each session with the client reviewing their schedule.



9. CANCELLED AND MISSED SESSIONS

Clients who miss a counselling session due to illness will be offered an alternative appointment if possible or arrangements will be made to see the client for their next weekly session and a further session will be tacked onto their counselling if agreed.

Clients who miss two consecutive sessions without notification, clients who cannot be contacted by the counsellor for two consecutive weeks or clients that are unavailable and have made no attempt to contact the counsellor regarding missed sessions will be deemed as 'not engaging with the service at this time'.

The referrer will be made aware and informed of all cases where a client is deemed as 'not engaging with the service at this time', where appropriate.

There can be many important and personal reasons why a young person does not engage with counselling. Enabling the young person to decline counselling can be viewed as an important aspect of the counselling service and process itself, supporting the young person's right to autonomy and offering the individual the space and time they need to engage with counselling (or not) in their own time, on terms which feel right for them.

10. ENDINGS

It is important that each young person's choice to leave counselling or not engage is respected and not seen as a negative occurrence or questioned unduly.

The counsellor will notify the client that the counselling file has been closed, and they have been removed from the counselling list accordingly, the client will also be informed that they are welcome to refer again for counselling in the future if they so wish.

The Ending Counselling notification process detailed above enables all clients to be fully aware when a client's counselling has ended. and the young person is no longer attending sessions.



11. COUNSELLING WAITING LIST

Depending on demand, it may be possible that, in future, a waiting list for counselling needs to be put in place. Should this occur, in the interests of maintaining fair practice counselling sessions will be allocated on a 'first come first served' basis.

In keeping with fair practice, some individuals presenting needs may be deemed as more immediately pressing than others, such individuals will be considered as 'in crisis' and may have the opportunity to bypass the 'first come first served' basis of session allocation, accordingly, depending on the merits of everyone's presenting needs. During initial assessment the client's suitability for counselling or their potential suitability or need to access other services is considered as routine and will therefore also apply to those deemed as 'in crisis' accordingly.

12. DATA PROTECTION

Records will be securely archived with the appropriate system; they remain my responsibility on behalf of the client or and referring organisation and will be kept in secure place until they are destroyed according to legal requirements stated in the Data Protection Act.

I process data in a variety of different formats, however all data within the scope of this policy falls broadly into either hard copy data (such as paper records) or electronic data, each of which is afforded appropriate, but different, security measures:

- **Electronic data** is only processed using devices which have security measures to protect the data. Electronic data is accessed only by authorised individuals on a need-to-know basis.
- **Hard copy data** is stored in a secured space, within secure filing systems accessed only by authorised individuals, and returned to its secure location when not in use, to protect the data from unauthorised access, loss or theft. When hard copy data must be relocated, it will be in transit for the minimum length of time and will be securely retained with an authorised individual during its entire time in transit. Hard copy records will not be left in a locked vehicle for any length of time.

Client session notes are the property of myself and referring organisation on behalf of the client and kept in line with law.

Active client session notes will be kept securely by me and coded in accordance with BACP confidentiality and note keeping guidelines.



Clients have the right to request (in writing) to view their own notes in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1988. Parents of clients do not have the automatic right to view their child's counselling notes and each case request must be determined upon its individual merits in accordance with legal requirements and the best interests of the young person involved.

12. REFERRALS TO OTHER SERVICES

During an initial assessment or during subsequent counselling it may become evident that the client could benefit from accessing other services or requires other specialist services.

Referrals to other services will be made, wherever possible, with the young person's full involvement and prior permission.

The referring party will be an active partner in any decision making in cases where onwards referrals are deemed necessary, in accordance with the service requirements of the issues raised.

13. SERVICE MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Counselling Service evaluation is monitored in the following ways:

1 Customer Satisfaction

In accordance with best practice evaluations of sessions will be obtained through the year to establish client's voice in the development of the service where appropriate.

2 Client Wellbeing Evaluation

The client will be asked to complete assessment criteria that indicate a scored level of need. This will be evaluated in relation to their progress through counselling. A number of tools can be used to obtain scores which are shared with the organisation.

- **Important note**

Young people are asked to share their views and suggestions regarding the counselling service they have received upon ending their counselling, including those who have ended counselling earlier than expected and individuals who have 'not engaged with the service at this time.' Client feedback is incredibly valuable, but it is requested at the client's discretion and is not compulsory.

- **Statistical Data Use**



During counselling, data is collected in a number of different ways such as during the referral process and during initial assessment, in addition to being collected during sessions. Evaluating the data gathered can be useful in helping to identify areas of the service in need of improvement, further training needs and establishing the needs of service users. Therefore:

The counsellor will ask for the client's written permission for their data to be used anonymously in the interests of monitoring the effectiveness of the counselling service. The client can refuse for this to happen, and the counsellor will respect the client's wishes.

If the client's permission for data use is granted, data from the weekly service monitoring form, client wellbeing sheets, and post counselling client feedback forms will be gathered and used by the counsellor in a way which cannot identify the client.

13. HEALTH AND SAFETY

Katrina Caslake will work to the hiring rooms health and safety protocols (A copy can be sent to referrer) but in addition to this:

Katrina Caslake is responsible for:

- providing a suitably equipped, consistently available room for counselling use, or online check that the client is in a suitable and confidential place.
- obtaining an emergency contact number in case it is needed, when someone ends an online or phone session abruptly and may be at risk.
- taking reasonable steps to safeguard the health and safety of everyone using or visiting the premises or hired room.
- identifying health and safety risks and finding ways to manage or overcome them.
- providing a safe and healthy place of work and safe entry and exit arrangements, including during an emergency.
- providing and maintaining safe working areas, equipment and systems and, where necessary, appropriate protective clothing.
- providing safe arrangements for the use, handling, storage and transport of articles and substances.
- providing adequate information, instruction, and supervision to all visitors, to avoid hazards and to contribute positively to their own health and safety.
- assessing health and safety in relation to lone working and safeguarding of both adults and children.
- promoting effective communication and consultation concerning health and safety matters and will consult with staff directly (where appropriate) relating to health and safety.
- if an epidemic or pandemic alert is issued, providing instructions, and informing of steps to be taken to minimise the risk of infection; and



- regularly monitoring and reviewing the management of health and safety, making any necessary changes in a timely manner.
- to provide use of facilities where appropriate.

12. COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES

Complaints against the counselling service or counsellor can be brought to the attention of Katrina Caslake, in cases where this is not possible, the BACP or NCPS.

Katrina Caslake is a member of the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) and abides by their guidelines for ethical best practice protocols. Any breaches of best practice should be reported to the BACP who will take any allegations made against a counsellor seriously and will take action against the counsellor accordingly. A copy of the BACP complaints procedure can be found on their website: www.bacp.co.uk

13. REFERRALS TO KATRINA CASLAKE

Referrals to Katrina Caslake, must come directly with a pre-consultation before the referral will be accepted (unless arranged otherwise with an organisation). All parties (the young person, parents, and other agencies) are therefore asked, where possible, to talk through the possibility of the young person attending counselling with the referrer.

- **Policy Review**

- Name: Katrina Caslake Signed:  Date: 10th October 2025
- This policy will be reviewed on 10th October 2026 by Katrina Caslake