

Counselling Service Policy 2025

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Counselling Service Policy 2025

1. Introduction / purpose of policy

Craven College provides a confidential counselling service to all students and staff, aimed at helping individuals enhance their effectiveness both within and beyond the college environment. While academic and support staff may use counselling skills in their roles, it is important to distinguish that professional counselling is a specialised service delivered exclusively by qualified practitioners. This service is not replicated elsewhere in the college.

Counselling is carried out by professionals who hold a recognised practitioner-level qualification, or by associate trainees enrolled in accredited programmes working towards at least a Diploma-level qualification. Volunteer associate counsellors undergo a thorough selection, recruitment, and induction process before beginning client work, and they participate in regular clinical supervision in accordance with BACP (British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy) standards.

Mental health affects everyone in society, with estimates suggesting that one in four adults will experience a mental health issue during their lifetime. These issues can range from mild anxiety and depression to more severe conditions such as major depressive disorder or psychosis. Over the past decade, awareness has grown around the pressures faced by young people that can impact their mental health and wellbeing. Students in education often face significant stress and change, and many are at an age when serious mental health conditions may first emerge, making them particularly vulnerable.

In response to these challenges—and in light of the Equality Act 2010, which replaced previous anti-discrimination legislation including the Disability Discrimination Act—the College acknowledges its duty of care to both students and staff. It therefore recognises the importance of providing timely and appropriate counselling support.

This document reflects the **AUCC Guidelines for University and College Counselling Services (2010) (second edition)** and will be updated and reviewed in conjunction with the development of the Service provision. The Association for University and College Counselling (AUCC) is a division of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) and provides support, information and guidance for its members, who work as counsellors in further and higher education institutions. This document also reflects the **BACP Ethical Framework for Good Practice in Counselling and Psychotherapy (2018)**. **(NB a revised Ethical Framework for Good Practice in Counselling and Psychotherapy will be introduced in 2026+)**

2. Scope

The college aims to:

- Deliver a confidential counselling service to students and staff studying and working at the college.
- Promote positive mental health in all staff and students.
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues.
- Alert staff to early warning signs of mental ill health.
- Provide support for staff working with students with mental health issues.
- Provide support to students experiencing mental ill health.
- Support the learning opportunities of all our students by removing barriers to learning and by positively promoting wellbeing and mental health

3. Role and Responsibilities

3.1. Leadership and Oversight

The Head of Student Experience & Inclusion holds overall line management responsibility for the Counselling Service. This leadership ensures the service remains responsive to the needs of students and staff, supporting their wellbeing and contributing to their success at Craven College.

3.2. Referral and Support Process

The Counselling Coordinator oversees all referrals for counselling support. After conducting a risk assessment, the Coordinator arranges appropriate ongoing counselling and assigns the client to a member of the counselling team.

The Coordinator also manages the overall service provision, including:

- Communication strategy
- Service development
- Coordination of counselling team meetings
- Liaison with the Head of Student Experience & Inclusion
- Production of reports and statistical data

The counselling team includes a mix of qualified counsellors working towards BACP accreditation and trainee counsellors on placement. All counsellors undergo a comprehensive induction led by the Coordinator. Counselling is currently offered via multiple platforms: face-to-face, telephone, and online.

4. Staff Responsibilities

Craven College recognises that promoting mental wellbeing is a shared responsibility across all staff. Staff are expected to:

- Foster a non-stigmatising environment by understanding and applying strategies that support positive mental health.
- Complete all required training, including mandatory safeguarding training.
- Understand confidentiality protocols, especially in safeguarding contexts, and avoid making promises to keep secrets.
- Prioritise student welfare and act in the best interests of students at all times.
- Identify students who may benefit from mental health support and remain alert to signs of potential wellbeing concerns.
- Follow safeguarding procedures when a child discloses abuse.
- Support ongoing monitoring and documentation to aid the implementation of individual education plans and risk assessments.
- **Confidentiality**
 - Confidentiality is a fundamental principle of the **BACP Ethical Framework (2018)**, which all members of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy are expected to follow.
 - Maintaining appropriate confidentiality is essential for both those accessing counselling and for the College in delivering a professional and effective service. However, absolute confidentiality cannot be guaranteed due to legal and safeguarding obligations, and this should never be promised. If confidentiality needs to be breached—for example, to refer a client to specialist services or access additional support—the counsellor will document all actions taken to demonstrate that reasonable care has been exercised.
 - When working with clients under the age of 18, counsellors must be aware of the relevant legal frameworks and the limits of confidentiality. Under English law (also applicable in Wales and Northern Ireland), young people aged 16–18 generally have the same rights to confidentiality as adults. They must be informed of the terms of their therapeutic contract, including the boundaries of confidentiality, and must agree to these terms before counselling begins.
 - Reporting abuse is a complex and sensitive matter, and no policy can cover every possible scenario. Craven College has a **Safeguarding Children & Vulnerable Adults Policy** in place to guide staff in responding to disclosures of abuse. All staff working with children and young people are expected to be familiar with this policy and must complete mandatory safeguarding training as part of their employment.

5. Implementation and Processes

Craven College is dedicated to delivering a high-quality, confidential counselling service for both students and staff. This document outlines the procedures that support the implementation of the Counselling Service Policy and covers the following areas:

5.1 Key Processes

Support services for students and staff are essential within further and higher education institutions, enabling individuals to engage effectively in learning, teaching, and research. Counselling is a specialist component of these services. While staff such as mentors, careers advisers, disability and welfare officers may use counselling skills, therapeutic counselling delivered by professionally trained practitioners is a distinct and dedicated service not typically available elsewhere in the institution.

The primary aim of the counselling service is to support students and staff in enhancing their personal effectiveness—both in their roles within the college and in their broader lives. This is achieved through various approaches, with the core activity being direct engagement with clients seeking support.

Clients may seek counselling for a wide range of reasons, including challenges affecting their wellbeing or performance due to past experiences or current circumstances. Common presenting issues include:

- Relationship and family difficulties
- Bereavement
- Sexual and personal identity concerns
- Anxiety, phobias, and obsessive thoughts
- Depression, including suicidal ideation or attempts
- Eating disorders such as anorexia and bulimia
- Cultural or identity-related challenges
- Effects of childhood trauma
- Life transitions and change

Students may also face developmental challenges, academic stress, adjustment to independent living, or concerns about future education or employment. Staff may present with workplace-related issues such as stress, bullying, restructuring, health concerns, or disciplinary matters.

Counsellors may also work with clients experiencing serious mental health conditions. In such cases, careful assessment is essential. Decisions about whether counselling is appropriate depend on factors such as:

- The client's needs and risk level
- Availability of psychiatric consultation
- The counsellor's expertise
- Access to external medical and mental health services

In some cases, alternative support services may be more suitable than counselling.

5.2 Additional Responsibilities of Counsellors

Counsellors may also undertake the following roles:

- Consultation and Advice: Supporting staff in roles such as personal tutors, welfare officers, and learning mentors to enhance their effectiveness.
- Staff Training: Delivering sessions on basic counselling skills, mental health awareness (e.g., depression, anxiety, trauma, addiction, eating disorders), interpersonal skills, and safeguarding.
- Institutional Support: Contributing to the development of a supportive environment that promotes wellbeing and success for all.
- Collaboration: Working alongside internal services such as mental health advisers, chaplains, and disability support teams.
- External Liaison: Establishing and maintaining referral pathways with external agencies, including GPs, community mental health teams, and local counselling services

6. Legislation and Regulatory Compliance

- *Education Act 2002*
- *Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) [Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK](#)*

- AUCC Guidelines for University and College Counselling Services (2010) (second edition)
- BACP Ethical Framework for Good Practice in Counselling and Psychotherapy (2018)
- BACP Confidentiality Guidelines on Reporting Child Abuse for College Counsellors and Psychotherapists in Further Education and Sixth Form Colleges
- BACP Access to Records of Counselling and Psychotherapy
- BACP Counselling and Psychotherapy Workloads
- BACP Personal Safety and Care in the Workplace
- BACP Recognising Mental Health and Mental Health Problems
- BACP Working Therapeutically with Clients experiencing Harassment in the Workplace
- BACP Considerations when Working with Clients who Self Harm
- BACP Working with Clients with Addictive Behaviours
- BACP Recognizing and acting upon Child Sexual Abuse
- BACP Guide for Ethical Decision Making
- BACP Working with the Suicidal Client
- BACP Psychopharmacology and Counselling
- BACP Making the Contract for Counselling
- BACP Making notes and records of Counseling Sessions
- BACP Assessment in Counselling
- BACP Supervision Guidelines
- BACP Guidance for Trainee Placements
- The Disability Discrimination Act 2010
- The Equality Act 2010
- Safeguarding Children and Young People within the Counselling Professions in England and Wales 2020
- Pre-Trial Therapy: Understanding the Revised Guidelines 2022
- BACP Competences Guide Required to Deliver Effective Counselling in Further and Higher Education
- Working with Adoption Law within the Counselling Professions in England 2022
- Confidentiality and Record Keeping within the Counselling Professions 2020

7. Monitoring and Review

Compliance will be monitored through annual audits, feedback from staff and students, and reported to the Governing Body.

- This policy will be reviewed biannually or in response to legislative changes.
- The work of the Craven College Counselling Service is monitored and evaluated through monthly clinical supervision meetings. The Counselling Coordinator is required to attend two hours of clinical supervision per month. Associate counsellors must attend supervision sessions with a Craven College-appointed supervisor at a mutually agreed time and location.
- Trainee counsellors are expected to attend supervision with a course-approved supervisor, in line with current BACP Supervision Guidelines. This includes a minimum of two hours of clinical supervision per month, based on a ratio of eight hours of counselling to one hour of supervision, with sessions held fortnightly.
- Group clinical supervision is provided for the associate counselling team and is facilitated by the Counselling Coordinator. Attendance at these sessions is mandatory for all associate counsellors as part of their placement at Craven College. In addition, trainee counsellors receive regular mentoring from the Counselling Coordinator.

- Broader monitoring of the Counselling Service's contribution to College-wide objectives is carried out through the annual appraisal process.

8. Reporting

CPOMS reports are produced monthly through Power Bi and monitored by the Head of Student Experience & Inclusion.

The Counselling Coordinator provides a monthly statical report statistical which details the impact of the counselling service. This includes details of number of counselling sessions offered CORE score changes and data about the retention and achievement of students accessing the counselling service. Client evaluation forms are also collated which report on self-assessment of impact of the counselling service.

The Head of Student Experience monitors any trends and the curriculum areas where support measures may be required to be implemented.

9. Related Policies and Documents

- Safeguarding Children & Vulnerable Adults Policy
- Drug and Substance Abuse Policy
- Equity Diversity & Inclusion Policy
- Learner Mental Health & Wellbeing Policy

10. Equality Impact Assessment

This policy has been assessed for equality impact to ensure it does not discriminate against any protected characteristics.

At Craven College, we are committed to fostering positive mental health culture for all members of our staff and student community. We achieve this through a combination of whole-college initiatives and targeted support for vulnerable students. Our restorative culture encourages open conversations about emotions, normalises seeking help, and ensures that individuals experiencing more serious difficulties are promptly identified and referred for appropriate support.

In addition to promoting wellbeing, we are dedicated to recognising and responding to mental health challenges. Statistics show that, on average, three students in every classroom may be living with a diagnosable mental health condition. By developing and implementing practical, relevant, and effective mental health policies and procedures, we aim to create a safe and supportive environment for all students—whether they are directly or indirectly affected by mental ill health.

Our Aims:

- Promote positive mental health across the college community
- Increase awareness and understanding of common mental health issues
- Equip staff to recognise early signs of mental health difficulties
- Provide support for staff working with students experiencing mental health challenges
- Offer appropriate support to students affected by mental ill health
- Ensure access to male and female counsellors from diverse culture and ethnic backgrounds

Appendices

- Counselling Service Procedure 2025 [Counselling Service Procedure 2025.docx](#)