

Newsletter - March 2020



Hi and welcome to our CTUK Newsletter.

As you can see from the list below, we have had a very busy month. If you have any questions, please email us at info@ukcounsellors.co.uk.

Thank you, Maria Albertsen (Founder, CTUK).

Content; Indeed advertising site, BACP/Volunteering/Petiton, Online training: False advertising and disingenuous claims, Changes at the CPCAB, Regulation, EAPs, COVID-19 UPDATES, Partners for Counselling and Psychotherapy, CTUK petition to BACP, CTUK peer support group and resources, CTUK Members Club, National Counsellors' Day, CTUK Books, Mental Health Workers Retreat.

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Indeed

As many of our members are aware, Indeed are a key advertising site for counselling jobs across the country. They also advertise a large portion of the post-qualification voluntary roles available, and as such, they play a large role in the perpetuation of the exploitation of counsellors.

Glenna and Tara have worked tirelessly to communicate this with indeed. Indeed have now issued a few statements in relation to this issue.

“Indeed values providing jobseekers with a consistent experience when using our site. In order to abide by our values, we only show opportunities that provide compensation to our

job seekers. Unpaid work is exploitative of the jobseeker. Therefore, indeed will remove these jobs to protect the job seeker. This includes unpaid trial periods, but may exclude volunteer positions, including political volunteers.”

In terms of what is asked of voluntary counsellors, this statement becomes contradictory. Indeed were unaware of what is asked of counsellors and so CTUK asked them the following:

“In counselling where mandatory costs for training and supervision paid for by the worker not the employer, you would also see that as exploitation?”

In order for the policy team at indeed to fully review this, we were asked to expand further and sent this:

“To work as a counsellor, people need to be insured and be with a membership body. These are costs that each counsellor has whether they are working in paid or unpaid roles. Many volunteer jobs over the last 2 years of us looking at your site have required specific memberships and have asked that people gain high cost membership with no financial recompense.

In addition to this, counsellors are required to maintain supervision. This is also a cost and very rarely offered within the job. [Of those that do] many ask for counsellors to pay a fee to be with them.

This can therefore mean that people are paying £100s per month to work. It’s slave labour [according to their own slave labour policy].”

We also sent them an example of a role that was confusing as it was unclear whether they were advertising a role or a course. This advert was quickly removed from the site as it breached terms by advertising a course. So, if you see anyone using Indeed to advertise counselling courses, REPORT them to indeed as they will deal with them.

At the time of writing we were still waiting to hear of the outcome of our correspondence. The progress of which has been slowed by the changes we are all facing during this pandemic.

In regard to other job sites, we are aware that others are also posting voluntary roles for qualified counsellors, such as LinkedIn, and we would continue to ask that members report those to the relevant sites. The more reports there are, the more evidence is available when we challenge these companies on their practices. Thank you for your continued support and diligence with this.

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Bacp rectifies volunteering advert on their jobs board

On 7th March Glenna alerted the BACP to an honorary role being advertised which left some ambiguity as to who the advert was aimed at. On the 9th March, BACP responded to say the advert was aimed at student counsellors and they have made amendments to make this much clearer.

For those unsure why CTUK picked this up, in 2017 a BACP resolution was passed to stop advertising volunteer roles for qualified counsellors. Resolutions are legally binding.

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Online training: False advertising and disingenuous claims

Association of Learning

Eagle-eyed members spotted an online training provider, 'Association of Learning,' was claiming students would be fit to practice after completing their level 3 online course. This included claiming that students would qualify for professional indemnity insurance. This was picked up by Tara who has begun communications with organisations affiliating with this course provider; including the National Union of Students (NUS), and communications with insurance providers.

Sussex Royals

On 20th March, the Sussex Royal Instagram account caused controversy by making the statement:

"If you're home and feeling bored, you can digitally train to be a counsellor and help someone who really needs your support."

Tara posted from the CTUK twitter account later that day and this prompted a response of anger and disbelief from the counselling community and, quite rightly, many people responded with dismay that an account with the level of influence as that of the royals, would post something like this without thinking about its impact.

On 23rd March, the BACP released a statement warning against the Duke and Duchess' post and underlined the need for appropriately trained professionals. "This is a matter of public protection and we feel strongly that an Instagram post encouraging online training to become a counsellor is irresponsible," Fiona Ballantine Dykes (deputy chief executive, bacp). You can read their full statement here: <https://www.bacp.co.uk/news/news-from-bacp/2020/23-march-therapists-needed-more-than-ever-but-appropriately-trained/>

At the time of writing, the Instagram post remains on the Sussex Royal Instagram account with no amendment and no further statement.

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Changes at the CPCAB

Policy changes for trainees on level 4 Diploma Course

In January, after months of correspondence, Glenna received confirmation from a CPCAB college that they had changed a policy from one that insisted on their students only being able to see BACP Accredited Counsellors. From now on, all counselling students will be able to work with a counsellor registered with any membership accredited by the Professional Standards Authority. The minimum standard of competence will be 3 years of practice.

We invite trainees and other interested parties to contact their local colleges and inform them of this change if it has any implications on your study or ability to provide a service. You can quote the below:

“Proposed Revised Extract taken from XXXXX College Student Handbook for CPCAB Level 4 Diploma in Therapeutic Counselling 2019-2021.

Individual Counselling

The course requires the student to have once-a-week individual counselling, because the fundamental belief is that one cannot begin to understand another human being unless one understands oneself. In addition, if counsellors are expecting clients to go through the counselling process, it is only fair and ethical that they too have undergone the process of counselling.

In addition, because of the nature of counselling courses, it is inevitable that strong feelings amongst group members will be generated. As there is not always sufficient time during the course to completely work through interpersonal conflicts, individual counselling is essential, to prevent the feelings that have been stirred up being painfully pushed underground and negatively affect ones work as the counsellor.

Students are required to engage in individual counselling and undertake a total of 60 hours over the 2 years with an experienced counsellor. Counsellors who fulfil this role must be registered with an appropriate professional body that is overseen by the Professional Standards Authority and to have been in practice for at least 3 years. This requirement reflects that professional bodies differ in how they describe membership categories and the eligibility they set for each one, including ‘accreditation’.

Counselling needs to commence at the beginning of the first year and take place at regular intervals to ensure the hours are met by the end of the course. Ideally, the 60 hours should be integrative counselling. However, this can be a mixture of person centred and psychodynamic therapy.

If a student wishes to continue beyond the of 60 hours personal one-to-one counselling, that is permissible. Failure to meet the requirement of 30 hours personal therapy per diploma year may lead to the trainee being unable to pass or complete the course.”

No more implicit promotion of volunteering

From September 2020, the phrase “employed or voluntary” will be removed from the CPCAB Level 4 diploma in Therapeutic Counselling (TC-L4) documentation. This wording was used to describe what trainees would be qualified to do post-qualification. This may seem like a small change but by pushing for this change, Glenna has ensured that future generations of counsellors are not silently groomed into post-qualification volunteering.

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Professional Standards Agency

Glenna has been working with the PSA to help spread the word to employers about the value of the accredited register. This is an ongoing project which remains important as the sector moves forward.

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Regulation

On 2nd March, the government once again declined to regulate the counselling and psychotherapy sector. BACP, along with UKCP and the BPC, briefed the members of the House of Lords prior to the debate.

In the BACP’s statement, Chief Executive Officer Hadyn Williams said: “We’re committed to working within a regulatory framework that will deliver high professional standards and level of public protection.”

We think it should be concerning all the counselling and psychotherapy sector that the group producing the unwanted and widely critiqued ‘SCoPEd framework,’ should be able to position themselves into the debate like this without their conflicting interests being questioned. It certainly suits these membership bodies the most if the House of Lords votes to keep the sector unregulated and those involved with SCoPEd can position themselves as the soft regulators. Thus, making the PSA virtually null and void without a loud opposition voice.

We have to remain vigilant.

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BACP petition

Last week the BACP, UKCP & BPC launched a petition to the government to better support counsellors and the public during the Covid-19 pandemic. Original wording on the document was unclear whether they meant the government should signpost to accredited counsellors or registered ones “PSA/HCPC accredited therapists and organisations.” After Tara made them aware on 27th March that individual accreditation is a separate matter and therefore this may mislead the government, the petition wording was changed. It is, however, disappointing to see the complete removal of any mention of the PSA given that the PSA register is a quality mark that underlines the basic competence of the professional and the quality of the training they received.

Despite this hiccup, we urge members to sign this petition and join more than 6000 other professionals and organisations in lobbying the government for proposals put forward:

* Working with us to ensure there is a workforce to deliver a comprehensive mental health response to the crisis.

* Tackling labour market barriers.

* Signposting the public to the very best mental health support.

You can sign their petition here: <https://bacp.e-activist.com/page/58143/petition/1?ea.tracking.id=2k53gp0e>

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Employee Assistance Programs

Since the development of the pandemic, EAPs have been increasingly in the spotlight for their employment practices. Many counsellors contacted CTUK to disclose how their EAP work was being impacted by the payment changes the EAPs were invoking, with many being told they were going to be given less per hour now they had to deliver telecounselling or online work.

Health Assured

It recently came to CTUK’s attention that Health Assured Limited were an umbrella company of the owners of BetFred. Although HA do not provide direct gambling rehabilitation work, it is still a company using tax payer’s money to profit from the mental health problems they contribute towards. It is not just addiction that gambling correlates with.

BACP have yet to confirm nor deny this, but Health Assured claim to be the ONLY EAP to be accredited with the BACP. It seems that BACP don’t do their due diligence or simply do not care about the morality of the companies they associate with. Despite this information

being in the public domain for months, BACP still plan to work with HA to provide a mental health helpline – manned by accredited bacp counsellors.

Some good news, since we released this information, there has been at least one service commissioner who has reassessed their contract with Health Assured.

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COVID-19 UPDATES

Psychological Professions into Action

Their second online forum is open until 14th April 2020 and invites professionals and members of the public to comment on what they believe the immediate response to covid-19 should be.

If you took part in their first forum, you log in details remain the same. If you're new to the PPA, you can sign-in/register here:

<https://ppsintoaction.clevertogogether.com/entry?fbclid=IwAR38-M2PNlJFzdr-04tflL7eHK-lpYSpFpOrtSLfPr4941bm9AdWtc3Y2oA>

National Counselling Society

Key worker's Counselling programme...read the fine print.

This initiative seeks to match key workers with NCS members who have agreed to provide 8 sessions of counselling for a discounted fee. The amount the counsellor chooses to reduce their fee by is discretionary but the T's and C's state a reduction needs to be made and any fee increase after those 8 sessions needs to be clear with clients.

You are also agreeing to keep anonymised data on the clients you speak with for NCS to collect at any point. Which means your contracting should be clear on this with any clients you agree to work with. Data collection goes beyond the usual demographics information and asks for the presenting issue of that client to be disclosed too. You need to think about how you're going to collect and store this information separately to your usual notes and data. As NCS have not given a date they plan to ask for this data, it is safe to say you'll need to cover it being under your usual data storage times.

“The NCS can conduct anonymised surveys and ask for anonymised data at any time (please note that any anonymised data requested will not compromise client confidentiality/indicate a client's identity in any way).”

NCS are not being crystal clear about what they plan to do with this data, so you would be well within your rights to ask for clarification that allows you to meet GDPR data

requirements if this is not clarified at any other point in the sign up process for this programme.

NCS are not the only membership body to be requesting counsellors “help” in this pandemic through reduced fees or voluntary work. A twitter user shared that the Association of Christian Counsellors had sent an email to all members urging them to consider volunteering.

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Partners for Counselling and Psychotherapy

Covid-19 Therapist Hub

On March 17, the PCP launched their covid-19 therapist hub to provide one central place for the virus updates. It includes government updates and links to various support initiatives across members of the PCP. You can explore the hub here:

<https://www.partnersforcounsellingandpsychotherapy.co.uk/the-therapist-hub/>

Open letter to the PSA

The PCP wrote an open letter to the PSA to ask for a meeting to discuss 3 important points about the future of the PSA and its function in this sector:

“(1) How we and the PSA can work better together to promote and protect the PSA’s regulatory approach so as to stem the tide of accusations that it is useless because ‘anyone can call themselves a therapist’. For example, PCP would like to contribute to your thinking about a national advertising campaign.

(2) How the PSA might develop guidance for the ARs with regard to the problem of practitioners who are struck off your ARs but remain in practice in a virtually identical manner. PCP has various ideas about the matter.

(3) We would like to raise the question of the PSA’s response to moves that are afoot to produce career pathways for therapists within the NHS that would disadvantage counsellors and psychotherapists on your ARs in favour of clinical psychologists and other practitioners of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy.”

At the moment of writing, the PCP were still awaiting a response.

Open letter to BACP, UKCP and BPC

On 23rd March, the PCP wrote another plea for the scrapping of the Scoped project

“As you are aware, there has been a huge impact on our profession of COVID-19 which is likely to last for a very long time. Many counsellors and psychotherapists are now at real risk

for their livelihoods. Many others are overwhelmed with additional work. In addition, all are facing unprecedented pressures on their family relationships, mental health and wellbeing.

There are huge and complex issues about practice, training and placements moving online, which are likely to be seismically profession-changing on a permanent basis.

You have admitted that SCoPEd has been very poorly received by thousands of professionals and many organisations. While no doubt well intentioned, the fact that SCoPEd is now undergoing lengthy reiterations and is in the phase of damage limitation should give you the greatest pause for thought even in normal times.

These, however, are anything but normal times. Our profession has no appetite now for fundamental and widely opposed restructurings of standards and competencies. These were optional extras at the best of times: under the current circumstances SCoPEd will be a further intolerable burden on counselling and psychotherapy. Rather than directing any more resources into the continuation of SCoPEd, we want professional associations to focus all their attention on supporting their members for the foreseeable future.

Scrapping SCoPEd will send a strong message to the profession that you care about your members and have acted to ease further stress and red tape during the current crisis. We call on you to do so without delay.”

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CTUK petition to BACP

Suspension of membership fees

Last week CTUK opened a petition for the suspension of BACP membership fees. As the largest membership body, they have the ability to make a large impact on the majority of counsellors in the UK.

On 24th March, BACP released a YouTube update from the chair, Natalie Bailey stating there would be no changes to membership fees during the pandemic. They would, however, cap the fee so there was no raise in April. By the 27th March, BACP had changed their approach and were now directing people to speak to their membership department if they faced financial hardship (membership.support@bacp.co.uk). Helped in no small part by the attention now being focussed on them for not offering this whilst over £3million in funds sit in free reserves.

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CTUK peer support group and resources

In our Facebook group, Counsellors Together UK, we have now opened up a peer support group which runs every Monday and Thursday at 7.30pm until 8.30pm. It is a chance to check-in with each other and feel less alone in these uncertain times. There is no pressure to join in with these discussions, but they will continue to run until the pandemic passes.

We have also set up dedicated threads which you can find pinned to the top of the group. These discussions cover practical information related to covid-19 and the operation of your practice, as well as ideas for things to do whilst in isolation.

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CTUK Members club

In the beginning of March, we announced the newest benefit to members of our membership club. This new benefit gives members full access to the CPD library over at Onlinevents.

This benefit joins the online directory, the member-to-member referrals, the discounted face to face CPD with JHD counselling, discounted website services and discounts for CTUK events. Plus many more, all for £6 per month. For a full list and to sign up, visit here:

<https://www.members-ukcounsellors.co.uk/>

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NATIONAL COUNSELLORS' DAY

Sadly, our conference event to mark National Counsellors' Day 2020 is being postponed. We currently do not have a set date for the new event, but we will update in due course.

We still plan to hold the online awards event. We will be updating as soon as the nominations open. We look forward to receiving all the nominations and celebrating counsellors and counselling in June.

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CTUK's first book publication

We have now launched the search for contributing authors to our first book publication. The book is a collection of chapters written by counsellors for the next generation. It will cover a range of challenges that trainees and counsellors face as they navigate this work.

Tara is receiving chapter proposals until 10th April. Check out the Facebook group for further information on this. Search 'Counsellors Together UK' on Facebook to join.

Mental Health Worker's retreat

Since the beginning of the year, Maria has been working away to bring her idea of a free mental health workers retreat to fruition. This is on top of her daily work for CTUK. Her idea was accepted in Natwest's Back Her Business competition and for the last month she has been working hard to raise money to pilot her idea.

At the point of writing, the campaign has raised over £3700 and secured enough funding to both be in a chance of winning £10000 from Natwest and met the minimum target to allow her to keep the money raised. The crowdfunding page is open for another 6 days and you can still donate towards this worthy cause here:

<https://natwestbackherbusiness.co.uk/mental-health-workers-retreat>

Written by Tara Shennan, CTUK Admin. March 2020.

Find us here

Website - www.ukcounsellors.co.uk

Facebook – www.facebook.com/ukcounsellors

Private Facebook group for counsellors/therapists - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/234004167107915>

Twitter – @UK_Counsellors

Instagram - @counsellors_together_uk