

THE CYCLE OF COUNSELLOR EXPLOITATION

Counsellors Together UK - working together to end the culture and prevalence of unpaid work within our profession.

COUNSELLORS
TOGETHER^{UK}

1 Counsellors pay thousands of pounds to train. As well as course fees, they also have to pay for insurance, personal therapy (often mandatory), clinical supervision and membership body fees. This can leave newly qualified counsellors with debts over £45K.

2 Whilst training counsellors usually have to complete at least 100 hours of face-to-face clinical work. This is usually delivered via an unpaid trainee placement.

4 Once a trainee finishes their placement there is little paid work to progress into. Services simply rotate in a fresh batch of trainees each year.

3 Placement providers (including private businesses, statutory services and charities) use trainees to deliver their counselling provision. Counsellors are often required to pay their own supervision, travel expenses, etc. This means they are paying to work.

5 Many charities operate in this way, not only using trainees to deliver counselling services but recruiting qualified counsellors to work unpaid. They often pay most staff except the counsellors delivering the service.

6 Where there are paid jobs, employers almost always ask for applicants to be accredited with a membership body such as the BACP. The application fee for this process is £200.

8 Charities and organisations then advertise unpaid roles to qualified counsellors as a way to "gain experience". However, qualified counsellors have already been deemed fit to practice and already experienced enough by their qualification assessors.

7 Some membership bodies such as BACP and COSCA require counsellors to have completed 450 clinical practice hours to be eligible for accreditation. 150 hours need to be post-qualification. For most people that would have to be gained through more unpaid work over the course of years; not months.

9 Membership bodies make a lot of money from the accreditation process. Training organisations can be endorsed by those membership bodies to send their trainees to that membership body (such as CPCAB do).

10 When in training, trainees are often kept in the dark about employment opportunities. Courses advertise potential earnings over £30K but fail to say that the average wage is less than £10k per year. Qualified counsellors are told to train to teach or supervise in order to make a wage and the cycle continues. Counsellors are being discriminated against. We deserve to be paid for the work we do.