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## **Associate Counsellor Programme**

### **Information for Applicants: 2017-18**

**GCS is a BACP Accredited Service (No.100187)**



Reg. Charity No 1109904  
Established 1980  
Company No. 4754643

## THE GLOUCESTERSHIRE COUNSELLING SERVICE

The Gloucestershire Counselling Service (GCS) was established in 1980 and is the major provider of counselling training services in Gloucestershire. GCS is accredited by the British Association for Psychotherapy and Counselling (BACP). All counsellors at GCS adhere to and work within the BACP Ethical Framework for the Counselling Professions.

GCS has two principal objectives:

- 1) To provide high quality professional counselling at affordable cost to the community of Gloucestershire and its surrounds.
- 2) To provide a programme of professional trainings in counselling.

Our **Counselling Service** offers a broad range of direct counselling services in a variety of settings. These services include:

- **Adult Counselling Service:** Offering confidential counselling to individual adults experiencing personal, emotional or psychological difficulties. Diploma trainees are offered placements with our Adult Counselling Service.
- **Couples Counselling Service:** For people experiencing difficulties in their relationships.
- **Employee Welfare Service:** Providing short-term solution-focused counselling to employees of a range of organisations across Gloucestershire.
- **GamCare:** A free counselling service for problem gamblers, in partnership with the Addiction Recovery Agency (ARA) and GamCare.
- **The Child and Family Counselling Service:** Counselling for families, children and young people who are experiencing difficulties.
- **School Counselling Service:** Counselling on school sites for individual pupils.

In addition to our introductory trainings in listening and counselling skills, our training department provides a comprehensive training programme for counsellors. This training comprises a three-year Diploma in Psychodynamic Counselling and the **Associate Programme, a post-diploma programme for counsellors seeking professional registration with organisations such as BACP and BPC**. We also offer trainings in different counselling modalities and in working with various client groups such as children, families and couples together with CPD programmes for practitioners.

GCS adheres to an Equal Opportunities Policy and is positively committed to opposing discrimination. We recognise that there are processes inherent in any organisation, including our own, which can work against this intention. We acknowledge that we have an obligation to be constantly re-examining all aspects of our policy development and implementation. We will aim to ensure that as far as is possible, equality of opportunity is available to all who work within GCS and use its services. As a charity, GCS tries to exercise the best possible stewardship of our financial resources to maintain the service.

## **THE ASSOCIATE COUNSELLOR PROGRAMME**

The Associate Counsellor Programme is intended for qualified counsellors who wish to develop a range of skills and capacities that are important in moving towards independent practice or working in an organisation. Applicants should have achieved a Diploma-level qualification with significant counselling experience. Please see a later section for details of how to apply.

The programme runs for 12 months beginning in September 2017. Successful applicants will become GCS Associate Counsellors and gain invaluable experience working within a well-established counselling service.

The programme comprises a programme of CPD seminars and a supervised counselling placement with our Adult Counselling Service (and possibly with our EWS and Couples service depending upon experience). It is not necessary to undertake both parts of the programme: you can apply for the placement only or the CPD seminars only.

Associate Counsellors are expected to manage a caseload of at least four clients per week and will have the opportunity to work with a range of clients and presenting problems. Weekly (42 weeks per year) counselling supervision is provided as part of the programme. Placement opportunities will be available for both time-limited and open-ended counselling.

The CPD seminar programme is designed to develop skills and capabilities and increase awareness of what it means to be a professional counsellor.

## **ACCREDITATION AND REGISTRATION**

GCS has extensive experience in working with and supporting counsellors as they work towards professional accreditation. The Associate Counsellor Programme exists so that Diploma-qualified trainees can gain enough counselling and organisational experience to apply for accreditation with professional bodies.

The supervised counselling placement offered in the programme provides an opportunity for Diploma-qualified counsellors to achieve the post-qualification client hours required for individual accreditation by BACP.

GCS has been accredited by BPC as a 'gate-keeper' of professional standards and is responsible for proposing graduates to BPC for membership. On satisfactory completion of this course Associate Counsellors may be proposed by GCS to BPC as registrants.

GCS will give help and support to Associate Counsellors as they apply for accreditation or registration.

## **PROGRAMME TIMETABLE**

Seminars and supervision for the Associate Programme are held on Mondays at the GCS Centre in Stroud. Client work takes place throughout the week.

### **Timetable**

12:00 – 13:30 Supervision (42 weeks per year)

14:30 – 16:00 Seminar

Total programme hours are:

Seminars	45 hours
Supervision	63 hours
Additional (reading etc.)	40 hours approx.

## **SUPERVISED COUNSELLING PLACEMENT**

GCS Associate Counsellors are expected to work with a weekly caseload of at least 4 clients on a once-weekly basis for 44 weeks of the year. There will be supervision with an experienced supervisor in a group, usually of 3 members, for 1 1/2 hours per week. Associate Counsellors will be required to attend 42 supervision sessions over the year.

## **SEMINAR PROGRAMME**

The seminar programme consists of 30 seminars of 1.5 hours over the academic year. There will be three seminars each half-term.

The seminars are intended to cover a range of areas of interest for emerging counsellors. They will cover themes including professional, counselling, contextual and practice issues as well as self-care.

Associate Counsellors are expected to contribute to the seminar programme by leading discussions and presenting papers and the seminars are facilitated by an experienced seminar leader.

## **OTHER MATTERS**

### **Absences**

Trainees are expected to attend at least 80% of the sessions. Prolonged absence due to illness or for other reasons may necessitate withdrawing from the course.

### **Waivers**

- GCS reserves the right to cancel an Associate Programme at any time if there are insufficient numbers of trainees to make the course viable.
- GCS reserves the right to vary the arrangements for the CPD seminars if there are only a small number of attendees. Any such re-arrangement will be done in full consultation with participants.
- GCS reserves the right to terminate or extend the training agreement with a trainee in the event of the trainee not meeting the requirements of the Associate Programme and/or those of GCS.
- GCS reserves the right to refuse the offer of a place on the Associate Programme
- GCS has Complaints and Appeals procedures.
- Offers of a counselling placement are made subject to a satisfactory DBS check.

### **Complaints**

GCS operates a Complaints Policy. Complaints should be in writing addressed to the Chief Executive and will be dealt with in accordance with the Complaints Procedure, a copy of which is available on request.

### **Appeals**

GCS operates an Appeals Policy. A trainee accepted onto the Associate Programme wishing to appeal against a training decision during their training should put this in writing addressed to the Chief Executive and it will be dealt with in accordance with the Appeals Procedure, a copy of which is available on request.

### **Working within GCS**

A Counsellor Handbook giving details of the counselling service and administration will be issued to Associate Counsellors

### **IT equipment**

GCS intends to move to an entirely paperless distribution of course material. Some course material is already distributed online and the use of online distribution will increase during the period of your training to a point at which very few papers will be printed at GCS and given to you.

We also make much use of our secure internal email system for communications regarding your assessed work (such as essays), counselling placement and other service matters.

It is therefore important for your studies with us that you have access to IT, email and printing facilities. Please speak to us if this will be difficult for you in order that we know what further support to offer you.

## **APPLICATION, SELECTION AND FEES**

### **Fees**

Supervision only: **£750**

Seminars only: **£750**

Full programme (ie seminars and supervision): **£1400**

*NB. Course fees can be paid by instalments over each year.*

### **Applications and references**

Applications should be sent to the Training Co-ordinator at GCS ([training@gloscounselling.org.uk](mailto:training@gloscounselling.org.uk)).

Please refer to our website for closing dates

Applications should include the following:

- CV
- Log of client work to date
- Log of CPD activity during the last year
- Letter to include:
  - Details of current counselling skills and capabilities
  - Areas you consider you need to develop
  - How you see the professional role of a counsellor and what it entails
  - Experience of working within an organisational setting, especially administration and working relationships.
- Details of any previous involvement with GCS apart from the training courses listed in your CV.

References:

- If you have not previously trained or worked at GCS, please provide the details of one referee (preferably a supervisor) who is willing to comment on your counselling capability.
- If you are a GCS trainee or graduate, reference will be made to your most recent supervisor.

### **Selection criteria**

Applicants must:

- Have successfully completed, or be about to complete, either the GCS Diploma in Psychodynamic Counselling or an equivalent qualification.
- Evidence a sound level of counselling competence with the capacity to deepen their skills.
- Evidence the ability to hold both long-term and complex clients within a caseload
- Demonstrate the ability to use supervision to develop counselling and theoretical understanding.
- Demonstrate competence in managing the administrative tasks associated with counselling work.
- Offer availability for a caseload of at least 4 clients per week.

**Selection process**

Applicants will be required to attend an interview.

All applications together with reports from the interview will be considered by an Assessment Panel.

### Conditions of acceptance

- On accepting an offer of a place on the programme the Associate Counsellor will be required to pay a registration fee of £175 which is a non-returnable deposit deducted from the course fee.
- The balance is payable either in full at the start of the course or in three termly payments, payable at the beginning of each term for which a £35 surcharge will be added.
- In the event of an Associate Counsellor not taking up an accepted place the registration fee and any other fees already paid are non-refundable.
- If an Associate Counsellor withdraws from the programme part way through the year, the full fees for the year are payable.
- If GCS asks an Associate Counsellor to withdraw from the programme the fees paid up to and including that term are non-refundable.
- In the event of an Associate Counsellor anticipating or experiencing difficulty in meeting financial obligations to GCS, he/she should contact the Head of Training as soon as possible so that a mutually appropriate solution can be sought. An award cannot be made if there are any outstanding fees unless an acceptable arrangement for the deferred payment has been made with GCS.