



**COLEG
CAMBRIA**

LEARNER COUNSELLING SERVICES POLICY

Policy Name:	Learner counselling services policy
Date Equality Impact Assessment completed:	October 2018
Presented for Approval:	October 2018
Approved by:	Safeguarding Group
Date approved:	October 2018
Review Date:	October 2021
Author:	Head of Student Services

Introduction and purpose

Coleg Cambria recognises its pastoral role in the welfare of learners. The Counselling Service is part of a range of services offered to provide support to enable students to study and successfully complete their course.

Risk

Failure to support learners with emotional problems – ensuring we mitigate against early leavers.

Definitions

Counselling aims to help individuals feel they are in control of their own lives and able to make positive, confident choices and decisions. It is a way of helping people cope with the difficulties in their lives, by talking through personal problems and dealing with emotional issues. Counselling is entered voluntarily and offers the opportunity to talk and be heard in a safe, non-judgemental environment. The counsellor does not give advice but will help the person find her/his own answers.

Standards

The Counselling service offers, without discrimination, free, impartial counselling sessions, which are accessible to all current learners of the College. Counselling is offered in accordance with Coleg Cambria's policies and General Data Protection Act 2018 Privacy Notice.

Confidentiality will be maintained in accordance with professional counselling practice, In exceptional circumstances, complete confidentiality cannot be guaranteed; for example, a break in confidentiality may be made:

- *Where there is a threat to human life or physical danger(either of the student or somebody else)*
- *Where there is a Safeguarding concern(reported direct to Safeguarding Officer)*
- *If there is a major threat to the interests of the College*
- *If ordered to do so, by Court Order or by Law-*
- *Cases may be discussed with complete confidentiality within required supervision.*
- *Information regarding attendance will be monitored on the college EBS system and may be viewed by authorised staff.*

Counselling Services are covered by the counsellor's own public liability insurance.

Responsibilities

The Counsellor will:

- Develop and maintain an effective network of internal and external referral agencies and share good practice throughout the college, to develop outstanding counselling services at Coleg Cambria.
- Be a suitably qualified and experienced Counselling Professionals who undertake regular CPD to maintain good practice.
- Have regular supervision with a suitably qualified and experienced counselling professional on a monthly basis, within a formal supervision contract.
- Have undergone a DBS disclosure and subscribe to DBS update service
- Work with staff across the college including:
 - Personal Tutors/Pastoral Coaches
 - Study Skills Tutors for students with mental health and/or behavioural problems likely to impede learning

- Head of Student Services and team
- Safeguarding Officer
- Careers Officer

Service delivery

- a) *Location* – the Counsellor will be based within Student Services at all five sites and with priority access to discreet meeting rooms (with disabled access) for counselling sessions.
- b) *Availability* – counselling sessions will be offered each week during term-time between the hours of 8.30am and 4.30pm; each session will last for up to 1 hour which can be extended in certain circumstances. Telephone counselling will be offered to work based learners who are unable to attend college due to other commitments.
- c) *Appointments*- may be made directly with the Counsellor in person or via Student Services or course/personal tutors. Wherever possible, students should arrange counselling appointments outside class times. If attendance during class time is unavoidable, the tutor must grant permission.
- d) *Record keeping* –Any data captured will be visible and accessible by the counsellors only. The data will be stored securely by the counsellor and will not be accessed by any unauthorised person(s). All data will be retained throughout the academic year in which the client is seen, but will then be destroyed at the end of the academic year. In exceptional circumstances, information may be kept for a longer period where further investigation into an alleged crime, complaint or incident is taking place.
- e) *Reasonable additional support* will be provided, as required, eg a British Sign Language (BSL) interpreter to enable students with hearing impairment to access counselling services, or an interpreter if the client prefers to communicate through the medium of Welsh or another language.
- f) *Client contract* - during initial sessions, the Counsellor will explain the nature and extent of counselling, how records are kept and the conditions necessitating a break in confidentiality. The Counsellor and client may reach an agreement on a determined number of counselling sessions to be offered and then this will be reviewed periodically as progress is evaluated. Some referrals are 'immediate', and may require only one or two sessions of solution-focused intervention in response to 'crisis' need. Contracts must be verbal and clear but have the flexibility to meet individual needs.
- g) *Evaluation* – during initial sessions and then periodically thereafter, the Counsellor will give the client a hard copy of the evaluation form. Learner evaluation forms are sent to the Head of Student Services. Evaluations will protect anonymity which can be verified if ever required.
- h) *Promotion of counselling services* – in addition to details of counselling services being included in prospectuses, they are also referenced in student and staff handbooks, induction sessions, leaflets, posters, the staff and student intranets, and referrals by tutors and Student Services.
- i) *Counsellor Absence* – in the event of the Counsellor's medium/long term absence from college, the Head of Student Services will make arrangements with another external counsellor to cover counselling services.
- j) *Complaints* - Students who are not satisfied with any aspect of the Counselling Service should initially discuss their concerns with the Counsellor. If they feel their complaint has not been dealt with satisfactorily, they may contact the Head of Student Services. If the client wishes to make a

formal complaint, the college's complaints procedure should be followed, and/or the complaint may be forwarded to the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP).

Communication & Bilingualism

This Policy will be provided in both Welsh and English.

Equality Impact Assessment

To be completed following consultation with stakeholders.

Statistics relating to attendance will be reported by the Counsellor to the Head of Student Services on an annual basis. This information will be used to monitor any trends emerging within the organisation and to make improvements in line with the College's commitment to Equality and Diversity.

Consultation Process

Consult with Counsellors via service Coordinator

Lifespan of Document

The Policy will be reviewed every 3 years.

Implementation Plan

The Head of Student Services will be responsible for ensuring all staff are briefed on the regulations and practice outlined in this policy.

References

BACP Ethical Framework for the Counselling Professions (updated 1st July 2016)