



South Gloucestershire and Stroud College
Counselling Service Policy & Procedure

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 Please contact the Human Resources Department**

Prepared by:	Jo Johnson
Job Title/Role:	Inclusion Manager & DDSL
Ref. No.: Q/P 135	Date of this version: 17 April 2019 Review date: 17 April 2021 (subject to any legislative changes) Upload to External College website? Yes Upload to e-Campus? Yes
Approved by:	Senior Leadership Team
Date:	April 2019

Main aim and purpose of the policy:	The policy aims to ensure that all learners and staff gain an understanding of the procedures around accessing and referral to the counselling provision.				
Is this policy (or its constituent parts) relevant to a general equality duty? (please tick)	This policy development will assist in the elimination of unlawful discrimination and/or harassment of identified groups?	Implementation of this policy will promote equal opportunities for identified groups?	Implementation of this policy will promote positive attitudes and participation between groups?	Implementation of this policy will promote good relations between groups?	
Age	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Gender Reassignment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Race or Ethnicity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Religion or Belief	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Marriage	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Pregnancy/ Maternity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Sex	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Sexual Orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Carers/ Care givers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Persons in care	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Specify any groups for which there is evidence or reason to believe that some groups or individuals could be affected differently:					
How much evidence is there:	None	A little	Some	A lot	
Is there any concern that the policy may operate in a discriminatory way?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	None	A little	Some	A lot	
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Assessed relevance to equality (tick one row only)	High	Med	Low	None	Brief reason for this assessment
Age	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Gender Reassignment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Race or Ethnicity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Religion or Belief	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Marriage	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Pregnancy/ Maternity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Sex	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Sexual Orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Carers/ Care givers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
What is the next step? (tick one only)	What priority level is this policy?			Has the Policy been sent for Full EQIA, or do you believe the policy should have a Full EQIA?	
	High <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Medium <input type="checkbox"/>	Low <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<i>I am satisfied that an initial screening has been carried out on this policy/procedure and a full Impact Assessment is not required</i>					
Completed by: Jo Johnson		Position: Inclusion Manager & DDSL		Date: 11 April 2019	

1. Introduction

- 1.1. South Gloucestershire & Stroud College (SGS) understands that students work more effectively in a supportive environment which encourages personal development and autonomy and that students who are in control of their personal lives are more likely to succeed in their course, achieve their personal goals and contribute to the overall success of the college. Counselling aims to help them to achieve, emotional wellness, feel in control of their own lives and able to make choices and decisions and put them into action.

2. Statement

- 2.1. SGS is committed to offering a fully supportive environment that enables all students to optimise their educational opportunity and participate fully in all aspects of college life by acknowledging and supporting their emotional needs.

3. Objectives

- 3.1. SGS Counselling Service is committed to:
 - 3.1.1. supporting students with emotional or personal difficulties that may impact on their ability to learn;
 - 3.1.2. providing counselling support in a safe and confidential environment;
 - 3.1.3. employing trained and experienced counsellors;
 - 3.1.4. working within the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) codes of ethics and practice; and
 - 3.1.5. acting in accordance with the requirements under the Children's Act of 1992.

4. Implementation

4.1. Entitlement

- 4.1.1. The service is only open to students enrolled at SGS.
- 4.1.2. Any student can make an appointment to see a counsellor.
- 4.1.3. During the first session, an assessment will take place allowing the counsellor and student to discuss and decide upon the most appropriate way forward for the student which may be onward referral to a more appropriate external agency.
- 4.1.4. If counselling is agreed to be the most appropriate way forward, students are entitled to 6 sessions following which a review will take place. Further sessions may be offered.

- 4.1.5. Students may request further sessions during the same or subsequent academic year if the need arises.

4.2. Confidentiality

- 4.2.1. The BACP Ethical framework requires that counsellors offer the highest possible levels of confidentiality in order to respect their client's privacy and create the trust necessary for counselling.
- 4.2.2. Counselling sessions are confidential to the student. Unless they have the student's prior consent, the counsellor will not pass on to a third party any information regarding the student's presenting issues.
- 4.2.3. In exceptional circumstances, the counsellor may take the decision to break confidentiality, if in her/his professional judgement:
- there is a risk of the student harming themselves or being harmed;
 - there is a risk of another person being harmed; or
 - there is the risk of a serious crime being committed.
- 4.2.4. It is ethically and legally unwise to promise 'total' or 'absolute' confidentiality but rather the service provides confidentiality within the BACP Ethical Framework and the law.
- 4.2.5. The confidentiality policy will be explained at the beginning of the first session with every student.
- 4.2.6. Records and notes will be kept securely in a locked drawer or cupboard. Records will be kept no longer than strictly necessary and will be disposed of safely.

4.3. Service Delivery

- 4.3.1. One-to-one counselling will be offered by trained counsellors by appointment. This is usually face to face, but can be offered via email if this is appropriate.
- 4.3.2. Appointments may be booked directly with the counsellor. Alternatively, Tutors and Education & Wellbeing Mentors can refer in to the Counselling Service with the student's consent.
- 4.3.3. Counselling will be provided in an appropriate, safe and confidential environment.
- 4.3.4. Counselling sessions will usually be 50 minutes duration and students will normally attend on a weekly basis.
- 4.3.5. Wherever possible, counselling appointments will be arranged to suit student needs. If attendance during class times is unavoidable, the student should seek permission from her / his tutor.

- 4.3.6. Students with no appointment may 'drop-in' and will be seen as soon as a counsellor is free, but if no-one is available an appointment will be made for them as soon as possible.
- 4.3.7. Tutors and Education & Wellbeing Mentors cannot make a counselling appointment without the student's agreement but can help make an appointment for them if this helps facilitate the process.
- 4.3.8. Students cannot be 'sent' for counselling by tutors or Learning Mentors, nor can students be required to attend counselling as part of a contract, disciplinary procedure or as a condition of them staying at college.
- 4.3.9. The counsellor will develop and maintain an effective network of internal and external referral agencies and refer students as appropriate.
- 4.3.10. The counsellor will develop and maintain a bank of resources on counselling-related issues for use by staff and students on a self-help basis.
- 4.3.11. Counsellors can provide advice and support in non 1:1 settings through various group sessions dealing with specific student concerns such as anxiety and exam stress.
- 4.3.12. Advice can be offered where appropriate to staff dealing with difficult issues.
- 4.3.13. Supervision may be offered to some tutors or teams within the college.

4.4. Marketing the service

- 4.4.1. The Counselling Service will be publicised to students and staff via induction talks, , posters, emails to staff, e-Campus, talks to tutor groups, leaflets to students and referrers, Freshers' Fayre, open events and business cards.

5. Responsibilities

5.1. Staff

- 5.1.1. All staff have a responsibility for ensuring students are made aware of the counselling service and the pastoral support that can be provided by the SGS Wellbeing Service & Students' Union should they become aware that a student has emotional and personal problems.

5.2. Counsellors

- 5.2.1. The counsellors have a responsibility to provide a high quality counselling service which is client focused and delivered by appropriately qualified counsellors working within the BACP Ethical Framework and the SGS Single Equality Policy.

6. Related Policies, Procedures and Guidance

- 6.1. Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy & Procedure
- 6.2. Compliments, Suggestions and Complaints Policy & Procedure
- 6.3. Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults Policy & Procedure
- 6.4. Single Equality Policy
- 6.5. The BACP Ethical Framework

7. Complaints Procedure

- 7.1. If any student is unhappy with the counselling they have received and wish to make a complaint about an individual counsellor or the service they have received, they can follow the following process:
 - 7.1.1. All complaints should be referred to the designated person as set out in the College Compliments, Suggestions and Complaints Policy & Procedure available on the College website or SharePoint. The BACP will be contacted if deemed necessary due to professional misconduct.