

## Tenterden Counselling Service

### Handbook

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## Handbook Version Record

(This record started following Quality Assurance (PQASSO) self-assessment)

VERSION	Change Description & Reason for Change
March 2010	Complete review of Section 1, updates made to payment and expenses section plus other minor wording changes
October 2010	Minor change made to Equal Ops policy to say without discrimination..... in line with current legislation
February 2011	Policy review dates updated following Trustee review
May 2011	Policy review dates updated following Trustee review. Minor changes made to Client Assessment process within the Policy
September 2011	Documentation list amended to reflect that Client Leaflets are now quality printed by a supplier
February 2012	Changes re couples counselling in Equal Ops policy and review date updates to that, External Complaints, Internal Grievance & Supervision policies
June 2012	Change to remove mention of other organisations workshops and review date updates for Client Assessment and Disciplinary policies
March 2017	General Revision and Updating
2018/2019	Comprehensive Review to Handbook, Policies and Constitution

## **Tenterden Counselling Service Formation**

The Tenterden Counselling Service was formed in 1983 as the Tenterden Advisory Committee, under the Chairmanship of Barry Wright who had identified the need for counselling in Tenterden and the surrounding villages. The Service is a non-profit making charity with no political affiliation.

## **Objectives**

The service seeks to promote personal growth towards psychological and emotional health and wholeness of personality. It offers a professional service with counsellors whose work is professionally supervised.

TCS is committed to equal opportunities and welcomes everyone without discrimination as to class, culture, gender, transgender, sexual orientation, marital status, physical ability, race or religion.

TCS is not a crisis intervention agency so the Referrals Secretary is not expected to offer this service. Potential clients in crisis should be referred to the Kent Mental Health single point of access 03002220123.

Clients who need assistance more appropriately offered by other agencies are referred to these agencies if possible.

## **Counselling**

The counsellors are qualified and experienced or are at the final stage of a qualifying course and acquiring their practical experience.

All counsellors work under supervision and are subject to annual review.

All counsellors and supervisors are DBS checked.

## **Website**

Information about the service can be obtained from the website at [www.tenterdencounselling.org.uk](http://www.tenterdencounselling.org.uk)

## **Client Referrals**

The local General Medical Practice refers the majority of the Service's clients to the Service. The other clients are self-referred or referred by other agencies.

## **Service Contact**

The Service has a dedicated telephone for clients to make contact. The number is 0776 968 3347. This number is a mobile phone held by the Referral Secretary (RS). There is an answering service associated with the phone. This telephone is solely for contact between the Service and potential clients. Contact may also be made by our website [www.tenterdencounselling.org.uk](http://www.tenterdencounselling.org.uk) Once a client has been allocated to a counsellor it is for the counsellor to establish a means of contact between the client and themselves.

## **Procedure for taking on new clients**

- Referrals Secretary (RS) receives referral from GP or other health professional or the client self refers.

- RS gives necessary details to client in accordance with a client referral form which can be downloaded from the Standard Documentation List on the website.
- RS selects a counsellor in consultation with the supervisor if necessary. Information on availability submitted by counsellors is used for this purpose. A waiting list is sometimes necessary. RS advises Counsellor of client's details.
- Counsellor contacts supervisor (unless otherwise agreed with the supervisor) to discuss the client, assess whether lone working is appropriate and if agreed that the counsellor will take the client then he/she contacts client to arrange first meeting and confirms details with RS.
- If the counsellor is not to take the client, then the counsellor will inform RS by phone at the first opportunity and RS will reallocate the client to the next available Counsellor.
- Counsellor hands the client information sheet to the client at the assessment meeting ensuring that it has been understood.
- All further contact is between the counsellor and the client and may with the permission of the client be by text or e-mail.
- Counsellor advises RS when client has finished counselling sessions.
- A client who has finished counselling and who subsequently seeks further sessions is treated as a new referral.
- If a counsellor cannot contact the client within 7 days of referral it is for the counsellor to write to the client within 10 days of referral. It is for the counsellor to remain responsible for the client. If the client does not respond after a further 7 days, the counsellor will inform the RS.

## Electronic Room Booking system

An electronic room booking system is in operation for Milroy House and may be accessed via the website. All bookings at Milroy House must be made via the electronic booking system. All counsellors will be given the current username and password. Those authorised to have access to the electronic booking system are the RS, supervisors and counsellors.

## The Cost of the Service

TCS is a charitable trust offering confidential professional counselling at an affordable cost. It is supported by grants and voluntary contributions. All our counsellors offer a defined number of hours. Adequate funding is essential if the Service is to continue to exist. Inevitably there are expenses in setting up, running and organising the work, establishing full and proper on-going training and supervision, and providing accommodation and related facilities. **No one should be refused counselling because of inability to pay.** However contributions from our clients are an important source of our funding and counsellors should not underestimate their importance. Clients should be asked by their counsellor to consider what if anything they are able to give; bearing in mind that there is a basic cost to TCS. Some will be able to give more, others much less. Of course, should circumstances change; the contribution can be adjusted either way.

## Gift Aid Declaration

Counsellors must invite all clients to complete a gift aid declaration which must be passed to the treasurer via the supervisor.

## Allocation of Clients

Clients are allocated to counsellors by the RS. Whenever a counsellor can take on a new client they should contact the RS and make known their availability.

When a new counsellor feels ready to take on their first client they should consult with their supervisor then contact the RS and ask to be allocated a client. They should also discuss with their supervisor the need for an initial assessment.

## **Initial Assessment of Clients**

Probationary counsellors and experienced counsellors new to TCS will be trained by their supervisors to do initial assessments that conform to TCS standards. Supervisors may carry out initial assessments on a flexible basis at their discretion.

## **Client Information Sheet**

At the first counselling session the counsellor will complete and sign the TCS Client Information Sheet which can be downloaded from the Standard Documentation List on the website, and obtain the client signature, make a copy to give to the client and retain original with client notes.

## **Number of Sessions**

The number of counselling sessions offered to a client is left to the discretion of the counsellor in consultation with their supervisor.

## **Contact with GP**

There will be no communication with the GP unless the client so requests. Otherwise there will be no contact unless the counsellor has serious clinical concern.

## **Keeping Notes**

Within TCS record keeping is seen as an intrinsic part of counselling. It enables counsellors to reflect on the counselling process, is a useful tool in supervision, and gives an overview of work done. It also provides a concrete record of work undertaken, demonstrates the counsellor's competence, as well as frequency of contact, and forms a basis for discussion in supervision.

Counsellors working within TCS are asked to fulfil the following requirements regarding record keeping;

- All client records will be kept securely in a locked filing cabinet or box within the counsellor's own home. If kept electronically they shall be maintained in accordance with the requirements of data protection legislation and guidance.
- A session record form will be completed for each counselling contact with the client.
- Any process notes, evaluations, personal responses etc. are separate from the requirements of TCS and should therefore be kept separately. For reasons of confidentiality counsellors must use a coding system with these private records. Counsellors may use these private records within supervision, but they are not part of the formal record of counselling contacts.
- Where recordings have been made of a counselling session, a copy of the client's signed authorisation to the making of the recording must be kept with the sessional record, together with details of where the original recording can be found. Records must be retained for six years from the date of last contact following which they should be destroyed unless there are current or imminent legal proceedings.

The sessional record form is available from the website.

## **Disclosure of Notes and Client Confidentiality**

As an Organisational Member of the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy, TCS is bound by its Ethical Framework for Good Practice in Counselling and Psychotherapy and is subject to the BACP's Professional Conduct Procedure. The use of the client reference number is strictly confidential.

As a general principle, no client or other person (including a solicitor) can compel a counsellor to provide a report about a client or to disclose any information at all about a client including any written documents or notes or tape in their possession.

However, courts have the power to summon a counsellor to give evidence about or for a client, and very occasionally (but increasingly) this is happening. Even then, courts will decide whether the interests of preserving confidence is outweighed by other interests and have a discretion to excuse a counsellor from answering a question when to do so would involve a breach of client confidence.

It is also possible for a court to order the production of records and in this situation, it is important to recognise that a court would make no distinction between private notes or more formal records required to be kept by the Service. Everything could be required to be produced. A counsellor who is asked to disclose client information must immediately consult their supervisor for advice.

## **Quality Control**

The Trustees are committed to providing the best service possible to its clients, so it is necessary for them to know how the clients and counsellors feel about the service provided. To this end two questionnaires have been prepared - one for clients and one for counsellors.

Any information given will be treated in strict confidence. An analysis of the answers to the questions plus clients' and counsellors' comments will be used as input to Trustees' discussions on possible changes and improvements that may be necessary in the way the Service operates.

The client should be given their questionnaire at their final counselling session along with a stamped addressed envelope if they so request. When completed it should be either posted to the chairman of TCS or sealed and handed to the counsellor for delivery to the chairman or a nominated Trustee.

Monitoring the performance of the Service is essential if TCS is to achieve and maintain a high quality of service and to be able to demonstrate our effectiveness. It is essential that counsellors complete their questionnaires and encourage clients to complete their questionnaires.

## **Counselling Accommodation**

The majority of counselling sessions and supervision are held at Milroy House. The use of client's and counsellor's homes is not supported by the TCS. Counsellors must only see clients at TCS approved premises.

## **Accommodation Addresses**

Milroy House  
Sayers Lane  
Tenterden Kent

Ivy Court Surgery  
Recreation Ground Road  
Tenterden Kent

## **Safety of Lone Counsellors**

Ultimately it is a matter for the counsellor to ensure that the environment in which they counsel is one with which they feel comfortable.

Supervisors and counsellors must have regard to the lone working policy and apply it in their practice and make use of the risk assessment schedule contained within it.

## **Management**

A Committee of Trustees manages the Service. The Chair is appointed annually.

The Committee is supported in their work by supervisors and by three administrators: client referrals secretary, treasurer and committee secretary.

The Trustees are volunteers. The supervisors work part time but receive a modest fee. The administrators work voluntarily and part time but receive small honoraria to help meet their expenses.

Trustees hold meetings some four or five times each year, depending on the needs of the Service. They monitor the Service's activity and finances, discuss and formulate policies, recruit new counsellors, and deal with any other business, which may arise from time to time.

Once a year, usually in February or as soon as practicable thereafter the Service holds an Annual General Meeting. All the counsellors are invited to attend this meeting. The Trustees are keen that as many counsellors as possible should attend, as it is an opportunity for all the Service's members to get together and discuss its affairs and to meet socially.

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## **Statement of Expectations**

The primary purpose of the Tenterden Counselling Service is to provide counselling to people in the local community. To achieve this objective the Service appoints suitably qualified counsellors and on occasion trainee counsellors.

Counsellors and Supervisors are required to:

- sign an agreement governing their relationship with TCS.
- work within the ethical framework of BACP.
- work with two or preferably at least three clients.
- attend supervision once a fortnight.
- meet BACP requirements for continuing professional development by attending a minimum three workshops a year.
- make regular monthly returns of data as required.
- provide proper information to the Referrals Secretary as required.

Tenterden Counselling Service will provide:

- (a) on a no cost basis –



- an allocation of clients commensurate with the Counsellor's availability and the needs of the client waiting list.
  - fortnightly group supervision sessions of two hours with a maximum of four counsellors at each session.
  - accommodation for meeting clients and for supervision.
  - professional Indemnity Insurance in respect of the clients referred to them by TCS.
  - a DBS check.
- (b) At the Trustee's discretion TCS may fund training and/or workshops to provide professional development opportunities
- all workshops organised by TCS itself are expected to be attended by TCS counsellors

In recognition of the commitment and support given by TCS, it is hoped that when trainees become newly qualified counsellors they will remain with the Service for at least one further year.

It takes several months to recruit a new counsellor and therefore it is essential that as much notice as possible be given by anyone intending to leave. The trustees suggest three months notice and do not expect counsellors to leave until work with current clients is completed.

## **Induction**

There is an induction process in place for trainees and newly appointed counsellors.

## **Supervision and Assessment**

The amount of supervision given to trainee counsellors at group sessions may not be sufficient to meet the requirements of their courses. Some courses require that the counsellors submit regular written assessments of their development. The cost of any additional supervision and the provision of assessments must be met by the trainee.

## **Annual Appraisals**

TCS requires that Supervisors conduct annual appraisals of all counsellors and pays for this work at the current session rate.

## **Payment to Counsellors**

Counsellors both qualified and accredited will be paid according to a schedule of hourly rates approved from time to time by the Trustees. This payment is subject to two sessions worked by each counsellor per month unpaid, starting on the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month following their qualification or accreditation.

All payments are paid directly into counsellor's bank accounts.

These payments are made providing the financial situation of the Service allows and may be altered or withheld by the Trustees at their discretion. The amount of these payments is reviewed at least annually by the Trustees. Any alteration in the rate of payment will be communicated to all counsellors.

## **Expenses**

Trustees may make a contribution towards a counsellors expenses at their discretion on details being submitted to them.

The amount of expenses paid is reviewed at least annually by the Trustees who may alter or withhold payments at their discretion. Any alteration will be communicated to all counsellors.

## **Workshop Costs**

Workshops are organised on a self-funding basis. If in any financial year, that is the calendar year for TCS, workshops achieve a surplus of income over expenditure, this surplus will be used in the interest of the counsellors. The Trustees, having considered proposals made by the counsellors, will decide the actual use of the monies.

## **Professional Liability Insurance**

The Service maintains a Professional Liability Insurance to cover legal liability for claims made against the Service for damages in connection with the provision of a confidential counselling service. The limit of the cover should be reviewed annually. The insurance includes cover normally provided by Public Liability Professional Indemnity, Product Liability, and Libel & Slander Immunity.

## **Appointment of new counsellors**

Anyone wishing to join TCS as a probationary counsellor is required to complete an application form and to attend an initial interview. If this is successful a further interview with Trustees, and sometimes supervisors, will be arranged. The Chairman writes to the applicant letting them know of the decision.

New probationary counsellors are allocated to a supervision group and are asked to contact the supervisor and to start attending their group.

## **Standard Documentation List**

Standard Documentation is maintained on the website. Leaflets describing the service may be published from time to time.

## TCS POLICIES

Policy	Review	Due	Changes- Reason and Description
Client Assessment	Bi-annually	2020	
Disciplinary	Bi-annually	2020	
Equality and Diversity	Bi-annually	2020	
External Complaints	Bi-annually	2020	
Grievance Procedure	Bi-annually	2020	
Supervision	Bi-annually	2020	
Safeguarding	Annually	2019	
Data Protection and Retention	Annually	2019	
Privacy	Annually	2019	
Lone Working	Annually	2019	

## CLIENT ASSESSMENT

### Aim and Objective

Tenterden Counselling Service ('the Service' or 'TCS') does not offer 'specialist' counselling, so it sometimes happens that potential clients need to be referred to a more appropriate agency. The following procedure aims to find out whether the Service is the right agency to meet the needs of the client and to match that client with an appropriate counsellor, not only as to availability of time and space but also as to the suitability of the counsellor to engage with the problem that the client brings.

### Procedure

#### **Initial Approach**

- The client first contacts the Service through the Referrals Secretary (RS). Some will have a letter from their GP referring them for an appointment, many will have self-referred. The RS telephones the client to obtain details and completes the client referral sheet and informs the client that he/she will be contacted by a counsellor as soon as possible to arrange an initial assessment session.
- If the RS when speaking to the client has concerns as to whether the Service is the right agency for the client, those concerns are to be discussed with the supervisor and the client contacted if necessary and be directed to services elsewhere.
- The RS then gives details of the client to a counsellor who is seeking a new client and who then telephones the client, after contact with their supervisor, to make an appointment. A period of up to one and a half hours should be allowed for this appointment. The client will be told that this session is not a counselling session but is to enable both counsellor and client to decide if counselling with TCS would be appropriate in this particular case. The client will also be told that the person doing the initial assessment may not be the eventual counsellor.

#### **Assessment Interview**

- The assessment will be conducted using a recognised format. The actual format used must be agreed with the counsellor's supervisor in advance.
- The counsellor introduces her/himself and explains the confidentiality of the meeting and the length of time available and again emphasizes that this is not a counselling session. The limits to confidentiality will be explained and the client informed that the details of this session will be discussed, anonymously, with the counsellor's supervisor.
- The client is handed an information sheet explaining among other things TCS's charitable status and policies in respect of financial contributions, confidentiality and data protection
- Some practical details are taken. These include name of any referrer and name of GP, details of any medication, availability of client – days of week, time of day etc.
- A major part of the session will probably be taken up by the problem as seen by the client, but it is also necessary to find something of the history from early days to the present time, and important to get a picture of the family or origin, current family arrangements and what support the client has available.
- At the end of the assessment session an experienced counsellor may decide, after consultation with their supervisor, to offer to take the client her/himself. In the case of a trainee counsellor (or if the experienced counsellor has any reservations of the suitability of the case either for her/himself or for the Service) the client will be told that TCS will contact him/her as soon as possible and it should be within two weeks. This break is to enable the counsellor to consult with their supervisor.

## **Post Assessment**

- Following the assessment session, the counsellor will write up the case. His/her own impressions of the client, a possible hypothesis of the problem, and a view of how the work might proceed. This will either be starting counselling with the counsellor who did the assessment, referral to another counsellor in TCS or referral back to GP/referrer. In any case the client will be presented at the supervision at the earliest possible time, and before the first counselling session.
- For trainee counsellors, following the assessment session, they will write up the case. His/her own impressions of the client, a possible hypothesis of the problem, and a view of how the work might proceed will be discussed at the following supervision session and appropriate action will be taken, This will either be starting counselling with the counsellor who did the assessment, referral to another counsellor in TCS or referral back to GP/referrer. In any case the client will be presented at the supervision at the earliest possible time, and before the first counselling session.
- In exceptional cases where delay in progressing counselling will be extremely detrimental to the client, before arranging the next session, the counsellor will contact their supervisor to discuss the assessment and the way forward.

## **Continual Assessment**

It is recognized that assessment is a continuous process within counselling.

## **Training**

The Service will give appropriate training to counsellors to enable them to conduct initial assessments.

## **Consultation**

This procedure has been approved following consultation with supervisors and counsellors.

## **Monitor and Review**

The operation and effectiveness of this procedure will be monitored by the supervisors and reviewed by the Trustees maximum bi-annually and when issues arise

## **DISCIPLINARY POLICY**

### **1. Purpose of Policy**

1.1 The Trustees and supervisors are responsible for the quality of the counselling carried out within the Tenterden Counselling Service ('the Service') and the Trustees are responsible for ensuring that the Service is properly managed and run on a day to day basis. The Trustees acknowledge the high standards of expertise and performance offered by all associated with the Service and are grateful that the ethos of the Service is such that any worries or concerns about standards are addressed in a helpful and supportive way. The Trustees recognize that formal policies and procedures are now expected of even the smallest of charities. The Service must be prepared to act effectively but with sensitivity to ensure required standards are maintained and this procedure shall be used to investigate and resolve any complaints or concerns regarding the quality of the work or the conduct of any person within the Service.

### **2. Confidentiality**

All aspects of any concern will be dealt with in a confidential manner. Information will be divulged within the Service on a need-to-know basis.

### **3. Procedure**

#### **3.1 Counsellors**

3.1.1. When there is cause for concern about the work or conduct of a counsellor, the supervisor will explain the nature of the complaint and hear the response. If appropriate, ways of resolving the problem will be explored and help offered to overcome difficulties. An action plan may be devised, and follow-up meetings arranged. A record of meetings will be kept by the supervisor. If an action plan cannot be agreed or the action plan is not adequately carried through, the supervisor will inform the Chairman of Trustees and the complaint will move to the second stage.

3.1.2. The purpose of the second stage is to involve the Chairman of the Trustees in attempts to resolve the complaint and for the Chairman of Trustees to decide, at whatever point he/she considers appropriate, whether to recommend to the trustees that the counsellor ceases to work with the Service.

3.1.3. The Chairman of Trustees will write to the counsellor stating the nature of the complaint and arranging a meeting between himself/herself, the counsellor, and the supervisor.

3.1.4. The supervisor and counsellor will have the opportunity to produce evidence and discuss their point of view. If an action plan is agreed, a further meeting (the 'review meeting') will be arranged to review the progress of the action plan. The review meeting will take place within six weeks of the original meeting. At the review meeting, progress on the action plan will be reviewed and a decision taken as to whether the complaint has been resolved, whether a further review period is necessary or whether the Chairman of Trustees decides to recommend that the counsellor should cease to work with the Service. A record of the meetings(s) will be kept by the Chairman of Trustees.

3.1.5. If the complaint is resolved the Chairman of Trustees will write to the counsellor (with a copy to the supervisor) informing them of this decision and of any conditions that may be attached.

3.1.6. If the Chairman of Trustees decides to recommend that the counsellor should cease to work with the Service, he/she will so advise the counsellor and will write to the counsellor with the decision of the trustees after their next meeting.

## **3.2 Supervisors, referrals secretary, committee secretary, treasurer**

3.2.1. When there is cause for concern about the work or conduct of a supervisor, the referrals secretary, the committee secretary or the treasurer, the Chairman of Trustees will take the role of the supervisor in section 3.1.1 above.

3.2.2. If the situation is unresolved, the Chairman of Trustees may, at his/her discretion, invite another trustee to become involved in discussions as in 3.1.4. above, and similar process will be followed.

3.2.3. If the complaint is resolved the Chairman of Trustees will write to the person concerned informing them of this decision and of any conditions that may be attached.

3.2.4. If the Chairman of Trustees decides to recommend that the person concerned should cease to work with the Service, he/she will so advise the person concerned and will write to that person with the decision of the trustees after their next meeting.

## **4. BACP**

If the person complained against wishes to appeal at the end of the disciplinary procedure, they may do so to a person nominated by the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy.

## **5. EMERGENCY PROCEDURES:**

In exceptional circumstances and normally where the safety or well-being of a client is involved or to protect the Service, the Chairman of Trustees has the right to suspend a member of the Service with immediate effect. This person will be advised in writing of the suspension and any conditions which apply. Procedure in paragraph 3 above, as appropriate and decided by the Chairman of Trustees will commence within four weeks of the suspension, which may remain in place until resolution of the complaint.

## **6. Consultation**

This procedure has been approved following consultation with all involved in the Service.

## **7 Monitor and Review**

The operation and effectiveness of this procedure will be evaluated following any need to follow it and will be reviewed by the Trustees maximum bi-annually and when issues arise.

## **EQUALITY & DIVERSITY**

### **Aim of the Policy**

The Trustees of Tenterden Counselling Service ('the Service') recognise the importance of equality of opportunity for all those working within the Service and for users of the Service and will work within the spirit and framework of relevant legislation and in accordance with the statements in this Policy.

### **Objectives of the Service**

People come to the Service with a wide range of difficulties. The Service seeks to promote personal growth towards psychological and emotional health and wholeness of personality, offering a professional service with trained counsellors whose work is professionally supervised.

### **Clients**

The Service welcomes everyone without discrimination for example as to their class, age, colour, creed, culture, gender, transgender, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, race or religion in compliance with current legislation or their ability to contribute to the full cost of the Service. We reserve the right to refer on to other agencies if in the best interest of the client.

### **Counsellors and Supervisors**

The Service welcomes applications from all suitably qualified candidates and will recruit according to the individual's skills and abilities and the needs of the Service at the time and will not discriminate against anyone on the grounds previously stated.

Similarly, the Service accepts that it has a responsibility to encourage all counsellors and supervisors, without discrimination, to develop their abilities and to provide them with appropriate training and development opportunities.

### **Officers**

Officers will be recruited to the Service according to the individual's skills and abilities and the needs of the Service at the time, and there will be no discrimination against any applicant on any of the grounds previously stated.

### **Complaints**

Any member of the Service who feels aggrieved over a matter of discrimination should follow the agreed Grievance Procedure.

### **Consultation**

This Policy has been approved following consultation with all involved in the running and operation of the Service or their representatives.

### **Monitor and Review**



The operation and effectiveness of this Policy will be monitored by the Trustees and reviewed by them maximum bi-annually and when issues arise.

## **EXTERNAL COMPLAINTS**

### **Aim of Procedure**

To establish the way in which the Service responds to any complaint made against it, or anyone associated with it.

### **Initial Action**

All complaints made about an individual or about the Service in general should be referred to the Chairman. A letter acknowledging the complaint will be sent to the complainant by the Chairman. Any complaint relating to the Chairman shall be referred to a Trustee nominated by the Trustees from time to time for this purpose. Any reference to the Chairman in this policy shall be construed accordingly.

### **Investigation**

The Chairman will investigate the complaint, involving any other member(s) of the Service as may be appropriate, and will decide what action, if any, needs to be taken.

### **Post Investigation**

The complainant will be advised in writing by the Chairman of the response of the Service to the complaint and any action taken. If the complaint relates to an individual, they will be sent a copy of this letter.

Any further response from the complainant will be considered and progressed by the Chairman. If the matter cannot be resolved the complainant will be directed to the BACP.

Resolved complaints and those where the complainant has referred the matter to the BACP will be reported to the next meeting of the Trustees.

### **Consultation**

This Procedure has been approved following consultation with all involved in running and operation of the Service or their representatives.

### **Monitor and Review**

The operational effectiveness of this Policy will be monitored by the Trustees and reviewed by them maximum bi-annually and when issues arise.

## GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

### 1. Purpose of Policy

1.1 Tenterden Counselling Service ('the Service') comprises the Trustees, the counsellors, the supervisors and the administrators. The trustees recognize and are grateful that the Service operates successfully because all within it work together, giving freely of their time and expertise for the benefit of clients. There is within the Service a strong ethos of co-operation which the trustees are confident will continue to flourish. However, formal policies and procedures are expected of even a small charity like the Service, so this procedure will be used to investigate and resolve any grievances involving anyone within the Service.

1.2 A grievance is a complaint of unfair, unlawful or unjustified treatment of an individual by another in the Service. Any grievance is important to the individual concerned so this procedure is designed to provide any person who feels aggrieved or dissatisfied with a process which enables their concern(s) to be dealt with fairly and promptly. It does not apply to disciplinary matters or to concerns or complaints about matters that are outside the control of the Service.

1.3 It is intended that effective and proper use of this procedure will encourage and maintain the already good working relationships that exist within the Service. The procedure is about resolution. It is not about apportioning blame or discipline.

### 2. Timescale

Grievances should be raised within six weeks of the complainant being aggrieved.

### 3. Confidentiality

All aspects of any grievance will be dealt with in a confidential manner. Information will be divulged within the Service on a need-to-know basis.

### 4. Informal Procedure

#### 4.1 Counsellors

A counsellor who has a grievance should first discuss it with their supervisor. If the counsellor is a trainee, it may be appropriate for the supervisor to consult with the course tutor. The supervisor will keep a record of the problem and of any action taken. If the counsellor is not satisfied with the outcome of this informal process, he/she may make a formal, written complaint to the Chairman of Trustees, giving full details and the action taken to date. The procedure for a formal complaint will then be followed unless the Chairman decides that the Disciplinary Procedure would be more appropriate.

#### 4.2 Supervisors and Administrators

A supervisor or administrator who has a grievance should first raise it with the Chairman of Trustees who will not investigate but will nominate another Trustee to do so on an informal basis. If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of this informal process, he/she may make a formal written complaint to the Chairman of Trustees.

## 5. Formal Procedure

### 5.1 Counsellors

- 5.1.1 When the written complaint is received, the Chairman of Trustees will confirm receipt within ten days. The Chairman will formally investigate the nature of the grievance, consider paperwork and undertake interviews if and as appropriate. The Chairman will contact the counsellor within four weeks of receipt of the written complaint to report the outcome of any investigation or action taken.
- 5.1.2 If the complaint is resolved, the counsellor and all involved in the investigation will receive written confirmation from the Chairman that the matter is resolved.
- 5.1.3 If the counsellor is not satisfied with the outcome, he/she will be informed that the Service's procedures have been exhausted and that any further complaint should be made through the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy. He/she will be given the BACP membership details of the Service.

### 5.2 Supervisors and Administrators

- 5.2.1 When the written complaint is received, the Chairman of Trustees will confirm receipt in writing within ten days. Unless the Chairman decides that the Disciplinary Procedure would be more appropriate, he/she will formally investigate the nature of the grievance, consider all paperwork and undertake interviews if and as appropriate. The Chairman will contact the complainant within four weeks of receipt of the complaint to report the outcome of any investigation or action taken.
- 5.2.2 If the complaint is resolved, the complainant and all involved in the investigation will receive written confirmation from the Chairman that the matter is resolved.
- 5.2.3 If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome, he/she will be informed that the service's procedures have been exhausted and that any further complaint should be made through the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy. He/she will be provided with the BACP membership details of the Service.

## 6. Consultation

This procedure has been adopted following consultation with all involved in the Service.

## 7. Monitor and Review

The operation and effectiveness of this procedure will be evaluated following any need to follow it and will be reviewed by the trustees maximum bi-annually and when issues arise.

## **SUPERVISION**

### **Objective**

The Trustees of Tenterden Counselling Service ("the Service" or "TCS") recognise that clinical supervision is an essential part of good counselling practice and therefore fund properly qualified supervision for all their counsellors. Supervisors are expected to run the groups as agreed with TCS and are required to have their own supervision in place.

### **Supervision Groups**

#### **Attendance**

Each supervisor holds 24 sessions of supervision a year, each one lasting for two hours. Counsellors are expected to attend supervision, although it is recognised that circumstances may make it difficult, on an occasional basis, for them to do so. The supervisor should be made aware of any intention to miss a session. Should absence occur on a frequent basis the supervisor will address this with the counsellor concerned.

#### **Size of Group**

Our aim is that counsellors will be part of a supervision group of no more than four counsellors.

#### **Clients**

Clients should be presented on a regular basis with priority given to new client assessments and emergencies. Each supervisor will advise the group of expectations of supervision preparation and feed-back.

#### **Trainees**

Some colleges require more supervision for their trainee counsellors than the Service routinely offers. Any extra supervision must be provided from within TCS and is funded by the trainee.

#### **Confidentiality**

The supervision of all TCS clients must be solely within the Service.

#### **Assessment**

Within the 24 annual supervision sessions, time will be allowed for counsellor assessment. Each supervisor will decide how to arrange this. Additionally, outside the 24 supervision sessions, a more formal individual annual assessment will take place when a Supervisor's Assessment form and a Self-Assessment form (available from supervisors) will be prepared, discussed with the individual and signed by both supervisor and counsellor. This should be regarded as an opportunity for counsellors and supervisor to discuss the supervision as well as the client work and an important tool to encourage counsellors to evaluate their work and performance and to think about their future aims in counselling. The document should be kept by the counsellor in his or her personal file.

#### **Administration**

Some supervision time may be used to discuss note-taking. TCS has a policy on what notes should be made of client sessions, in what form and with regard to confidentiality and security. Supervisors need to remind counsellors that end-of-month client returns must be handed in on time even when no work has taken place. This is to ensure that the Trustees have an up-to-date record of the work, which is of course necessary information for them and our fund holders.

## **Continuing Professional Development**

Supervisors are expected to undertake appropriate training opportunities to ensure their own professional development.

## **Consultation**

This policy has been approved following consultation with supervisors and counsellors.

## **Monitoring and Review**

The operation and effectiveness of this procedure will be constantly monitored by the supervisors and reviewed maximum bi-annually and when issues arise by the Trustees when supervisors will be asked to present a report on feedback gathered during annual appraisals mentioned above.

## **SAFEGUARDING POLICY**

**To be read in conjunction with BACP's documents:**

- **Safeguarding Children and Young People in England and Wales**
- **Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults in England and Wales**

## **CONTENTS**

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2. Principles and Values
3. What is abuse and to whom does it apply?
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4. Types of Abuse.
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10. What if the vulnerable adult does not want any action taken?
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## 1. Why do we need an Adult safeguarding policy?

One of the ethical principles of counselling and psychotherapy is *Beneficence* which is a commitment to promoting the client's well-being. It means acting in the best interests of the client based on professional assessment. An obligation to work in the best interests of a client may become paramount when working with clients whose capacity for autonomy is diminished. This can be for a variety of reasons including extreme distress, serious disturbance or other personal constraints. While we recognize that respecting clients' privacy and confidentiality are fundamental requirements for keeping trust and respecting client autonomy, **exceptional** circumstances may prevent the practitioner from seeking clients' consent to a breach of confidence due to the urgency or seriousness of the situation, for example preventing the client causing serious harm to self or others or the client being seriously hurt by another.

## 2. Principles and Values

TCS believes that every person who accesses our services has a right to a life free from fear, to be treated with dignity and respect, to have their choice respected and not to be forced to do anything against their will. TCS believes that everyone has the right to protection from abuse, regardless of their age, culture, disability, gender, racial origin, language, religious belief or sexual orientation.

## 3. What is abuse and to whom does it apply?

Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons. Abuse of a vulnerable adult may consist of a single act or repeated acts. It may occur as a result of a failure to undertake action or appropriate care tasks. It may be an act of neglect or omission to act, or it may occur where a vulnerable person is persuaded to enter into a financial or sexual transaction to which they have not or cannot consent. Abuse can occur in any relationship and may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of the individual.

*Who is included under the heading 'vulnerable adult'?*

This could include people with learning disabilities, mental health problems, older people and people with a physical disability or impairment. It is important to include people whose condition and subsequent vulnerability fluctuates. **It may also include victims of domestic abuse, hate crime and anti-social abuse behaviour.** The persons' need for additional support to protect themselves may be increased when complicated by additional factors, such as, physical frailty or chronic illness, sensory impairment, challenging behaviour, drug or alcohol problems, social or emotional problems, poverty or homelessness.

## 4. Types of Abuse.

### a) **Physical abuse**

- Hitting, slapping, and scratching.
- Pushing or rough handling
- Restraining without justifiable reasons
- Inappropriate and unauthorised use of medication
- Using medication as a chemical form of restraint.

- Inappropriate sanctions including deprivation of food, clothing, warmth and health care needs.

**b) Sexual abuse**

- Sexual activity which an adult client cannot or has not consented to or has been pressured into
- Rape or attempted rape
- Sexual assault and harassment.

**c) Psychological abuse**

- Emotional abuse
- Verbal abuse
- Humiliation and ridicule
- Deliberate denial of religious or cultural needs.

**d) Financial abuse**

- Misuse or theft of money
- Fraud and/or extortion of material assets
- Misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.
- Exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance.

**e) Neglect and acts of omission**

- Ignoring medical or physical care needs
- Failure to give privacy and dignity.
- Professional neglect.

**f) Domestic abuse**

- Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or who have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass but is not limited to the following types of abuse.
- Psychological
- Physical
- Sexual
- Financial

**g) Digital Abuse**

Any incident of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour over the web or through the use of social media.

Emotional controlling behaviour is a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and / or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

- A referral to the police or Social Services can be made and if applicable also to Child Protection agencies.
- Make a safety plan with the client.



- Give the client any relevant leaflets and information.

In any event - regardless of it reaching the level for referral – counsellors need to consider the following issues:

- Give priority to ensuring the client's immediate safety.
- Ensure that the client understands the confidentiality policy.
- Be sensitive and believe what the client is telling you.
- Find out what the client wants and see if you can help to achieve it.
- Give up to date information on what other agencies offer.

Tell the supervisor that a client has been referred and to whom. Provide him/her with a written summary of what you have done and why, including a copy of the completed toolkit form. If you have acted without the client's consent include a report giving details for your decision to breach confidentiality.

## 5. Recognising Abuse

**'Research to date has found cases of abuse and neglect in all social and economic strata, in rural and urban settings, in all religious groups and in all races'** (Shifting emphasis from abused to abuser D G Bennett, May 1990)

It is important to consider the environment and context in which abuse is alleged or suspected because exploitation, deception, misuse of authority, intimidation or coercion may result in the vulnerable adult being incapable of making his or her own decisions.

## 6. Procedure:

### a) Adults

At the initial interview the level of confidentiality is explained, and a contract is presented for the client to sign at the commencement of therapy.

1. When Domestic Abuse (DA) is disclosed, the counsellor will remind the client about the limits of confidentiality at TCS referring to the contract for clarification.
2. Tell the client that in DA situations we use a toolkit based on research to assess the level or risk of serious harm. It is called the Co-ordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse – toolkit (CAADA-toolkit) and suggest it be used. If on completion of the recommendation there is a referral (because the person falls into the highest risk category) then the counsellor will seek the client's consent to make an appropriate referral e.g. to Social Services or the police.
3. If the client is at serious risk explain sensitively that this is the case. The client may be overwhelmed by it, so state your concerns using the information the client has given you.
4. Explain what will happen next:
  - a) A referral to the police can be made and if applicable also to child protection agencies
  - b) Make a safety plan for the client.
  - c) Give the client any relevant leaflets and information.
5. In any event – regardless of it reaching the level for referral – counsellors need to
6. consider the following issues:
  - a) Give priority to ensuring the client's immediate safety.
  - b) Ensure that the client understands the confidentiality policy.
  - c) Be sensitive and believe what the client is telling you.
  - d) Find out what the client wants and see if you can help to achieve it.
  - e) Give up to date information on what other agencies offer.

### b) Young people

Children under 18 years have the same rights of confidentiality as adults.

- Counsellors have an ethical responsibility and a legal duty of confidentiality towards the client even when they are less than 18 years old.
- A child 13-16 years of age who has the capacity to understand and make their own decisions would be regarded as 'Gillick Competent'. This status gives the child certain rights to make decisions and be granted confidentiality without parental consent.
- Trust and confidentiality are fundamental to counselling; best practice requires counsellors to seek the consent of their clients for any disclosure of personally sensitive information.
- It would not usually be the practice of TCS to contact the parents of any child they are working with.
- Where the parents contact the service for information regarding their child's progress or otherwise, this should only be with the prior consent of the child.
- In the event of you having some concern of the child being suicidal, it may be appropriate to inform an accompanying parent/carer, preferable (but not necessarily) with prior consent of the child.

## **7. Who is responsible for ensuring adult protection concerns are addressed?**

Everyone has a responsibility to ensure that concerns about the abuse of vulnerable adults are addressed. The lead responsibility for managing adult protection lies with the Social Services Agency although the government requires other organisations to work in partnership with them.

## **8. Who should report concerns about adult abuse?**

Anyone may report concerns of abuse or suspected abuse directly to the Social Services Agency. These reports may be made by phone. Concerns should be reported even if an adult or child does not want any action taken, if there is a risk to themselves or others. Once a referral has been made to the relevant Social Services Agency, it is the responsibility of that agency to respond.

## **9. When and how should we share confidential information?**

*Principles that should govern sharing of information include:*

- Confidentiality must not be confused with secrecy.
- Information will only be shared on a 'need to know basis' when it is in the best interests of the service user(s).
- Informed consent should be obtained but if it is not possible and other vulnerable adults are at risk, it may be necessary to override the requirement.
- It is inappropriate for agencies to give assurances of absolute confidentiality in cases where there are concerns about abuse, particularly in those situations when other vulnerable people may be at risk.

## **10. Responsibilities**

### **a) Self-Care**

Working with clients who disclose abuse can be both difficult and stressful for the counsellor.

We strongly advise counsellors to take steps to gain support and guidance as soon as possible after the session by speaking to their supervisor.

## b) Duty of Care

The need to maintain client confidentiality needs to be carefully balanced with a competing obligation to protect from abuse by following reporting guidelines.

- Counsellors working with children and vulnerable adults face difficult choices and dilemmas as they seek to reconcile their obligation to protect anyone from abuse, whilst attempting to maintain a high level of confidentiality.
- Where possible it is always better to encourage and support the client to make the disclosure, or to gain their consent for you to report the abuse
- Where the client refuses to give consent, the counsellor is faced with an ethical and professional dilemma.
- It is the policy at TCS that when suspicions of abuse arise, that the counsellor consults with their Supervisor.
- For additional support and guidance, the counsellor may consult with the BACP on Tel. 01455883300.
- It is the responsibility of the TCS Trustees to ensure Counsellors have read this policy as part of their induction process

This policy will be reviewed by the Trustees at least annually.

## 12. Useful addresses.

### **Kent County Council**

Headquarters.  
General enquiries  
County Hall  
Maidstone, Kent, ME14 1XQ

TEL. 03000416161  
Fax 01622 696492  
Out of hours 03000 419191  
24hr. contact centre  
03000414141 or 030003335540

### **Ashford Borough Council**

Civic Centre  
Tannery Lane,  
Ashford TN23 1PL

Tel 03000 414141  
Fax 01233 205700  
Minicom 01233 205777 Youth Support Team

### **BACP**

4, School Lane  
Hungerford RG17 7HP

Tel 01455883300

## **Data Protection and Retention**

### **1. Purpose**

The purpose of this Policy is to ensure that necessary records and documents of Tenterden Counselling Service (hereinafter known as TCS) including both those under its own control and those under the control of its counsellors and other agents) are adequately protected and maintained and to ensure that records that are no longer needed by TCS are of no value are discarded at the proper time. This Policy is also for aiding Trustees, administrators and counsellors of TCS understanding their obligations in retaining electronic and other documents.

### **2. Policy**

This Policy represents TCS's policy regarding the retention and disposal of records and the retention and disposal of electronic documents.

### **3. Administration**

Attached as Appendix A is a Record Retention Schedule that is approved as the initial maintenance, retention and disposal schedule for physical records of TCS and the retention and disposal of electronic documents. The Chair of TCS (the "Administrator") is the person in charge of the administration of this Policy and the implementation of processes and procedures to ensure that the Record Retention Schedule is followed. The Administrator is also authorised to: make modifications to the Record Retention Schedule from time to time to ensure that it is following National legislation and includes the appropriate document and record categories for TCS; monitor legislation affecting record retention; annually review the record retention and disposal program; and monitor compliance with this Policy.

In addition, any retained information can only be used for the purpose for which it is stored. This is compliant with the Data Protection Act 1998. The TCS website will include a suitable Privacy Statement which is updated as necessary.

### **4. Suspension of record disposal in the event of legal proceedings or claims**

There are certain occasions when information needs to be preserved beyond any limits set out in the Policy. The Policy must be SUSPENDED relating to a specific customer or document and the information retained beyond the period specified in the TCS Data Retention Schedule in the following circumstances:

- Legal proceedings or a regulatory or similar investigation or obligation to produce information are known to be likely, threatened or actual.
- A crime is suspected or detected.
- Information is relevant to a company in liquidation or receivership, where a debt is due to TCS.
- Information is considered by any Trustee administrator or counsellor to be of potential historical importance and this has been confirmed by the Administrator.

In the case of possible or actual legal proceedings, investigations or crimes occurring, the type of information that needs to be retained relates to any that will help or harm TCS or the other side's case or liability or amount involved.

If there is any doubt over whether legal proceedings, an investigation or a crime could occur, or what information is relevant or material in these circumstances, the Administrator should be contacted, and legal advice sought.

The Administrator shall take such steps as is necessary to promptly inform all staff of any suspension in the further disposal of documents.

## **5. Security of Personal Information**

TCS will take reasonable technical and organisational precautions to prevent the loss, misuse or alteration of a client's personal information.

TCS will store all personal information on our secure (password and firewall-protected) servers

TCS is committed to protecting and respecting the privacy of its clients attached as Appendix B is the Privacy Notice to which it will adhere and will be displayed on our website.

TCS will not itself hold any client clinical records in the normal course of its operations. The counsellors and supervisors working within TCS must comply with data protection legislation and guidance and with the requirements as to record keeping, the disclosure of records and client confidentiality as set out in this Policy, the Handbook of TCS and elsewhere from time to time. Both counsellors and supervisors will adhere to these requirements including any applicable timescales after they no longer work within TCS

If for whatever reason any Trustee or administrator of TCS receives any client clinical records they shall take reasonable steps to return them to the originator as soon as possible save as follows. If the material is received in the course of their duties then they shall return or destroy that material as soon as it is clear those duties are discharged and, in the meantime, it shall be kept in a secure place.

Any other information not comprising clinical records which is processed by TCS shall not be kept for longer than is necessary for that purpose or those purposes and shall be dealt with in accordance with the Record Retention schedule below.

Notwithstanding the provisions above, TCS will retain documents (including electronic documents) containing personal information:

- \*to the extent TCS is required to do so by law;
- \*if the Trustees of TCS believe that the documents may be relevant to any ongoing or prospective legal proceedings;
- \*and to establish, exercise or defend TCS legal rights (including providing information to others for the prevention or detection of a crime).

## **6. Amendments**

TCS may update this policy from time to time by publishing a new version. It should be checked occasionally to ensure the Policy remains relevant.

## **7. Applicability**

This Policy applies to all physical records generated in the course of TCS's operation, including both original documents and reproductions. It also applies to the electronic documents described above.

## APPENDIX A RECORD RETENTION SCHEDULE

The Record Retention Schedule is organised as follows:  
SECTION TOPIC

### Income and Monies received

Document	Retention Period	Reason for Retention period
Bank paying counterfoils	Six years from the end of the financial year in which the transaction was made.	Charities Act
Bank statements		
Remittance advices		
Correspondence re. donations		
Bank reconciliations		
Receipts cash book		
Deeds of covenant/Gift aid donations	Six years after last payment made. Twelve years if payments outstanding or dispute regarding the Deed	Data Protection Act
Legacies	Six years after the estate has been wound up	Data Protection Act

### Personnel Records

Document	Retention Period	Reason for Retention period
Accident books, accident records/reports	Three years after last entry or end of investigation if later.	The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995
Organisation charts	Permanently	Record of the Trust
Personnel files and training records	Six years after individual no longer associated with the Trust	Limitation Act 1980
Emoluments, wages and salary records	Six years plus current year	Taxes Management Act
Expense accounts/records	Six years plus current year	Taxes Management Act
Application forms and interview notes (for unsuccessful candidates)	Six months to a year	Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and Race Relations Act 1976 recommend 6 months. One-year limitation for

		defamation actions under Limitations Act

## Building and Property

Document	Retention period	Reason for Retention period
Deeds of title	Permanently or until six years after the property is disposed of.	Data Protection Act
Leases	Fifteen years after expiry	Limitations Act 1960
Records of major refurbishments, warranties, planning consents, design documents, final health and safety files	Permanently or until six years after the property is disposed of	Data Protection Act

## Insurance

Document	Retention period	Reason for Retention period
Policies	Three years after lapse	Data Protection Act
Claims correspondence	Three years after settlement	Data Protection Act

## Other Documents

Document	Retention period	Reason for Retention period
Corporate records including Trustee minutes or meetings and decisions	Permanently	Data Protection Act
Annual Audit Reports and financial statements together with working papers relating to the audit	Permanently	Record of Trust
Annual accounts and annual review	Six years from end of current year	Record of Trust
Major agreements of historical significance	Permanently	Record of Trust
Investment certificates	Permanently	Charities Act
Health and safety records	Three years for general records. Permanently for certain other records	Personal injury actions must be commenced within three years of injury. However,

		injuries not capable of detection within that period, such as asbestos, the time period may be substantially extended.
Investment ledger	Permanently	Charities Act
Fixed assets register	Permanently	Charities Act
Correspondence and Internal memoranda	Six years from the date of the document. Permanently if relates to non-routine matters or having significant lasting consequences	Data Protection Act
Electronic documents – client referral emails.	Deleted after the Referrals Secretary is notified by a counsellor that a client has left the service.	Data Protection Act
Electronic documents - other email	Deleted after twelve months unless subject matter requires it to be treated as correspondence	Data Protection Act
Other electronic documents – including Microsoft office suite and PDF files	Retention depends upon subject matter. It should be no longer than six years. If deemed essential it should then be printed and stored before deletion.	Data Protection Act



## Appendix B

### Privacy

Tenterden Counselling Service (“TCS”, “we” or “us”) is committed to protecting and respecting your privacy in connection with your use of our website, [www.tenterdencounselling.org.uk](http://www.tenterdencounselling.org.uk) (“Website”)

Please read the following carefully to understand our practices regarding your personal information and how we will collect, use and disclose your personal information.

The current Data Controller for TCS is Doctor Neil Pillai.

### Changes

Our privacy policy is regularly reviewed to make sure that we continue to serve your privacy interests. We reserve the right to modify or otherwise update this privacy policy and these changes will be posted on our website. We encourage you to visit this page from time to time to ensure that you are aware of any changes we may have made.

### Information We May Collect from You

We may collect and process the following information about you:

1. Personal information including, for example, your name, e-mail address, telephone, and information about your usage of the website that may identify you as an individual or allow online or offline contact with you as an individual.
2. Device Information such as operating system version, device type, and system performance information. The information we collect via this website may also include your IP address (this is your device's individual identification number that is assigned to it when connected to the Internet) which is automatically logged by our web server.

In order to save you re-entering information, this website collects data which allows us to recognise you, your preferences and how you use this website. This information is collected by ‘session cookies’ and ‘persistent cookies’. Cookies are small strings of data stored in your device's temporary memory when you navigate around our website. Session cookies are deleted when you close your browser, but persistent cookies are not. Our cookies do not store your email address or other personal information.

Our counsellors keep their own client information and are the data controllers of that material. Any requests in relation to that must be addressed to your counsellor, although TCS would wish to know if you were dissatisfied in any way. Please contact the TCS data controller in those circumstances.

### What We Do with Your Information

We collect your personal information to allow our counsellors to communicate information to you.

We do not pass your personal details on to any other third party, unless we have specific permission from you to do so. You have the right to ask to see what personal information we hold about you and you have the right to ask us to remove your personal information from our systems.

## **Statistical Analysis**

The data we collect for statistical analysis to evaluate our service does not include personal data. This data is anonymous and aggregated and is used to maintain and improve the quality of our service and may be used in reports for our Trustees.

## **Security & Confidentiality**

The security of your personal information is important to us. We follow the most recent regulatory EU and NHS standards and comply with the Data Protection Act and GDPR to protect all information submitted to us, both during transmission and once it is received.

If you have any questions about the security of your personal information, you can contact our Data Controller Dr Neil Pillai at [contact@tenterdencounselling.org.uk](mailto:contact@tenterdencounselling.org.uk)

## **Law Enforcement**

We reserve the right to cooperate with law enforcement officials in the investigation of alleged unlawful activities of our website users or relating to our website users. We will have no legal liability for such disclosures of your personal information.

Unless we suspect fraud, we do not use your IP address to identify you personally.

## **Where We Store Your Personal Information**

Our website is hosted on the wpengine.com platform. wpengine.com provides us with the online platform that allows us to offer our services to you. Your data may be stored through wpengine.com's data storage, databases and the general wpengine.com applications. They store your data on secure servers behind a firewall.

Emails sent via our website or email address are managed on the password protected Gmail platform and are viewed securely only by approved TCS staff through password-protected IT devices.

## **Other websites**

This Privacy Policy only covers personal data collected via this website. While we carefully select the websites to which we may link, we are not responsible for the privacy practices or the content of these websites.

## **Your Rights**

### **Access**

You have the right to request a copy of certain personal information we hold about you. You also have a right to seek correction or erasure of that personal information and the right to seek the

limiting or ceasing our processing of it. To do this, simply email Dr Neil Pillai, Data Controller at [contact@tenterdencounselling.org.uk](mailto:contact@tenterdencounselling.org.uk)

## **More information**

Detailed information about your rights under UK Data Protection legislation can be found on the website of the United Kingdom Information Commissioner, which is (as at the date of this privacy policy) <https://ico.org.uk/>

This policy will be reviewed by the Trustees at least annually.

## Lone Working

### Safety of Lone Counsellors Policy

Some of our counsellors counsel in the evenings. This may mean that they and their client are the only people in a building. At TCS we take the safety of our counsellors very seriously. It is therefore essential that all our counsellors study this section of the handbook carefully and are familiar with our policies.

It is the counsellor's responsibility to abide by TCS guidelines and to complete the TCS risk assessment at Appendix A.

#### 1. Student Counsellors.

TCS do not expect student counsellors to see clients when they are alone in the building.

#### 2.. Qualified Counsellors

There is no obligation for any counsellors to work in a building alone, but we realise there are times when it may be convenient for counsellor or client to do so.

A first or assessment appointment with a client should not be scheduled at a time when the counsellor will be alone in the building.

Counsellors must always discuss with their supervisor any client they are considering seeing when alone in the building. If unsure of the suitability of the client, then they can be offered an alternative time or referred on to a more appropriate service. No counsellor is obliged to work with anyone they feel unsure about.

To avoid being in a building alone with a client, counsellors can either arrange a 'buddy' system with other counsellors or arrange to be there when other evening activities are taking place.

However, if a counsellor does decide to proceed with lone working, and has agreed the suitability of the client with their supervisor, there are certain procedures which should be followed: -

*-Counsellors should Inform their supervisor and the referrals secretary of any session times when they will be regularly working alone in the building.*

*-The counsellor should make themselves familiar with the building's layout and know where the exits and entrances are located in relation to the counselling room.*

*- The counsellor should have a pre-planned escape route to a place of safety. This should include the 'means of escape in case of fire'; where to go should a general emergency arise and also the escape route should a client threaten violence.*

*-The counsellor should also notify a third party of their whereabouts each time when working alone and advise them when they are out of the building.*

*- The counsellor should sit in the chair closest to the door in order to have a clear path if there is need to leave the room quickly.*

*- Counsellors should ensure they always have their mobile phones during sessions and keep them switched on. They must ensure the phone is fully charged and has credit. It is advisable to have 999 on speed dial in case of need. If mobile phone coverage is poor, then lone workers should discuss with their supervisor as to how to deal with the situation.*

*- Counsellors should not continue with any session if they feel that the client is under the influence of alcohol or drugs, or if they appear aggressive or abusive, or present a risk. Counsellors should make whatever excuses needed to safely leave the situation.*

### **3. Dealing with threatening behaviour.**

Be aware that due to changes in the NHS, you may now be meeting clients with more complex issues.

Be aware if a client has a history of violence. If there is anything within the client's history that causes you concern, then ensure that you have both the experience and the support you need to work with the client. Clients who have a history of impulse control problems, such as explosive rage, are more likely than other clients to lose control with a counsellor.

Only work within your scope of practice and experience – make sure that you have access to relevant agencies (such as local mental health team) so you can refer a client on if need be.

Be honest with yourself - if you have any doubts about working with a particular client talk to your supervisor. If a client is expressing a lot of anger or emotional upset – are you able to 'hold' them safely? Giving some thought to such matters before they happen will help prepare you to act in the best interests of both your client and yourself.

If there is an emergency – what will you do? Having a practiced procedure in place will help you to react more calmly. Hopefully you will never need this but better to have in place in advance rather than having no idea what to do in an emergency.

REMEMBER that the earlier you spot a potential problem arising, the easier it will be to avoid it. It is very rare for aggression or violence to come from nowhere. So be aware of changes in the behaviour of the person you are with, especially if they seem to be getting irritated or angry.

- Try to use your own communications skills to defuse a difficult situation early on.
- Think about what you say and how you say it and be aware of your body language.
- Try to remain calm and do not be drawn into their anger.
- Try to distance yourself both physically and emotionally
- Be assertive but avoid meeting aggression with aggression Use exit strategies.
- Have a pre-planned way to excuse yourself from a situation if it looks like becoming aggressive.
- Trust your instincts – Never underestimate a threat: if you feel uneasy or alarm bells start ringing, ACT immediately to get out of the situation

We are advised by the police that if a client does threaten violence to the point where the counsellor does not feel it can be controlled verbally, the correct response is for the counsellor to escape as fast as possible to a place of safety. If a self-defence situation arises, reasonable force may be used against a client.

All counsellors should feel free to call the police to any situation where they feel this is necessary. Besides the conventional 999, mobile phones reach emergency services through 112, even in

areas where there is no signal. Emergency services 112 are able to track where you may be if you are unable to talk.

Although TCS will do everything possible to support lone workers, ultimately it is a matter for the counsellor to ensure that the environment in which they counsel is one with which they feel comfortable.

Counsellors who do not adhere to this policy are putting themselves at risk and disciplinary action will be taken.

This policy will be reviewed by the Trustees at least annually.

## Appendix A - Risk Assessment

Potential Risk	Level of Risk: High, Medium or Low	Action to be taken to control Risk
Have you discussed seeing this client when you are alone in the building with your supervisor?		
Have you informed your supervisor and the Referrals Secretary of any session times when you will be regularly working alone in the building?		
Have you notified a third party of your whereabouts?		
Are you familiar with the layout of the building and do you know where the exits and entrances are in relation to the counselling room?		
Is there mobile phone reception?		
Is the building well lit?		
What is the previous history of the client?		
Are there any obstacles in front of the door?		
Are things available that could be used as weapons?		
How well does the client appear to be?		
Is there evidence of drink or drug use?		
Are they dressed appropriately?		

Do I feel uneasy at any point during the session with this client?		

## CONSTITUTION

adopted on the **Eleventh day of October 2004 (reviewed November 2007, no changes made)**

### A Name.

The name of the Association is The Tenterden Counselling Service ("the Charity").

### B Administration.

- (1) The Service shall be registered as a charity with the Charity Commissioners. The Charity shall have no political or religious affiliation and shall not be profit making.
- (2) Subject to the matters set out below the Charity and its property shall be administered and managed in accordance with this constitution by the Trustees.

### C Objects.

The Charity's objects ("the objects") are:

- (1) To relieve persons suffering from mental and emotional problems in such ways as the Service thinks fit.
- (2) To educate train and develop persons in counselling so that they may assist in the treatment of persons suffering from mental or emotional disorders or problems.

### D Powers.

In furtherance of the objects but not otherwise the Trustees may exercise the following powers:

- (i) to provide advice and counselling to persons suffering from mental and emotional problems.
- (ii) to provide information to the public concerning the work of the Charity.
- (iii) to raise funds and to invite and receive contributions provided that in raising funds the Trustees shall not undertake any substantial permanent trading activities and shall conform to any relevant requirements of the law;
- (iv) to co-operate with other charities, voluntary bodies and statutory authorities operating in furtherance of the objects or of similar charitable purposes and to exchange information and advice with them;
- (vi) to establish or support any charitable trusts, associations or institutions formed for all or any of the objects;



- (vi) to appoint Trustees;
- (vii) to appoint and constitute such advisory committees as the Trustees may think fit;
- (viii) to engage a director, treasurer, counselling supervisors, counsellors, and such other persons as thought necessary to carry out the day-to-day management of the service and to implement the objectives and enforce the policies and procedures of the service.
- (ix) to do all such other lawful things as are necessary for the achievement of the objects.

## **E Membership**

Membership of the Charity shall be the Trustees.

- (1) The number of Trustees shall be not less than three nor more than seven and shall include if possible a doctor, a priest, a psychiatrist, and a social worker.
- (2) Each and every Trustee shall have one vote.
- (3) The Trustees may by unanimous vote of the other Trustees and for good reason terminate the office of any individual Trustee: Provided that the individual concerned shall have the right to be heard by a meeting of the Trustees, accompanied by a friend, before a final decision is made.
- (4) Nobody shall be appointed as a Trustee who is aged under 18 or who would if appointed be disqualified under the provisions of clause J.

## **F Patrons**

The Trustees shall have the power to invite eminent persons to become Patrons of the Service.

## **G Honorary Officer.**

At the annual general meeting of the Charity the Trustees shall select from amongst themselves a chairman who shall hold office from the conclusion of that meeting.

## **H Conduct of Trustees Meetings.**

The Trustees shall meet at least twice each year. A special Trustees meeting may be called at any time by the chairman or by any two Trustees upon not less than 4 days' notice being given to the other Trustees of the matters to be discussed.

The chairman shall act as chairman at meetings of the Trustees. If the chairman is absent from any meeting, the Trustees present shall choose one of their number to be chairman of the meeting before any other business is transacted

There shall be a quorum when at least three Trustees are present at a meeting.

Every matter shall be determined by a majority of votes of the Trustees present and voting on the question but in the case of equality of votes the chairman of the meeting shall have a second or casting vote.

The Trustees shall keep minutes, in books kept for the purpose, of the proceedings at their meetings and any sub-committee.

The Trustees may from time to time make and alter rules for the conduct of their business, the summoning and conduct of their meetings and the custody of documents. No rule may be made which is inconsistent with this constitution.

The Trustees may appoint one or more sub-committees consisting of three or more Trustees for the purpose of making any inquiry or supervising or performing any function or duty which in the opinion of the Trustees would be more conveniently undertaken or carried out by a sub-committee: provided that all acts and proceedings of any such sub-committees shall be fully and promptly reported to a Trustees meeting.

The proceedings of Trustees meetings shall not be invalidated by any vacancy among their number or by any failure to appoint or any defect in the appointment or qualification of a Trustee.

## **I Attendance at Trustee Meetings**

- (1) All Trustees shall be entitled to attend Trustee Meetings.
- (2) The Director and Treasurer shall be entitled to attend meetings of the Trustees and, at the discretion of the Trustees, so may other persons engaged to assist in the management of the service. Such attendance shall be in an advisory non-voting capacity.
- (3) The Trustees may co-opt other persons to attend their meetings in an advisory non-voting capacity. Each appointment of a co-opted person shall be made at a meeting of the Trustees and shall take effect from the end of that meeting. The Trustees at their pleasure may end the attendance of co-opted persons.
- (4) All Counsellors currently active within the Service shall select annually by secret ballot one of their number whom they wish to recommend for co-option at the Trustees discretion to attend Trustee Meetings.
- (5) Co-opted persons, and any other persons who are not Trustees, at the discretion of the chairman, may be excluded from any business of the committee relating to individual clients, counsellors, prospective or past counsellors, or officers of the service.

## **J Determination of Office of Trustee.**

A Trustee shall cease to hold office if he or she:

- (1) is disqualified from acting as a Trustee by virtue of section 72 of the Charities Act 1993 (or any statutory re-enactment or modification of that provision);
- (2) becomes incapable by reason of mental disorder, illness or injury of managing and administering his or her own affairs;
- (3) is absent without the permission of the other Trustees from all their meetings held within a period of six months and the other Trustees resolve that his or her office be vacated; or
- (4) Notifies to the other Trustees a wish to resign (but only if at least three Trustees will remain in office when the notice of resignation is to take effect).

- (5) Is the subject of a decision under clause E (4) above.

**K Trustees not to be personally interested.**

No Trustee(s) shall acquire any interest in property belonging to the charity (otherwise than as a Trustee(s) for the charity) or receive remuneration or be interested (otherwise than as a Trustee(s)) in any contract entered into by the Trustees.

Any Trustee(s) for the time being who is a solicitor, accountant or other person engaged in a profession may charge and be paid all the usual professional charges for business done by him or her or his or her firm when instructed by the other Trustees to act in a professional capacity on behalf of the Charity: Provided that at no time shall a majority of the Trustees benefit under this provision and that a Trustee shall withdraw from any meeting at which his or her own instruction or remuneration, or that of his or her firm, is under discussion.

**L Receipts and expenditure.**

The funds of the Charity, including all donations contributions and bequests, shall be paid into an account operated by the Trustees in the name of the Charity at such bank as the Trustees shall from time to time decide. All cheques must be signed by any two of the Chairman, Director, and Treasurer, or anyone authorised by the Trustees to deputise for any of them.

The funds belonging to the Charity shall be applied only in furthering the objects.

**M Property.**

The Trustees shall cause the title to all investments held by or on behalf of the charity to be vested in not less than three individuals appointed by them as holding trustees. Holding trustees may be removed by the Trustees at their pleasure and shall act in accordance with the lawful directions of the Trustees. Provided they act only in accordance with the lawful directions of the Trustees, the holding trustees shall not be liable for the acts and defaults of the Trustees.

**N Accounts.**

- (1) The financial year shall be from 1<sup>st</sup> January to 31<sup>st</sup> December
- (2) The Trustees shall comply with their obligations under the Charities Act 1993 (or any statutory re-enactment or modification of that Act) with regard to:
  - (a) the keeping of accounting records for the Charity;
  - (b) the preparation of annual statements of account for the charity;
  - (c) the auditing or independent examination of the statements of account of the Charity; and
  - (d) the transmission of the statements of account of the Charity to the Commission.

## **O Annual Report.**

The Trustees shall comply with their obligations under the Charities Act 1993 (or any statutory re-enactment or modification of that Act) with regard to the preparation of an annual report and its transmission to the Commission.

## **P Annual Return.**

The Trustees shall comply with their obligations under the Charities Act 1993 (or any statutory re-enactment or modification of that Act) with regard to the preparation of an annual return and its transmission to the Commission.

## **Q Annual General Meeting.**

- (1) There shall be an annual general meeting of the Charity which shall be held in the month of February in each year or as soon as practicable thereafter.
- (2) Every annual general meeting shall be called by the Trustees. The Director shall give at least 14 days notice of the annual general meeting to all Trustees, counsellors currently active with the Charity, officers of the Charity, and all such other persons as shall be decided by the Trustees.
- (3) The chairman shall act as chairman at the meeting. If the chairman is absent from any meeting, the Trustees present shall choose one of their number to be chairman of the meeting before any other business is transacted
- (4) The Trustees shall present to each annual general meeting the report and accounts of the Charity for the preceding year. The report should include a statement of who is currently a Trustee of the Charity.
- (6) The Trustees shall select from amongst themselves a chairman who shall hold office in the forthcoming year from the conclusion of that meeting.
- (7) There shall be a quorum when at least three Trustees are present at a meeting.

## **R Notices.**

Any notice required to be served on any Trustee or other persons entitled to attend a meeting shall be in writing and shall be served by the Director or the Trustees on those persons either personally or by sending it through the post in a prepaid letter addressed to such Trustee or other persons at his or her last known address in the United Kingdom, and any letter so sent shall be deemed to have been received within 10 days of posting.

## **S Alterations to the Constitution.**

- (1) Subject to the following provisions of this clause the Constitution may be altered by a resolution supported by the vote of at least three Trustees present and voting at a Trustees meeting. The notice of the Trustees meeting must include notice of the resolution, setting out the terms of the alteration proposed.

- (2) No amendment may be made to clause A (the name of charity clause), clause C (the objects clause), clause K (Trustees not to be personally interested clause), clause T (the dissolution clause) or this clause without the prior consent in writing of the Commissioners.
- (3) No amendment may be made which would have the effect of making the Charity cease to be a charity at law.
- (4) The Trustees should promptly send to the Commission a copy of any amendment made under this clause.

## **T Dissolution.**

Any decision to dissolve the Charity must be made at a Trustees meeting must be supported the votes of at least three Trustees present and voting. The Trustees shall have power to realise any assets held by or on behalf of the Charity. Any assets remaining after the satisfaction of any proper debts and liabilities shall be given or transferred to such other charitable institution or institutions having objects similar to the objects of the Charity as the Trustees of the Charity may determine or failing that shall be applied for some other charitable purpose. A copy of the statement of accounts, or account and statement, for the final accounting period of the Charity must be sent to the Commission.

**Effective date of the constitution.** This constitution shall take effect from the date that it was adopted.