



External Assessment - Guidelines for Applicants

Procedure applies to:	Applicants to Volunteer Counsellor positions
Procedure approved by:	Trustee for Counselling
Procedure start date:	January 2016
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Contact for queries about procedure:	Head of Counselling
To be read in conjunction with:	Application and Selection Process Guidelines for Applicants

Following a successful interview, all applicants applying to become Volunteer Counsellors at Basingstoke Counselling Service must undergo an external assessment.

The aim of the assessment is to:

- Determine the applicant's suitability to see BCS clients.
- Determine the applicant's potential to work with the unconscious and their awareness of the need for developing self-awareness and personal growth.

The external assessor is an experienced and well qualified psychodynamic counsellor or psychotherapist who has no other connection with the counselling service. The applicant should be unknown to the assessor.

A written report will be prepared by the assessor and sent to the applicant. The applicant is then requested to send a copy of the report to the Head of Counselling to share with the rest of the interview panel. A position of Volunteer Counsellor cannot be offered if the applicant is unwilling to share the assessment with the Head of Counselling.

The Head of Counselling may wish to discuss the report with the applicant, as part of the application process.

If the applicant is offered a position as a Volunteer Counsellor, it is recommended that a copy of the report is also made available to the applicant's new Supervisor at BCS as this will help in the process of allocating suitable clients. If, for any reason, there are aspects of the report which the applicant wishes to remain confidential, this can be discussed with the Head of Counselling, and appropriate extracts made available to the Supervisor.

Decision making

The decision on the applicant's suitability to be taken on as a Volunteer Counsellor is the responsibility of the Service, and not the assessor.

The assessment

A copy of the applicant's application form will be sent to the assessor before the interview. The Head of Counselling may ask for specific areas to be explored. During the interview the assessor may explore any of these areas:

- personal history, past and present family dynamics, traumas or significant losses
- professional training and experience
- reasons for wanting to become a counsellor and relevant current life situation
- personal experience of counselling or psychotherapy
- understanding of the counselling process
- understanding of unconscious processes
- capacity to be in touch with own feelings
- any particular rigidities of the personality
- potential to work with negative reactions
- ability to relate - using the experience of the assessment