

# BACP Information Services & AIP

The BACP Information Services Team can help AIP members. The Information Service Department has a team of nine people who are all dedicated to helping the members of BACP and to promoting BACP and the ethics and safe practice of counselling. The Information Services Department is made up of several smaller departments. In the forefront we have reception, general information, members ethics support team and the two directories - Counselling & Psychotherapy Resource Directory and the Training Directory. Behind the scenes we produce the Information Sheets that offer common sense and ethical approaches to all aspects of counselling. We have a growing database of agencies offering trainee placements, which will soon be accessible by members on the BACP website.

There are six team members who form the members ethics support team, which is also supported by the Experienced Practitioners Network. This ethics helpdesk team is at the end of the phone or e-mail to discuss ethical dilemmas and concerns with the members. We do not offer advice, as we cannot be aware of all factors of the dilemma, but we are there as a sounding board and to offer perspectives on ethical issues, which might assist members in making their final decisions. The Experienced Practitioner Network, which comprises very experienced BACP practitioners, supports this team by offering further perspectives on complex issues on request. As a team we receive monthly training sessions on ethical decision making. We receive this from very experienced and prominent members of the counselling profession, namely Alan Jamieson, Deputy Chief Executive of BACP who has been our trainer from the beginning and John Eatock, BACP Lead advisor for Healthcare who has been sharing this burden for the past two years or so. We also receive support from the Professional Conduct Department where Grainne Griffin and John O'Dowd are always available for consultation.

General queries are handled by all of the Information Services team. We offer information on training and what has to be achieved for accreditation. We send out lists of counsellor and supervisors, or direct enquirers to the BACP website where they are able to download a host of information. We have also collated some very useful fact sheets that give telephone numbers of organisations who offer support in many areas e.g. for people who are disabled, creative therapies, family welfare, gender issues etc. These also can be downloaded from the BACP website by members and by members of the public.

The Counselling and Psychotherapy Resource Directory and the Training Directory are managed by Shirley Mills. Entry in this directory is an essential means of advertising their services for practitioners in private practice. The directories are both easily accessible to the public on-line.

Information sheets are commissioned and these go before an editorial board to ensure the accuracy of the information given and to establish any legal implications that our members should be aware of. They have been referenced according to their setting and are now also available in an anthology. We are hoping to have a number of information sheets with specific guidance for those in independent practice and the Information Services Manager, Denise Chaytor, is in close liaison with AIP to explore the hot topics for this sector. The information sheets can be purchased individually and many of them can be downloaded for free from the members section of the BACP website - [www.bacp.co.uk](http://www.bacp.co.uk). We welcome enquiries from any of our members who feel that they can write an information sheet for us, or if they have a pressing area in which guidance might be helpful. A telephone call to Denise would get them all the information they need to set them on their way.

Our overall aim is to be able to offer support and resources to all our enquirers, on the basis of if we don't know, we know a person that does!

This article provided for AIP by Denise Chaytor