

Year of impact
2023 to 2024

2023
2024

Contents

Welcome from our CEO	3
Our year in numbers	4
Influencing policy and working with employers	6
Improving access for all	10
Championing our members	14
Learning and connecting	18
Setting the standard	22
Increasing the evidence base	26
Our register	30

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Year of impact 2023 to 2024

The British Association for
Counselling and Psychotherapy
is the professional association
for members of the counselling
professions in the UK.

We've taken this opportunity
to outline some of our key
achievements during
2023 to 2024.

Welcome from our CEO

When I joined BACP as CEO in December, I was immediately struck by the energy, dedication and passion that our staff and members have for their work. That has continued to shine through as I've got to know our team over the past few months, and as I've spoken with members in person or online.

Therefore, it's a real privilege to release our first ever impact report that shows how this energy, dedication and passion have translated into making a tangible difference in the lives of our members, the public and in the counselling and psychotherapy community.

While there's lots of great work happening within BACP, we've showcased what has made a significant positive impact. As our membership grew during the year to 70,000 members and as the demand for counselling increases, it's more important than ever before that we're working on behalf of our membership to support their practice and advance the profession.

During 2023, we also launched our new strategy, titled Increasing Our Reach, which aims to deliver even better for our members and to change the lives of many more people and communities.

We'll be talking more about the impact of our work against our strategic objectives over the next five years.

All of our work and objectives are rooted in our knowledge that counselling changes lives. This is the driving force that powers us.

Of course, having only been at BACP for a few months, I can't take the credit for the work shared here. That must go to the incredible staff, members and volunteers who've worked tirelessly throughout the year, sometimes in challenging circumstances.

I was also thrilled to see this year that those efforts have been recognised externally too. Our marketing and communications team won Team of the Year at the Association Excellence Awards, and our events team took home the highly commended prize for our Private Practice conference, at the MemCom awards.

Thank you to everyone who has played a part in BACP's positive impact in 2023 to 2024, and I look forward to working with you all to build on this in the future.

Dr Phil James
CEO



Our year in numbers



One in three people

have had counselling or psychotherapy at some point in their lives.

BACP/YouGov Public Perceptions Survey 2024



77%

of our members say we provide them with resources that support professional and ethical practice well.

BACP membership survey 2023

There were

1.1 billion

opportunities to see media coverage of BACP.



The *Ethical Framework* was downloaded **64,055** times during 2023 to 2024.



70%



of our members say we set standards well.

BACP membership survey 2023

We reached

7,978

delegates through 25 online events.



205,927

enquiries to members came through our Therapist Directory.

65,000

customer services enquiries were dealt with via phone and email.



We were part of a coalition that helped secure

£7.9 million

Government funding for 24 early help support hubs for young people in England, with counselling a key part of the services.



Influencing policy and working with employers



Ofsted guidance on adoption

Rules around therapy for adoptees, birth parents and adoptive parents have caused confusion, frustration and heartache to clients and therapists for years.

But, after years of campaigning, there was cause for celebration in December when regulations changed. It's a move we believe will improve access to therapy for people affected by adoption.

Among those who celebrated this news was Marian O'Brien. "Having finally decided to take the big step and have counselling to discuss my adoption story, I was told by the lovely therapist I had found that the law actually prohibited her from working with me - I was incredulous," she said. "So, I'm delighted with this change in the regulations because it means I can get the support that I need from the therapist I want to work with."

The issue first arose in 2010 when new Ofsted guidance required practitioners and organisations in England, providing therapy around adoption issues, to be registered with Ofsted, or provide the therapy through a contract with a registered adoption agency, adoption support agency or local authority adoption agency.

This change had a series of unintended consequences. It meant some clients had to stop using the therapist they'd established a relationship with, if adoption came up during therapy. Practitioners and clients were unsure about what they could and couldn't talk about in their therapy. There was a lack of opportunities for BACP members to access the specialist adoption training needed and to become Ofsted registered. A shortage of Ofsted registered adoption counsellors meant many clients who needed adoption-related therapy couldn't access the appropriate services and felt abandoned.

For years, we've campaigned with members, client groups, adoption support services, adoption charities and Ofsted, to highlight the issues with the guidance. We responded to a public consultation, firmly setting out our views on the problems with the guidance. And after 13 years, the regulations were finally changed at the end of 2023.



Martin Bell, our Head of Policy and Public Affairs, said:

"Adoption can have a life-long impact on people, and it's crucial that anyone affected by it can access the mental health support they need. It's also a topic that our members and clients feel incredibly passionate about.

We've no doubt this change in legislation will significantly increase access to therapy and help more people at a time when they need it most."

Key achievements

New rural counselling jobs

- A new national counselling service for rural workers is to create more than 120 counselling roles, exclusively for BACP registered members. We worked with organisational member Red Umbrella/Care Coins to leverage £1.6 million in private sector investment to fund the service. It will extend the provision currently delivered through the charity Royal Agricultural Benevolent Institution (RABI) to the whole of the UK. This will provide much needed support to farmers and those working in rural communities dealing with a unique set of stresses that are often outside of their control but have an impact on their mental health and income. These can range from unpredictable weather and animal health crises to labour shortages, isolation, the cost of living crisis, and changes in government policies.



Emergency services directory

- More than 200 therapists have joined a national directory to provide emergency service workers with access to qualified specialist mental health support. The Network of Emergency Service Therapists (NEST) was launched by the Royal Foundation of the Prince and Princess of Wales, PoliceCare UK and the Fire and Ambulance Service charities in November. We worked with the charities over the past three years to develop the service, which provides our members with a new route to paid employment.

200
therapists have joined a national directory to provide emergency service workers with mental health support.

£200,000
local authority funding secured for a school counselling programme.

School counselling: England

- Working with partners Citizens UK, we've campaigned for a counsellor in every school and further education college in England. We produced a joint policy paper that was shared with political parties to influence manifesto planning that focuses on funding model options for school counselling, including costings for the fair pay and conditions of therapists. The Labour Party, Liberal Democrats and Green Party are among parties to commit to investing in school counselling. Alongside Citizens UK, we've also helped secure a £200,000 local authority funded school counselling programme targeted at year nine students in Brighton and Hove from September 2024. Our research team will evaluate this project.



School counselling: Northern Ireland

- We called on Northern Ireland's political leaders to prioritise primary school counselling. This involved establishing a coalition of representatives from a range of professional bodies and providers and followed on from our campaigning on the Healthy Happy Minds programme, which was closed in Spring 2023.

The coalition's report, published in November, featured the voices of children, families, school staff and our members. It included impact data and return on investment evidence. Since publication, we've met with the education spokespeople of the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP), Sinn Fein, and the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), as well as the Deputy Permanent Secretary of the Department of Education. Given the cross-party political support we've helped to secure through our campaign activity, we're optimistic that we can secure a commitment to re-establishing funding for this vital programme.



NHS pay equity

- We've successfully supported members to be paid equally to their psychological therapist colleagues in the NHS in England. Our NHS Talking Therapies for Anxiety and Depression pay equality support resources include evidence to help members to make a case for better pay. We've shared this with members who've got in touch about their pay and who have used it in their communications with the NHS. We've also published it on our website.



Improving access for all



EDI

Shyronie Davis's journey to becoming a fully qualified counsellor has involved a series of challenges that she feared might stand in the way of her dream job.

She's balanced being a mum, with a part-time job and studying for her counselling qualifications.

She's also needed support with her dyslexia, is awaiting an assessment for ADHD and faced financial worries relating to her tuition fees.

Shyronie was one of the successful applicants for our [Bursaries scheme](#), which launched in November 2022. The funding and support has been a lifeline to her as she's navigated her counselling qualifications and the complexities and difficulties of the higher education system.

The pilot bursary scheme was set up to encourage underrepresented groups into the counselling and psychotherapy professions by providing financial support for training.

A total of 10 recipients of the bursaries started their courses in September 2023, with some beginning level 2 training and others studying for diplomas or master's level courses.

The bursaries pilot scheme is part of a range of projects carried out as part of our [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy](#).

For Shyronie the funding and support she received from BACP has been crucial as she's overcome several hurdles, including missing the mark on one of her modules and changing her training provider and course.

She's now studying for an MA in Psychodynamic Psychotherapy at the University of Essex, a BACP-accredited course, where she was allocated a Disabled Student's Allowance (DSA) assessment and student support for her neurodivergent needs.

"This bursary has been a life-changing opportunity for me," said Shyronie.

"BACP's faith in my capabilities has inspired me to strive for excellence and contribute positively to the field of psychotherapy. It means the world to me to have BACP's support on this journey to becoming a professional therapist. Thank you so much."

While 10 recipients may mean this scheme feels like it can only make a tiny difference in encouraging diversity in the counselling professions, to individuals like Shyronie, the impact has been huge.

The impact also reverberates beyond the individuals as the ripple effects of enhancing their skills and capabilities create life opportunities and can increase social mobility.

Marzena Hunter, who oversees the bursaries pilot as part of her project manager role at BACP, added:



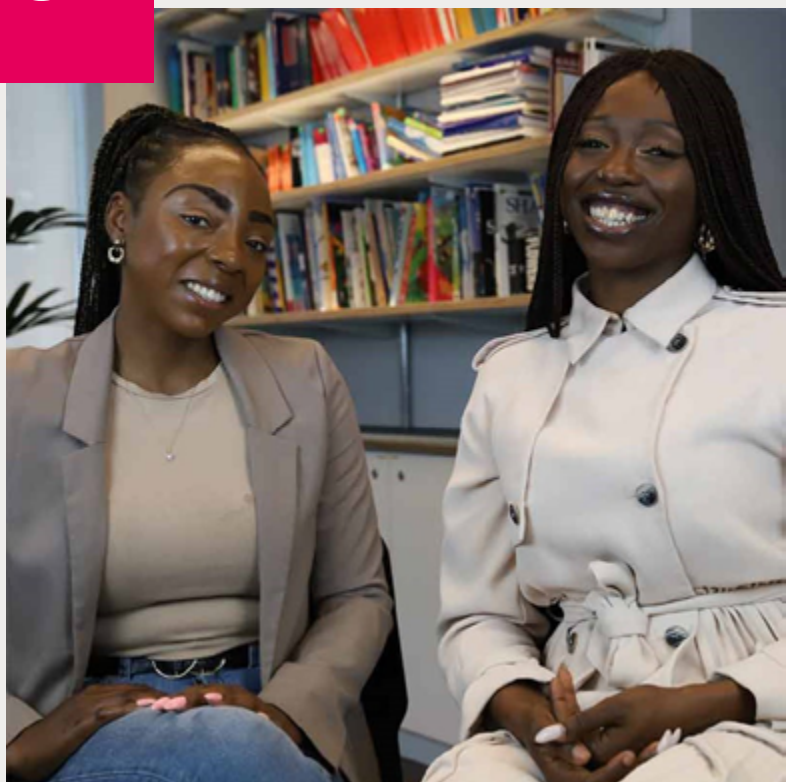
"Shyronie's story is an impactful example of how our bursary scheme is able to support people. They feel the positive difference from it in their lives and will also then go on to help people in need through their work as counsellors and psychotherapists."

We're hoping to secure external funding to continue the bursary scheme in the future.

Key achievements

Race is complicated

- The Coalition for Inclusion and Anti-Oppressive Practice, of which we're a member, released its *Race is complicated* toolkit. The interactive PDF supports people involved with delivering psychological therapy training to be more comfortable in managing and working within racial and cultural diversity. The toolkit has been downloaded more than 1,500 times since its launch in November, with more than 180 people attending the launch event. The coalition is now encouraging senior leaders in training institutions, programme leaders and tutors to adopt the toolkit.



1,500 downloads of the *Race is complicated* toolkit.

Third sector grants

- Projects funded as part of our pilot EDI third sector grant scheme showed that co-production of support and activity are effective in removing barriers to therapy for people from marginalised community backgrounds. They also identified the value in having a workforce that is reflective of the communities being supported and in clients having the choice of working with therapists who shared their identities and experiences. Two BACP organisational members – Children North East and the Metanoia Institute – received funding to deliver projects as part of the scheme.



More than **470** members supported through accreditation process by our Support and Inclusion Officer.

Accessible accreditation

- In response to members telling us about the barriers they've faced in applying for accreditation, we introduced extra financial support and employed a Support and Inclusion Officer. More than 470 members have received financial support since this was launched in June 2023. Our Support and Inclusion Officer's work has focused on helping members with disabilities, long-term health conditions or learning differences. She's successfully supported 463 members through the accreditation process. This has involved talking through reflective practice criteria and application form requirements on the phone or by email as many times as needed. We've received positive feedback from members about this new service.



Championing our members



More than headlines

Our media campaigns have taken us on a journey from eye-catching AI images of anxiety displayed on the streets of London, to a powerful testimony in Parliament about men's mental health.

The coverage of these campaigns featured in national newspapers, websites, broadcast media and podcasts – reaching an estimated 306 million people.

Anxiety is... featured a collection of AI art generated from quotes describing people's real life anxiety symptoms. These stunning images were displayed near Waterloo Station and were published in national media to raise awareness of the importance of seeking qualified support from a registered therapist.



R.A.I.S.E.

Spotting signs of depression in men

Our R.A.I.S.E. campaign aimed to help people spot the symptoms of depression in men and to encourage them to access professional support.

The campaign used the acronym R.A.I.S.E. – which stands for risk-taking, anger, isolation, substance abuse and exhaustion.

Our member Anthony Davis was invited to appear before the Health and Social Care Select Committee, due to his work on R.A.I.S.E.



He said:

“I was fortunate to have an opportunity to engage in discussions with MPs around the mental health disparities among men, advantageous inclusive and intersectional interventions to implement, and policies to consider to better men's mental health.”

“I highlighted the R.A.I.S.E. campaign, which is a valuable resource providing information on the most common symptoms of depression among men and how to manage these symptoms effectively. I hope these discussions continue.”



Key achievements

Digital advertising

- Our digital adverts, on Google AdWords, social media and targeted websites, aim to raise awareness of BACP and counselling, and encourage those in need of support to contact our members. They were shown 8.9 million times and generated several thousand member enquiries through our Therapist Directory.



8.9 million

Our digital adverts were shown more than six million times on websites and social media feeds.



77,000

of our Counselling changes lives leaflets picked up by members of the public from GP surgeries.

GP surgery campaign

- Leaflets and posters featuring our motto Counselling changes lives were displayed in more than 3,000 GP surgeries across England, Scotland and Wales. Some 77,000 of the leaflets were picked up by members of the public, generating more than 1,000 visits to our website. Web visitors were given more information about therapy and the need to choose a therapist from a professional body, and were signposted to our members through our directory.



Keeping members informed

Our eBulletin is sent to all 70,000 plus members on a bi-weekly basis and includes the latest news, updates and events in a succinct round-up. Our open and click rates (how many members opened the email and how many members clicked on a link within the email) are higher than the industry average. This suggests our members engage with the eBulletin in a consistent and positive way. We also introduced a dedicated student eBulletin in 2023, following analysis of data showing they were our least engaged membership group and least likely to open an email from us. This email features relevant content, career-based blogs, information on student placements and journal archive articles tailored to our student members. Its open and click rates are also higher than the industry average. According to our 2023 membership survey, 67% of members agree we keep them informed about the issues within the profession.

Learning and connecting

Bridging the gap – student event

As a trainee therapist, swapping your studies for client work can feel like a huge jump.

“Putting your foot in the ‘door’ to the therapeutic world can leave you feeling a mishmash of excitement and nerves – so finding opportunities to connect and share insights with others on similar journeys continues to be helpful to me in riding the ebbs and flows the training brings, agrees trainee counsellor Leah Hudson.

Leah was among 290 people who went along to our 2023 Student event, with 563 joining online.

The event aimed to give our student members the confidence to take the first steps from trainee practitioner to fully qualified therapist. The programme structure was designed to encourage students to engage, learn and make professional connections.

Leah added: “I felt keen to really immerse myself in the anticipated ‘buzz’. As well as hearing from all the great speakers and gaining insights into the potential for our future practices, it was a blessing to connect and reconnect face-to-face with so many other budding professionals.”

Leah, who is currently completing her second and final year of the MSc in Counselling Children and Young People at the University of Northampton had only just embarked on her first year of core training when she attended the event.

She added: “Being in the early training stages, I had secured my fitness to practise and placement, but had yet to start client work at the time – and I admit, felt nervous about doing so! Thus, the conference helped improve my confidence and encouraged me to get curious about this. It really complemented my core training, and I came away feeling refreshed and armed full of ideas for the path ahead.”

Speaker Andrew Reeves gave a keynote presentation on his journey into becoming a counsellor, and led a workshop on working with risk. He said: “I love attending BACP’s student conference and this one was no exception. My hope with my keynote was that students could see there was no ‘right’ way of becoming a counsellor; rather, an encouragement to take opportunities and to be brave with professional decisions. I hoped the workshop offered some grounding about ways in which we can offer a safe and facilitative space for our clients, particularly when they were encountering moments of crisis when feeling unsafe.”

Attendees rated their confidence pre-event as an average of 2.6 out of five, but this rose to four out of five after the event. Some 90% of attendees said the programme content was good or very good and 86% said the event helped them feel part of a community.



Leah said:

“For me, it provided much more than a chance to learn. Chatting with fellow delegates, I was reminded of the importance of connection within this field – particularly as a student. I came away with newfound peers and a heightened excitement for our journeys ahead.

“Attending the student conference was such a joy and pivotal in my progression as a counsellor.”



Key achievements

Private Practice conference

- Our annual Private Practice conference focused on anxiety. It featured a key note presentation from Emmy van Deurzen on an existential perspective on anxiety, and another from Josh Fletcher, known to many on Instagram as Anxiety Josh, on how stress plays a part for therapists post Covid. Nearly 200 people attended in person in London, with another 345 logging on virtually. Our post-event survey found that 93% of attendees said it made them more knowledgeable, 76.4% said they were more confident after the event, and 89% said it inspired them.



93%
of attendees at our Private Practice conference said it made them more knowledgeable.



Jobs

- More than 500 roles were listed on our jobs board, connecting members with a host of paid opportunities across the country. Roles have included practitioner, supervisor, trainer and teaching positions from across the charity sector, schools and education, training providers, private practice, Employee Assistance Programmes (EAPs) and NHS services.

125,455 views

of our video content from events, learning centre and CPD hub.

Video content

- We uploaded 379 videos to our website including content for our live events, CPD hub and learning centre. The videos aim to support members with continued learning and development through their careers and to help keep their skills and knowledge up to date. Topics of videos included neurodiversity and counselling, working with obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD), and inclusion versus anti-oppressive practice. The videos received 125,455 views during the year, compared to 95,500 in 2022 when 362 videos were uploaded. In our 2023 membership survey, 62% of our members agree we provide good online continuing professional development opportunities.



Setting the standard



Ethics service

From record-keeping to working online with clients abroad, and from supervision to artificial intelligence – the variety of queries that come into our ethics service reflect both the key issues members have faced for years, but also the fast-paced changing world we live in now.

There were more than 6,700 calls and emails to the service during the 12 months.

And there were also around 30,000 visits to our [ethics hub](#), where members can access further support in the form of Good Practice in Action resources, competency frameworks and other articles about ethics.

The most common topics of enquiries were around notes, record keeping, supervision, legal enquiries and confidentiality.

But the hi-tech world of the 21st century has also brought a new breed of enquiry to our ethics officers.

Increased online working has opened up the world of therapy, with some members in the UK working with clients abroad and vice versa.



Our Ethics Services Manager Patrick Cawley said:

“As international working has increased, we’ve seen that filter through to the ethics team with the enquiries we receive. We’ve supported members with the complexities of the legal and ethical considerations when working with international clients. Countries across the globe have different systems that members need to navigate, and it can be very confusing and challenging.”

In response, the team has provided updated information in the ethics hub to support members on this topic, including checklists for online platforms and international working guidelines.

Another trend is a rise in queries from members about artificial intelligence (AI).



30,000 visits to our ethics hub.

“Among the enquiries we’ve received are those from members who are struggling with technological, data and ethical implications of this technology. We’re looking to upskill our staff and create extra resources for members to help them with this growing area.

“This year we have seen an increase in both the volume and the complexity of the enquiries that are coming into us.”

Some 86% of those who used the service said they were satisfied with the response they received.

The team has attended conferences and Making Connections events around the country this year, to ensure members know about the service and what’s on offer.

And with new trends in ethical queries, the team is also feeding into the *Ethical Framework* review so that it remains relevant to the types of issues members are facing in their practice in 2024 and beyond.

Key achievements

SCoPED transition

- The Scope of Practice and Education (SCoPED) framework is a ground-breaking shared standards framework that transparently sets out the core training, practice and competence requirements for counsellors and psychotherapists working with adults.

In 2024, it took an important step forward with the opening of the transition period. During this time members can move between our membership categories, which are aligned to the standards of the SCoPED framework columns, where they have the relevant skills, training, knowledge and experience to do so. About 3,000 members booked to attend our webinar in September on the transition period mechanisms. The framework was downloaded 22,575 times in the past year.

SCoPED has already improved partnership working among the six counselling and psychotherapy professional bodies who have collaborated on it. It's also been instrumental in the development of requirements of therapists for the NHS Pathways Project, a pilot programme that's providing fully funded training for psychotherapeutic counselling within NHS Talking Therapies for anxiety and depression.

22,575

Downloads of the SCoPED framework



We believe the SCoPED framework will encourage more diversity in the profession, ensuring it's accessible to therapists with different backgrounds and types or levels of training, and also distinguish qualified therapists from those whose training doesn't meet the framework's minimum standards. We're confident it will increase access to paid opportunities for qualified counsellors and psychotherapists wherever they are represented in the framework. We also believe the framework will enable all therapists to thrive and continue to provide all the services they currently do, and provide professional counselling and psychotherapy help to more people across society.



Workplace counselling

- Our Workplace counselling competence framework is being used by employers to recruit appropriately trained and experienced therapists and identify continuous professional development (CPD) needs. It's helping commissioners, employers and service users receive the best and safest possible psychological therapies. We've worked closely with Employee Assistance Programme Association (EAPA) members and individual EAPs to promote the adoption of the Workplace Counselling Competence Framework. The framework was developed by industry experts in partnership with BACP. It's a crucial element of ensuring the general public, employers, commissioners, HR professionals and therapists are able to understand that Workplace Counselling is a distinctive and specialised form of counselling, requiring a core set of competencies.

Good Practice in Action

- Our Good Practice in Action (GPiA) resources were downloaded more than 75,500 times, providing information and support to thousands of our members. Some 50 GPiAs have been created or updated during the year. GPiAs on working online, supervision, managing confidentiality, and safeguarding children and young people were among the most downloaded during the year.



Increasing the evidence base

Research grants

Whether we're calling for counselling in every school, for GP guidance to include more references to therapy, or for business leaders to invest in mental health support for their employees – we rely on high-quality, peer-reviewed evidence to make our case.

While the evidence base for counselling and psychotherapy has grown considerably over the past 20 years, as a profession we still lag behind psychology and psychiatry.

If we're to continue to successfully argue for wider access to counselling for clients, for a choice of talking therapy interventions and for more paid employment for our members, we must keep increasing our efforts to build a high-quality, peer-reviewed evidence base, and fund research over time that supports the work of our members.

In 2023 we made a huge stride in this ambition, with the launch of our [research grants](#).

The £120,000 grant pot will be divided between collaborative projects, that involve two or more partners, and a secondary data analysis project that involves research undertaken on an existing dataset.

The projects will all involve client-focused research in counselling, psychotherapy and/or coaching.

We received more than 30 applications for funding, with a total financial ask of £1.2 million.

"We were blown away with the response to the grants" said our Head of Research Dr Clare Symons. "It demonstrated there's a high level of need and demand to support research within our sector."

This has been a huge project, including identifying research priorities through consultation with our members and researchers in the field, developing the application and peer review process, and recruiting a high-calibre Grants Peer Review Panel of academics and people with lived experience to assess applications.

The involvement of people with lived experience is a crucial part of the grant process and the research it will fund.



Clare added:

"We wanted to fully involve people with lived experience into this to help ensure that the commissioned research is conducted in such a way that it fully takes into account how it might benefit and impact clients. Basing the topics for research that we will fund on consultation with a wide range of stakeholders, including our members, also means that we're funding research that will directly impact our ability to advocate for the provision of the work that our members do."

Jennifer, a member of the panel, said:

"I was thrilled to get a place on the BACP grants funding panel to give my perspective as someone who has used therapy and counselling services. I'm also someone who has sat on eight other national research funding panels and I chair a research ethics committee, so I hope that the lessons I've learned from those can help this new panel. The people are really interesting and I feel like an equal and valued member of the panel. It's a work in progress but really exciting to be a part of something new and to help the organisation support research that improves practice and the lives of clients and therapists."

The successful research projects will be announced in spring 2024 and are expected to take up to two years to complete.





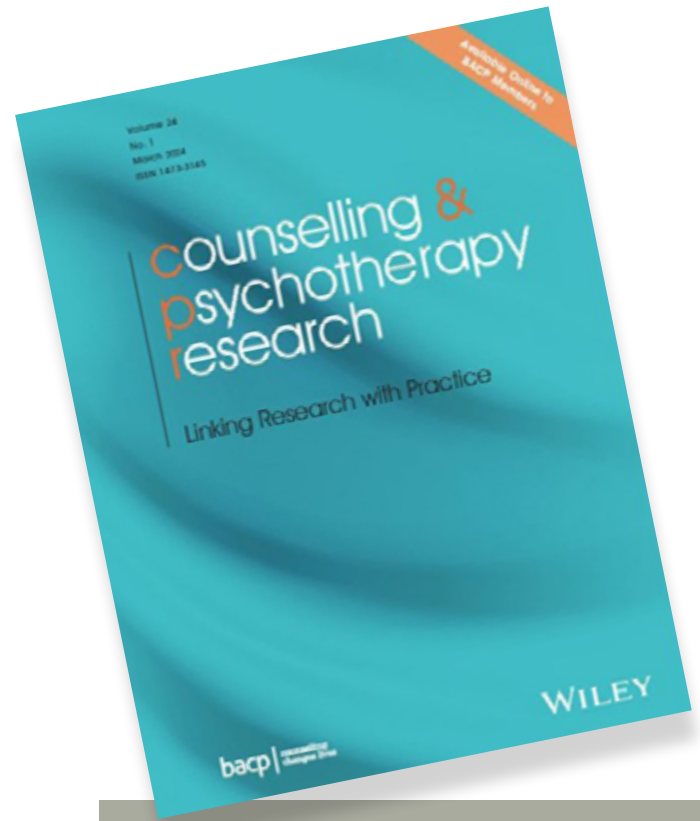
Key achievements

68 peer-reviewed presentations at our annual research conference.



Research published

■ Our Research team presented 19 papers at conferences in the UK and internationally, and published six peer-reviewed journal articles and one book chapter. Article topics included university counselling, and the parents of children with mental health difficulties. The team's impact factor, which reflects the yearly average number of citations of articles published by them in the past two years, of our team's papers, stands at 3.25, up from 2.7 in 2022. We've also had six citations in policy documents and 67 media stories, largely from research featured in our Counselling and Psychotherapy Research journal.



£120,000 of grants to be given out to counselling and psychotherapy research projects.

Annual research conference

■ Our 2023 research conference focused on global issues in counselling and psychotherapy research. The event, co-hosted with Leeds Beckett University, featured keynote addresses on refugee trauma, and the climate and ecological emergency, and a policy discussion on the role of therapy in supporting displaced people. There were 68 peer-reviewed presentations across the two days, including 29 research papers, 10 discussion papers and 11 posters. Feedback from attendees highlighted the strength of the inspiring research, and that the event shared relevant knowledge to bring into day-to-day practice.



International collaboration

We developed links with two journals owned by the American Counseling Association (ACA) and worked with them to curate a special joint virtual issue to coincide with the research conference. Articles were free to access for six months.



Our register

Get help with counselling concerns

When people first call or email our Get help with counselling concerns service they may be feeling angry, disappointed or confused. They may be upset or grieving. And they often want answers and to know what to do next.

They're contacting the service as something has happened with their therapist or in their therapy sessions that's worried them – and they need to talk about it.

This is where Kathleen Daymond and Sarah Millward come in.

The pair run our [Get help with counselling concerns service](#). It's a confidential, frontline service for anyone who has concerns or is worried about their therapist, supervisor, trainer, or any therapeutic relationship where they have received a service.

"We're the empathetic friendly voice at the end of the phone," said Sarah. "People who contact us appreciate us being unbiased and honest. They know they're being listened to and feel validated."

Clients and members of the public often have no one else to speak to about their concerns, so the work of the Get Help service is crucial in supporting these vulnerable people.



It's the only service of its kind in the UK and is an important aspect of our accreditation with the Professional Standards Authority, demonstrating our commitment to supporting both clients and members.

The pair responded to 1,532 enquires in 2023 to 2024 and 93% of people surveyed rated the service as excellent.

Sarah and Kathleen don't give advice, but they share information and discuss clients' experiences with them, acting as a sounding board to help clients come to a decision about what they'd like to do next.

Kathleen said:

"Often when people call us, they don't know what therapy looks like. They don't know how it should be – but they know that something they've experienced doesn't feel quite right. Or sometimes they've been in therapy for years and something has suddenly changed and they need to talk to someone about it."

Sarah added: "The biggest question for people is why? What have I done? They want to know what we can do to help them."

1,532

enquiries responded to by our Get help with counselling concerns service.

"We listen and help them to unpick their story. It's often not linear, sometimes it's about several things. But we let them voice the whole story – and it helps.

Kathleen continued: "A lot of the conversations are helping people to understand therapy. People often blame themselves, especially about endings."

When they understand what's happened, the next step is working with the client to understand what they can do.

This could be going back to their therapist to resolve the matter.

Or it might be deciding to submit a complaint.

"Sometimes people do decide to make complaints and in these instances we'll talk through the conduct process with them. But this is a relatively small part of what the service is all about," said Sarah.

For Kathleen and Sarah, the best-case scenario is for a client to be able to resolve things with their therapist, where possible and appropriate.

The flood of thank you emails they receive show that their support is appreciated.

Sarah said:

"At the end of the day I feel like I've made a difference to someone,"

"There's a sense of purpose."



Key achievements

Complaints support

- We launched a service to give members who are going through the complaints process access to support from specially trained individuals. We know that this can be a distressing and challenging situation for members, and they have said they would value more support. While it's important all our staff remain impartial within the process, we recruited four practitioners who were trained to provide support to members. Since November, members going through the complaints process have access to up to six, 30-minute sessions during a 12-month period.

PSA re-accreditation

- We were re-accredited for another 12 months by the Professional Standards Authority for Health and Social Care (PSA). Every year, the PSA examines how we uphold professional standards, including how we carry out our complaints procedure, and also looks at our financial status and governance processes.

Certificate of proficiency

- We supported 4,242 members in passing their certificate of proficiency (CoP) assessment and becoming eligible for registration. We support therapists going through the assessment by developing case study material, helping them with their queries as they prepare and by giving them feedback on their results. The CoP is free for individual members if they book it within 24 months of starting their Individual membership, and for their first three attempts at taking it.

4,242

members passed their certificate of proficiency assessment.

