

# Working Practices 2025

## Overview

The workforce mapping survey supports policy and advocacy work at BACP, by building a current picture of members' working practices. This enables BACP to identify gaps in provision and make a stronger case for support with policy makers and commissioners. We distributed the Workforce Mapping Survey to 53K people. 4028 people completed the survey with a response rate of 7.5%.

Some of the key areas of information being collected are:

- sectors members work in
- client groups worked with
- areas of practice specialism
- levels of training
- income and capacity for additional employment
- demographic characteristics

The findings from the workforce mapping survey have been used, and continue to be used, by BACP's policy team to inform wider policy discussions and strategy relating to the counselling professions. This includes using the information gathered about aspects such as annual income, working hours, additional client hours required, training, professional roles and assessing differences across sectors (for example, third sector, private practice, children young people and families, healthcare, and workplace settings), nations, and by demographic characteristics. This helps identify differences between these groups and where further support may be needed. This report presents an analysis of a portion of the key findings from the workforce mapping survey.

Since its inception, data from this survey has been used by the BACP Policy Team in direct briefings to ministers across the four nations. This has included briefings related to health inequalities, school counselling, effectiveness of government catchup and mental health recovery, support for migrants and the mental health strategy consultation.

# Key findings

## Training

A high proportion of respondents enter the Profession with a Level 4 (32.23%), Postgraduate (20.73%), or Level 5 (14.23%) Diploma. Whilst 13.3% of respondents entered the profession with a Masters degree, 23.17% indicated this to be their highest level of training. The majority of respondents completed primary training in either integrative (39.48%) or person centred (29.54%) theoretical models.

## Professional roles

The most common professional role was as a practitioner in private practice or in the third, charitable and voluntary sector. Approximately one quarter (21%) of respondents were supervisors.

## Annual income

Two thirds (66%) of respondents earn an annual income of £30,000 or less from their counselling work, with 31% of those earning £12,500 or less. 32% of respondents agree they could earn a living from their counselling work

## Paid hours

The average number of paid client contact hours a week was around 10.25.

## Unpaid and voluntary hours

The average number of unpaid or voluntary client contact hours a week was 1.29. 51% of respondents working in the third sector worked zero unpaid hours compared to 70% working in private practice. A higher proportion of respondents working in the third sector are earning £0 from counselling related work (7%) than any other sector.

## Protected Characteristics

## Training

A high proportion of respondents enter the Profession with a Level 4 (32.28%), Postgraduate (20.79%), or Level 5 (14.25%) Diploma.

Whilst 13.3% of respondents entered the profession with a Masters degree, 23.17% indicated this to be their highest level of training.

The majority of respondents completed primary training in either integrative (39.48%) or person centred (29.54%) theoretical models.

**Table 1: Theoretical model of primary training**

Theoretical model of primary training	Workforce Practices Survey percentage
Integrative	39.48%
Person-Centred	29.54%
Psychodynamic	11.27%
Humanistic	8.23%
CBT	1.77%
Gestalt	1.92%
Pluralistic	1.87%
Other	5.93%

**Table 2: Initial level of training**

Initial level of training	Workforce Mapping Survey percentage
Level 4 Diploma	32.28%
Postgraduate diploma	20.79%
Level 5 Diploma	14.25%
Masters degree	13.32%
Bachelors degree	6.86%
Foundation degree	5.53%
Other	4.36%
Higher National Diploma (HND)	2.23%
Doctorate	0.38%

**Table 3: Highest level of training**

Highest level of training	Workforce Mapping Survey percentage
Masters degree	23.17%
Postgraduate diploma	19.69%
Level 4 Diploma	19.71%
Level 5 Diploma	13.64%
Bachelors degree	10.38%
Foundation degree	4.53%
Other	5.18%
Higher National Diploma (HND)	1.78%
Doctorate	1.93%

## Professional Roles

67% of respondents worked as a practitioner in private practice, with 27% working in the third sector and 21% working as supervisors. many members work in multiple roles.

**Table 4: Professional roles**

Professional roles	Workforce Mapping Survey percentage
Practitioner in private practice	72.13%
Practitioner in the third sector/charity sector/voluntary sector	26.63%
Supervisor	21.04%
Practitioner in an Employee Assistance Programme/workplace setting	8.02%
Practitioner in a healthcare setting	6.31%
Trainer/Tutor	6.81%
Practitioner in a secondary school	6.28%
Practitioner in NHS Talking Therapies	4.32%
Practitioner in an agency/organisation	5.49%
Practitioner in a primary school	4.22%
Service manager/Clinical lead	2.96%
Practitioner in a university/Higher Education institution	3.13%
Other non-counselling/psychotherapy role (you will be asked to specify)	4.44%
Practitioner in private group practice	3.58%
Other counselling/psychotherapy role (you will be asked to specify)	2.81%
Coach	3.56%
Practitioner in a college/Further Education institution	3.85%
Academic	1.99%
Researcher	1.94%
Practitioner in a other non-private setting (you will be asked to specify)	1.14%
Not currently working	1.42%
Retired	1.19%

## Income from counselling

32% of respondents agree or strongly agree they can earn a living from their current paid counsel hours. 66% of members earn £30,000 or less from counselling related work with over 31% earning £12,500 or less.

On average respondents are working 10.25 paid client contact hours per week and 1.29 unpaid client contact hours per week.

**Table 5: Income from counselling**

Income from counselling	Workforce Mapping Survey percentage
£0	8.78%
Up to £12,500	22.54%
£12,501 - £20,000	16.7%
£20,001 - £30,000	18.2%
£30,001 - £40,000	14.19%
£40,001 - £50,000	7.59%
£50,001 - £75,000	4.33%
£75,001 - £100,000	0.85%
£100,001 - £150,000	0.20%
Over £150,000	0.03%
Do not wish to disclose	6.60%

**Table 6: Earn a living**

I can earn a living from counselling related work	Workforce Mapping Survey percentage
Agree & Strongly agree	31.54%
Disagree & Strongly disagree	51.51%
Neither agree nor disagree	16.95%

## Income and sector

A higher proportion of respondents working in the third sector are earning £0 from counselling related work (7.36%) than any other sector.

**Table 7: Income and sector**

Income from counselling	Criminal justice setting	EAP/Workplace	Healthcare	Private Practice	Education	Other	Third sector/ social care setting
£0	1 (1.64%)	4 (0.26%)	16 (1.12%)	26 (0.5%)	37 (1.67%)	3 (1.32%)	184 (7.36%)
Up to £12,500	7 (11.48%)	268 (17.74%)	153 (10.68%)	1253 (24.25%)	346 (15.59%)	45 (19.82%)	637 (25.48%)
£12,501 - £20,000	6 (9.84%)	337 (22.3%)	237 (16.54%)	998 (19.32%)	471 (21.22%)	27 (11.89%)	434 (17.36%)
£20,001 - £30,000	13 (21.31%)	332 (21.97%)	308 (21.49%)	1070 (20.71%)	528 (23.78%)	39 (17.18%)	471 (18.84%)
£30,001 - £40,000	20 (32.79%)	250 (16.55%)	299 (20.87%)	1070 (14.40%)	528 (20.59%)	58 (25.55%)	375 (15%)
£40,001 - £50,000	1 (1.64%)	134 (8.87%)	217 (15.14%)	415 (8.03%)	132 (5.95%)	14 (6.17%)	153 (6.12%)
£50,001 - £75,000	2 (3.28%)	41 (2.71%)	84 (5.86%)	218 (4.22%)	88 (3.96%)	7 (3.08%)	61 (2.44%)
£75,001 - £100,000	2 (3.28%)	17 (1.13%)	21 (1.47%)	58 (1.12%)	11 (0.5%)	3 (1.32%)	23 (0.92%)
£100,001 - £150,000		4 (0.26%)		14 (0.27%)		1 (0.44%)	5 (0.2%)
Over £150,000				2 (0.04%)			
Do not wish to disclose	9 (14.75%)	124 (8.21%)	98 (6.84%)	368 (7.12%)	150 (6.76%)	30 (13.22%)	157 (6.28%)

**Table 8: Average unpaid client contact hours**

Sector	N	Average unpaid client contact hours
Criminal justice setting	59	3.41
EAP/Workplace	1456	1.0
Education	2148	1.40
Healthcare	1366	0.92
Other	213	1.38
Private Practice	5016	0.97
Third sector/Social care setting	2395	1.80

## Protected Characteristics

Respondents were invited to complete questions relating to each of the protected characteristics. These questions are asked to help us to better understand our members and monitor changes over time. Responses to these questions help us to understand how representative responses are of our broader membership and to national data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS). We are also able to explore differences in responses to survey questions between demographic groups.

The next few pages present the data relating to each of the protected characteristics alongside comparative data, where available, from the 2021 Census as reported by the Office for National Statistics.

Data has been combined to enable comparisons to be made, the full list of survey items and response options can be made available on request.

## Age and Ethnicity

The majority of respondents identify as white (88.52%) and between the ages of 45 and 65 years (26% 45-54; 37% 55-64).

Compared to national averages there is an under-representation of individuals from Asian and Black ethnicities:

9.2% of the UK population would identify as Asian, compared with 2.7% of survey respondents  
4% of the UK population identify as Black compared with 2.35% of survey respondents.

**Table 9: Age**

Age group	Workforce Practices Survey percentage	ONS 2021
16-24	0.35	0%
24-34	4.78	16.35%
35-44	13.75	15.71%
45-54	26.42	16.07%
55-64	36.65	15.20%
65-74	13.77	12.03%
75 and over	2.64	0%
Prefer not to say	1.64	0%

**Table 10: Ethnicity**

Ethnicity	Workforce Practices Survey percentage	ONS 2021
White	88.52	81.58%
Other	3.54	2.20%
Asian	2.70	9.21%
Black	2.35	4.00%
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups	2.89	2.90%

## Gender, Sex and Sexual Orientation

The majority of respondents to this survey identify as heterosexual (78.24%), and as A Woman (79.57%).

**Table 11: Sexual orientation**

Sexual orientation	Workforce Practices Survey percentage	ONS 2021
Heterosexual/straight	78.24	89.35%
Prefer not to say	7.01	7.50%
Gay or Lesbian	5.56	1.54%
Bisexual	6.41	1.28%
Other	2.78	0.34%

**Table 12: Gender identity**

Sex assigned at birth	Workforce Mapping Survey percentage	ONS 2021
Female	79.57	51%
Male	15.61	49%
Prefer not to say	1.82	
Non binary	1.32	
Other	1.67	

## Disability

The majority of respondents do not consider themselves to have a disability (80.32%), 17.69% of the general population identify as have a disability, compared with 16.79% of respondents to this survey.

**Table 13: Disability**

Disability	Workforce Practices Survey percentage	ONS 2021
No	80.32	82.8%
Yes	16.79	17.8%
Prefer not to say	2.89	