**Job description**

**Introduction:**

The British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) is a membership organisation and a registered charity that sets standards for therapeutic practice and provides information for therapists, clients of therapy and the public. Through its work BACP ensures that it meets its remit of public protection whilst also developing and informing its members.

BACP sets, promotes and maintains standards for the profession. The Ethical Framework for the Counselling Professions and its Professional Conduct Procedure ensure that members of BACP abide by an accepted and approved code of conduct and accountability. It safeguards both practitioners and members of the public alike. The Professional Conduct Department processes complaints of professional misconduct.

A new complaints process is being introduced and with it a new hearing process known as a Practice Review Hearing. Essentially BACP wish to ensure that a complainant who has brought a complaint about the services they have received from their therapist, has adequate support during a hearing. In other words, there is an equality of arms.

**The Role:**

The term 'Professional Supporter' has been adopted by BACP to describe an individual who helps complainants who are attending a Practice Review Hearing in person and who are neither legally represented or supported by anyone else. This support is needed for those complainants who would like to have some assistance during the hearing process in presenting their complaint about a BACP Member. A legal background is not necessary for anyone interested in becoming a 'Professional Supporter'. Although we expect you to treat the role as a professional engagement. This means taking on the professional standards of punctuality, maturity and commitment.

A Professional Supporter can play a useful role in providing moral and/or practical support to complainants in person. The process can be a stressful one.  The aim of a Professional Supporter is to provide help in dealing with the emotional and procedural issues to complainants who do not have other support.

**Remit:**

Generally, a Professional Supporter is an independent and impartial person who will be expected to provide moral support for the complainant, take notes, help with case papers and give advice on the hearing procedure, assist with issues that the complainant may wish to raise in the hearing and help draft questions the complainant may wish to ask the Member or any witnesses.

* You will gain a thorough understanding of the BACP Professional Conduct Procedure and the Practice Review Hearing process
* You will understand the purpose of the hearing and what end it is there to achieve
* You will understand the processes and assist the complainant in formulating relevant questions and guide the complainant through them
* You will know what each professional’s role is
* You will understand the paperwork fully in advance
* You will help a complainant understand what to expect during the hearing
* You can address the Panel on behalf of the complainant in the opening and closing statements
* You can ask any witnesses questions on behalf of the complainant

A Professional Supporter will not

* give legal advice
* become involved in people’s lives
* answer questions on behalf of the complainant but can give guidance and support

In summary you will be there in a professional capacity. You will need to have the skills, understanding and ability to successfully guide people through the process and give complainants the information they need to know.

**Recruitment:**

This role would ideally suit those who a have a genuine interest in ensuring fairness to unrepresented persons and have a relevant background, you may already act as a Mackenzie Friend, have mediation experience or have advocated for or worked with vulnerable people. You may have undertaken voluntary work with vulnerable people or young persons.

BACP have on average between 10 -15 hearings a year. Hearings are normally set down for one day and dates are fixed 3 – 6 months in advance. We are looking for a pool of 3 or 4 Professional Supporters. Work will be allocated on a contract for service basis in accordance with your availability. BACP cannot guarantee the amount of work you will receive.

This is not PAYE etc

* The role will attract a fixed fee which will include any pre-reading and consultation with the complainant at a rate of £350 per hearing day.
* Reasonable expenses such as travel, and meals will be paid in accordance with BACP expenses policy.
* Overnight accommodation can be arranged where appropriate
* Training will be provided

**Experience**

1. **Required**
* You will be educated to degree level or equivalent
* Worked or volunteered in a setting where you have advocated or worked with vulnerable people or young persons
* You will have excellent oral and written communication skills
* You will have the ability to explain complex procedures to lay persons
* You will have the ability to deal with sensitive issues in a confidential setting
* You will have the ability to think on your feet and respond appropriately to any unexpected situations or queries that may arise
1. **Desirable**
* Proven work experience in a legal/regulatory setting
* Knowledge/experience of safeguarding vulnerable people

**Venue:**

Hearings normally take place at BACP offices in Lutterworth, on occasion they may be held at Jury's Inn, Hinckley.

BACP may be required to make a reasonable adjustment for a complainant or a member, and therefore a hearing may be moved to another location within the UK.

Reasonable travel expenses will be covered in line with BACP expenses policy.

Where appropriate, overnight accommodation, will be provided if the hearing is moved to a location outside of the Midlands.

**Fee:**

Each hearing will attract a set fee of £350 per day, this is inclusive of advance reading time.

**Exclusions:**

This vacancy is not open to those with professional legal qualifications, such as solicitors, barristers or chartered legal executives.

This vacancy is not open to practising or former counsellors or psychotherapists.

**How to Apply:**

Please submit:

1. Your CV (no more than 2x A4 sides); and
2. A letter of interest (Maximum 2 x A4 sides). Please refer to the Role, Remit and Experience outlined in this vacancy and explain why you are interested in the role and how you fit the profile.

Shortlisting will take place week commencing: 8 April 2019

Interviews are likely to take place weeks commencing 8 April and 15 April (TBC) at our offices in Lutterworth, Leicestershire.