

ABOUT COUNSELLING FOR PARENTS & CARERS



WHAT IS INDEPENDENT SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY-BASED COUNSELLING?

The opportunity to talk about things that are of concern to a child or young person, in confidence, with a qualified counsellor.

What is spoken about will depend on the individual, but common themes are stress, feeling low, relationships, change, loss, distress, and traumatic events.

For easy access for children and young people, counsellors are based in all secondary schools, and some host primary schools. On some occasions, counsellors may also see children and young people in community settings or online.



WHAT DOES A COUNSELLOR DO?

Counsellors are trained to listen without judging to help people sort out their thoughts and feelings about whatever is concerning them.

Area 43 counsellors work on a one-to-one basis with children and young people up to age 30 and where appropriate, they may offer a session with parents or carers of very young children to provide additional support.

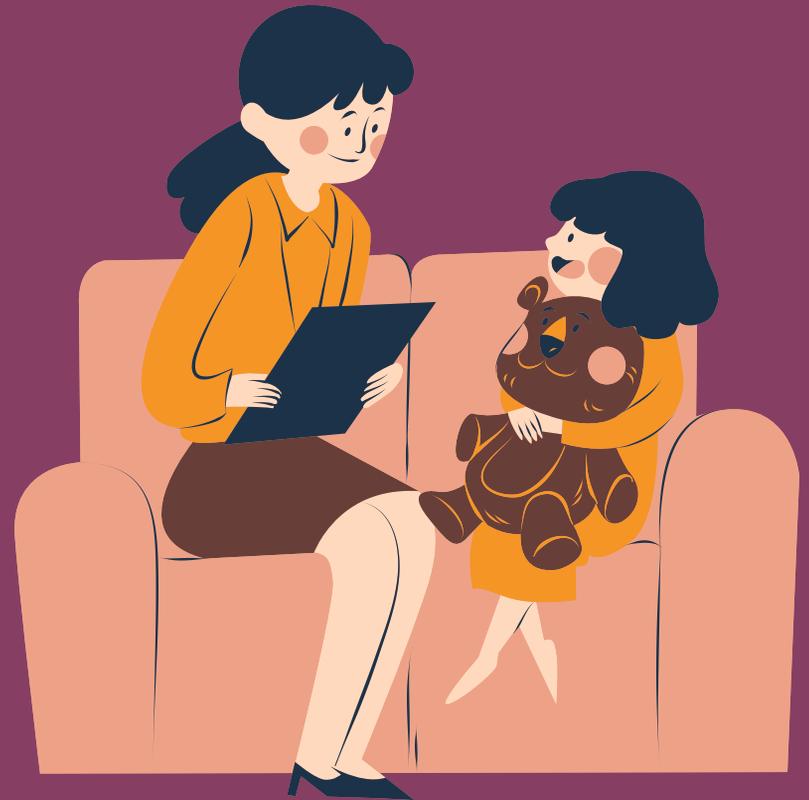


WHO ARE THE COUNSELLORS?

Area 43's team of counsellors and clinical supervisors hold recognised formal counselling/supervision qualifications and are competent to work with children and young people within safeguarding guidelines.

Our counsellors are qualified at the Counselling Degree level with Level 5 Children and Young People's Counselling qualifications and have experience delivering counselling to children and young people face-to-face, online, and via telephone, in line with the BACP ethical and competencies framework and the BACP Online and Phone Therapy Competency Framework.

Many of our counsellors are based in education settings on the same days every week, so they should become a familiar face, but they are completely independent from the schools.



WHERE AND WHEN DOES COUNSELLING TAKE PLACE?

Usually, a small, private room is made available in your child's school, a host primary school, or in the secondary school that your child is due to attend (for Year 6 pupils).

Appointments will generally take place during the school day. Alternatively, depending on individual circumstances, counsellors may meet with your child online or in a community setting outside of school hours.

Sessions last up to fifty minutes, and appointment times can be varied so that time is not lost from any one subject or kept consistent where you need to transport your child to the venue.



WHY HAVE A COUNSELLOR IN SCHOOL?



A school-based service brings counselling to children and young people in a place that is familiar, safe, and secure. Alternatively, depending on individual circumstances, counsellors may meet with your child online or in a community setting outside of school hours.

Improving children's and young people's emotional and mental health before they reach adulthood not only makes an immediate difference at the time, but it also has the potential to improve their life chances.



HOW LONG WILL COUNSELLING LAST?

Counselling sessions usually last up to 50 minutes, depending on the age and attention span of the child or young person. Area 43 offers 6 – 8 sessions, but this is reviewed regularly between the child or young person, the counsellor and the counsellor's supervisor.

To give time to process and practice support strategies learned in counselling, we ask that you wait at least 8 weeks before asking for counselling again.



CONSENT

Area 43 promotes the articles of the UNCRC (1989) in our practise through our children and young people-centred ethos, supporting self-referral to the counselling service, and, when appropriate, granting autonomy.

Our practitioners assess Gillick competency and use Fraser guidelines to balance the requirement to ensure the safety of children and young people with our obligation to listen to the voice of the child or young person. In general, young people of secondary school age are not likely to need a written parental agreement for counselling, although primary school-age children most often will.

We will always encourage a child to tell their parents or carers about the decisions they are making. If they don't want to do this, we will explore why and, if appropriate, discuss ways to help them inform their parents or carers, but this decision always remains the child or young person's choice.

Even if the young person has informed their parents they wish to receive counselling when their parents disagree with their decision, counselling can still proceed if the child has been assessed as Gillick competent in line with Article 12 of the UNCRC.

If our counsellors don't think a child is Gillick competent or there are inconsistencies in their understanding, we will seek consent from their parents or carers before proceeding.

WHAT IF MY CHILD REFUSES TO HAVE COUNSELLING?

The decision about whether or not to take up the offer of counselling is entirely voluntary for children and young people, just as it would be for an adult.



IS IT CONFIDENTIAL?

A key feature of our service is that the information discussed in the counselling session is treated confidentially.

Counselling is a time when it's OK to talk about concerns without fear of them being discussed elsewhere. This includes not sharing the work with parents or carers unless the child or young person requests or gives consent for this.

We understand that this can be hard for parents and carers to accept at times, but ensuring confidentiality is crucial for establishing trust so that children and young people feel confident enough to speak openly and freely about what they need to.

However, if any child or young person appears to be at risk of significant harm, it may be appropriate to seek help from other organisations (including the school, if appropriate) to keep them safe. The counsellor would aim to discuss this first with the child or young person concerned.

All counsellors receive clinical supervision of their work with young people to ensure the quality of their practise. This process is completely anonymous; the child or young person will not be identified by name.

SAFEGUARDING

We collaborate with children and young people, pastoral teams, and other service providers to develop a service that places safeguarding, agency, and wellbeing at the heart of its provision.

Our counselling services complement the HM Government's (2006) Working Together to Safeguard Children, Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, the Welsh Government's (2012) Together for Mental Health Strategy, and The Wellbeing of Future Generations Act (2015). Therefore, we take our responsibilities to keep children and young people safe very seriously.

Safeguarding means protecting people from harm, including physical, emotional, sexual, and financial harm and neglect. Counsellors must recognise the signs and symptoms of abuse and to act on any concerns, based on legal responsibilities set at the local authority level, by the Children Act (1989) and the Education Act (2002).



SAFEGUARDING



Area 43 counsellors follow the BACP Ethical Framework and are required to make a record of any suspicions or concerns regarding the safeguarding of all children and young people. They will work together with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) at the child or young person's education setting (if relevant) and Area 43's DSL or Clinical Director to take forward any reporting of safeguarding concerns to other agencies such as police and social services.

The counsellor would aim to discuss the need to report concerns with the child or young person and parents or carers may be contacted where it is appropriate and safe to do so.

CAN I SUPPORT THE COUNSELLING WORK?

Yes, and we welcome this. Our experience shows that the most helpful thing a parent can do is to show an acceptance of counselling as a normal and useful activity, to show an interest if their child wishes to talk about it, but not to press them if they don't.



We acknowledge that this isn't an easy task and that it is quite natural for parents to feel anxious about what may be being said in the sessions. It is always our hope that talking with a counsellor will lead to greater openness with parents and families, you may need to allow a little time for this to happen.

For very young children, our counsellors are often able to offer a support session with a parent, carer or member of the school support staff which may be useful to help the child implement coping strategies.

IF MY CHILD WANTS TO SEE A COUNSELLOR DOES THAT MEAN I AM FAILING AS A PARENT?

Absolutely not! We all experience occasions when it feels hard to speak to those closest to us about things which are bothering us. Often this can be because we don't want to worry those we love most, or because we want help thinking things through with someone outside of the family.

The Counsellor will not be judging you or your child, but looking to help them find their way through whatever is troubling them.



HOW ARE REFERRALS MADE TO THE COUNSELLING SERVICE?

Our children and young person-centred ethos encourages self-referral to the counselling service, enabling autonomy. Parents, carers, education staff, GPs and other agencies can all refer to the service using the same registration form.

It is important to talk with your child before completing a registration because they must want to attend and understand the counselling process for it to be successful.



HOW ARE REFERRALS MADE TO THE COUNSELLING SERVICE?

Our support is easily accessible and tailored by counsellors to appropriately meet children and young people's needs reflective of their age, language preference, level of understanding and their choice of engagement platform.

Counsellors explain the benefits and limitations of counselling at an assessment meeting and clarify confidentiality and safeguarding. It is also an opportunity for both counsellor and client to decide whether counselling is appropriate and explore the nature of their difficulties. Counselling relationships may enable children and young people to feel empowered and supported to access additional specialist services and our counsellors will support those transitions and make referrals or signpost as appropriate.

Scan or CLICK the QR code for your area to access the registration form:

POWYS



WEST WALES



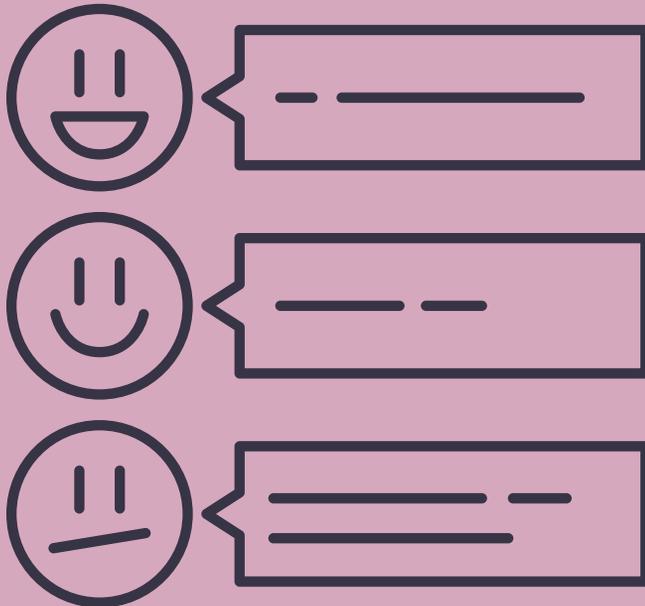
DATA PROTECTION PROCEDURES

Area 43's online registration form populates a secure, GDPR-compliant client management system (Lamplight). The data we hold includes personal details and demographic information as well as brief, factual session notes and follows guidelines from the Welsh Government on managing referrals.

We use a simple contract (including an accessible version) that sets out the level of confidentiality. The Human Rights Act 1998 gives every individual the right to respect for their private and family life. This includes having any personal information held in confidence in line with the Data Protection Act 1998 and GDPR 2018. This right, however, is not absolute and can be overridden if necessary, such as for a safeguarding concern.



QUALITY MONITORING AND SERVICE EVALUATION



Monitoring and evaluation are vital to maintaining best practices and quality provision. Therefore, we analyse psychological distress results and collect qualitative, anonymous feedback via electronic evaluation forms through the client management system, incorporating feedback into service design.

We work in collaboration with education settings to conduct focus groups with children, young people, parents, carers and education staff (as appropriate) to gain insight into their perceptions of the development of the service, and to feed into the wider systems approach, ensuring youth-led provision which meets the needs of children and young people.

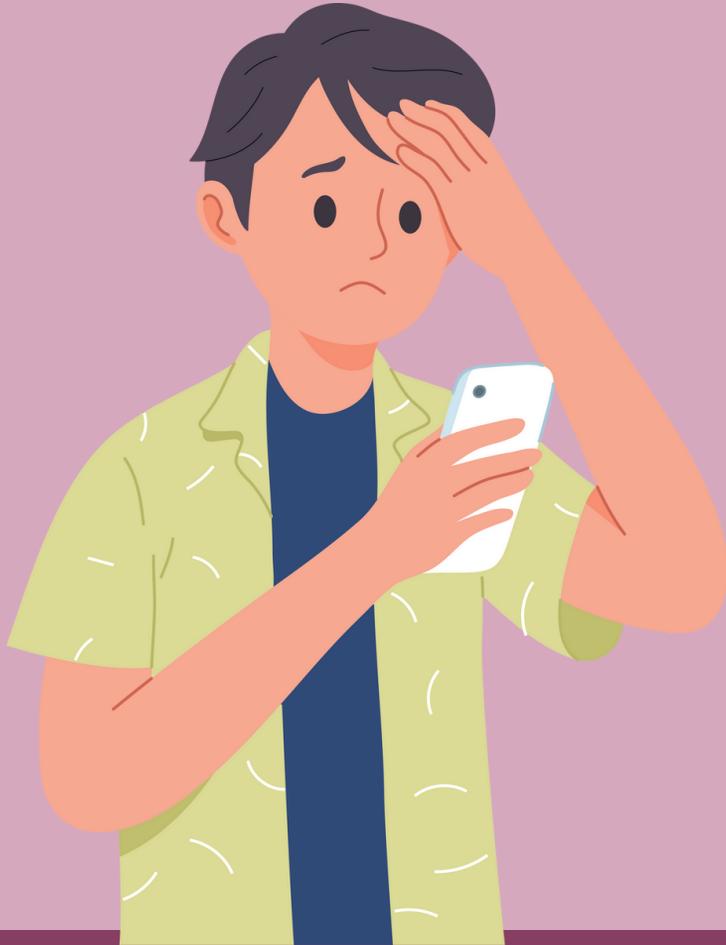
COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS



We value your feedback and would love to hear your suggestions or compliments about Area 43.

In case we have fallen short, please share your concerns with us openly, so that we can make the necessary rectifications and improve our services. Yours and your child's satisfaction are our priority, and we take any complaints or issues seriously. This helps us to better understand and serve our clients. To submit a testimonial, share a suggestion, or make a formal complaint, please email us at counselling@area43.co.uk.

WHAT IF I NEED HELP NOW?



- **Papyrus - HOPELINEUK**
Freephone **0800 068 41 41**
- **Samaritans 116 123**
- **ChildLine 0800 1111**
- Text **SHOUT** to **85258** for 24/7 crisis text support www.giveusashout.org
- **C.A.L.L.** Mental Health Helpline **0800 132737** or text **HELP** to **81066**



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