

## **Information for Prospective Volunteer Counsellors**

Centre 33 is a well-established registered charity operating within Cambridgeshire, and working with young people aged 8 to 25.

Centre 33 provides free and confidential services. We offer information and advocacy; assessment of need and onward referral; housing advice; counselling and mental health support; sexual health support; support to young carers, outreach services, and participation opportunities.

### **Centre 33's Core Mental Health & Counselling Service**

Centre 33 offers a free and confidential counselling service to young people aged 13-25, living in Cambridge City, South Cambridgeshire or East Cambridgeshire, and in our satellite drop-in services based in Wisbech, Huntingdon and St Neots. We have up to 30 volunteer counsellors at a time within the core service, from a range of modalities and backgrounds, many of whom are fully qualified. We also have Mental Health & Counselling Project Workers who work with more complex cases and support the team with referrals and joint-working with other agencies.

Young people can come to us with any issues. We have a self-referral policy – young people need to make contact with us themselves, although they can be supported to do this by professionals or family/friends. We have a short-term counselling model – we usually offer 6 weekly sessions of ongoing counselling, and in particular circumstances this may be extended up to a maximum of 12 sessions.

We also have drop-in counselling in Centre 33 on Saturday mornings – young people can come for one-off sessions, or for extra support when they are in crisis.

### **Centre 33's School-based Counselling Provision**

Centre 33 has been delivering counselling in Secondary Schools across South and East Cambridgeshire since September 2012 (initially in 9 schools, and due to the project's success we have been working in 12 schools since September 2013). This project is funded by a partnership of schools. We have a team of 10 schools volunteer counsellors. Our Schools-based Project Worker oversees and co-ordinates this project, as well as working with more complex cases and supporting the team with referrals and joint-working with other organisations.

This counselling provision is for 11-16 year olds. We use a very similar counselling model to our core counselling service. However, young people are referred for counselling, via a CAF, usually by a member of school staff (although they need to want to engage in counselling). Our Schools-based Project Worker meets each client for an initial assessment, and then the schools counsellors usually work with them for 6 weekly sessions of ongoing counselling, and in certain cases this may be extended up to 12 sessions.

## **Place of Work and Travel Expenses**

Schools counsellors work in Secondary Schools across South/East Cambridgeshire (in an appropriate room within each school). Core service counsellors work in counselling rooms at Centre 33 (33 Clarendon Street, Cambridge), and as part of our satellite services in venues in Ely, Wisbech, Huntingdon & St Neots.

Counsellors can claim travel expenses within a 20 mile radius of their place of work. This includes public transport or mileage (on production of relevant tickets / receipts). Counsellors can claim travel expenses for attending weekly counselling slots and for attending Centre 33 supervision and any training sessions / meetings.

## **Centre 33 Counsellor Commitment**

### Induction training

Induction training is usually over several Saturdays or spread over a series of shorter sessions in the evenings. The full induction MUST be completed before being able to start counselling at Centre 33. Mandatory training includes safeguarding, suicide risk-assessment and boundaries working with young people.

### Counselling slots

All Centre 33 counsellors commit to at least one slot a week, which lasts 3.5-5 hours, during which they will see 3 clients, and attend a debrief meeting.

In our school-based provision counsellors commit to one slightly shortened “school day” per week based in a South/East Cambridgeshire Secondary School (in one area the counsellor needs to work across two schools within one day). These counselling sessions will be during the school day, and during term-time only.

- In Cambridge we have counselling sessions on Mondays during the day, Tuesdays during the day and evening, Wednesday during the day and evening, Friday mornings and Saturday mornings. We usually recruit for specific time-slots.
- In Ely we have counselling sessions on Thursday afternoons and evenings.
- In Wisbech we currently have counselling sessions on Thursday afternoons and evenings and on Fridays.
- In St Neots we currently have counselling sessions on Wednesdays 3.45-6.45pm.
- In Huntingdon we currently have counselling sessions on Thursday afternoons and evenings, and /or Fridays.

### Support, supervision and training

Counsellors must attend a debrief meeting after their counselling slot. For the school-based provision support is provided by the Schools-based Project Worker who visits the counsellors in each school. All counsellors also have access to telephone support from the Centre 33 staff team.

Counsellors have one hour of one-to-one clinical supervision a fortnight, funded and organised by Centre 33.

Centre 33 holds regular training sessions throughout the year, and we hold counsellor events with updates and networking about two or three times a year. Counsellors should attend these where possible.

## Volunteer Counsellor Role Description

We ask Volunteer Counsellors to:

1. Provide short-term counselling to young people (aged 13-25 for core service; aged 11-16 for school-based provision) in an agreed weekly 3.5-5 hour slot.
2. Commit to volunteering for at least one year, and for at least 40 weeks per year (or for all 35 school-term weeks per year for school-based provision). And to give adequate notice (ideally 4 weeks) when taking days off.
3. Take part in the Centre 33 Saturday morning drop-in rota (approx. 3 times a year), after completing the 6-month probationary period.
4. Abide by Centre 33 policies and procedures – in particular understand and follow Centre 33 boundaries, confidentiality and safeguarding policies and procedures.
5. Undertake the necessary administrative procedures and complete the appropriate paperwork to enable to smooth-running of the service.
6. Work with other staff and volunteers in the team at Centre 33 to meet the needs of young people (in some cases it may be appropriate to work with others to make referrals to more specialist services internally or externally).
7. Attend and contribute to debrief meetings following each slot.
8. Attend fortnightly Centre 33 supervision sessions.
9. Undertake a six month probationary review and thereafter an annual appraisal.
10. Attend Centre 33 induction, training, and meetings.

## Person Specification

### Qualifications and experience:

- **ESSENTIAL:** You must either:
  - a) Have passed a counselling Level 4 Diploma course, or equivalent
  - b) Be currently undertaking a counselling Level 4 Diploma course, or equivalent

*The course completed / in progress must be counselling or psychotherapy core practitioner training, and must be in-depth and meet BACP accreditation criteria – i.e. it must: include a minimum of 400 tutor contact hours; be carried out over at least two years (part-time) or one year (full-time); include a supervised placement as an integral part of the training; cover theory, skills, professional issues and personal development.*
- **ESSENTIAL:** You must have either:
  - a) Completed a supervised counselling placement as part of your training
  - b) Gained equivalent experience of counselling, or comparable 1-1 work, with vulnerable people and ideally with young people
- **DESIRABLE:** Have experience of working / volunteering with young people

### Skills, knowledge and personal attitudes:

- Ability to listen and communicate well, in particular with young people
- Non-judgemental attitude, and ability to understand and respect young peoples' issues and situations.
- Warm, open, positive and flexible
- Commitment to young people's rights to have their voice heard
- Ability to assess level of risk to young people and to share information appropriately
- Ability to work positively in a team
- Ability to take on new ideas and have a commitment to personal development
- Ability and willingness to work within the short-term counselling model offered by Centre 33
- Ability and willingness to follow basic administrative procedures
- Basic knowledge and understanding of issues that can be faced by young people and of common mental health issues
- Basic understanding of professional boundaries; confidentiality; Safeguarding; and Equal Opportunities & Diversity

All volunteers at Centre 33 will be subject to an enhanced DBS check – counsellors will not be able to start counselling until we have completed this process.

### **Recruitment Procedure for Volunteer Counsellors**

1. If you decide you would like to be considered for a counsellor post, you need to complete the application form, demonstrating how your qualifications, experience, skills and knowledge meet the person specification. If you are currently training or recently qualified then at least one referee must be from your counselling tutor/trainer. Otherwise please use your current / most recent supervisor as one of your referees.
2. You will be considered for interview on the basis of your application. Please note that we receive many more applications than we have volunteer counsellor vacancies, so we are usually only able to interview some of the applicants.
3. The interview will be conducted in a venue local to the role you are applying for wherever possible. We will be asking questions closely related to the role description and person specification.
4. If you are not selected, you may request feedback.

# Important information for trainee counsellors

Centre 33 has a mixture of fully qualified counsellors, and counsellors who are part-way through their training.

Trainee counsellors who are hoping to undertake a placement at Centre 33 need to consider the following:

- **Centre 33 is a young people's organisation - the age range we work with is 13-25 for our core counselling service and 11-16 for our schools-based counselling service.** If your course requires you to work with adults only (18+) then this will not be a suitable placement.
- **Centre 33 counselling is time-limited** – usually 6 sessions, which can occasionally be extended to a maximum of 12 sessions in particular circumstances. If you need to do long-term counselling for your course then this is not a suitable placement.
- **Centre 33 has a very strict confidentiality policy**, and this impacts on case studies for course material:
  - **Centre 33 does not allow audio recording of sessions under any circumstances**
  - **Consent must be sought from clients before they can be used in case studies**
- **Counsellors at Centre 33 must have clinical supervision with one of the Centre 33 supervisors** (this is fortnightly one-to-one supervision). Centre 33 clients cannot be discussed with external supervisors. If your course has particular requirements for supervisors / supervision then these need to be discussed during the recruitment process.