

Four-way contracting between training providers, placements, trainees and supervisors within the counselling professions

Good Practice in Action 114 Fact Sheet

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**Good Practice in Action 114
Fact Sheet**

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Context

This resource is one of a suite by BACP to enable members to engage with BACP's *Ethical Framework for the Counselling Professions* in respect of four-way contracting between training providers, placements, trainees and supervisors within the counselling professions.

Using Fact Sheet resources

BACP members have a contractual commitment to work in accordance with the current *Ethical Framework for the Counselling Professions*. Resources are not contractually binding on members, but are intended to support practitioners by providing information, and offering questions and observations practitioners may need to ask themselves as they make ethical decisions within their practice in the context of the core ethical principles, values and personal moral qualities of BACP. Specific issues in practice will vary depending on clients, particular models of working, the context of the work and the kind of therapeutic intervention provided. As specific issues arising from work with clients are often complex, BACP always recommends discussion of practice dilemmas with a supervisor and/or consultation with a suitably qualified and experienced legal or other relevant practitioner.

In this resource, the terms 'practitioner' and 'counselling related services' are used generically in a wider sense, to include the practice of counselling, psychotherapy, coaching and pastoral care. The terms 'therapist' or 'counsellor' are used to refer to those trained specifically as psychotherapists and counsellors.

Introduction

This is a resource to support counselling and psychotherapy practitioners in understanding the practical, ethical and legal complexities of multi-way contracting. It is intended to support training providers, supervisors, placement organisations and trainee practitioners in understanding and formally clarifying and agreeing their respective roles in the supervised practice placement through a 'contract' document usually known as a four-way agreement.

Unless managed well, this process can be a 'minefield', which can be more difficult than it at first appears and can potentially lead to confusion and uncertainty. Therefore, a strong focus on clarifying roles and responsibilities transparently and formally is recommended. There are limitations to this resource in that it cannot specify exactly what to include in all areas or the actual wording of any documents. Agreements must be tailored to the needs of the situation and parties involved.

Contracting and the four-way agreement

A four-way agreement is a way of formally 'contracting' to collaboratively clarify and agree responsibilities and lines of communication. The aim is to support and supervise trainee practitioners whilst they work towards the client hours required by their training course/programme in a supervised practice placement. It ensures clarification of where responsibility and accountability lie for supporting the client work of trainee practitioners and also ensures that all parties (usually training provider (tutors/course team), supervisor, placement organisation (manager/mentor) and trainee practitioner) understand both their own role and the roles of the others (hereafter in this resource referred to as the **four parties**). This assists all parties in working ethically and within BACP's *Ethical Framework for the Counselling Professions* (BACP 2018a). The Accreditation of Training Courses (BACP, 2021a) section B4 includes a number of requirements for supervised practice placements, including the requirement for there to be an 'explicit written agreement/contract between students, the placement provider and the course which is available to all' (section B4.5). For accredited courses/programmes, a four-way agreement can assist in ensuring that training providers provide clarity about how these requirements are met, and, as a model of best practice, can also be adopted by non-accredited courses.

When considering any agreement or contract (single or multi-way), the United Kingdom General Data Protection Regulation (UKGDPR) and data protection law apply. The law in this area is complicated and still developing. However, the Information Commissioner's website has up-to-date information and guidance (see <https://ico.org.uk>).

As practice issues arising from counselling professions' work can be complex, we recommend consulting your supervisor, and, wherever necessary, a qualified practitioner or lawyer. Some professional insurers provide legal advice as part of their service. Also, it is important to keep up to date with any changes in organisational and agency practice and policies that may affect any agreement or contract.

In terms of data protection and four-way agreements, there needs to be clarity around who is a) a data controller (who alone or jointly with others, determines the purposes and means of the processing of personal data) and b) a data processor (who processes personal data on behalf of the controller). Both controllers and processors should be named in the four-way agreement and their responsibilities identified.

- **Controllers:** Whilst each data controller is responsible for their own activities when processing personal data, it is a good idea to specify who is responsible for what in the contract.
- **Processors:** Whenever a controller uses a processor, there must be a written contract (or other legal act) in place. The contract is important so that both parties understand their responsibilities and liabilities. The GDPR sets out what needs to be included in the contract (Article 28).
- **Employees/students:** employees/students are not data controllers or data processors, but they are responsible for following the policies and processes of the organisation they work for.

When considering the four parties involved in the agreement:

- The *training provider* is responsible for ensuring the placement organisation is appropriate through asking the correct due diligence questions and analysing the responses. It is likely they will be a data controller for any processing carried out for educational purposes on their behalf.
- The *placement organisation* is likely to be a data controller for any activities the trainee undertakes whilst working for the organisation.
- The *supervisor* may be an employee of the placement organisation or externally contracted by the trainee (self-employed). The supervisor can be a data controller or data processor depending on their relationship with the various parties.

In most cases the supervisor is likely to be a data controller when discussing matters with the trainee directly; however, they may be a data processor if they are conducting work on behalf of the placement or training organisations (e.g. a report provided to either organisation about the trainee).

- The *trainee* is likely to be acting as a student or employee and responsible for ensuring they follow all policies, procedures and guidance of the placement and training organisations.

Setting up a placement

It is usually the responsibility of the training provider to support trainee practitioners in the process of setting up a placement and to provide relevant documentation covering what this entails. For example, the *Accreditation of Training Courses* (BACP, 2021a) specifies that any course/programme seeking accreditation 'will have clear, written and published procedures for practice placements, which will include procedures for remote working and any requirements for homeworking where relevant' (B4.3) and that any course will 'demonstrate how it approves its placement providers as appropriate for the particular course' (B4.4). Further guidance on the setting up of placements can be found in the Fact Sheet GPiA 090 (BACP, 2021b). In summary, the steps involved in a trainee practitioner preparing for and starting a placement usually include:

- the trainee practitioner is formally assessed as ready to practise with clients and fit to practise by the training provider;
- the trainee practitioner organises their professional indemnity insurance and confirms BACP (or other professional association as relevant) membership (many courses require trainee practitioners to hold membership from the start of their course/programme);
- the trainee practitioner finds/agrees a placement with placement organisation;
- the trainee practitioner contacts, chooses and contracts with an independent supervisor (usually from a list of supervisors approved by the training provider) for regular supervision (in some cases supervision may be provided within a placement);
- a placement induction process takes place for the trainee practitioner with the placement organisation before any client work begins.

Within this process, usually a four-way agreement guides the induction process and would be signed by the four parties before any client work begins, with all parties having a copy.

Accountability

BACP's *Ethical Framework for the Counselling Professions* (BACP 2018a) requires that:

careful consideration will be given to the undertaking of key responsibilities for clients and how these responsibilities are allocated between the supervisor, supervisee and any line manager or others with responsibilities for the service provided (Good Practice, point 65)

and that in supervising trainees, supervisors must 'collaborate with training and placement providers in order to ensure that the trainee's work with clients satisfies professional standards' (Good Practice, point 66).

The importance of accountability is also referred to in the *Accreditation of Training Courses* (BACP, 2021a), which states that:

supervisors must work to an explicit contract with the course and the placement provider, which clarifies accountability for the client work, reporting and assessment requirements, issues of confidentiality and practical issues such as meetings and finance and the mode(s) of delivery i.e., face-to-face, online/phone supervision (B4.16).

Additionally, BACP Guidance for online teaching delivery and remote supervised placements (2021c) states that agreements between students, the placement provider and the course, should include details of where the responsibility lies for data protection for the student's remote practice, and of the placement's remote working support structures.

A four-way agreement clearly defines these aspects of accountability, and this may be achieved by explicitly setting out the roles of each of the four parties.

Roles

Whilst there may be variations between course/programme providers and placement organisations based on the nature and structure of the training, the following aims to outline how the roles of each of the four parties may be defined as part of a four-way agreement. Further details are included in the section entitled *The Agreement*.

Training provider

The training provider holds the responsibility for the delivery of the training, trainee assessment/progression and academic/professional support. Key responsibilities of this role usually include:

- formally assessing trainee practitioners as ready for placement and fit to practise, and ongoing assessment of their work, as referred to in the *Accreditation of Training Courses* (BACP, 2021a): 'before starting client work students must be assessed individually for their readiness to take clients. This must include an assessment of readiness to begin work with clients remotely.' (B4.1i). Guidance on delivering appropriate training for remote client work is available (BACP, 2021a, 2021c, 2022);
- ensuring that trainee practitioners obtain a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check, where applicable;
- providing a reference for trainee practitioners to the placement organisation as part of the organisation's selection process;
- maintaining a database of suitable placements which have been approved as appropriate for the course/programme;
- approving supervisors, confirming that they agree to work within the *Ethical Framework for the Counselling Professions* (BACP 2018a) and that their rationale and philosophy are compatible with the therapeutic modality of the course. Supervisors should be experienced and competent in online and phone therapy (OPT). (*Accreditation of Training Courses* BACP, 2021a, B4.15);
- ensuring that trainee practitioners have regular and sufficient supervision in line with the requirements of the *Ethical Framework for the Counselling Professions* (BACP 2018a);
- ensuring that a 'link tutor' is the first point of contact for supervisors and placement organisations;
- supporting students if they have issues or concerns about their placement – e.g. concerns about ethical practice or relationships;
- organising general information meetings between supervisors and placement organisations where this is appropriate, for example to provide updates about the course/programme;
- providing information about the course/programme to all parties, including (for purposes of consistency and course accreditation) holding authorship of the four-way agreement (in consultation with other parties);
- supporting any reasonable adjustments for disabled students;

- whilst not all courses are accredited, the four parties should be aware of the training provider's policy for extending the training period for a trainee to complete their required practice hours; for example, tutorials and supervision (*Accreditation of Training Courses* BACP, 2021a, B4.2).

Supervisor

Further information about the requirements for supervision can be found in BACP's *Ethical Framework for the Counselling Professions* (BACP 2018a) and in GPiA 054 *Introduction to supervision in the counselling professions* (member version) (BACP, 2018c). Additionally, the *Accreditation of Training Courses* (BACP, 2021a) specifies that 'the course must ensure that students have regular and sufficient supervision in line with the requirements of the *Ethical Framework*' (B4.12). In the context of supervising trainee practitioners, the key responsibilities of this role usually include:

- providing regular supervision in line with BACP guidelines/requirements (*Accreditation of Training Courses* BACP, 2021a, B4.13);
- making clear to the trainee practitioner the location and costs involved in supervision, including cancellation fees if applicable (for example, through their own supervision contract); 'the mode of supervision must be the same as the client work, therefore, a mix of face-to-face and OPT supervision is required'. (*Accreditation of Training Courses*, BACP, 2021a, B4.12)
- verifying that the trainee practitioner has attended supervision sessions (for example by signing a log of sessions attended);
- participating in a formal review of the trainee practitioner's practice and writing a report on this (often jointly with the trainee practitioner) as part of an interim and/or final assessment for the course, including confirming fitness to practise;
- agreeing to work within the *Ethical Framework for the Counselling Professions* (BACP 2018a);
- maintaining confidentiality in their work with the trainee practitioner, with certain exceptions (see Issues of concern section).

Placement organisation

Usually, a placement organisation will ensure that a placement manager, mentor or facilitator acts as the main contact point and provides support to the trainee practitioner during their placement. Key responsibilities of this role usually include:

- verifying the number of client hours completed by the trainee practitioner;
- informing potential clients of the trainee status of the practitioner;
- supporting students to work within the *Ethical Framework for the Counselling Professions* (BACP 2018a) and in the specific therapeutic modality relevant to the course/programme;
- paying close attention to how many clients a trainee has in their caseload;
- ensuring that a suitable room or other facilities (e.g. for remote working) for client work is provided;
- agreeing any arrangements for online and/or telephone client work which may be in place for trainee practitioners;
- ensuring that the trainee practitioner receives an induction to the organisation, including health and safety procedures and policies;
- supporting any reasonable adjustments for disabled students;
- ensuring that initial assessment of clients as suitable to work with a trainee is carried out;
- ensuring that the trainee practitioner is supported in contracting for a suitable number of sessions with clients, where possible consistent with any recommendations of their training provider;
- providing support with making client appointments, storage of client records, and other administrative aspects of the service, ensuring that data protection law is complied with;
- providing support and guidance on action to be taken in an emergency, for example safeguarding concerns;
- supporting the trainee practitioner in having no other relationship with any potential and actual clients, for example by not requiring them to take on other roles in the placement organisation;
- where possible, allowing trainees to audio/video record sessions and write case studies for reflection and assessment as part of their course work (with client consent);

- agreeing that the trainee practitioner will take their client work to supervision – both 1:1 supervision external to the course and supervision within small groups on the course, in accordance with course/programme and BACP requirements;
- participating in a formal review of the trainee practitioner's practice and writing a report on this (often jointly with the trainee practitioner) as part of a final assessment for the course/programme, including confirming fitness to practise.

Trainee practitioner

The *Ethical Framework for the Counselling Professions* (BACP 2018a, Good Practice, point 83d) states that trainee practitioners have a responsibility to:

be watchful for any incompatibilities between contractual requirements that have implications for work with clients, for example, between agreements with clients, training providers and placements, and seek appropriate support in order to ensure that all contractual requirements are compatible.

It also states that (BACP 2018a, Good Practice, point 83b and c) trainees will 'ensure that they deliver services that satisfy the minimum professional standards when working as practitioners with members of the public', and will 'collaborate with their trainers, placement providers, supervisors and other professional advisers to provide services to their clients that satisfy professional standards by being undertaken with reasonable care and skill'. To facilitate this, whilst working within a placement the trainee practitioner usually agrees to the following responsibilities:

- attending regular supervision in line with BACP guidelines/requirements, and agreeing to take all their client work to supervision;
- maintaining student membership of BACP (or other professional association as relevant);
- ensuring they are covered by public liability and professional indemnity insurance (either individually or through their placement provider). Consequently, students will be deemed to be accountable for their work with clients;
- agreeing to work within the *Ethical Framework for the Counselling Professions* (BACP 2018a);
- ensuring that client confidentiality is maintained, handling client material in a respectful way and complying with the training provider's and the placement organisation's requirements;
- engaging with their placement organisation beyond providing client sessions and working within the relevant policies and procedures, for example in regard to safeguarding, health and safety;

- maintaining an accurate professional log of the client hours completed which may be required as part of an assessment by the training provider, maintaining client confidentiality within this;
- paying the supervisor for supervision sessions unless an alternative arrangement is in place (for example some placement organisations provide supervision);
- maintaining confidentiality of client work and security of client records in line with data protection law. For fuller details see GPiA 105 Legal Resource: *The United Kingdom General Data Protection Regulation (UKGDPR) legal principles and practice notes for the counselling professions* (BACP, 2021e).

The agreement

Training providers and other parties can decide on the structure of the agreement covering the roles above to meet the needs of the training and to ensure consistency with the content and style of other course/programme documentation. Usually, training courses/programmes provide trainee practitioners with a handbook covering information about the course, supervision, recording of client work and assignments, and other essential elements.

The four-way agreement may be an additional document which is shared with the four parties and signed by each before client work begins, defining the responsibilities of each party.

The following provides a suggested framework for additional key areas to be included.

Placement and client work

This section covers the elements of the trainee practitioner's client work in placement to be covered in a four-way agreement. The agreement would usually specify who holds the main responsibility for each of these points. Before any client work begins, it is considered good practice for meetings and an induction process to take place between the placement organisation (the placement manager, mentor or facilitator) and the trainee practitioner to agree and document the following (this may be done with the use of a proforma document provided by the training provider):

1. *How referrals will be managed and assessment of clients by the placement.* The *Accreditation of Training Courses* (BACP, 2021a) states that the contract between the training provider, trainee practitioner and placement organisation must include 'details of the placement providers' professional practice such as the initial assessment of clients, methods of referral to students' (B4.5vi). Whilst the process for doing this will vary between different organisations, it is important to demonstrate that clients are assessed as suitable to work with trainee practitioners, including an initial risk assessment, and that this is the responsibility of the placement organisation.

2. *Information to clients about the practitioner's trainee status.*

The *Accreditation of Training Courses* (BACP, 2021a) states that 'The course has an obligation under the *Ethical Framework* to ensure that placement providers indicate student status to their clients' (B4.1v).

Additionally, the *Ethical Framework for the Counselling Professions* (BACP 2018a, Good Practice, point 82a) states that 'in the interests of openness and honesty with clients, trainees on a practitioner-qualifying course working with clients will inform clients (or ensure that clients have been informed) that they are trainees'. A discussion between the trainee practitioner and placement organisation about how and when clients will be informed of their trainee status and given a choice about whether or not they wish to work with a trainee is therefore important.

3. *Public liability and professional indemnity insurance.* The placement organisation may be covered for one or both of these areas in relation to the client work of the trainee practitioner. If they are not, it is important to ensure that the trainee practitioner is aware of this and that they arrange their own insurance as necessary. The *Accreditation of Training Courses* (BACP, 2021a) states that students should only work with UK based clients due to 'particular legislative, insurance and safeguarding considerations for international practice' (B4.1vi).
4. *Contracting for client consent.* Clarity is needed on the contracting process with clients to be followed by the trainee practitioner. See GPiA 039 *Making the contract within the counselling professions* (BACP, 2020a).

A standard contracting form to be discussed with clients may be provided by the training provider. Alternatively, the placement organisation may have their own document(s) which the trainee practitioner adopts. It is good practice to ensure that a consent form includes confirmation from the client that the counselling process has been discussed (for example, number of sessions) and that they consent to the sessions. Usually this form will include a number of points including the storage of client data and confidentiality, as outlined in the following paragraphs.

5. *Audio recording of sessions and assessment of practice.* The *Ethical Framework for the Counselling Professions* (BACP 2018a, Good Practice, point 83a) states that all trainees will:

seek their clients' permission to use any information from work with them for training purposes, for example, in presentations, case studies or as assessed practice. Alternatively, any report of work undertaken will be so thoroughly anonymised that the identity of the person concerned cannot be identified by any means reasonably likely to be used. Consent is required if anonymity cannot be assured or when required by the training provider's instructions or regulations.

Many training courses include a requirement for the trainee practitioner to record some sessions (with client consent) in order to submit these as part of assessed work for the course. This needs to be agreed with the placement organisation.

If the trainee practitioner and placement organisation agree that audio and/or video recording of sessions is acceptable, this is usually included as part of the client consent form, or on a separate form for this purpose.

This will provide clarity to the client about the purpose of any recordings, how they will be used and who will have access to them. For example, the consent form may state that any recordings will be held securely, according to Data Protection legislation, including the United Kingdom General Data Protection Regulation (UKGDPR), and used only for training and supervision purposes (for example as part of an assessment submission, as part of ongoing supervision and/or as part of the External Examiner's moderation of the course), and that the client's anonymity/confidentiality will be protected. The owner of any recordings should be made clear, which may be the training provider as Data Controller. For further information on this see GPiA 105 Legal Resource: *The United Kingdom General Data Protection Regulation (UKGDPR) legal principles and practice notes for the counselling professions*, (BACP, 2021f), and GPiA 071 Legal Resource: *Ownership and storage of records in the context of the counselling professions*, (BACP, 2021d).

6. *Confidentiality.* It is important that contracting with clients includes information about the trainee practitioner's commitment to uphold confidentiality and any exceptions or limits to this. This is an area to clarify together with the placement organisation, to ensure consistency with the organisation's policies. For example, the placement organisation may have their own policy on issues such as safeguarding and clients at risk of harm to self or others, which the trainee practitioner will need to work within. Further information about confidentiality is available in GPiA 014 Legal Resource: *Managing confidentiality within the counselling professions* (BACP, 2021e).

- 7. Record keeping and data protection (UKGDPR).** The placement organisation has a responsibility to comply with data protection legislation, and it is important that the trainee practitioner is aware of the organisation's process for recording, handling and storing client details, including the procedures for storage of any client notes and/or recordings and where these will be held.

For further information on this see GPiA 105 Legal Resource: *The United Kingdom General Data Protection Regulation (UKGDPR) legal principles and practice notes for the counselling professions*, (BACP, 2021f).

- 8. Health and Safety.** The placement organisation has a responsibility to ensure that the trainee practitioner is aware of any procedures that should be followed within the placement as a workplace, for example the location of fire exits and emergency procedures within the placement premises.
- 9. Lone working and personal safety.** Usually, training providers will specify that trainee practitioners should not be in a position of lone working and that there should always be another person in a building used for client work. The placement organisation has responsibility for ensuring this through agreed procedures concerning building opening times, times of access and client appointments, and for ensuring that the trainee practitioner is aware of these before beginning client work and is supported. For further information see GPiA 106 *Safe working in the context of the counselling professions* (BACP, 2020b).
- 10. Online and phone therapy (OPT).** Whilst the majority of supervised placement hours should be face to face, recent changes as a result of the coronavirus pandemic include the provision for the remainder to be a combination of online-video and phone or online-video only. The placement organisation has a responsibility to provide details of their remote working support structures, including where OPT sessions will be conducted, homeworking policies (where relevant), how students can debrief after OPT sessions and where to take any concerns, procedures for technology failures during client sessions and information about additional support services and onward referral pathways that students can share with OPT clients when required (*Accreditation of Training Courses*, BACP, 2021a, B4.5v). For further information see GPiA 047 *Working online* (BACP, 2022).

Supervision

This section covers the elements of supervision of the trainee practitioner's client work to be covered in a four-way agreement. The agreement would usually specify who holds the main responsibility for each of these points and what the parties have agreed to.

1. *Contracting before client work begins.* The trainee practitioner needs to arrange for supervision before beginning client work, therefore it would usually be appropriate for supervisor and trainee practitioner to meet for a supervision session before the first client session takes place.

In addition to the four-way agreement, many supervisors have their own supervision contract.

2. *Frequency of supervision.* The trainee and supervisor usually commit to regular supervision as part of the four-way agreement in line with the ratios of supervision specified by BACP for practitioners in training.

Further information about the requirements for supervision can be found in BACP's *Ethical Framework for the Counselling Professions* (BACP 2018a) and in GPiA 054 *Introduction to supervision in the counselling professions (member version)* (BACP, 2018b).

3. *Responsibility for client work.* Usually, a trainee practitioner would be considered accountable for their own client work as a member of BACP. The *Ethical Framework for the Counselling Professions* (BACP 2018a, Good Practice, point 67) states that:

When supervising qualified and/or experienced practitioners, the weight of responsibility for ensuring that the supervisee's work meets professional standards will primarily rest with the supervisee.

However, when the supervisee is a trainee, a greater share of responsibility is assumed by the other parties, especially the supervisor. Supervisors have a joint responsibility with trainee practitioners to ensure (to the best of their ability) that all client work is presented in supervision.

4. *Recording/verifying hours.* Whilst the trainee practitioner would usually be responsible for keeping a record of client hours and supervision sessions, the supervisor would usually be asked by the training provider to verify that the supervision sessions had taken place.
5. *Reviewing practice.* Whilst it is not usual for a supervisor to be asked to assess the practice of trainee practitioners on an ongoing basis (this responsibility usually rests with the training provider) there may be a responsibility to participate in a formal review of the trainee practitioner's practice and to write a report on this (often jointly with the trainee practitioner) as part of an interim and/or final assessment for the course, including confirming fitness to practise;

6. *Confidentiality.* Supervisors and trainee practitioners usually make an agreement about confidentiality within the supervisory relationship, which protects the anonymity and confidentiality of both the client and the supervisee. Possible exceptions to this are discussed in the Issues of concern section.

Issues of concern

The *Accreditation of Training Courses* (BACP, 2021a) states that any contract between the training provider, placement organisation and supervisor 'must include provision for the supervisor to report concerns about any aspect of the student's practice' (B4.17).

Placement organisations and supervisors may have concerns about the trainee practitioner which they feel need to be brought to the attention of the training provider, and as they have a role in confirming the student's competence and ethical practice, any concerns that they have need to be taken seriously by the training provider. Therefore, as part of a four-way agreement (or as an additional document) clarity is needed about the process in the event of any of the four parties having concerns about the placement, supervision or work of the trainee practitioner.

This could include (and is not restricted to):

- a supervisor or placement organisation with concerns about a trainee practitioner's fitness to practise;
- a trainee practitioner with concerns about how their placement is managed, or what is required of them;
- a training provider with concerns about the quality of supervision;
- emergency circumstances where there is a concern by any party about risk of harm to self or others;
- formal Fitness to Practise procedures being followed by the training provider where there is cause for concern about a trainee's practice.

In the case of an issue of concern arising, it may become necessary in working within the *Ethical Framework for the Counselling Professions* for one or more of the parties to share information in the interests of putting clients first (BACP, 2018a). This may override other agreements made about confidentiality of information. For further information on confidentiality see GPiA 014 Legal Resource: *Managing confidentiality within the counselling professions* (BACP, 2021e).

An Issues of Concern procedure may therefore cover the following:

- encouragement for the trainee practitioner to address any concerns they have in the first instance directly with the person concerned (for example, mentor, placement manager, supervisor);
- clarity about the training provider's point of contact for any concerns held by the supervisor or the placement organisation;
- the process for addressing and resolving any difficulties and how this will be managed in the event of concerns being raised, for example meetings between the parties;
- in the event of the procedure being followed without resolution, the right of any party to lodge a complaint following the *BACP Professional Conduct Procedure* (2018c).

Summary

This resource has covered the purpose of four-way agreements in supervised practice placements for practitioners in training.

It has outlined the respective roles of the training provider, supervisor, placement organisation and trainee practitioner in relation to client work in placement, and has proposed aspects of practice that can usefully be included in an agreement between these parties, with reference to a range of supporting resources.

Addendum

The resource has been updated taking into account relevant changes in guidelines for practice introduced by BACP as a consequence of the coronavirus pandemic. Relevant information covering online and phone therapy (OPT) and changes to training course requirements have been included, BACP (2021c) has reviewed the 'position on online teaching delivery and remote supervised placement hours to ensure that students are suitably prepared for the changing professional landscape'. You are advised to check current guidance for practitioners, training providers and other parties at www.bacp.co.uk.

About the author

Margaret Rock is based in the North West of England and has worked in the field of training, supervising and developing practitioners for the past 17 years. She was previously Programme Leader for the PgDip/MA in Counselling and Psychotherapy at University of Cumbria, and now works as an Associate Lecturer for the Open University teaching Psychology and Counselling. She is a person-centred practitioner, registered and accredited with BACP, a Chartered Psychologist and an Associate Fellow of the British Psychological Society (BPS). Margaret has worked with clients in the NHS, with children and young people in schools, in the third sector and in a University counselling service.

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