

# PF YoungPeople

## A Proposal for a New Counselling Service for Young People



8 Balcarres Street, Edinburgh EH10 5JB 0131 447 0876 [matthew@pfcounselling.org.uk](mailto:matthew@pfcounselling.org.uk)

## Summary

This proposal concerns the creation of a completely new counselling resource for Edinburgh and the surrounding area, offering a unique service open to young people on a Saturday. It is hoped that the Trustees will recognise the value of a longer term commitment in this sector, and will consider funding three or more years of the programme, with a budget of at least £136,000.

## Aims

- To support the emotional wellbeing, mental health, and resilience of young people.
- To extend the PF's counselling service, prioritising young people.
- To create new opportunities for counsellors to work with young people.
- To reduce the PF's long waiting list and waiting times.

## The PF Counselling Community and Context

In recent years, there has been a confusing discourse in public life regarding mental health and the provision of services. Whilst there has been considerable rhetoric on 'prioritising' mental health, there have been real cuts in funding, and a focussing of what is left on fewer, cheaper services. Counselling and psychotherapy in particular have suffered from an enthusiastic but short-sighted emphasis on certain forms of short-term behavioural approaches. The availability of meaningful relational talking therapies in the statutory sector has declined significantly.

However, the Government's [Mental Health Strategy for Scotland](#) includes key themes which are strongly supported by counselling (especially with young people), namely:

- Support for self management and self help approaches
- A personal, social and clinical outcomes approach

The third sector has responded where possible, and probably now provides the majority of medium to long term counselling and psychotherapy for people unable to afford private fees. The PF has managed to successfully maintain its level of support for individuals and volunteers in a difficult climate of funding cuts and service closures across Edinburgh. Our reputation and our financial position is strong, but we are far from complacent. Although we now have over 100 counsellors volunteering with us every week, our waiting list grows constantly and is longer than ever at around 425 potential clients.

The availability of support for young people at the weekends is particularly poor. Most NHS and many third sector services are only available Monday to Friday, which can make things difficult for many young clients. The charity Caledonia Youth used to provide one of the few services available at the weekend, which it is understood was highly valued, but this has now closed. The PF does not currently offer access to its core service at the weekend, because of our reliance on volunteer counsellors.

Furthermore, *YoungMinds* has noted that the threshold used to enable access to statutory mental health services is higher for adults than for adolescents, such that young people can find themselves 'locked out' of these services as they reach their later teens.

Funding models for third-sector counselling vary. Currently, we offer counselling on the basis of affordable donations at a level which clients themselves choose, rather than having fixed fees or a defined sliding scale. We ask everyone to donate something for each weekly session, if at all possible. We feel this is important therapeutically, as it can represent the client valuing themselves, as well as the counselling process. We currently receive around 50% of our income from client donations. As we continue to maximise our efficiency, we aim to contribute more to meeting the needs in the community.

At the moment we have a Service Level Agreement with NHS Lothian in support of our contribution to mental health services, which amounts to around 15% of our income. Knowing that the NHS can cut vital funds, even to respected and valued organisations, we are creating a sustainable future which is not dependent on the NHS or any public funding.

## The Proposed New PFYoungPeople Service

This proposal concerns the creation of a completely new counselling resource for Edinburgh and the surrounding area, offering a unique service open to young people on a Saturday.

*PFYoungPeople* would be part of the PF Counselling Service, but identifiably distinct within it. It would benefit from the leadership, management experience and ethos of the PF, allowing an expansion of service delivery without disrupting the successful core. This would be possible through a number of innovative factors, new to the PF:

- Providing a service on Saturdays. Currently the PF is closed on Saturday and the building is not used (apart from a few 'Fast Track' clients). *PFYoungPeople* would increase the utilisation of our premises significantly, at a marginal cost.
- Prioritising places for young people. The age range targeted by *PFYoungPeople* will be defined through consultation, but is likely to include 18-26 year-olds initially. Around 100 of the PF's clients in 2015/6 were 26 or under, so the service would have a positive impact on our ability to meet our existing demand, as well as attracting new young clients.
- Offering a time-limited service of 10 sessions per client. Young people tend to need fewer sessions to achieve meaningful change, so limiting the number of sessions available to each client would not have an adverse effect on outcomes. However, it would allow us to offer a service to more clients each year.
- Providing opportunities for paid work to counsellors. Many counsellors volunteer as part of their path to paid work, and we 'lose' some of our best counsellors to employment and self-employment. *PFYoungPeople* would provide a new element to the mix of developmental counselling opportunities available at the PF.

## Income Generation

We believe that a key contributing factor to the success and sustainability of the PF has been our culture of client donations. This not only generates much-needed income and impacts positively on the therapeutic work, but it creates an organisational ethos akin to a 'social enterprise'.

It is unknown whether *PFYoungPeople* will be able to emulate this ethos. Although we hope to encourage clients to make donations at each regular session, it is not known what level might be achieved, and we would anticipate much lower average amounts from young people. This proposal has therefore assumed no income generation at this stage. If we can generate any income, it would be used directly for *PFYoungPeople*, meaning simply that the initial funding would go further or last longer, extending the scope or longevity of the programme.

## Outcomes and Benefits

Our work impacts directly on the health and wellbeing of individuals, and the resilience of the communities in which they live. People can be transformed from being a worry to themselves and their family or friends, and a demand on social resources, to becoming full participants in life. As well as addressing specific mental health conditions, counselling can improve the life experience of those who are struggling with a wide range of issues, including their confidence, self-esteem and life skills.

Our service can and has enabled clients to re-join or re-engage with education or employment, to re-establish happy personal and family lives, and to reconnect with the community life from which they had become distanced. Outcomes for individuals can range from higher self-respect leading to better and fuller engagement with family, colleagues and neighbours, to literally saving the lives of people facing psychiatric disorders, hospitalisation and suicide if their early needs are not met.

The benefits of counselling and psychotherapy for young people are well known. These include:

- Recovery from moderate or mild mental health illness, and the adverse impact of traumatic or destabilising events. Counselling can help us to understand, 'work through' and recover from a specific diagnosis or a traumatising experience.
- Improved mental and emotional resilience with which to cope with adverse circumstances. A better, deeper understanding of ourselves and our patterns of behaviour, including our unconscious strategies, making us more able to meet adversity and survive or thrive.
- Successful negotiation of the important transitions which occur for young people, such as at school or work, or in relationships and families, etc. Knowing more clearly who we are, not just as a reflection of those and that which is around us, can help us stay grounded and secure even as change happens.

## Endings

As part of *PFYoungPeople*, all young people receiving counselling support will have a specific 'ending' session wherever possible. This will support them to move forward and learn from their experience by reviewing the process they had been through and any changes made. If it is felt appropriate, this session would also be used for signposting or referral to other agencies and support. This will also help with the evaluation of the programme, and our ability to demonstrate the young person's journey while undergoing counselling.

## Outcomes Measurement

It would be an integral part of *PFYoungPeople* that we would use a standardised clinical outcomes measurement tool with all clients, such as the well-known CORE-OM system. The PF has recently been developing its knowledge and experience of CORE-OM, and many counsellors now use it both for feedback on outcomes and as a therapeutic tool.

CORE-OM stands for 'Clinical Outcomes Routine Evaluation – Outcome Measure', it was designed as a non-proprietary, pan-theoretical measure of global psychological distress. CORE-OM gathers a restricted set of data that relate to the clients' accounts of their subjective experience within four dimensions: well-being, problems, functioning in relationships, and risk. The PF is a member of SILC UK, a network and learning community for voluntary sector counselling and psychotherapy services using CORE.

## Staffing & Resources

The small and very efficient staff team at the PF are flat-out supporting a service of 100 counsellors and 300 clients a week, so *PFYoungPeople* cannot add additional burden onto them. It is thus proposed that, with oversight from the Board and Director, the programme would require to recruit and support the staff resource necessary to both set it up initially and to run it in the medium to long term.

It is proposed that a **Project Manager** is recruited to initiate and run the project. This Project Manager, with both clinical and management skills and experience (including in the training and use of the CORE outcome measure), would work at least one day a week over the first year, fully flexibly to enable more time at the outset, and including some attendance on Saturdays to oversee *PFYoungPeople* operations. S/he would work closely with the PF Director in recruiting and managing the counsellors. In the later years of delivery, there may be scope to reduce the Project Manager's hours. However, opportunities for service development, working with partner agencies, and the likely enthusiasm to sustain and continue the programme, would provide incentives to continue the post at the same level.

A **Reception Administrator** would be recruited specifically for the service. S/he would have responsibility for opening and closing the building, and would usually be the only staff member on site apart from the counsellors. It would therefore be necessary for him/her to have appropriate experience and maturity for this aspect of the role. S/he would provide the reception services required between 9.30am and 4.30pm, and would carry out the client/counsellor appointment administration, using facilities and systems with which PF staff already have much experience. Sickness and holiday cover would be provided by core service PF administrative staff.

The heart of the service would be the **Counsellors**, who would provide the weekly therapy sessions. We hope and expect that these counsellors would be recruited from amongst those already volunteering at the PF, who will see this as an interesting and developmental opportunity. To support motivation and commitment for Saturday working, PFYoungPeople would pay the programme's counsellors. It is widely established that third sector counselling agencies in Edinburgh currently pay around £20 per session, and we would propose offering this rate. This would form the biggest single element of the costs of the programme, but our assessment is that it would be necessary for a successful and sustainable project. It would be a direct cost, related specifically to the number of sessions delivered, although we would want to offer some (reduced) payment for late cancellations and client no-shows. Counsellors would work on a self-employed basis and would submit invoices monthly for the sessions delivered.

Every client would be offered a one-off assessment session prior to beginning with their regular counsellor, allowing some scope for matching clients and counsellors wherever possible. These **Assessments** would be a cost in addition to the regular counselling.

Every counsellor needs to have individual and group **Supervision** at a ratio compatible with the requirements of our professional body, COSCA. For our core service, this is already paid for by the PF. We have negotiated very reasonable rates with a team of professional supervisors with whom we have worked for many years. The intention would be to use the same pool of supervisors for PFYoungPeople counselling work as well.

As the core PF service is primarily aimed at adults, it is appropriate that we offer some **Training** in working with young people to those for whom this would be relevant. We will not know, until we have our team of counsellors, how much and what sort of training will be required, but have estimated two CPD sessions per year.

Buying a licence to enable us to use the **CORE-PC** software package for the processing of our CORE-OM data would support the routine evaluation of therapeutic outcomes, as well as our evaluation of the programme overall.

Whilst there would be some additional **overhead costs** for the PF associated with PFYoungPeople, a key aspect that would make it a very efficient use of funds is that there would essentially be no premises costs. Extending our use of our building into Saturdays would have some effect in terms of heating, lighting, materials, staff refreshments, management, etc., but would not add to the overall premises costs which are already borne by the core programme.

## Evaluation and Sustainability

Ongoing evaluation of the PFYoungPeople programme is built into its operations, through the use of CORE-OM. We would also seek qualitative feedback, wherever possible, from clients after they have completed their counselling, using an anonymous feedback form. Additionally, we would routinely collect statistical client data such as age, referral source, presenting issues, number of sessions attended, late cancellations, DNAs, donations, etc., as

shown, for our core service, in Appendix 2. This would allow us to conduct periodic evaluative reviews of performance against our declared aims.

Towards the end of the initially funded period, we would conduct a formal evaluation, perhaps seeking funding to commission this from an external perspective. This would be with a view to establishing the desirability, funding requirements, and opportunities for the further continuation and sustainability of the *PFYoungPeople* programme.

## Budget

Detailed costings will be developed as part of the project. A total budget of £136,000 is available to fund at least 3 years of operation, with the hope that efficient operations and some income generation may allow some extension to this.

Initial resource estimates used in the development of the funding proposal are given in Appendix 1.

There is scope for active fundraising in years 2 and 3 to ensure the continuation of the service if the first year proves successful.

## Appendix 1 – Resource Estimates

Project Manager – Project set-up and ongoing oversight/management.

Administrator – Present at premises while counselling is taking place (one day each week, a Saturday).

Counsellors – Initially envisaged as 5 counsellors paid to see up to 5 clients each Saturday. 10 sessions limit per client overall, with some flexibility to add a further 10 sessions.

Assessments – One per client start if deemed necessary, paid additionally.

Supervision – Monthly individual by external supervisor, plus one two-hour group per month.

Training – CPD commensurate with the service level.

Contribution to overhead – to cover premises, Director's time, and other PF costs.

## Appendix 2 – PF Counselling Service Full Service Statistics

For information. 1 April 2015 – 31 March 2016

<b>SESSION ATTENDANCE</b>		
Attended		
<i>Counselling</i>	9,086	84.9%
<i>Assessment</i>	443	85.5%
<i>Total</i>	9,529	85.0%
Cancelled by Client		
<i>Counselling</i>	1,058	9.9%
<i>Assessment</i>	38	7.3%
<i>Total</i>	1,096	9.7%
Cancelled by Counsellor		
<i>Counselling</i>	330	3.1%
<i>Assessment</i>	4	0.8%
<i>Total</i>	334	2.9%
Did Not Attend		
<i>Counselling</i>	232	2.2%
<i>Assessment</i>	33	6.4%
<i>Total</i>	265	2.3%
Total Offered	11,224	
Average total number of sessions attended		Median
<i>Core clients</i>	20.5	12
Number of Clients seen during the period	741	
<b>GENDER</b>		
Female	324	69.5%
Male	138	29.6%
<b>REFERRAL SOURCE</b>		
GP	117	25.1%
Friend	93	20.0%
Returning Client	40	8.6%
Web Search	38	8.2%
Other Counselling Agency	33	7.1%
Family	24	5.2%
Uni Counselling Service	20	4.3%
Employer	12	2.6%
WHSL	12	2.6%
Other Counsellor	9	1.9%
Reputation	9	1.9%
Other NHS Service	8	1.7%
Training Course	3	0.6%
Social Services	2	0.4%
Other	7	1.5%

## EMPLOYMENT

Employed Full Time	172	36.9%
Employed Part Time	83	17.8%
Unemployed	72	15.5%
Student	57	12.2%
Self Employed	48	10.3%
Employed off sick	15	3.2%
Retired	8	1.7%
At Home	2	0.4%
Other	4	0.9%

## ETHNIC ORIGIN

White British	342	73.4%
White Other	96	20.6%
Asian Other	7	1.5%
Indian	5	1.1%
Black African	1	0.2%
Chinese	1	0.2%
Other	6	1.3%

## PRESENTING ISSUES

Interpersonal/Relationship	308	15.1%
Anxiety/Stress	304	14.9%
Self Esteem	254	12.4%
Depression	242	11.9%
Bereavement/Loss	200	9.8%
Trauma/Abuse	138	6.8%
Work/Academic	98	4.8%
Living/Welfare	82	4.0%
Eating Disorder	28	1.4%
Personality Problems	17	0.8%
Addictions	17	0.8%
Psychosis	12	0.6%
Cognitive/Learning	5	0.2%
Other		
- Childhood issues	165	8.1%
- Anger/Violence	62	3.0%
- Spiritual/personal Growth	59	2.9%
- Sexual	22	1.1%
- Other	28	1.4%

## CLIENT POSTAL DISTRICTS

CITY OF EDINBURGH		
EH1 - Old Town	14	3.0%
EH2 - New Town	2	0.4%
EH3 - New Town	34	7.3%
EH4 - Pilton/Muirhouse	17	3.6%
EH5 - Granton	5	1.1%
EH6 - Leith	42	9.0%
EH7 - Lochend	24	5.2%
EH8 - Holyrood	33	7.1%
EH9 - Grange	38	8.2%
EH10 - Morningside	76	16.3%
EH11 - Broomhouse	55	11.8%
EH12 - Corstorphine	11	2.4%
EH13 - Colinton	8	1.7%
EH14 - Wester Hailes	11	2.4%
EH15 - Portobello	15	3.2%
EH16 - Craigmillar	18	3.9%
EH17 - Gilmerton	7	1.5%
EH28 - Ratho	1	0.2%
EH29 - Kirkliston	2	0.4%

**Specific Postcodes 148 35.8%**

MIDLOTHIAN		
EH19 - Bonnyrigg	3	0.6%
EH20 - Straiton	3	0.6%
EH22 - Dalkeith	4	0.9%
EH23 - Gorebridge	3	0.6%
EH24 - Rosewell	1	0.2%
EH26 - Penicuik	8	1.7%

EAST LoTHIAN		
EH21 - Musselburgh	4	0.9%
EH32 - Longniddry	2	0.4%

WEST LoTHIAN		
EH46 - West Linton	3	0.6%
EH48 - Bathgate	1	0.2%
EH52 - Broxburn	3	0.6%
EH53 - East Calder	2	0.4%
EH54 - Livingston	1	0.2%