

Volunteer Counsellor

INFORMATION PACK

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Dear Applicant,

Thank you for your enquiry concerning volunteer counselling placements at Off the Record.

Off the Record is an established counselling service for young people. We currently offer counselling placements in Croydon, which offers a service to young people between the ages of 14 and 25 living, studying, working or has a GP within the borough of Croydon, and in Sutton, which offers a service to young people between 11 and 25 who lives or has a GP in the borough of Sutton. We will interview and assess trainee counsellors wishing to take up a placement in these two services on an ongoing basis.

We offer the opportunity to work with a minimum of three clients weekly in a professional and supportive environment. Clients come from a variety of backgrounds and presenting with a range of issues. We provide free, bi-weekly group supervision and offer regular training and assessment opportunities. This is after an initial 6 month probationary period when supervision will be one to one.

We are looking for trainees who are well grounded in basic counselling skills and who are able to demonstrate a theoretical understanding of the counselling relationship and process. In order to be considered for a placement here, you will need to have completed a certificate course in counselling or psychotherapy (equivalent to year 1 MSc) and have done at least 100 hours training at Diploma level (or year 2 MSc) and have some prior experience of supervised counselling practice either with clients *or in role play as part of your training*. You will also need to have been in weekly personal therapy for at least one year (30 sessions minimum) with a commitment to continue for the duration of your training. For longer trainings, this will mean for at least the duration of 2 years of Diploma level training post Certificate.

Please read our role description and person specification. If you meet our criteria and you are still interested, please complete and return **both** the Application and the Equal Opportunities form by the **closing date mentioned in the Information Pack or as soon as possible** either by email to recruitment@offtherecordcroydon.org or by post to:

Bodhakari
Off the Record Youth Counselling
72 Queens Road
Croydon
Surrey
CR0 2PR

Please note that the Equal Opportunities Form is for statistical information only and has no bearing on your application, being separated from the Application Form on receipt. This helps to ensure that the application process is fair at all times.

If you have any further questions about this role please contact me on 020 8251 0251.

Regards,

Bodhakari
Counselling Co-ordinator

VOLUNTEER COUNSELLOR

Application Information

CLOSING DATE

Volunteer recruitment continues throughout the year, with applications accepted at any time. We currently assess potential volunteers through a videoed counselling skills practise featuring two applicants. This process is not competitive. Counsellors who are perceived to have reached an adequate standard will all be invited subject to the availability of a suitable shift and supervision arrangement.

NOTE: If we have no current spaces available for counsellors (if the current supervision groups are full), we will ask if you would like to go through our further assessment process and be held in waiting for a placement to become available before inviting you for interview.

RETURN OF APPLICATION

If you would like to be considered for this role, please apply by sending the following:

- Completed Application Form
- Equal Opportunities Form (this will be separated from the Application Form on receipt and will have no effect on your application for this role)

Please note that a CV will not be considered

You may email the completed forms to recruitment@offtherecordcroydon.org, or post them to:

Bodhakari
Counselling Co-ordinator
"Off The Record" Youth Counselling
72 Queens Road
Croydon
CR0 2PR

To avoid any delay in your application being processed, please ensure you have signed the Application Form (Section G: Declaration). If you are not able to sign the form electronically, we will accept your email as provisional signature but we will require you to sign the form when you attend the interview or you can post your completed Application Form to the above mentioned address.

Acknowledgement of Applications

Once we receive your application we will notify you if we think that you have a suitable background to be invited for our recruitment process. We will then look to have another suitable applicant before proceeding.

Off The Record Organisational Structure & Services 2016

“Off the Record” Youth Counselling Croydon was founded in 1994 to provide free, independent, confidential, professional counselling for 14 – 25 year olds in the Croydon area. Since then the agency has expanded to include further areas of work including BME Mental Health Work; a Young Carers Service offering support to young people under 26 who are caring for the needs of others; a specialist counselling service for young refugees; online counselling and workshops and our young people’s counselling service in the borough of Sutton.

The agency is funded through a variety of sources including Croydon CCG, Sutton CCG, London Borough of Croydon, London Borough of Sutton, Lloyds Foundation, Progress Foundation, L&Q Foundation and Children in Need.

Limited Company

“Off the Record” is a charitable limited company and is a registered charity. The conduct of the company is governed by our Memorandum and Articles of Association.

The Management Committee

“Off the Record” is an independent voluntary sector agency and is managed by a multi-disciplinary voluntary Trustee Board. The Trustee Board meets quarterly and has full legal responsibility for the operation of the agency. The Trustee Board also has officers who have delegated responsibility for particular areas of work e.g. finance. Trustee Board members are elected at the Annual General Meeting. Due to “Off the Record’s” status as a limited company, all Trustee Board members are also Directors of the Company. The Trustee Board works in an open and collaborative style and encourages full participation from paid and volunteer staff and service users.

Paid Staff

“Off the Record” currently has 46 paid staff posts (many part-time and some staff hold more than one post) – an Agency Director & Assistant Director; seven Administrative, Data and Finance staff; seven Croydon Counselling Service counsellors; six Sutton Counselling Service counsellors; one Sutton Wellbeing Navigator; nine online service co-ordinators and counsellors; four Refugee Counsellors; two BME Community Development Workers; six Young Carers’ workers; a group worker and one Communications & Participation Worker. The Agency Director & Assistant Director are responsible for overall line management of staff and for the day to day running of the agency and are accountable to the Management Committee.

Volunteers

“Off the Record” has and seeks volunteers in the counselling services, the refugee group work, with young carers and in administration. Volunteer counsellors carry out part of the counselling work with young people and are professionally supervised in their work. Group work volunteers support the running of a weekly group for young refugees, and volunteers support young carers in their Learning Support Club. Administration volunteers assist in the daily receptionist and administrative tasks for all the services and projects. Volunteers are drawn from a variety of backgrounds and all are selected and trained by the agency. Volunteers are directly accountable to the paid staff.

Professional Standards

“Off the Record” is a member of the British Association for Counselling & Psychotherapy and of Youth Access. The counselling service is operated in accordance with BACP’s Ethical Framework and is subject to BACP’s Complaints Procedure. “Off the Record” is working towards Youth Access Quality Standards, and PQASSO.

Involvement of Young People

“Off the Record” seeks to actively involve young people in the development of its services and service users are encouraged to provide feedback and suggestions about the service.

"We believe that everyone has strengths, abilities and talents within them. We want children and young people who are vulnerable or struggling to be empowered to use these resources to meet life's challenges."

ORGANISATIONAL AIMS

"Off The Record" aims to:

- Provide a broad range of accessible, responsive, imaginative, flexible and inclusive support services for vulnerable children, young people and young adults from all communities.
- Identify and represent the needs of children, young people and young adults and to challenge and encourage service providers and policy makers to fully take account of those needs.

Our vision is that we want young people to be inspired to make choices and decisions so that they can feel alive in their own lives.

To achieve this:

- We will always do our best to welcome young people and we will be clear, truthful and friendly.
- We will always work hard to earn their trust, rather than to expect it.
- Whatever their race, culture, gender, sexuality, disability or religion, we will respect and accept them.

Off The Record's values are to:

- Listen to young people.
- Understand and respect their wishes and beliefs.
- Be humble and acknowledge any mistakes we make.
- Be helpful and supportive.
- Challenge young people to be the best they can be.

What we do

We provide a wide range of free, friendly and accessible support services for young people including Counselling, Young Carers Service, Compass and Community Development Work.

Counselling

The counselling service is a free, confidential service for young people aged 14-25 living, working or studying in Croydon.

Counselling is a confidential space where a young person can explore your thoughts, feelings, beliefs or experiences over a period of time with the support of a skilled listener. It is a friendly and non-judgemental space in which to get to know and understand yourself better in safe environment.

At times life can be difficult and it can feel hard to cope on your own. When this happens we can feel lots of different feelings - sad, scared, hopeless or angry. We believe that it's okay to ask for support at a time like this and that you have the ability within you to find your own answers.

At Off the Record we believe that the young person, not the counsellor, are the expert on him or herself, but that the counsellor can help and support you in finding their own way forward. Through this we hope to help you to develop your potential and feel more able to deal with life's challenges.

Young Carers Service

The Young Carers Service is a free, friendly and professional service, offering support to young people who are caring for a parent or sibling. If you are aged 7-25 and caring for someone with a physical disability, mental health issue, long-term illness or learning difficulty, then our service is here to support you.

At the Young Carers Service we offer a wide range of activities to support young carers, including:

- Assessment
- Respite (trips, activities, groups)
- Case work including 1-1 support (emotional, educational, whole family)
- Referral to external services for children and adults where appropriate
- Art Therapy and Counselling
- Workshops
- Weekly Homework Club
- Training opportunities
- Referral to external providers for respite and therapeutic services
- New Young Adult Carers Service for young carers aged over 18

We believe that young carers play a special role in caring for others, but that often means someone has to grow up fast! Caring for someone can sometimes leave you feeling stressed, tired and alone, with little time for yourself and lots of responsibilities.

With all this going on we believe that it is really important that young carers are able to enjoy themselves and feel a sense of achievement in all that they do. At the Young Carers Service we are committed to providing a friendly and understanding service, supporting the young person whilst they make a positive contribution to the lives of others.

Compass

Compass is a specialist service within Off the Record, providing mental health support to young people in Croydon who are refugees, asylum seekers or forced migrants.

Compass provides individual counselling and group work to young people who are refugees, asylum seekers or forced migrants. We offer a service within local schools and colleges, as well as at Off the Record. We can also offer counselling through an interpreter, if requested.

- **COUNSELLING:** Talking to a counsellor can help someone to increase their understanding of feelings or problems, exploring past or present issues confidentially without feeling judged, told what to do or under pressure to talk about problems. We support a wide range of issues, including trauma, loss, self-harm, suicide, anxiety, isolation and sleep problems.
- **GROUP WORK:** Group work is offered in schools and colleges to explore issues such as anger, relationships and change. Our weekly Boys Group provides more flexible support, offering an opportunity to develop new friendships, get involved in activities and access wider services.
- **TRAINING FOR PROFESSIONALS:** Training is available to organisations working closely with young refugees and asylum seekers, providing information on mental health difficulties, the impact of loss and trauma and effective support strategies.

We believe that all young people have the right to access culturally sensitive support that respects individual experiences and beliefs.

At Compass we understand that past memories, experiences or trauma can be difficult to cope with and worries about the future or problems within the UK can be hard to manage alone. We aim to provide a service which respects your own culture, beliefs and experiences, whilst offering you a safe space to talk about things that are going on in your life.

Community Development Work

The Community Development Workers service helps the Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) community to develop mental health services. By providing support to mental health and community organisations we aim to help the development of services for young people and young adults aged 0-35.

We support mental health services and community organisations to engage Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities in their work by:

- Empowering BME communities to play a key role in the development of services.
- Identifying barriers to accessing mental health services.
- Raising awareness of mental health issues and challenging mental health stigma within BME communities.
- Acting as a supportive link between BME communities and mental health services.
- Helping organisations to build capacity.
- Bridging the gap between community organisations and statutory services, providing information and advice on how to engage with BME groups.

As Community Development Workers, we are committed to raising awareness of mental health and reducing any stigma that is attached. We believe that services should be accessible to all people, particularly BME communities, and that discrimination in mental health services should be a thing of the past. Also, we believe that BME community organisations have a significant role to play in the strategic development of more culturally appropriate and responsive mental health services.

Skyline Online Support Services

Skyline Support services are free online services providing online counselling and workshops to young people aged 14-25 in Croydon, Merton Sutton. **SkyLine Online Counselling** offers short term counselling for young people 14-25 who might prefer this to a face to face service. The service can take the form of online chat, or the exchange of emails between the young person and their counsellor. **SkyCasts Online Workshops** provide practical help and information about key issues you might be struggling with in your life, such as depression, stress, anger or anxiety.

VOLUNTEER COUNSELLOR

Role Description

Title:	Volunteer Counsellor
Responsible to:	The Counselling Co-ordinator
Hours:	Negotiable subject to a minimum of 3 hours per week
Location:	Based at the agency's main office at 72 Queens Road, Croydon
Role Purpose:	To provide clinical counselling on a weekly basis

Background Information:

The counselling team provide a safe, confidential talking therapy space for young people and hence a sensitive and professional manner is of key importance. The counselling team include the Counselling Co-ordinator, the Assistant Director, a number of staff counsellors and a team of volunteer counsellors. Clinical supervision is provided by clinical staff and one external supervisor. New volunteer counsellors are offered an initial 6 months of one to one clinical supervision before moving in to a group of up to 4 volunteer counsellors. One to one supervision is for 1 hour fortnightly, and group supervision is for 2 hours fortnightly. This complies with BACP minimum requirements for clinical supervision.

All roles within Off the Record are subject to Enhanced Disclosure and Baring Service checks.

Tasks include:

1. Commit to working for the agency for one year after acceptance onto the team, subject to a six-month review
2. Provide weekly counselling to a minimum of 3 clients per week
3. Attend supervision in accordance with agency guidelines, an absolute minimum of 75% of scheduled supervision
4. Offer at least 3 hours weekly to the agency, including clinical work with clients
5. Respond to enquiries about the service from personal and telephone callers in line with current agency policy
6. Offer support to counsellors one works alongside
7. Attend an absolute minimum of 75% of all quarterly team meetings (currently 4 Saturday afternoons)
8. Attend training events
9. Maintain counselling records and agency client administration in line with current agency policy
10. Ensure that the office is left appropriately tidy and secure

VOLUNTEER COUNSELLOR

Person Specification

Knowledge, Skills, Experience

1. Ability to demonstrate comprehensive, competent counselling skills
2. Ability to quickly engage with and relate to young people and the issues they raise
3. A commitment to adhering to all agency policies and procedures
4. Ability to maintain time commitment for counselling, supervision and training
5. Ability to work as part of a team
6. An understanding and awareness of boundaries and how they impact on working with young people
7. Ability to work within the BACP Ethical Framework for the Counselling Professions
8. An awareness of own strengths, weaknesses and motivations combined with a commitment to identifying and working on personal issues
9. Excellent interpersonal and communication skills
10. An ability to reflect on clinical practise and respond to and work on feedback