Essex and Suffolk Youth Enquiry Service

Counsellor (Volunteer and Student Placements)

About YES

Essex and Suffolk Youth Enquiry Service (YES) has been supporting young people aged 11 to 25 across Colchester and Tendring since 1988. We believe every young person deserves access to the support, guidance and opportunities they need to thrive, whatever challenges they may be facing.

Our services provide practical and emotional support across a range of areas, including housing and homelessness prevention, pregnancy and parenting, life skills and counselling. From our centres in Colchester and Holland-on-Sea, we work alongside young people to help them build confidence, develop resilience and make positive steps towards a brighter future.

Role Overview

Working as part of a supportive and experienced counselling team, volunteer and student counsellors will have the opportunity to gain valuable experience supporting young people with diverse presenting issues while contributing to a service that helps improve outcomes for children and young people across North East Essex.

We welcome applications from student counsellors who require placement hours as part of their counselling qualification. We offer both qualified and student counsellor a supportive environment with regular supervision, opportunities for professional development, and experience of working with a diverse range of presenting issues affecting children and young people. We ask for a minimum commitment of three hours per week and, in return, provide monthly clinical supervision (for qualified counsellors), on-going peer supervision and opportunities to contribute to the development of the counselling service.

Qualified counsellors must be a registered member of the BACP (or an equivalent professional body) and hold a counselling qualification at diploma level or above.

Safeguarding and Professional Boundaries

At YES, creating safe, supportive environments for young people is everyone's responsibility. As a volunteer, you'll play an important part in helping people feel welcome, respected and valued.

We'll provide you with safeguarding training, guidance and ongoing support to help you feel confident in your role. While volunteers are not expected to deal with concerns themselves, we do ask that any worries about a young person's wellbeing or safety are shared with an appropriate member of the YES team so that the right support can be put in place.

To protect both the people we support and our volunteers, all volunteers are expected to maintain appropriate professional boundaries and follow YES policies and procedures at all times.

Please note: This role is subject to an Enhanced DBS check and satisfactory references.

Why volunteer as a counsellor with YES?

At YES, we are committed to supporting our volunteer and student counsellors to develop their skills, confidence, and professional practice. In return for your time and commitment, we offer:

- For qualified counsellors, monthly clinical supervision provided by an experienced supervisor.
- Ongoing peer support and opportunities for case discussion and reflective practice.
- Placement opportunities for student counsellors.
- Experience of working with children and young people aged 11 to 25 presenting with a diverse range of presenting issues
- A supportive and experienced counselling team committed to learning, development, and high-quality practice.
- Opportunities to contribute ideas and support the ongoing development of the YES counselling service.
- Access to mandatory and additional training opportunities, including safeguarding and professional development sessions.
- Regular support and check-ins with the Counselling Manager.
- A welcoming and inclusive environment where your contribution is valued and recognised.
- The chance to make a meaningful difference to the lives of children and young people whilst developing your counselling skills and experience.

Key Responsibilities

- Providing one-to-one counselling to young people aged 11 to 25 years.
- To work within the BACP Ethical Framework for counselling professions, or equivalent professional framework.
- Deliver counselling in accordance with YES Policies and Procedures.
- Commit to a minimum of three hours per week.
- Attend monthly clinical supervision provided by YES.
- Attend mandatory training sessions, including safeguarding and GDPR.
- Maintain accurate client records and contribute to monitoring and evaluation requirements.
- Demonstrate reliability and punctuality, informing the Counsellor Manager as soon as possible of any absence or inability at attend scheduled sessions.
- Comply with health and safety requirements and be mindful of risk assessment procedures.
- Work in an inclusive manner, demonstrate awareness and respect of equality, diversity. And cultural differences.

Person Specification

- Qualified Counsellor (Diploma level or above) or a Student Counsellor seeking placement hours as part of their qualification.
- Registered member of the BACP or membership of an equivalent professional body.
- Experience of working with children and young people.
- Ability to work with children and young people presenting with high levels of anxiety, emotional distress, and complex issues.
- Strong communication skills, both written and verbal.
- Ability to work using own personal initiative and professional judgement.
- Ability to assess situations and respond appropriately.
- Excellent listening skills, sound judgement, and the ability to maintain perspective in challenging situations.
- Ability to establish and maintain clear professional boundaries.
- Good organisational skills, including record-keeping.
- Commitment to equality, inclusion, and respect for others.
- An understanding of safeguarding principles and a commitment to maintaining safe working practices and professional boundaries.