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14 September 2021

Dear Serena,

### Welcome to The National Counselling Society

We are delighted to welcome you as a valued member of The National Counselling Society. We have enclosed your membership certificate, and you can find your membership card on the bottom right hand side of this letter. Your membership number is NCS21-01775. You should have received an email from us with your details to access the **Member's Area** of the website, where you will find lots of useful information and access to membership benefits; please let us know if you have not received this yet.

We kindly remind you that annual renewal of membership is automatic and non-refundable once payment has been received. You can find your membership renewal date in the **Member's Area** of the website.

As a Registrant (Accredited) member, your details are now listed under the **Counsellor Directory** section of the website. Please take a few minutes to check that you are happy with your listing; if you would like to make any changes to your details at any time, please let us know.

You will also find the following helpful information enclosed:

- Communications Guidance
- Get Involved – Society Social Media information
- Maintaining your Membership
- Upgrading your Membership
- About the Accredited Register Program
- Insurance Leaflet
- Details of Membership Benefits
- Society Information Leaflets

You may be interested to know that National Counselling Society has been approved by the Commissioners for HM Revenue & Customs under Section 344 of the Income Tax (Earnings and Pensions) Act 2003 with effect from 6th April 2011.

As the Society is on the listing of approved bodies, Members are able to apply for a tax rebate for professional fees paid, which can be applied for directly through the local HMRC office. More information can be found online, including the list of approved bodies: [www.hmrc.gov.uk/list3](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/list3)



THE NATIONAL  
COUNSELLING  
SOCIETY

SERENA WAITE  
NCS21-01775  
ACCREDITED



Instead of following a 'top down'-approach with our members, we aim to involve, encourage, and work with them at all levels: in our monthly newsletter, through the research we conduct via member surveys, and with the variety of CPD events and workshops we run nationwide throughout the year. We invite you to contact us with any ideas for newsletter content, research avenues, training opportunities, and anything else you might want to talk to us about.

Thank you for choosing to become a member of our Society. We hope that you enjoy your membership, and look forward to supporting and working with you.

Yours sincerely,

*Camilla Hyland*

Camilla Hyland

Head of Membership Services

## About the Accredited Register Programme

The National Counselling Society holds a register of counsellors that is accredited by the Professional Standards Authority Accredited Register programme.

The programme was set up by the Department of Health, and is administered by the Professional Standards Authority who are an independent body, accountable to Parliament. Counsellors on our register, also known as registrants, (i.e. our Accredited, Senior Accredited, and Fellow members) will be able to display the Accredited Register quality mark, as a sign that they belong to a register which meets the Authority's rigorous standards.

The programme was created to ensure that the public are able to choose safe, ethical and competent professionals for their health and social care needs. The programme provides assurance on the standards of Accredited Registers, and is the best way to promote quality within the field of Counselling.

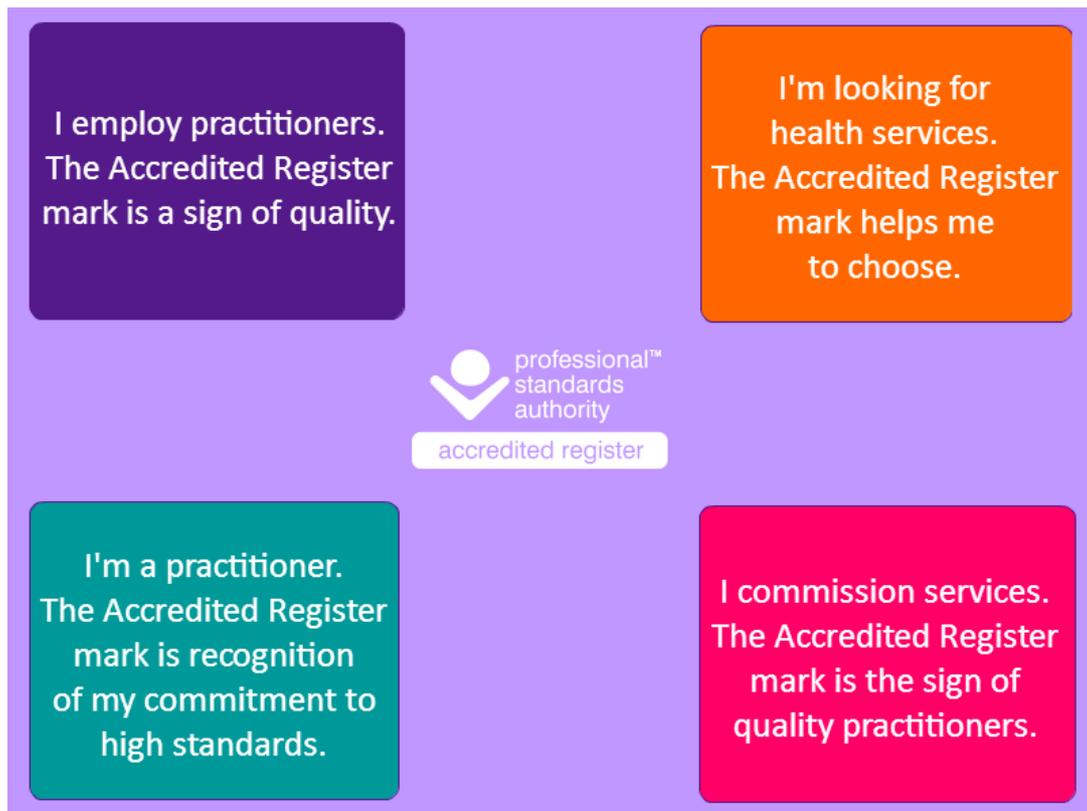
Clients of counsellors will, from now on, be encouraged to choose a practitioner who belongs to a register which has been vetted and approved by the Authority.

You can help make people aware of the importance of the programme by:

- Using the Accredited Register quality mark and the phrase "I am on a register that has been accredited by the Professional Standards Authority" on your promotional materials.
- Telling your clients that the programme was set up by the Government to improve standards and safety for the benefit of the public.
- Promoting the programme amongst other practitioners working in Counselling as a means of demonstrating their personal commitment to meeting high standards
- Mention the Society and Accredited Registers programme to any placements you are in; any agencies or charities that you have connections with; or any other organisations such as EAPs
- Speak to your employer about mutual recognition with the Society.
- Let us know about clinics, agencies or organisations that want further information.

## Messages about the Accredited Register programme

The following information will help you to demonstrate your status as a registrant and inform people about the programme. The graphic below sets out the main messages about the programme and what it can mean on an individual basis. You will see this graphic - and variations of it focusing on the individual messages it contains - used in a variety of communications materials that the Authority has developed to promote the programme.



You can use the following messages to explain the benefits of accreditation to clients, service users, employers and commissioners:

- The National Counselling Society's register has been accredited by the Professional Standards Authority under its Accredited Registers programme.
- Accreditation offers practitioners working in counselling a means of demonstrating their personal commitment to meeting high standards by joining The National Counselling Society or another accredited register.
- Accreditation means that The National Counselling Society has met the Authority's demanding standards in the following areas: governance, setting standards, education and training, managing the register, providing information, and complaints.

## Communications Guidance

As a professional association for counsellors and psychotherapists, the National Counselling Society is committed to promoting and providing high standards in the practice of counselling. The Society expects all practitioners to conduct themselves at all times in accord with their professional status and standards. This is principally addressed in the Code of Ethics but it is recognised, however, that more and more of our members are using various forms of electronic media including social networking sites; blogs; email; Skype etc. to communicate with friends, family, professional networks and clients.

This Communication Guidance addresses the use of differing electronic media by members of the Society and sets out how the Code of Ethics can be applied in this context, and provides practical advice for using electronic media responsibly.

The Code of Ethics sets out very clear ethical guidance on the counsellor-client relationship and thinking about ethics should underpin all professional activity and decision making. As stated in Code of Ethics General Conduct 1), all practitioners undertake to conduct themselves at all time in accord with their professional status and in such a way as neither undermines public confidence in the process or profession of counselling nor brings it into disrepute. To this end, the principles set out in the Code of Ethics apply at all times including when the member is online; it will be judged in the same way and should be at a similar high standard.

## Social Networking Media (Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter etc)

### You should:

- Remember that social networking sites are public and permanent. Once something is posted online, it will remain traceable even if you delete it
- Keep your personal and professional life as separate as possible – always question whether you are participating in a professional or personal capacity and whether your opinions and activity are appropriate in that context
- If 'friend' requests are received from clients, decline the request via a more formal means of communication
- Be aware that whether or not you identify yourself as a counsellor or psychotherapist on your profile, you should act responsibly at all times and uphold the reputation of the profession
- Protect your privacy by thinking about what information about yourself you want to be available and to whom. Regularly check your privacy settings and remember that social networking sites update their services which can reset privacy settings to a default setting
- Consider at all times the strict code of client confidentiality, stay within the legal framework and be aware that discrimination, safeguarding, libel, slander, copyright and data protection laws all apply
- Be minded that social networking sites often make it easier to engage, intentionally or otherwise, in professional misconduct
- Remember that images posted online by family or friends may be accessible as they may not set privacy settings as tightly as you do
- Report the misconduct of other members on social networking sites to any relevant parties

#### **You should not:**

- Establish inappropriate relationships with clients and service users online
- Discuss client or work-related issues online in any non-secure medium
- Publish pictures of clients or service users online, where they could be identified personally resulting in a breach of confidentiality
- Use social networking sites for whistle blowing or raising concerns
- Post defamatory comments about individuals or institutions. Defamation law can apply to any comments posted on the web, regardless of whether they are made in a personal or professional capacity

### **Mobile telephones & texting**

#### **You should:**

- Always be clear in your contracts whether you will contact clients using your mobile and confirm and agree the working hours when a client might expect a call
- Consider your surroundings when making calls to clients – can you be overheard by anyone; are you in a situation to allow you to make the call safely and confidentially?
- Only use text messaging for non-important discussions, such as confirming appointment times or directions to appointments
- Avoid sending text messages containing anything that you would not say in real life
- Ask yourself if a face to face conversation would be better than a telephone call

#### **You should not:**

- Discuss confidential client issues in any public environment where you could be overheard
- Use a text message to provide guidance or advice or use emoticons in a text
- Make calls or send texts outside of the working hours confirmed to the client
- Forget your business etiquette and professionalism at any time
- Send texts that could be deemed to be offensive or have sexual overtones or could be deemed as a threat

### **Email**

#### **You should:**

- Always ensure that clients know you are going to use email and what you are going to use it for
- Confirm and agree the working hours a client might expect an email
- Write all email messages in a professional manner. The content of an email should be to the same standard as a letter. Avoid using emoticons or 'smiley' faces
- Avoid sending sensitive information in an email. Sending an email is like sending a postcard through the post

- Establish the right tone and objective upfront; use a meaningful subject line, rather than just 'hello' and keep messages short and to the point
- Take care when forwarding on emails in case the information in the chain is confidential
- Always consider the reputation of your profession in your email correspondence

#### **You should not:**

- Treat an email as a conversation: remember you don't have the benefit of feedback on body language to help you modify any message
- Write an email when you are angry, upset or frustrated or you are not in the right frame of mind
- Send messages that are offensive, obscene, defamatory, abusive or otherwise unlawful. Emails, like any other form of written communication, can be used as evidence in a court of law
- Send links to web pages or bulletin boards that are offensive, obscene, defamatory, abusive or otherwise unlawful
- Send emails outside of the working hours you have confirmed with the client

#### **Video Conferencing**

##### **You should:**

- Discuss and agree using video conferencing with a client and confirm and agree the working hours when video conferencing may be used and for what purpose
- Always be aware of your surroundings and ensure that you are in a secure, confidential and appropriate place for having a video conference
- Send a quick note to the other person to make sure that they can take your video conference call
- Make sure that you give the person/people on the other end your undivided attention
- Ensure that you are fully prepared for the conversation

##### **You should not:**

- Open files during a video conference from a person you hardly know
- Make video conferencing calls outside of the working hours agreed with the client
- Assume that the other person is ready and able to have a conversation with you
- Read from your notes whilst you are talking to the other person
- Forget your business etiquette and professionalism at any time

When using any online platform, software, technology or app to offer client services, it is important only to use platforms which are secure in terms of data protection, breaches of confidentiality, hacking and data storage. Members are required therefore to take all reasonable steps to ensure that client data and confidentiality are secured, and follow all guidance issued by the Information Commissioner's Office.

Please note that the Society cannot prescribe, or proscribe, any particular platform due to the large number of platforms available and the constantly changing profile of those platforms

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Registered in England No. 5861051

#### **Complaints and Communications**

Members should be aware that many forms of communication in common usage for therapy or to support the client relationship are permanent and create permanent records of your client communications. These records can be, and

often are, introduced into the Society's complaints procedures by complainants as evidence.

Members are therefore particularly advised to ensure that all communications with clients are carried out in a professional and bounded manner.

This guidance is intended to assist members in avoiding some of the common pitfalls that can arise out of the use of electronic media and to reinforce the conduct, ethics and professional standards of a member of the Society. With the rapid developments in electronic media and its uses, the guidance will be regularly reviewed and members should check this frequently.



## Maintaining your Membership

March 2020

Alongside abiding by the Society Code of Ethics and complaints process (please do check the website on a regular basis to ensure that you are aware of the most up-to-date information), as a Registrant member of the Society, you agree to the following in order to maintain your Registrant status:

- To undertake 30 hours of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) per year
- To undertake ongoing, regular Supervision - further guidance for this is provided below
- To maintain adequate professional insurance - see leaflet enclosed

### CPD

The Society defines CPD as a range of learning activities through which professional counsellors grow and develop throughout their careers to ensure that they retain their ability to practise safely, ethically and legally within their evolving scope of practice. Effective CPD should ensure that you stay up-to-date and safe to practise. As a guideline, when choosing CPD activities to do consider how the activity will enhance your work as a counsellor and how you can demonstrate that. Registrant members should complete a minimum of 30 hours CPD each year. Your CPD must include activities which involve learning specifically about your own discipline as well as more general learning to support your development as a practitioner. General learning could be focused on issues such as health & safety, first aid or business development. You should aim to do a range of CPD activities, choosing which ones are most relevant to your practice.

You can find more information about CPD in the member's area of the website, in the Professional Member section.

### Supervision

Supervision is rightly considered to be vital to the practice of professional counsellors. In the early years of practice it is one of the best ways in which a new counsellor can find help in emergencies or with clients whose presenting issues are difficult. It is also the way in which a therapist can be seen, by a more experienced person working in the same field, to be growing and maturing. Supervision is a valuable "checking in" procedure, helping counsellors stay grounded and centred, maintain professional and personal boundaries, avoid "burnout", and thus provide safe, ethical and competent counselling for all clients.

As a guideline if you are in full time practice we recommend 1.5 hours of supervision every month; your level of experience and also the client group you are working with will affect how much supervision you need. If in doubt about any aspect of your work with a client then you should refer to your Supervisor for advice.

You can find more information about Supervision in the member's area of the website, in the Professional Member section, which also includes a listing of Society approved supervisors, who have shown clear experience and training in a Supervisory capacity, and are insured to carry out supervision.

### Audits

The Society conducts ongoing, random audits of all of our members. If chosen, these are sent to members along with their annual membership certificates. We recommend that you keep a log of all of your supervision and CPD activities, as, in the event that you are chosen for an audit of your practice, these will be required. You can find templates for supervision and CPD logs in the member's area of the website, in the Professional Member section, under Keeping Records.

## Complaints Procedure

As a professional association for counsellors, the Society is committed to promoting and providing high standards in the practice of counselling. We understand that the people using the services of counsellors who are members of the NCS may have a range of different issues and a range of experiences of working with these members.

We encourage constructive feedback about these experiences and we invite people, including our members' clients, to tell us about their experiences. We believe in listening to the voices of both clients and of therapists and in the sharing of these viewpoints and opinions we believe that each group has much to learn, both from the positive experiences of therapy as well as from times when things have not worked out as planned or hoped. We are aware that the professional therapeutic relationship in some forms of counselling and therapy necessarily involves the exploration of difficulties and lapses within the relationship itself. We therefore seek to avoid an unnecessarily legalistic approach to dealing with complaints. We are also aware that therapists can overstep therapeutic boundaries and breach our Code of Ethics, and this needs to be addressed proportionately, fairly and transparently.

You can find full details of our Complaints Procedure at the following web address:

<https://nationalcounsellingsociety.org/have-a-concern/complaints-process>

## Code of Ethics

All members of the Society agree to abide by our published Code of Ethics, which can be found in the About Us section of the website, under Code of Ethics. If you have any questions about our Code of Ethics, please contact the Society so that one of our Officers can provide guidance.

## Benefits of Membership



### Cylix

Cylix currently offer all NCS members a 10% discount on Cylix online courses. Please use code: CYL-NCS-1503



### Routledge

Routledge offers all NCS members a 20% discount on all products when purchased through their website.

They also have a catalogue of books especially for NCS members. Please use code: AF026



### Sage Publishing Discount

SAGE are delighted to be offering 30% off on counselling and coaching titles exclusively for NCS members. Please use code: UK16SM05



### CPD Workshops/Courses

The Society produces an annual calendar of workshops across the UK which are specifically run for members. You will find a variety of topics that you can use as part of your Continuing Professional Development (CPD).



### NUS Extra

Student members of the Society can apply for the NUS Extra Card to get exclusive discounts.



### Insurance

The Society has negotiated with an insurance provider to offer all NCS members preferential rates.



### Dedicated members area of the website

All members' have access to the members' area of our website – which is full of information to help and guide you.



### Monthly members' newsletter

All members receive a newsletter via email each month. Members are welcome to write articles and share news.



### Use of Society literature

Members can request Society literature to share with their networks, including Society pens, leaflets, and posters.



### Social Media presence

The Society is active on social media with around 20,000 likes on Facebook, growing every week.

### Good Practice Guidance

The Society has produced Good Practice Guidance documents, available for all members in the Member's Area of the website, in the Professional Practice Area.

## Get involved!

### Society Social Media

We want you to be involved in all aspects of the Society. One of the ways you can do this is by joining us online:



Follow us on Twitter  
@ncs\_media



Like us on Facebook  
The National Counselling Society



Link with us on LinkedIn  
National Counselling Society

We post quotes, news, and stories for you to share with your friends, colleagues, and clients. If you stumble upon something you think we'd like, please don't hesitate to share it with us, too.

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### Website

There is lots of information on our website, including an exclusive area for members, which has forums, notice boards, recent news and plenty of other interesting pages. You can access this by visiting:

[www.nationalcounsellingsociety.org/members](http://www.nationalcounsellingsociety.org/members)

If you forget your login details, you can request a password reset using your email address.

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### eNewsletter

This is sent to all of our members on the first day of each month. We always try to include news and articles from members, so please send anything you would like to be included to: [support@nationalcounsellingsociety.org](mailto:support@nationalcounsellingsociety.org)

If you are not receiving these we recommend checking your spam or junk folders in the first instance, but if that doesn't work then please get in touch to let us know. If you think you have missed any of our newsletters, you can find an archive of all of our previous newsletters in the Member's Area of the website, under News & Interaction.

Please do get in touch if you need help with anything. We look forward to connecting with you.

## Upgrading your Membership

The Society encourages all of our members to progress to the next level of membership. For example, the journey for many counsellors is from Student membership, to Accredited Registrant membership (MNCS Accred), to Accredited Professional Registrant membership (MNCS Prof Accred) to Senior Accredited Registrant membership (MNCS Snr Accred), and finally through to Fellowship of the Society (FNCS). If you are unsure about which membership level to apply for then tell us all about you and your practice and we will advise you. We do not charge for processing your upgrade. We will send you a new membership certificate and update your website entry to reflect the change once assessment is complete.

You will need to complete an upgrade form, which can be found in the Member's Area of the website.

There are three routes to upgrade your membership:

### Equivalent Register

Under this route, membership is awarded to a practitioner who holds an equivalent membership grade already attained via another Accredited Register.

### Complex Applications

Applications which contain complex information; for example, from long standing practitioners where historical training routes show a marked difference from current training routes, may be referred to the Professional Standards Committee for a complex case review. The committee will ensure that the application meets the Society's published standards and decide at what level to place the successful applicant on the register; unsuccessful applicants will be assisted with clear guidance about suitable routes for registration.

## Training & Qualification Criteria

### Accredited Registrant Membership:

Accredited Registrant status is awarded to a practitioner who has completed a National Counselling Society Accredited Course, or a full qualification in counselling or psychotherapy practice which complies with the Society's currently published standards of training, at Ofqual RQF Level 4 or Ofqual RQF/FHEQ Level 5 or equivalent.

### Accredited Professional Registrant Membership:

Accredited Professional Registrant status is awarded to a practitioner who has gained Accredited Registrant status via either the Training/Qualification or Equivalent Register route; has maintained Accredited Registrant status for at least 2 years in good standing; has been in practice for 3 years with 450 hours of supervised practice, at least 150 of which must have been accrued post training; has been appropriately supervised and insured throughout practice. Applicants must produce a satisfactory written statement describing their client work, use of supervision, ethical awareness, self-awareness and issues of difference and diversity, a satisfactory report from a clinical supervisor, and a reference from a suitable referee.

### Senior Accredited Registrant Membership:

Senior Accredited Registrant status is awarded to a practitioner who, having met the requirements for Accredited Professional Registrant status has completed an advanced qualification at Ofqual RQF/FHEQ Level 5 or equivalent and has completed a minimum of 200 further hours of clinical experience since meeting the requirements for Accredited Professional Registrant status.

### Fellow Registrant:

A counsellor who has met the standards for Senior Accredited Registrant membership and who has significant further professional experience which has made a notable contribution to the profession. (This grade cannot be applied for)

## Change of Details Form

Return this form to notify the Society of any changes to your personal details or practice. If you do NOT return this form within 28 days you agree that you understand and are maintaining Society requirements for registration, including supervision, CPD, and insurance. Please ensure you receive acknowledgement from the Society of the changes.

Please use the below to update us on things such as address, practice status, insurance, supervision, further training and any complaints received.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

MEMBERSHIP NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

Practice Status (e.g not in practice) \_\_\_\_\_

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Change of Contact Details i.e. address, email, phone number etc. (please state if private or practice)

Please log onto the Members' Area of [www.nationalcounsellingsociety.org](http://www.nationalcounsellingsociety.org) all these can be amended there

Change of name

Please contact the Society by phone or email for the correct form, name changes can not be accepted on this form

Further Training/CPD/Specialities: \_\_\_\_\_

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Complaints: \_\_\_\_\_

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Any other changes not noted above: \_\_\_\_\_

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