

The COSCA Register of Counsellors and Psychotherapists

Guidance on the Professional Standards Authority's Accredited Registers Programme

1. Introduction

The COSCA Register of Counsellors and Psychotherapists is accredited by the Professional Standards Authority (The Authority).

The Authority promotes the health, safety and wellbeing of patients, service users and the public by raising standards of regulation and voluntary registration of people working in health and care. It is an independent body, accountable to the UK Parliament.

It oversees the work of nine statutory bodies that regulate health professionals in the UK and social workers in England. It reviews the regulators' performance and audits and scrutinises their decisions about whether people on their registers are fit to practise.

It also set standards for organisations holding registers for people in unregulated health and care occupations and accredits those registers that meet its standards.

To encourage improvement it shares good practice and knowledge, and conducts research. It monitors policy developments in the UK and internationally and provides advice to governments and others on matters relating to people working in health and care. It also undertakes some international commissions to extend its understanding of regulation and to promote safety in the mobility of the health and care workforce.

It is committed to being independent, impartial, fair, accessible and consistent. More information about its work and the approach it takes, including the list of accredited voluntary registers, is available at www.professionalstandards.org.uk.

2. Key Messages for COSCA Registrants to use about the Authority's accreditation

COSCA's Register of Counsellors and Psychotherapists is accredited by the Authority under its Accredited Registers programme.

The programme was set up to provide assurance on the standards of registers of unregulated health and care occupations.

Bringing counsellors and psychotherapists into a broad framework of assurance is good for clients, service users and the public and is the best way to promote quality.

Being accredited under the Accredited Registers programme offers enhanced protection to anyone looking for counselling and psychotherapy services - people now have the option of seeking practitioners on a register that has been vetted and approved.

Accreditation offers practitioners working in counselling and psychotherapy a means of demonstrating their personal commitment to meeting high standards by joining COSCA's Register or another accredited register.

Accreditation means that COSCA has met the Authority's demanding standards in the following areas: governance, setting standards, education and training, managing the register, providing information and complaints.

COSCA needed to provide evidence and demonstrate to the Authority that it meets the Accreditation Standards. Accreditation will be reviewed annually.

Being accredited means that COSCA has satisfied the Authority that it meets its high standards. It is a mark of quality.

Accreditation does not imply that the Authority has itself assessed the merits of individuals on the COSCA Register of Counsellors and Psychotherapists. It remains the responsibility of COSCA to do that.

COSCA requires its registrants to meet high standards of personal behaviour, technical competence and, where applicable, business practice.

Accreditation does not imply that the Authority has endorsed the efficacy of a treatment or therapy practised or any other service offered by registrants on the COSCA Register.

Registration on an Accredited Register is different from statutory professional regulation because it is voluntary, not compulsory.

Practitioners can work in counselling and psychotherapy without being on a register.

Registers accredited by the Authority encompass a wide range of occupations and organisations holding voluntary registers. The Authority may accredit more than one register in any particular occupation.

Accredited Registers and its registrants are entitled to use the Authority's accreditation mark so that they can be distinguished easily.

The quality mark will give extra peace of mind for anyone looking for a counsellor or psychotherapist, letting them know that anyone who holds the mark is committed to the high standards of COSCA. .

All Accredited Registers can be accessed through the Professional Standards Authority's website - <http://www.professionalstandards.org.uk/voluntary>

This programme applies to the health sector in the UK and to social care in England.

3. Practical Guidance for COSCA Registrants

Do:

- Highlight to your clients, funders or employers that you are a member of COSCA's Register that is accredited by the Authority
- Actively communicate, in writing, to other relevant stakeholders such as GPs and schools etc., using the materials developed by the Authority to promote the Accredited Registers programme and yourself
- Use the phrase 'I am a counsellor (or psychotherapist) on COSCA's Register that has been accredited by the Professional Standards Authority. This is recognition of my commitment to high standards'.
- Tell your audiences that the Accredited Registers programme was set up by the Government to improve standards and safety for the benefit of the public
- Emphasise that being on an accredited register demonstrates your commitment to high professional standards, to enhancing safety and delivering a better service
- COSCA Registrants are entitled and expected to display the Accredited Register logo where appropriate - in your premises, on your nameplate, in your email signature, on your business cards and leaflets, on information you give to clients, and on your website etc. You should follow guidance for doing so that is provided by COSCA – see below.

Don't:

- Mislead anyone about what accreditation means
- Claim that you are accredited by the Authority. The accredited register is accredited. You are on COSCA's Register which is an accredited register.
- Claim that any treatment or service you provide is endorsed by the Authority or by the government
- Display the Accredited Register logo before you have been notified by COSCA that you can do so
- Continue to use the Accredited Register logo if you cease to be a member of an accredited register
- Use the Accredited Register logo contrary to its governing regulations and the Authority's corporate brand guidelines. COSCA advises below on how Registrants should use the Accredited Register logo (Accreditation Mark).

4. Use of the Accredited Register Logo (Accreditation Mark) by COSCA Registrants

COSCA Registrants listed on COSCA's Register of Counsellors and Psychotherapists are permitted to use the Accredited Register logo (Accreditation Mark).

The use of the Accreditation Mark by a COSCA Registrant signifies that the COSCA Registrant is registered on COSCA's Register of Counsellors and Psychotherapists.

It is a condition of use that the Accreditation Mark shall not be used without indicating that it is a certification mark. This means that the words 'certification mark' should not be removed from the supplied Accredited Register logo and that these words should always be included when COSCA Registrants use the Accredited Register logo.

Registrants are required to accept and operate in accordance with the Authority's published Conditions of Use and its Corporate Brand Guidelines as amended from time to time. From the above guidelines relevant Information is given below on how COSCA Registrants should use the Accredited Register logo.

COSCA will monitor the use of the Accreditation Mark by its Registrants to ensure compliance with the Authority's Corporate Brand Guidelines and Conditions of Use.

In the event that the Corporate Brand Guidelines and the Conditions of Use are not complied with by a COSCA Registrant, the Authority and COSCA on behalf of the Authority reserves the right to immediately withdraw the right to use the Accreditation Mark.

Where COSCA Registrants cease to be Registrants, all use of the Accreditation Mark must be removed immediately from any stationery, PR, marketing or other materials used by the Registrant in any media (save for such materials in the public domain but beyond the control of the Registrant such as promotional flyers or brochures).

Misuse of the Accreditation Mark may lead to the right to use the Accreditation Mark being withdrawn. Registrants shall at all times give all such information regarding the use of the Accreditation Mark as COSCA or the Authority may from time to time require. Registrants shall permit an authorised representative of COSCA or the Authority to conduct an audit, on reasonable notice and during business hours, of the uses to which the COSCA Registrant is putting the Accreditation Mark.

COSCA Registrants shall:

- not apply for the registration of the Accreditation Mark (or any confusingly similar trade mark) as a trade mark in its own name in any part of the world;
- not challenge the Authority's use or registration of the Accreditation Mark or the validity of the Accreditation Mark;
- not bring or threaten to bring the Accreditation Mark into disrepute;
- comply with the Corporate Branding Guidelines, these Regulations and any other Conditions of Use. Breach of the above, along with any other material breach of these Regulations will allow the Authority and COSCA on behalf of the Authority to immediately withdraw the right to use the Accreditation Mark from the COSCA Registrant

COSCA Registrants are expected to use the accreditation mark in the following ways:

Websites

COSCA Registrants are expected to include the accreditation mark either in the header or in the footer of their website, so that it is evident in the same place on each page on their site.

Email signatures

Email signatures used by COSCA Registrants should include the accreditation mark, which could operate as a hyperlink to the Authority's website:

www.professionalstandards.org.uk/accredited-registers

All COSCA Registrants should use the new accreditation mark as detailed above. The Professional Standards Authority expects all COSCA Registrants to have made the necessary electronic changes by 31 January 2015.

The Authority recognises that some COSCA Registrants may have existing printed materials which would be costly to replace. So a longer time period for implementing the changes to printed materials is permitted. These should therefore be implemented by 30 November 2015.

5. The Authority's Corporate Branding Guidelines for Registrant's Use of the Accredited Register Logo

Exclusion zone

The logo should always have a comfortable amount of space around it. The minimum amount of space should be at least the size of the Accredited Register logo 'head'.

Placement

When placed next to other marks or logos, the Accredited Register logo should be sized proportionately so that it is approximately the same scale as any accompanying logos.

It is a condition of use that the Accreditation Mark shall not be used without indicating that it is a Certification Mark (see above for further information).

The Accredited Register logo should not normally be used in conjunction with any other logo, aside from the logo of the organisation holding the accredited register. Where there is no alternative, the third party's logo should not be adjacent to the Accredited Register logo and the logo of the organisation holding the register. For example, when the logo of a training provider must appear in the same document as the Accredited Register logo and the logo of the organisation holding the register, the Accredited Register logo should appear next to the logo of the organisation holding the register, but the logo of the training provider should be set apart from them both. There must also be a clear description of the relationship between the organisations.

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