



Scotland's  
Professional Body  
for Counselling &  
Psychotherapy

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## **COSCA's RECOGNITION SCHEME FOR ORGANISATIONS INFORMATION, GUIDANCE AND PROCEDURE**

### **Setting Standards for Counselling, Psychotherapy and Counselling Skills Organisations in Scotland**

The Recognition Scheme has been developed by COSCA through extensive consultation and forms part of COSCA's wider quality assurance work.

By recognising and endorsing good practice within counselling, psychotherapy and counselling skills organisations in Scotland, the Scheme aims to identify and raise awareness of good quality service provision.

#### **Who is the Scheme for?**

The Scheme has been designed for all organisations, both small and large, that provide counselling, psychotherapy and/or use counselling skills.

#### **Why does your organisation need Recognition?**

The Scheme offers organisations:

#### **Credibility and the opportunity to *evidence* your organisations impact:**

- the opportunity to make a public statement about the quality of your organisation and the services they provide
- external recognition by the professional body for counselling & psychotherapy in Scotland
- use of the Recognition Scheme Logo and listing on the Recognition Scheme Directory on COSCA Website
- section for funders on COSCA Website detailing key criteria evidenced by Recognition Scheme Organisations- demonstrate with clarity and confidence the quality of your organisations work and evidence your outcomes to funders.

## Increased Organisational Focus

- a reflective tool to increase organisational awareness and drive your organisation forward
- the opportunity to pull together policies and procedures into an easily accessible and clear framework across key organisational criteria

## Dedicated one to one support to develop and maintain quality services

- support from Recognition Scheme Development Officer to develop policy and practice
- support from Recognition Scheme Development Officer to apply for and maintain Recognition Scheme Status

### Ongoing Feedback and Monitoring

- Assessment Report provides detailed feedback on key organisational criteria identifying strengths and recommendations for future organisational development
- Annual Monitoring process provides ongoing feedback on organisational strengths and areas for development promoting continuous organisational development

## Who can apply for Recognition?

COSCA Organisational Members that provide Counselling, Psychotherapy and/or use counselling skills.

Organisations must adhere to the COSCA Statement of Ethics and Codes of Practice and have a Complaints Procedure which complies with the COSCA Standards for Complaints Procedures, where organisations have a website Complaints Procedures must be referenced.

For more details on the COSCA Standards for Complaints Procedures please see the COSCA Website [www.cosca.org.uk](http://www.cosca.org.uk) under the heading 'Complaints'.

To meet the requirements of being a **Counselling organisation**, an organisation must engage counsellors who satisfy either of the following criteria:

- COSCA Diploma in Counselling or equivalent; Completed a programme of accredited training encompassing a minimum of 300 cumulative contact hours of training in counselling or psychotherapy
- Completed a programme of integrated training in counselling (minimum of 150 contact hours) approved and/or delivered by an Organisational Member of COSCA for the training of its counsellors. Also be currently practicing as a counsellor with the organisation that trained them, or an equivalent Organisational Member of COSCA, and have their training and current involvement in counselling practice endorsed by that organisation

- Where organisations offer counselling services to Children and Young People in addition to the above training practitioners should have significant experience and/ or training in working with Children/Young People. Post qualifying training in child and adolescent counselling is desirable and ongoing professional development relevant to working with children and young people should be expected and available.

To meet the requirements of being a **Counselling Skills organisation** an organisation must engage staff who satisfy one of the following criteria:

- COSCA Certificate in Counselling Skills (or equivalent)
- Have adequate in-house specialist training in the use of counselling skills
- Where organisations offer counselling skills services to Children and Young People in addition to the above training practitioners should have significant experience and/ or training in working with Children/Young People. Additional training in child and adolescent counselling skills is desirable and ongoing professional development relevant to working with children and young people should be expected and available.

## The Criteria

Organisations are required to meet 2 types of criteria: **Organisational** and **Practice-based**.

### 1 Organisational criteria focus on:

- Management Structures
- Recruitment
- Health & Safety Requirements
- Confidentiality
- Equal Opportunities
- Complaints, Appeal, Grievances & Disciplinary Procedures
- Insurance
- Financial Management
- Referral of Clients
- Publicity Material
- Networking

### 2 Practice-based criteria focus on:

- Recruitment
- Training & Personal Development
- Support & Supervision
- Record Keeping
- Confidentiality
- Complaints
- Outcomes & Research

## **Costs of joining the Recognition Scheme**

- £100 for registration (one-off payment)
- £100 for assessment (one-off payment)
- £100 for monitoring visit (payable on the 3rd Anniversary and any further Monitoring visits, if required)
- On-going annual COSCA Organisational membership fee

## **PROCEDURE**

### **The Application Process**

The process contains 3 stages:

#### **1. Registration:**

- Registration forms can be found on the COSCA Website [www.cosca.org.uk](http://www.cosca.org.uk) under the heading 'Recognition'
- Complete the registration form returning it to the Recognition Scheme Development Officer, Jenny McLintock at COSCA with the £100 Registration Fee.
- On approval of your application the Recognition Scheme Handbook will then be sent to you containing all the information you need to progress through the Scheme.

#### **2. Evidence gathering:**

- You will gather evidence to support Practice Based and Organisational Criteria listed fully within the RS Handbook.
- A suitable member of your organisation should be assigned as a contact who will be responsible for overseeing the Recognition Scheme application process.

### ***Organisational Criteria***

- You need to gather evidence to support each of the Organisational Criteria on the Organisational Criteria Checklist Form (pages 12-13 of the Recognition Scheme Handbook).
- This should be completed within 9 months of Registering on the scheme (if not completed and submitted within this time, Registration will be withdrawn and the fee forfeited).
- Once you have completed this form, you need to sign the form and send it, with the evidence (clearly numbered), to the Recognition Scheme Development Officer at COSCA (please note that COSCA is unable to return documents/material submitted).

- The evidence will then be checked and confirmed within a month. If you need to produce further evidence, the Recognition Scheme Development Officer will contact you.
- Once you have been given confirmation that you can proceed, you need to gather evidence to support the Practice-based Criteria (pages 14-21).

### ***Practice Based Criteria***

- This can be written evidence, by way of policies and procedures, signed statements from clients or counsellors regarding practice etc. COSCA is looking for thorough, detailed evidence that all the criteria have been covered.
- You need to retain this evidence until a Recognition Scheme Assessor has visited your organisation as it may be checked at the Assessment Visit.
- Once the evidence is collated, complete the Practice-based Criteria Checklist Form (pages 22-24).
- Once you have completed this form, you need to sign the form and send it, with the evidence (clearly numbered), to the Recognition Scheme Development Officer at COSCA (please note that COSCA is unable to return documents/material submitted).
- The evidence will then be checked and confirmed within a month. If you need to produce further evidence, the Recognition Scheme Development Officer will contact you.
- You then must notify us of your readiness for assessment by returning the Assessment Registration Form (page 25), and paying the **£100** assessment fee.

### **3. Assessment:**

- You will be allocated a Recognition Scheme Assessor who will visit your organisation (with the Recognition Scheme Development Officer).
- The Assessment Visit will involve examining your collated evidence and meetings with various staff and volunteers.
- A report will be written by the Assessor, and will be passed to a Recognition Scheme Independent Verifier for confirmation. We aim for a decision about your application for Recognition to reach you within eight weeks of the Assessment Visit.

## Support

Throughout your process through the Recognition Scheme, Jenny McIntock (Recognition Scheme Development Officer) will contact you regularly to support you. Please do not hesitate to contact Jenny McIntock at any time for support and guidance. You can contact Jenny on 01786 475140 or e-mail at [jenny@cosca.org.uk](mailto:jenny@cosca.org.uk).

## Recognition

There are 3 outcomes to Recognition:

### Recognition granted:

- Once the criteria has been assessed, verified and Recognition recommended, you will be sent a copy of the Assessment Report. We ask that the Assessment Report is shared within your Team, and that you confirm to COSCA when this has been done.
- On our receipt of confirmation, you will be awarded the Recognition Scheme kitemark, which we encourage you to use on publicity materials.
- A certificate will be sent to you and your organisation will be listed on COSCA's Register of Recognised Organisations on our website, [www.cosca.org.uk](http://www.cosca.org.uk).

### Recognition deferred:

- If there are significant criteria, that have not been met, recommendations on how to meet the criteria will be sent to you.
- This may involve gathering additional evidence or arranging telephone interviews with personnel within the organisation. If a further visit to the organisation is required, you will need to pay an additional £100 Assessment Fee.
- Submission of the revised evidence should be presented by the next available deadline date.

### Recognition not granted:

- Where the organisation has failed to meet a large number of criteria, Recognition will not be granted. Full re-submission may be required.
- There is an appeals procedure should you be dissatisfied with the outcome. This can be found on the COSCA Website [www.cosca.org.uk](http://www.cosca.org.uk) under the heading 'Appeals'

## **Annual Monitoring Process:**

- This takes place, using an Annual Monitoring Form (pages 29-35 of the Recognition Scheme Handbook), on an annual basis every 12 months from the date of Recognition. This process is automatically triggered by COSCA.
- For detailed guidance on the Annual Monitoring Process see the COSCA Website under the heading 'Recognition'.
- The form and any accompanying documentary evidence is checked and verified by the Recognition Scheme Development Officer.
- On the third Annual Monitoring, a half day visit to the organisation will be arranged (by a Recognition Scheme Assessor and the Recognition Scheme Development Officer). There will be a £100 fee for this. See pages 22 for full details of the Annual Monitoring Procedure.