

About Via in West Berkshire

Launched in 2022, Via West Berkshire is a fully integrated substance use treatment service, providing clinical and psychosocial interventions, operating from a main treatment hub in Newbury. The team actively promotes recovery and works with individuals that are directly and indirectly affected by substance misuse, working with the local community to improve the health, wellbeing and functioning of West Berkshire residents, irrespective of circumstance.

About the counselling service

Our counselling service provides service users with the opportunity to meet in private with a counsellor for typically between 6 and 12 weekly, 50-minute sessions to discuss issues and concerns, which are currently making life difficult. These could include any of the following and more: drug and alcohol dependency, low self-esteem, stress, anxiety, panic attacks, self-harm, relationship difficulties, loss of purpose or meaning, family difficulties, loss and bereavement, anger, depression, trauma etc.

About the role

As a Volunteer Counsellor, you will support the delivery of a wide range of interventions for service users. These will include:

- See a minimum of 3 clients and a maximum of 6 clients per week (1 day).
- Keep accurate records of work in line with Via expectations and feedback any issues to the line manager (counselling lead) and clinical supervisor.
- Attend ongoing training in discussion with your clinical supervisor.
- Adhere to all Via policies and procedures.

In addition to the above you will be invited to participate in meetings where relevant and to carry out other tasks as deemed necessary to support the needs of the counselling service.

What skills do I need?

The role would be ideal for someone looking to develop their therapeutic experience in the drug and alcohol field and accrue some counselling hours towards your future accreditation with BPS, BACP, UKCP. While some knowledge of the sector is desirable, we are specifically looking for people who have a passion for the work that we do. A positive attitude, inclusive approach and the desire to learn are essential, as is a non-judgmental and supportive approach to people who are facing problems with drugs and alcohol.

Volunteer Counsellor (West Berkshire)

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To ensure good practice standards and to maximise the safety of both the therapists and the clients at Via we require all students to confirm and adhere to the following:

- Trainees are in their final year of an undergraduate degree or equivalent or are at a postgraduate level. Alternatively, students should be in their third year of a Diploma, BSc or MSc in counselling or psychotherapy training, preferably accredited
- If students are not in the third year of their Diploma, BSc, or MSc in counselling or psychotherapy training, trainees need to be in their second year (at least) but have undertaken (or be prepared to undertake prior to seeing clients) significant and appropriate training.
- Trainees are recommended to be a member of one of the counselling governing bodies BACP, BPS, UKCP or BABCP.
- Trainees may need to have conducted a minimum number of counselling hours.
- Trainees are working or intend to work towards counselling, psychology or psychotherapy accreditation.
- Previous details of supervisor and present college tutor information should be sent to Via and with agreement that Via can ask the supervisor and tutor for references.

What Via can offer you

When you begin volunteering, you will be allocated a line manager (counselling lead), who will act as your main point of contact in your Via service. They will provide you with ongoing support and will work closely with you throughout your time at Via. You will be also allocated a clinical counselling supervisor (BABCP accredited), who will provide fortnightly counselling supervision via Microsoft Teams (this will be a mix of individual and group supervision). There is also a central volunteer services team that will support you while you are on placement. In addition, you can expect:

- A full induction to your role and continuous local training
- Access to central staff training opportunities
- Reimbursement of reasonable travel expenses and lunch expenses

When

We are looking for someone to support the team for 1 day per week for few hours – depending on the Via project and number of counselling sessions. We ask that volunteers counsellors try to commit for at least one year where possible.

How to apply

If you would like to apply for this role, please read the guidance notes on applying for volunteer roles and complete and return an application form directly at our Via website: www.viaorg.uk
You can also contact us on volunteers@viaorg.uk.

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