

External Examiner Online Report A

CENTRE DETAILS & CERTIFICATION

REPORT DETAILS

Report Type	First Sampling
Centre Name	SUPPORTING MINDS
Centre Number	04891
Standards Verifier (EE) Name	MRS LARKIN
AA Number	974709
Has Been Submitted	Yes

VISIT DETAILS

Date Of Sampling	22/06/2016
Feedback Presented To	Jenine Butroid
Designation	Company Director

PROGRAMME EVALUATION SUMMARY

Programme No.	Programme Title	No. of Reg.	Status
NTV45	THERAPEUTIC COUNSELLING (QCF)	21	Released

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SUMMARY OF ACTIONS**Action Points From Last Report**

No action points noted from last report. The centre have responded to recommendation to use Edexcel sample plan for assessment planning.

Summary of Essential Actions

No essential actions raised by the external examiner.

Summary of Recommendations

No recommendations made by the external examiner.

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General Comments

Mention any points you may wish to make, including:

comments on administration; communication with the centre; access to material needed to carry out the external examination; and comments about how the centre is meeting the expectations of the QAA Code of Practice and addressing the Academic Infrastructure.

The organisation have some developmental plans for the course. They are due to change premises and widen their client base thus providing a greater range of experiential placement experience for students. The centre are building links with the university and are considering marketing of their course as a package to incorporate BACP membership as well as access to local university library. The centre are keen to move forward with the qualification.

Areas of Good Practice

Identify any areas of particularly good practice mentioned in other sections of this report.

The standards of feedback are detailed and developmental. Plans are in place to develop the course delivery to a wider range of students and to expand the teaching team. Course materials are well produced and student support is a key area for the success of the course.

DETAILED COMMENTS

Management of Academic Standards

Comment on the presence of effective management procedures that are supported by appropriate systems and policies. Make specific reference to the management of any programmes run on a collaborative basis in other institutions.

Comment also on the operation of assessment meetings, including:

- the fairness and consistency of decisions
- the decision making process
- administrative support for the meetings
- the scope of the minutes of previous meetings
- the organisation and conduct of the meetings.

Supporting Minds organisation is a non-profit social enterprise organisation. It offers low cost counselling to the community and provides training for counsellors. The organisation is expanding with a growing numbers of students applying this year. The centre has also developed a satellite centre in South Wales.

The company director holds responsibility as Quality Nominee. She is in the process of expanding the teaching staff. Most staff are part time with the course delivery taking place at weekends. There is a good level of communication between staff with monthly meetings and moderation processes which are clearly minuted and actioned. The internal verification processes are clear and structured with good documentation and constructive and developmental feedback to assessors. The centre is developing well in its second year. The Company Director has clear plans for expansion of delivery of service and training. The centre has the benefit of offering practice opportunities to learners although they also encourage learners to access placements across a range of service provision. The training is marketed as a cost effective package to include university library access; BACP membership ; MOODLE resources and supervision sessions. The course documents are clear with a course handbook detailing the appeals process and other policies. Mitigation and extension requests have a clear process that learners understand. Most of the learners are studying part time alongside employment . The teaching team could not be available for my meeting but they had opportunity to feedback through the last staff meeting. No issues were raised.

Effectiveness of Assessment Instruments

State, for each programme, whether the design and nature of the assessments permit the aims and learning objectives of the programme to be met and are of a standard appropriate to the qualification level.

The assessment processes are clear and structured. Learners receive a handbook containing all assignments so that they can relate any links in learning and evidence across the course. This has also helped course planning for learners. The assignment briefs are clear and well presented. All assessment criteria are clearly signposted and appropriate vocational language and context are applied. Practice opportunities and experiential learning are essential to this course and all learners can access this within the organisation. Strong reflective processes and journaling of experience are required for the course. This was clearly evidenced and noted that confidentiality was maintained throughout. Learners work within the BACP Ethical Framework requirements with a focus on safeguarding and Data Protection as key elements of expectations. Learners access monthly supervision on the course in adherence with BACP requirements and standards.

Maintenance and Audit of Records

State whether the procedure for maintaining and auditing assessment records is secure and effective.

All records are securely stored onsite in the office environment which is protected through 24 hour security measures. Records are stored for the required 3 year period.

Registration and Certification Claims

Summarise the process for ensuring that student registration and certification is accurate and monitored effectively.

The registration and certification processes are completed by the company director who has a good understanding of the processes and completes these in a timely manner. She ensures careful checks on registrations; withdrawals and changes of information.

Student Support and Review**Key areas to discuss include:**

- The assessment process, assessment feedback to students
- The quality of teaching, the expertise and experience of staff
- Physical resources and learning support for the programme
- Tutorial and pastoral support
- Opportunities for students to give feedback on their programme
- For HN programmes, summarise the views expressed by students, including favourable comments and any concerns raised
- Summary of discussions with staff

Learners could not be present to meet with me today but I have received excellent feedback via e mail. Since most of the learners are in full time employment the course is developed at weekends. There is a team of part time staff delivering on the course from a range of backgrounds in care; family therapy; play therapy and psychology. The organisation offers counselling services to young people from the age of 16 years at present and are developing to offer family and child services for children from age of 5. Thus expanding variety and opportunity to learners in practice. The learners use role play to practice scenarios and skills development with a view to developing towards individual practice in setting.

The centre has provided a range of resources for their learners and is developing the MOODLE site resources as well. The Company Director has developed partnerships across the city and is developing links in to Lincoln University library services that the learners can access.

Interview processes for the course are carried out with integrity ensuring suitability of the learner for such a rigorous course. All learners need to have a DBS. There are clear induction processes and pastoral support offered by structured tutorial and supervision sessions. A good level of feedback to learners and opportunities for learner responses to be noted. Learners are encouraged to fully participate in the course development and future opportunities for prospective students based upon their experiences.

Comments provided by students to SV include: "I just wanted to say that I'm two weekends into this course, and the organisation, the quality of the materials, the delivery and the learning environment have all been fabulous. The group of learners includes people from a wide variety of ages and backgrounds, all of whom have a genuine commitment to developing their counselling knowledge and skills, and we have been very well instructed and facilitated by Steve our trainer. I can't speak highly enough of my experiences on this course so far, and I look forward to participating in the remainder over the next 2 years."

"I have had wonderful experience on this course. The college material given has been relevant and supportive to my learning.

The classroom environment is excellent and the subject delivered well. I enjoy the lessons and have learnt much from this course.

Unlike other courses, counselling has deeply personal and reflective element to it, which needs trainees to work on their self awareness. This can make people quite vulnerable if not supported correctly as they undergo this training and exposure. I have felt Jenine has been there for me both as a tutor and as a supporter during my most difficult times on the course.

Overall, I have had excellent service."