



Churches' Ministerial Counselling Service

Review of the Service for 2018

Mission Statement

The Churches' Ministerial Counselling Service exists to provide confidential support to ministers and adults in their immediate household through short-term, professional counselling.

Review of the Year 2018

2018 was again a successful year in the life of CMCS, once again exceeding our previous record number of referrals by 10%. The introduction of the GDPR framework, and major changes in personnel, have been the areas of greatest change for CMCS during the year.

The Steering Group presents this review of the central work of the Service, noting that what really matters is that ministers and their families are being helped, day in, day out, through CMCS's counsellors. Details are unreportable, due to confidentiality, but we offer annual statistics.

Who is involved?

The Service continues to be co-ordinated in the office of the Baptist Union, where a member of the Ministries Team is committed to this task. In July 2018, Ian Millgate retired, who had held the role of Service Co-ordinator since before CMCS was launched in 1996. The Baptist Union of Great Britain has provided Hilary Mason from within the same team to take on this role, and the changeover was completed without any break in cover.

At the end of 2018 we have four Area Co-ordinators, to receive enquiries from those seeking counselling and manage the referral process. We welcomed Amanda Bettison, Jane Knights and Emma Jones during 2018 and said farewell to Menna Bonsels and Frances Bloomfield; Norma Clark will be retiring early in 2019.

Five Consultants are available to consider clinical judgments, including assessing applications from counsellors wanting to join our Register and advising the Service on matters of policy.

Final decisions on policy and all matters to do with the running of CMCS are made by the Steering Group, which consists of the Consultants alongside both administrative representatives and those with counselling expertise appointed by the participating denominations.

During 2018, the Steering Group welcomed Lynn Ash of the Baptist Union and Carol Harris of the Salvation Army. Les Ackie of the Seventh Day Adventists has been replaced by Eglan Brooks. Josephine Chuks is standing in for Linda Robotham, representing the Methodists. The additional place allocated for Anglicans, after Leeds and Sheffield Dioceses joined CMCS, has been vacant, but from January 2019 we look forward to welcoming Anthea Carter-Savigear of Exeter Diocese. Frances Bloomfield stood down as the Area Coordinators' representative in the summer. In the light of so much change, it was agreed that Graham Exon would take on this role in addition to being Chair of the Steering Group, and the terms of office for Chair and Vice Chair would be extended by one year, for the sake of stability.

At the time of writing we have 215 counsellors registered, of whom 60 are on the couples' work Register as well as the individuals Register, and two are just on the couples' list.

The Steering Group's Work

Major work was undertaken on the introduction of the General Data Protection Regulations, and considerable progress has been made, although we acknowledge that there is still more to do, to ensure ongoing compliance with this legislation. Privacy Notices are on the CMCS website.

Discussion concerning the legal status of CMCS continues, with the aim of working towards becoming a separate charity

(rather than our current status as a partnership of denominations), probably as a 'Charitable Incorporated Organisation'. Important decisions on this are likely in the next year.

We have appointed a Designated Officer for Safeguarding, Peter Mockford, and added our Safeguarding Policy onto the CMCS website.

CMCS continues to offer high quality CPD Workshops for counsellors, with 2017-18 focused on working with issues around shame and sexuality. The introduction of an additional day in Manchester was warmly welcomed by counsellors in the North West.

We have welcomed another partner into the Service, when the Diocese of Sheffield joined us on 1 January 2018. We are also delighted that the Diocese of Exeter will become part of CMCS with effect from 1 January 2019. There have been initial conversations with some other dioceses.

Finance and Statistics

2018 was another record year for referrals – with previous peaks at 248 in both 2014 and 2016, and at 278 in 2017, 2018 saw 305 referrals. In keeping with the intention that the Service should offer short-term work, again 95% of cases were completed within the standard 12 sessions, so although we permit extra sessions in exceptional circumstances, such extensions are rare.

Not surprisingly, the amount paid for counselling also increased with this rise in the number of clients. The total paid by CMCS over the year was £86,080 compared with £71,310 in 2017.

The Steering Group reviews the counselling fee annually, and has agreed that this should continue at the 2018 level of £45 per session in 2019.

Client Feedback

Here are a few comments from clients, given in anonymous feedback forms during the year:

- “The financial assistance was very helpful. For some people this would be a major issue in enabling counselling to even be an option if finances were really tight. Thank you for all that you do!”
- “It was hugely beneficial and I was amazed at the (*denomination*)’s generosity ... I was able to have 3 extra sessions – because my circumstances changed dramatically – and I am very grateful”
- “I felt I was placed with a counsellor who was able to understand my situation and this put me at ease very quickly”
- “My experience was way beyond my expectations. I really didn’t know how it would help, I was so wrong. It really was life changing, and has had such a positive impact on my life and ministry. I am so, so happy I got in touch”
- “The counselling has given me insights which have helped me to gain a much better understanding of my relationship with God and with others. The sessions have helped me to see discipleship in a new and more healthy way”

- “I was delighted with the overall ability of my counsellor. I felt I was able to talk about the root problems and she had the ability and skills to lead me forward”

One of the questions on the form is: ‘Did you have confidence in your counsellor and their skills and techniques?’ There are various options, starting with ‘At all times’ ‘Most of the time’ etc – this last client put 3 ticks in the box for ‘At all times’!

From comments like that, we continue to believe that all the work is more than worthwhile.

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