



Churches' Ministerial  
Counselling Service

Review of the Service for 2019

### **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 2019

### **Foreword: From a minister who received counselling in 2019**

“When one is in ‘ministry’ there are very few places one can speak/share without some degree of concern over possible consequences: there are very few situations where one speaks truly ‘freely’. A CMCS counsellor, listening with an appreciation & understanding of the particular challenges of ministry, is a valuable service (whatever the counsellor’s faith position).”

### **Briefly: Two key points about 2019**

A new Consultant to advise the Steering Group; a 31% increase in clients seeking counselling.

### **Who is involved?**

**Co-ordinators** – Norma Clark retired early in 2019, and we are so grateful for her many years of faithful service to CMCS.

**Counsellors** – There were a few retirements this year but lots of new joiners too, some who had first heard of CMCS when they saw our advertisement for a Consultant in the BACP Online Jobs Board and ‘job alert’ emails. The increase in the number of requests for application packs for joining the CMCS Register of counsellors was a welcome secondary effect.

At time of writing there are 211 counsellors registered. There are still a dozen who have been with CMCS since the earliest days, joining the Register between 1996 and 1998. One counsellor who joined the Register in 1999 and retired in 2019 said this: “I have loved working for CMCS in many ways – the clients I have seen, the other colleagues who I have got to

know through the training days, and the very efficient way the Service has been run. I consider myself very blessed to have been involved in CMCS for so many years.”

**Consultants** – With **Rachel Hudson** leaving for another role in June 2019, the search for a new fifth member for the team of Consultants took several months, culminating in a day of interviews in September. The Consultants’ role is to consider clinical judgments, including assessing applications from counsellors wanting to join our Register, and to advise the Steering Group on matters of policy. We are grateful to BACP for a special deal enabling us to advertise this senior Board-level role for nearly two months throughout the summer rather than just the couple of weeks our budget would have provided at their normal rate. Our thanks go to everyone who participated in the selection process and helped to ensure that the standard of candidates at interview was so high. The new appointee is **Debbie Dawson** who will take on the full range of duties from April 2020 after a few months of shadowing the role.

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

There have been a few changes in membership of the Steering Group during the year: when the Diocese of Exeter joined CMCS on 1 January 2019, **Anthea Carter-Savigear** took up the vacant place for an Anglican representative; Methodist counselling representative **Sarah Bruce** left after the October 2019 meeting; URC denominational ex-officio representative **Craig Bowman** also left after the October 2019 meeting, to be replaced by his successor **Nicola Furley-Smith**. We are grateful to all four for their involvement.

## **The work of the Steering Group**

We welcomed another organisation into CMCS: the Anglican **Diocese of Exeter** joined on 1 January 2019.

CMCS continues to offer high quality CPD Workshops for counsellors, on subjects specific to our client groups. The 2018-19 Workshops were facilitated by Rachel Hudson, one of the CMCS Consultants, on the theme “God in the Room: Issues surrounding faith dynamics”. The 2019-20 Workshops are about **Recognising Spiritual Abuse** and are being delivered by Gillie Jenkinson of Hope Valley Counselling. Feedback about both sets of Workshops from participants was uploaded to the CMCS website to show from another angle how beneficial they are for counsellors.

Another of the CMCS Consultants, **Peter Mockford**, was appointed as vice-chair to succeed Rachel Hudson; Graham Exon continues as Chair at this time of transition.

As we approach the 25th anniversary of CMCS, the Steering Group are considering how we should be structured to meet the challenges of the future and maintain the high quality of the ever-increasing client-facing activities through our many professional counsellors. This work continues into the forthcoming year.

## **Finance & Statistics**

After previous increases of 10% or 12% from year to year, 305 referrals in 2018 were followed by 399 referrals in 2019, an increase of 31%. Looking at this another way, the number of new clients per year seeking counselling from CMCS nearly doubled (increased by 97%) from 2015 to 2019.



In keeping with the intention that the Service should offer short-term counselling, 95% of cases were again 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 via CMCS over the year was **£107,434** compared with £86,080 in 2018.

The Steering Group reviews the counselling fee every year, and came to the decision that this should increase to £47 per session (from £45 per session) for sessions taking place after 1 January 2020. To assist with the arithmetic this would require from counsellors and Area Co-ordinators, an optional new version of the counsellors' claim form is being provided in Excel spreadsheet format, which subtracts the client's contribution for each session, and automatically totals up the balance amount to be claimed from CMCS for all the sessions at the foot of the form.

## **Feedback: how clients benefit from using CMCS, in their own words**

These comments from clients were received on anonymous feedback forms during the year:

- ❖ The two times I have used this service it has helped me rebalance and cope with pressures of ministry.
- ❖ Although I asked for a referral because of a personal situation, the experience has hugely helped my professional development too.
- ❖ Your choice of counsellor for me was inspired: I am so grateful for this.
- ❖ I have found this course of counselling utterly transforming and it has given me tools I can continue to use.
- ❖ A very helpful service which was affordable for me - I would not be able to afford it otherwise.
- ❖ It was a very fast process having a counsellor matched with me. I waited 4 months for an NHS appointment, but this was pretty much immediate.
- ❖ *(Commenting on the service provided by the Area Co-ordinator)* Easy to access, making one comfortable to ask for help, comprehensive information for a first-time user, friendly and supportive.
- ❖ Preservation of anonymity *(was particularly helpful)*.

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