Hope Therapy & Counselling Services

Scope of Practice and Referral Policy

Version: October 2026 | Client-Facing

This policy explains how Hope Therapy & Counselling Services and our affiliate counsellors define their scope of practice, how we decide whether we can help you, and what happens if your needs fall outside what we are able to provide.

1. What Is Scope of Practice?

Scope of practice refers to the range of clients, presenting concerns, therapeutic approaches and situations within which a counsellor or therapist is qualified and competent to work. Working within scope is a professional and ethical requirement for all practising therapists in the UK, and is required by all major professional bodies, including the BACP, NCPS and UKCP.

Hope Therapy & Counselling Services takes scope of practice seriously. We check every affiliate counsellor's qualifications and professional registration before they receive referrals, and we match you with a counsellor whose stated training and experience fit what you have told us. Your counsellor is responsible for deciding whether your needs are within their own competence.

2. What We Offer

Hope Therapy & Counselling Services provides access to qualified, registered counsellors and therapists offering support for a wide range of emotional, psychological, relational and personal development concerns. Our services include:

- Individual counselling and psychotherapy for adults aged 18 and over, and for young people aged 16 and 17 with counsellors approved by Hope to work with this age group
- Couples and relationship therapy
- Family therapy
- CBT (Cognitive Behavioural Therapy)
- EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitisation and Reprocessing)
- Hypnotherapy
- Online and telephone counselling, available to clients across England

Not every counsellor on our network offers every approach or works with every presenting concern. Our matching process takes your specific needs into account when identifying a suitable counsellor.

3. What We Do Not Offer

Some types of support fall outside what Hope Therapy & Counselling Services can arrange. These include:

- Crisis intervention or emergency mental health services. If you are in immediate danger or experiencing a mental health emergency, please contact emergency services (999) or NHS 111, option 2.
- Support where, now or within the last six months, someone has had thoughts of ending their life or a plan to do so; has taken an overdose; has self-harmed in a way that needed (or would reasonably have needed) medical treatment; or has self-harm that is becoming more frequent or more serious. Other experiences of self-harm are considered individually. If you are currently experiencing thoughts of suicide or self-harm, please contact Samaritans (116 123, free and available 24 hours), your GP or emergency services.

- Psychiatric assessment, diagnosis or medication management. These are medical services and must be provided by a qualified psychiatrist or GP.
- Services for children under the age of 16 (except where a younger family member takes part in family therapy with our prior written agreement).
- Court-directed or legally mandated therapy (unless specifically agreed in writing in advance).
- Forensic or risk assessment services.

If you are unsure whether your needs fall within our scope, please contact us at contact@hopefulminds.co.uk or call 0333 043 1850 before booking. We will always be honest with you about whether we can help.

4. How We Check Whether We Can Help You

When you enquire or book, we carry out a brief initial screening to understand your presenting concerns and to identify a suitable counsellor. This is not a clinical assessment — it is an administrative and matching process. Its purpose is to help us refer you to a counsellor whose experience, training and availability fit your needs.

Your counsellor will also carry out their own professional assessment at the start of therapy. If at any point they find that your needs fall outside their individual scope of practice or competence, they will discuss this with you and take appropriate action (see Section 6).

5. Counsellors Working Within Their Competence

Our affiliate counsellors are independent practitioners who are responsible for their own clinical work. They have agreed with us that they will:

- not accept or continue working with a client whose needs go beyond their training, competence or insurance;
- not offer therapeutic approaches in which they are not qualified or trained;
- use clinical supervision to reflect on their practice, including any concerns about their ability to work with a particular client; and
- refer a client back to Hope Therapy & Counselling Services if the client's needs move beyond their scope, so that other arrangements can be made.

We check that counsellors continue to meet our requirements through our onboarding process, annual compliance declarations and our ongoing relationship with them.

6. When a Referral Is Needed

If it becomes clear that your needs cannot be appropriately met by your current counsellor or through Hope Therapy & Counselling Services, you will be told clearly and promptly. This might happen because:

- your presenting concerns have changed since therapy began and now need a different type of support;
- your level of risk has increased to a point that needs a higher level of clinical support than counselling can provide;
- a specialist service — such as a community mental health team, a psychiatric service, or a specialist trauma or eating disorder service — would be better placed to support you; or
- your needs would be better matched to a different counsellor within our network.

Where a referral or change is needed:

- your counsellor will discuss the situation with you openly and with care, and explain why a change is being recommended;

- your counsellor will refer you back to us, and we will help you find another counsellor in our network or information about other services that may help;
- any transition will be handled in a way that puts your wellbeing first and keeps disruption to a minimum; and
- we will refund any pre-paid sessions that cannot go ahead.

7. Signposting to Other Services

Where your needs fall outside our scope, we will always try to point you towards services that may be better placed to help. These might include:

- your GP, who can assess, refer and prescribe where appropriate;
- NHS Talking Therapies, which offers free CBT and other evidence-based therapies for anxiety and depression;
- Samaritans: 116 123 (free, 24 hours) for emotional support in distress;
- Mind: www.mind.org.uk for mental health information and local services;
- Cruse Bereavement Support: 0808 808 1677 for bereavement support;
- Relate: www.relate.org.uk for relationship counselling; and
- specialist services for eating disorders, addiction, trauma or other specific concerns, as appropriate to your situation.

Signposting to another service does not mean we do not care about your wellbeing — it means we are being honest about where you are most likely to receive the help you need.

8. Our Commitment to You

We are committed to being honest, transparent and client-centred. We will not knowingly match you with a counsellor whose stated training and experience do not fit what you have told us. Our counsellors have agreed with us that they will not start or continue work that is outside their training and competence, and that they will refer you back to us if that happens.

If you have any concerns about whether your counsellor is working within their scope, or about whether Hope Therapy & Counselling Services is the right service for you, please contact us. We would rather have that conversation openly than have you continue in a therapeutic relationship that is not serving your needs.

9. Questions

If you have any questions about this policy, or about whether we are able to help with your particular concerns, please contact us:

- Email: contact@hopefulminds.co.uk
- Phone: 0333 043 1850 (9am–9pm, Monday to Sunday)
- Website: www.hopefulminds.co.uk

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