

Briefing: NCPS' Direct Access to Counselling Campaign: The Evidence-Based Need for Integrated and Appropriate Care

The National Counselling & Psychotherapy Society (NCPS) represents over 16,000 Registered and Accredited professionals. We advocate for **timely, effective, equal and appropriate access to mental health support**, and the **integration of the counselling & psychotherapy workforce** into national mental health provision, including schools and the NHS.

Key Objectives

Reduce waiting times: The Direct Access initiative allows for immediate access to counselling, sidestepping NHS Talking Therapies waiting lists. Shorter waiting lists result in improved outcomes for patients, leading to an overall cost saving to the NHS.

Use existing workforce: With over 60,000 counsellors and psychotherapists in practice in the UK, there is a large workforce available to provide mental health support

Appropriate care: Based on the CROP study and other 'Common Factors' research, we advocate for choice of both therapy and therapists to increase efficacy

Financial efficiency: No need to pay for training or employment-related costs. The workforce is already trained (self-funded), and have their own therapeutic spaces.

Compelling Research

Reduced NHS Costs: A recent UK study suggests that immediate access to mental health treatment could save the NHS approximately £600 million annually.

Physical Health Benefits: A trial at Barts Health NHS Trust revealed that mental health interventions saw a 20% drop in high-risk diabetes admissions & 50% decrease in bed days.

Importance of Appropriate Care: A Danish study on the "Common factors, Responsiveness and Outcome in Psychotherapy (CROP)" demonstrates the critical role of choice and flexibility in therapy, advocating for choice in therapists and therapy.

Why it Matters

To the General Public: Quicker, more accessible mental healthcare means a healthier, more productive society. Everyone benefits when mental health is prioritised.

To Your Constituents: Immediate, integrated, and appropriate care will drastically improve both the mental and physical wellbeing of your constituents.

To the Government: Using the existing workforce and thereby removing training and estates needs, as well frontloading funding into prevention rather than crisis services and improving long term health outcomes, further reduces the burden on the NHS.

To Counsellors & Psychotherapists: Adopting the Direct Access initiative validates the pivotal role our members play in mental health support, and aims to provide more opportunities for their skills and services to be utilised effectively.

Calls to Action

Endorse the Campaign: Public support can instigate crucial policy changes.

Initiate Parliamentary Dialogue: Encourage in-depth discussions about this with colleagues.

Engage with NCPS and Other Experts: A deeper dive into the potential benefits of this approach is essential.

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