

NCPS Student Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Survey 2026 – Word-only version

Introduction

We know from our most recent EDI survey that many of the barriers people face begin long before they join a professional body. The cost of training, of supervision, of the time it takes to qualify, how training fits around students' lives and work... all these things determine who even feels able to step into a counselling training room, let alone go on to build a career in the profession.

We sent this survey to our NCPS student members, asking them to share information about their backgrounds and circumstances. We want to understand who is in training right now, and what their experiences are, so that we can build a clearer picture of the people entering the profession and the factors that shape their journey.

We will run the survey annually to see how these findings change over time and how they compare with our wider membership data. Over time, this will help us understand who enters training, who goes on to qualify, and where barriers may prevent people from completing their journey which gives us a better understanding of how we can support them.

At this first stage, this survey aims to provide a snapshot of who is undertaking counselling and psychotherapy training, including their backgrounds, experiences and circumstances. As always, we welcome your thoughts, comments, and feedback, and look forward to working with our members to create a profession where all those with the emotional and relational skills to become counsellors and psychotherapists are welcomed and encouraged to do so

Question 1 - Please select your age group

The largest age group was 55–60, with 19.4% of respondents falling into this category. This was followed by those aged 50–54, who made up 18.4% of respondents, and those aged 45–49, at 17.0%.

A further 12.8% of respondents were aged 60+, while 11.1% were aged 35–39. Those aged 40–44 accounted for 10.1% of respondents.

Smaller proportions of respondents were aged 25–34, at 9.4%, and 18–24, at 1.7%.

Overall, the responses show that the student membership surveyed was largely made up of people aged 45 and over, with the largest proportion aged between 55 and 60.

Question 2 - Which of the following best describes your gender identity?

The majority of respondents identified as female, accounting for 75.7% of responses. Male respondents made up 18.8%.

A further 2.4% of respondents preferred not to say, while 1.7% identified as non-binary. A small proportion, 1.4%, preferred to self-describe their gender identity.

Question 3 - Which of the following best represents your sexual orientation?

The majority of respondents identified as heterosexual, accounting for 76.0% of responses. A further 7.7% identified as bisexual.

Those who identified as gay and those who preferred to self-describe each accounted for 4.2% of respondents. A further 5.6% preferred not to say, while 1.7% identified as lesbian and 0.7% as asexual.

Question 4 - Which of the following best describes your ethnic background?

The majority of respondents identified as White: English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British, accounting for 68.1% of responses. A further 10.4% identified as White: Other White, while 3.1% identified as White: Irish.

Among respondents from Asian backgrounds, 1.7% identified as Indian, 0.7% as Chinese, and 0.3% as Bangladeshi. A further 0.3% identified as another Asian background.

Among Black respondents, 2.1% identified as Caribbean, 1.7% as African, and 0.7% as another Black background.

A further 1.0% identified as White and Asian, 1.7% as White and Black African, 1.0% as White and Black Caribbean, and 1.4% as another Mixed or Multiple ethnic group.

Of the remaining respondents, 0.3% identified as Arab, while 0.7% identified as another ethnic group. A further 3.1% preferred not to say and 1.0% preferred to self-describe.

No respondents identified as Gypsy or Irish Traveller, Roma, or Pakistani.

Question 5 - Which of the following best describes your religious belief, if any?

The largest proportion of respondents reported having no religion, accounting for 49.5% of responses. Christianity was the next most common response, at 27.7%.

A further 12.6% of respondents preferred to self-describe their religious belief, while 4.2% preferred not to say. A further 3.2% identified as atheist.

Among those identifying with a specific religion, 1.4% identified as Hindu, 0.7% as Muslim, 0.4% as Jewish and 0.4% as Buddhist. No respondents identified as Sikh.

Question 6 - Do you consider yourself to have a disability or health condition?

The majority of respondents, 63.9%, said they did not consider themselves to have a disability or health condition. A further 32.6% said they did consider themselves to have a disability or health condition, while 3.5% preferred not to say.

Question 7 - What is the highest level of education you have completed?

The most common highest level of education completed was a Bachelor's degree, reported by 33.3% of respondents. This was followed by a Master's degree at 18.8%, a post-graduate diploma at 16.0%, and A Levels or equivalent at 14.6%.

A further 7.3% of respondents had completed GCSEs or equivalent, while 5.2% selected other. Doctorates accounted for 3.1% of responses, and 1.7% reported having no formal qualifications.

Question 8 - What was the occupation of your main household earner when you were about 16?

The most common category was modern professional and traditional professional occupations, accounting for 28.1% of respondents. This was followed by senior, middle or junior managers or administrators at 12.2%, and clerical and intermediate occupations at 11.8%.

A further 11.1% of respondents reported routine, semi-routine manual and service occupations, while 10.1% reported technical and craft occupations. Small business owners accounted for 9.0% of responses.

For 8.3% of respondents, the main household earner's occupation was not disclosed. A further 6.3% selected other. The occupations described in this category included military roles, social care, domestic abuse support, a retired professional, classical guitarist, musician, National Grid worker, nurse and police officer. Some respondents also reported that there was no household earner at the time, including where a parent was retired or unable to work.

A further 3.1% of respondents reported that their main household earner was long-term unemployed.

Question 9 - Which type of school did you attend for the most time between the ages of 11 and 16?

The majority of respondents, 71.9%, attended a state-run or state-funded school for the most time between the ages of 11 and 16.

A further 12.3% attended an independent or fee-paying school, while 1.4% attended an independent or fee-paying school with a means-tested bursary covering 90% or more of the total cost throughout their time there.

A further 11.2% of respondents attended school outside the UK. For 1.8%, the type of school they attended was not known, while 1.4% preferred not to say.

Question 10 - If you finished school after 1980, were you eligible for free school meals at any point during your school years?

Of respondents who finished school after 1980, 18.8% said they were eligible for free school meals at some point during their school years. Almost half, 48.4%, said they were not eligible.

A further 19.5% said this was not applicable to them, while 11.1% did not know. A further 2.1% preferred not to say.

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