



## Programme Specification

### Level 4 Diploma in School-Based Child Counselling

*Date last updated: August 2025*

## Course Overview

This course is designed for people who:

- Want to become a safe and ethical qualified counsellor with a focus on working with children within a whole school approach to supporting mental health
- Wish to learn vocationally within a school setting to work therapeutically with children and their families
- Want hands-on experience of the practical management of a whole school service
- Are interested in pursuing a career with Place2Be in roles such as a Mental Health Practitioner or School Project Manager
- Are wanting a learning approach that is aimed between A level and Bachelor degree level
- Are ready to take on an intensive and fast-tracked, full time study option
- Are at a point in their life and learning journey where they are ready to undergo self-discovery that will be both challenging and rewarding

On this course, students will:

- Gain a therapeutic counselling qualification with a focus on working with children in a school environment
- Gain skills to run a whole school approach to supporting children's mental health
- Develop a theoretical knowledge and understanding of Place2Be's Therapeutic Approach and clinical delivery model, as well as the practical skills needed to deliver a counselling programme in a primary school
- Develop the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to operate safely, ethically, autonomously and accountably as a counsellor for children, making appropriate use of the BACP ethical framework, relevant laws and safeguarding policies
- Develop the skills necessary to deliver a package of mental health support in schools demonstrating self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems
- Actively engage with a variety of therapeutic interventions and activities including assessment and formulation, parent meetings and reviews, safeguarding practices, multi-agency working, groupwork, 1:1 counselling work, drop-in services and teaching/school staff consultations.
- Actively develop awareness of intersectional identities and difference in order to develop anti-oppressive practices

[place2be.org.uk](https://place2be.org.uk)

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HRH The Princess  
of Wales

Registered Office: Place2Be, 175 St. John Street, Clerkenwell, London, EC1V 4LW. 020 7923 5500  
Registered Charity in England and Wales (1040756) and in Scotland (SC038649)  
Registered Company in England and Wales (02876150)





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#### Learning & Teaching

| What you will learn                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | How learning will be taught & developed                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | How learning will be assessed                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
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| Skills, Knowledge & Behaviours for:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working within the Place2be Therapeutic Approach and clinical delivery model as a coherent theoretical frame</li> <li>Working safely, ethically and professionally as a counsellor with children in a school setting</li> <li>Working in a therapeutic relationship with children and young people.</li> <li>Working ethically and reflectively with the diversity and difference within and around the therapeutic relationship (including the counsellor, child, family and school)</li> <li>Working with self-awareness in the counselling process</li> <li>Working self-reflectively as a counsellor.</li> <li>Delivering a range of mental health interventions in primary schools including classroom work, small group therapeutic work, child-initiated drop in sessions, teacher and parent consultations, multi-agency work, safeguarding practices.</li> <li>Using Safeguarding policies, laws and professional ethical frameworks for decision making and intervening as necessary in the context of counselling children and young people in a school setting</li> <li>Current government and educational policy on improving children's well-being which impact on school based counselling services and mental health work support.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lectures</li> <li>Workshops</li> <li>Seminars</li> <li>Discussion Groups</li> <li>Reading</li> <li>Experiential exercises</li> <li>Peer guided learning</li> <li>Clinical placement experiences and placement specific supervision</li> <li>Tutorials</li> <li>Independent study and assignment completion</li> <li>Observations of children in schools</li> <li>Required engagement in externally provided personal therapy throughout the taught course</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Essays</li> <li>Case Studies</li> <li>Tutor report</li> <li>Half termly Placement Reviews</li> <li>Recordings and observations of skills sessions</li> <li>Skills Presentations and Reflective Viva</li> </ul> |



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| Subject-Based Practical Skills                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                 |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Competence and effectiveness as a therapeutic practitioner</li> <li>• The ability to use reflective processes to consider the verbal and nonverbal communications from children and young people; respond sensitively and therapeutically to a child's communications.</li> <li>• The ability to use reflective processes to consider the impact of counselling interventions on the child and the therapeutic process.</li> <li>• The ability to be a playful and creative counsellor with children; to regulate, relate and reflect in relationship to consider meaningful communications.</li> <li>• The ability to assess your own competency</li> <li>• The ability to contribute to and make good use of group supervision</li> <li>• The ability to deliver a variety of therapeutic interventions in a school setting</li> <li>• Ability to manage, organise a school based mental health support approach effectively and with empathy in the school system</li> <li>• The ability to conduct and assessment and formulate</li> <li>• The ability to conduct observations of children in a variety of settings</li> <li>• The ability to work within a multidisciplinary team to consider a child's mental health and potential supportive interventions in the educational setting.</li> <li>• Work sensitively and respectfully with issues of difference</li> <li>• Hold safe and ethical boundaries in a therapeutic setting; maintaining professional boundaries in the school and training setting</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Counselling role play</li> <li>• Experiential exercises</li> <li>• Skills Vivas</li> <li>• Opportunities to observe a range of therapeutic interventions provided in the school, such as safeguarding, recordkeeping, assessing and formulating, parent meetings, teacher meetings, multiagency meetings, groupwork, drop in sessions, etc,</li> <li>• Regular self and supervisor reviews of placement with course tutors</li> <li>• Gain an understanding of operational aspects of a Place2be school based mental health programme</li> <li>• Professional log</li> <li>• 1:1 counselling experiences</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Placement Supervisor's reports</li> <li>• Tape and video analysis and evaluation</li> <li>• Tutor, self and peer assessment</li> </ul> |



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| Skills for Life & Work (Behaviours)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                      |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work within a team and engage with difference constructively with curiosity</li> <li>• Deescalate conflict</li> <li>• Enhanced oral and written communication skills</li> <li>• Effective self-appraisal</li> <li>• Working autonomously</li> <li>• Demonstrate and maintain self-care</li> <li>• Make use of and provide feedback for the purpose of learning</li> <li>• Make use of own therapy to process personal life experiences</li> <li>• Start developing the skill to recognise and own your unprocessed experiences</li> <li>• Reflective thinking to engage with both the self and the other</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participation in group learning and development in person and online</li> <li>• Personal therapy</li> <li>• Other Self development activities</li> <li>• Self and peer appraisal</li> <li>• Independent study</li> <li>• Placement in schools</li> <li>• Tutor and supervisor feedback</li> <li>• Use of IT systems and learning platforms to engage with course materials and operational systems involved in operational work with a third sector organisation and school</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tutor and peer feedback</li> <li>• Self-assessment</li> <li>• Peer presentations</li> </ul> |
| Thinking Skills                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                      |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ability to reflect on and make use of your own emotional responses in a therapeutic setting</li> <li>• The ability to use the Place2Be theoretical framework to regulate, relate and reflect within the work with clients The curiosity to explore and integrate theoretical concepts in practice.</li> <li>• The capacity to examine biases and consider multiple perspectives.</li> <li>• The ability to remain curious, open and receptive, reflecting on a range of clinical material and relational experience to identify meaningful themes.</li> </ul>                                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion group, presentations and exercises</li> <li>• Clinical Supervision</li> <li>• Reflective peer supervision</li> <li>• Personal therapy</li> <li>• Reflective journals</li> <li>• Self-directed study</li> <li>• Tutorials and Study Skills days</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Written assignments</li> <li>• Presentations</li> <li>• Reflective journals</li> </ul>      |



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#### Course Structure

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| Course duration                | 18-months full time study, September – December as a minimum with 2 week break over Winter holidays and Easter holidays, and longer over summer.<br><i>Option to extend for up to 6 months if needed to reach competencies, see more below</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Time commitment                | Full time<br>First three terms: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monday: 9am-5pm in-person tutor directed learning</li> <li>Tuesday-Thursday: Two days in Clinical placement 8:30am-4:30pm (variable depending on placement school) and one day self-study.</li> <li>Friday: 9am-12:30pm online tutor directed learning with the afternoon for self-study, incl. therapy.</li> </ul> Final term four: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One-day per week clinical placement</li> <li>Fortnightly case discussion groups (1.5 hours online)</li> <li>Monthly tutorials</li> <li>Two full in-person training days (to be held on a weekend)</li> </ul> |
| Level                          | 4 Diploma                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Locations                      | London<br>In-person learning – 175 St John St, London EC1V 4LW<br><br>Manchester<br>Location to be confirmed                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Guided learning teaching hours | 471hrs                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Student Handbook               | Students will be given the student handbook prior to the course beginning and be responsible for it.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |



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| Supervised clinical contact hours | <p>100hrs minimum</p> <p>It is required safe practice for all counsellors to have their work supervised regularly. Student counsellors need even more supervision to stay safe and ethical, while studying you will need 1 hour or supervision for every 6-8 client hours. Our model provides supervision within the whole-school model. This ensures your safety, the client's safety and aids to develop your skills and knowledge.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Personal therapy hours            | <p>Minimum of 30hrs by the end of the programme.</p> <p>Due to the heavy emphasis on personal development, students on this course must undertake <i>a minimum</i> of 30hrs of personal therapy sessions with a registered counsellor or psychotherapist . We view the 30 sessions as an absolute minimum and encourage the prioritising of personal therapy beyond qualification. Your therapist will need to confirm the number of hours you have attended.</p> <p>Counselling safely is as much about understanding yourself as it is about understanding others, and you need to be ready to commit yourself fully to the personal and professional development required to create a safe therapeutic space for children within the school environment.</p> <p>Personal Therapy is an additional cost to be covered by self-funded students. Students receiving financial support will receive a contribution towards their therapy. The per session cost can vary between £10-£70</p> |
| Self-study hours                  | <p>126hrs minimum</p> <p>Students will be expected to use their self-study time in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-lecture reading</li> <li>• Further reading and engaging with resources</li> <li>• Reading and study for assessments</li> <li>• Completing assessments at the end of each module</li> <li>• Personal therapy – weekly throughout the programme</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |





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| Course structure    | <p>The Level 4 course is a full-time course for 18-months from September to December, with learning Monday and Friday each week. We have a blended delivery approach for our courses and therefore you will learn in the classroom, through live online lessons and through practical experience in your school placement. During term times for the first three terms, the course schedule will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monday – in-person learning</li> <li>• Tuesday – school placement (1 of 2 placement days) or self study day</li> <li>• Wednesday – school placement (1 of 2 placement days) or a self study day</li> <li>• Thursday – school placement (1 of 2 placement days) or self study day</li> <li>• Friday – half day online learning, half day self-study or personal therapy time</li> </ul> <p>During school holidays and half term breaks, the students will take part in interactive skills workshops and pre-professional training sessions. There will be 2x 2week long holiday breaks throughout the course (at Christmas and Easter).</p> <p>For the final term four the structure will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One-day per week clinical placement</li> <li>• Fortnightly case discussion groups (1.5 hours online)</li> <li>• Monthly tutorials</li> <li>• Two full in-person training days (to be held on a weekend)</li> </ul> |
| Clinical Placements | <p>Students will take up a pre-arranged placement of 2-3 days per week in at least one (possibly two) Place2Be schools for the duration of at least a full academic year (September to July) while engaged on the course.</p> <p>You will be provided onsite supervision (usually paired) by the School Project Manager (SPM) and will also be responsible to the SPM at all times in school. You are expected to be available from 8.30 to 4.30 on your placement days which would be term time which will be 2 of the following days: Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. (In some cases, placements occur in a half day model, where you and your tutor will decide if an additional half day is needed to meet the course requirements).</p> <p>Every effort would be made to place you in a school in your general geographical area, however, you will need to allow for up to an hour and a half commuting and travel time each way as</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |



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|  | <p>placements are pre-arranged according to the location the course is being offered. During the placement you will complete a minimum of 100 1:1 counselling contact hours. You will also be provided opportunities to learn about practical skills and tasks necessary to operate and manage a whole school based mental health service. Tasks will include observing assessments, making formulations, parent reviews, teacher consultations, multi-agency working, safeguarding procedures, groupwork and drop in services.</p> |
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| Additional learning support | <p>Students with disabilities and/or additional learning needs who need reasonable adjustments to access the curriculum should apply for additional learning support through the course application form. If you secure a place on the course, all efforts will be made to develop a comprehensive supported learning plan to allow equal access. A reasonable adjustments plan would be agreed through the Student Experience manager, the programme team, yourself and the 1:1 tutor according to the evidence you submit and the adjustments you may need to access the curriculum and learning.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Extension                   | <p>In some cases we will consider requests to extend This is not an exhaustive list of what exceptional cases might be considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unable to complete the 1-1 hours due to events beyond your control</li> <li>• Unanticipated, unforeseeable, and unpreventable life events (e.g. bereavement, unplanned parenthood, housing issues) These circumstances would be considered by the extenuating circumstances panel and the nature of a n extension would be considered.</li> <li>• If attendance at 80% of the guided learning hours and 80% of the placement was not met, the student would be required to retake the entire year and no extension could be considered.</li> <li>• Not meeting fitness to practice criteria, but being on track to meet it within a defined extended period.</li> </ul> <p>Not all absence from placement for reasons of sickness would automatically be considered outside of your control; where a failure to practice self-care has become a pattern of behaviour we would be working with the student during the programme to explore suitability to continue. At this stage, we would consider frequent absence in relation to the capacity to provide safe and ethical provision of counselling services to CYP and meet minimum requirements of attendance for safe and ethical standard of training according to the BACP training curriculum standards. The Place2be Fitness to Practice policy and Clinical Competence Policy would be referred to in relation to the BACP three way agreement between course, placement and learner.</p> |



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| Professional Body Accreditation | <p>We are working with the following accrediting bodies to ensure we are developing this programme in line with their criteria and requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• British Association of Counsellors and Psychotherapists (BACP)</li><li>• Counselling and Psychotherapy Central Awarding Body (CPCAB).</li></ul> |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|