

# **UK Council for Psychotherapy Standards of Education and Training**

## **Guidelines for Section and Institutional Members for the Development of Training Standards in Child Psychotherapy:**

### **Accreditation for Prior Learning (APL/APEL)**

This document is copyright of UKCP and may not be reproduced, in whole or in part, without prior written permission.

## 1. Introduction

This document is a template for Section and Institutional Members to support those Training Member Organisations whose Child Psychotherapy Courses it has already accredited to manage an Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) and an Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) process for applicants applying to such training courses and who may qualify on the basis of the criteria outlined below.

In this context APL and APEL can be defined as the recognition of the skills and knowledge of an individual who has not completed either a four year UKCP accredited training programme in Child Psychotherapy, or the two year Post Qualifying training for existing registrants, but who has nevertheless undertaken some formal training in this area and / or has gained experience working with children and young people as part of their therapeutic training and practice. APL refers to instances whereby application is made to test the equivalence of a formal (usually accredited) training process against certain elements of the accredited training in Child Psychotherapy offered by the Training Member Organisation. APEL refers to a claim of experience gained in lieu of the need to attend certain elements of an accredited training process or the fulfilment of certain elements of the practice. Claims for APEL and APL can be made against both the full four year training process and the post qualifying training process, but only where such courses have gained prior UKCP accreditation.

Application for APL and APEL must be made to Member Training Organisations in the first instance. As with the Child Psychotherapy Training Standards and the Post Qualifying Standards for Child Psychotherapy, the standards described here are based on the existing requirements for competence of the UKCP standards framework for work with adults, and incorporates standards of best practice for work with children together with current government guidelines and statutory requirements for work in this area.

### **Guiding Principles for Child Psychotherapy**

These guidelines are informed by overriding principles which give recognition to:

- The child's individual human rights, including the right to self-determination, within the reasonable constraints of their need for safety, protection and care, in keeping with the law relating to Child Protection and the rights of parents and carers
- Given the right support and conditions, the capacity for the child to access impeded developmental impulses and re-establish the potential for psychological well-being
- The importance of considering the experience of children and young people in the context of the overall matrix of their lives and the centrality of family, social, cultural, religious/spiritual and political systems which frame their reality.
- The need to recognise the value and validity of a child's experience and to recognise the creativity and resilience of infants and children in responding to the circumstances of their lives as best they can within their developmental capabilities and emotional resources, even where this manifests in ways that present challenge and difficulty in the adult world, and to recognise that the child alone is not the problem
- The particular dependency and vulnerability of the infant, child and young person, emotionally, physically, psychologically and spiritually.
- The particular nature of the child's experience that characterises the several developmental stages and tasks involved in growing up into a mature relationship in the world

- The need to support children in developing the skills and resources they need to deal realistically with the circumstances of their lives, as well as to emerge more fully with their own potentialities and to build trust
- The multidisciplinary nature of work with children, and the vital importance of inter and intra-professional dialogue and exploration

## **Training Standards**

Standards for the AP(E)L process should be the same as those applied to full four year Child Psychotherapy Trainings and Post Qualifying Trainings. Section and Institutional Members should develop an AP(E)L process that specifies the procedure that Training Member Organisations should apply in the consideration of applications for AP(E)L. This process should specify both the minimum skill and knowledge base required for consideration of such an application and the nature of the evidence required in support of an APL application, as well as the proportion of the total training process (competencies or practice requirements) that can be AP(E)Led.

Training Requirements must be based on a minimum curriculum as defined by the Learning Outcomes specified in Section and Institutional Member 2 of this document, which defines a knowledge base and practical competence within the following categories:

- Child and Young Person Development
- Theories and Modalities
- Context Specific Competencies
- Therapeutic Communication, Relationship and Process
- Information Sharing
- Legal and Ethical Issues
- Multi-agency Working
- Special Educational Needs, Emotional, Social and Behavioural Difficulties and Issues of Mental Health
- Supporting Transitions
- Research and Monitoring
- Personal Skills and Qualities

Additionally, Section and Institutional Members should ensure that where relevant, AP(E)L applicants can provide evidence of the way in which they meet the modality specific needs and processes identified as integral to the training process, UKCP guidance documents and government guidance and statutory regulation in the following areas:

- Theoretical and Philosophical Practice Base
- Qualifying Criteria
- Selection and Admission Procedures
- Diversity and Equality
- AP(E)L Procedure

Documentation required from Training Member Organisations must fall within existing Section and Institutional Member requirements, as specified under the Guidelines for Section and Institutional Members for the Development of Training Standards in Child Psychotherapy: 4 Year Training Courses and should include:

- Organisation Background

- Course Specification
- Resource Provision

The unique needs and vulnerability of children must be borne in mind at all times, and Section and Institutional Members need to ensure that practitioners who seek professional registration for work in this area maintain the highest standards of professional competence and personal skill. For this reason Section and Institutional Members will need to articulate clear evidence requirements for AP(E)L applications, and to specify the ways in which applications satisfy both the letter and the spirit of the standards set by UKCP for Psychotherapy with Children. Additionally, Section and Institutional Members and existing and putative Training Member Organisations need to be aware of the rapidly changing legislation in this area, and need to develop processes to apply and integrate such changes into their training processes, and to ensure that they are able to support registered practitioners in the management of such changes.

## 2. Minimum Curriculum

The Learning Outcomes detailed in this Section and Institutional Member must form the basis of all trainings, and Training Member Organisations must be required to provide evidence of the ways in which competence is achieved for each of these outcomes, whether training is in the form of a full and basic training, a conversion training, or an AP(EL) procedure.

### 2.1 Child and Young Person Development

2.1.1 Knowledge base and critical evaluation of:

- a) Child Development, including developmental stages and psychological, existential, cognitive, emotional and relational tasks
- b) The specific needs and vulnerability of the child as a result of their unique stage and level of development.
- c) Different forms of abuse and their impact on children's development
- d) The impact of transitions on child development
- e) Issues of attachment and the ways in which attachments form and change
- f) The role of play and self-directed play as a component of child development

2.1.2 Practical skill and competence in:

- a) Working with children of different ages and developmental levels
- b) Recognising the signs of possible developmental delay

### 2.2 Theories and Modalities

2.2.1 Knowledge base and critical evaluation of:

- a) Own therapeutic modality and issues this raises for work with children
- b) Other major modalities
- c) The process of therapeutic change within chosen modality
- d) Strengths and limitations of own modality

2.2.2 Practical skill and competence in a range of age-appropriate practical techniques and processes appropriate to own modality

## **2.3 Context Specific Competencies**

### 2.3.1 Knowledge base and critical evaluation of:

- a) The position of the child or young person in the family or caring network, as well as the wider social context
- b) The key role and value of parents and carers and an appreciation of their support, information and advice needs
- c) The relative importance of peer- and community influence within different cultures
- d) The impact of adult functioning and mental health on the physical, emotional and mental health of children
- e) The roles and functions of the range of services involved with children and the relative effect of involvement of these agencies (education; mental health; social services; relevant voluntary services)
- f) Theories of attribution and range of factors that give rise to the difficulties experienced by young people

### 2.3.2 Practical skill and competence in:

- a) Working with parents
- b) Appropriate management of social and cultural difference and need, both within the therapeutic configuration, in family and in inter-agency work
- c) Work with children in a range of contexts (private practice; schools; NHS; other professional settings)

## **2.4 Therapeutic Communication, Relationship and Process**

### 2.4.1 Knowledge base and critical evaluation of:

- a) The role and importance of body language in communication
- b) Barriers to communication
- c) Dynamics of power in relation to the therapeutic process with children
- d) Transference and counter transference / relational dynamics

### 2.4.2 Practical skill and competence in:

- a) Rapport building and the maintenance of an appropriate professional relationship with children and young people as well as with families and carers
- b) Appropriate emotional warmth, self awareness and personal emotional competence in the management of the therapeutic relationship
- c) Communication with young people in a manner appropriate to their cultural and social context and at their level of need and ability
- d) Appropriate written and oral communication using a range of media including electronic media
- e) Management of therapeutic boundaries of safety and containment
- f) Appropriate use of supervision
- g) Assessment of need and the development of a reasoned and substantiated proposal for treatment
- h) Development of clinical hypotheses based on theoretical principles
- i) Therapeutic decision making / evaluation skills / outcome management
- j) Maintaining the child at the centre of the therapeutic relationship while managing boundary issues
- k) Managing the range of conflicting demands of stakeholders in a manner that safeguards the therapeutic process
- l) Adapting strategies and techniques to suit the age, life stage, experience and context of the child
- m) Appropriate ending

## 2.5 Information Sharing

### 2.5.1 Knowledge base and critical evaluation of:

- a) The range of confidentiality procedures that apply in different contexts
- b) The process whereby the relevance, status and any gaps in information is determined
- c) The implication of the differences between different types of data (e.g. confidential information, personal data and sensitive personal data)
- d) When it is and when it is not necessary to have consent prior to sharing information

### 2.5.2 Practical skill and competence in:

- a) Obtaining information from a range of sources in an appropriate manner
- b) The use of the Common Assessment Framework for Children and young People (CAF), both as a source of information and to record information
- c) Ensuring that information transfers ahead of the child or young person, where appropriate
- d) Provision of timely, appropriate, succinct information to enable other practitioners to deliver their support to the child or young person, parent or carer

## 2.6 Legal and Ethical Issues - Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the child

(This should be read in conjunction with the “Guidelines for Section and Institutional Members for the Development of Codes of Practice and Professional Conduct for Working with Children”)

### 2.6.1 Knowledge base and critical evaluation of:

- a) The concept of competence and the right to self-determination of the child or young person
- b) Rights of parents and carers
- c) The concept of harm and situations potentially harmful to children and young people
- d) The subtleties and signs of abuse in terms of affect and of physical, emotional, mental symptoms, as well as part of the therapeutic communication process (e.g. art and play situations)
- e) The laws and key policy areas related to children, including the most current legislation
- f) Government and local guidance policies and procedure and how they apply in the wider working environment
- g) The role and remit of the Local Safeguarding Children Board
- h) Data protection issues in the context of the therapeutic process
- i) Current legislation and the common law duty of confidentiality and legislation which specifically restricts the disclosure of certain information
- j) The difference between permissive statutory gateways (where a provision permits the sharing of information) and mandatory statutory gateways (where a provision places a duty upon a person to share information) and their implications for sharing information
- k) Variations in child protection procedures, legal frameworks and use of terminology across agencies
- l) Codes of ethics of UKCP and other relevant professional organisations
- m) Ethics relating to the maintenance of professional boundaries
- n) Implications of the use of medicines to treat mental and emotional conditions in children

### 2.6.2 Practical skill and competence in:

- a) Supporting client self determination where appropriate, taking account of health and safety and child protection issues
- b) Formal and informal risk assessment



- c) Making considered judgements about how to act to safeguard and promote a child or young person's welfare
- d) Practical data recording, including the security and the legal requirements and guidance relating to the length of time for which records must be kept

## **2.7 Multi-Agency Working**

### 2.7.1 Knowledge base and critical evaluation of:

- a) Structures of support and operational and consultation processes within the personal working environment
- b) Local agencies and statutory and voluntary organisations involved in child, family and adolescent support work, and the nature of the work that they do
- c) Framework for decisions regarding case referral – both internal and external
- d) The range of professional terms, abbreviations and acronyms used within different agencies

### 2.7.2 Practical skill and competence in:

- a) Forging and sustaining respectful relationships across agencies
- b) Effective communication with other practitioners and professionals on an inter and intra- agency basis
- c) Operating effective cross-agency referral processes

## **2.8 Special Educational Needs; Emotional, Social and Behavioural Difficulties and Issues of Mental Health**

### 2.8.1 Knowledge base and critical evaluation of:

- a) Issues related to aggression, anger and violence
- b) The needs of children and young people with disabilities or special educational needs, including those in relation to transitions
- c) The range of Emotional, Social and Behavioural Difficulties
- d) Psychopathology and mental conditions relating to children
- e) The effects of trauma, neglect and physical and sexual abuse
- f) The physical and psychological implications of the use of medicines to treat mental and emotional conditions in children

### 2.8.2 Practical skill and competence in:

- a) Appropriate response to conflict, aggression, anger and violence within the session, and also more generally in relation to children, young people and families
- b) Practical session and therapeutic process management in cases of Special Educational Needs, Emotional, Social and Behavioural Difficulties, Psychopathology and mental health conditions
- c) Exercising appropriate care in identification, diagnosis and therapeutic work in respect of cases of trauma, neglect and physical and sexual abuse

## **2.9 Supporting Transitions**

### 2.9.1 Knowledge base and critical evaluation of:

- a) The signs of difficulties associated with transitions of all kinds
- b) The likely impact of key transitions, such as divorce, bereavement, family break-up, puberty, move from primary to secondary school, unemployment, and leaving home or care

2.9.2 Practical skill and competence in working with the full range of transition situations, in terms of managing information, providing support and undertaking a therapeutic process

## **2.10 Research and Monitoring**

2.10.1 Knowledge base and critical evaluation of recent and current developments in the therapeutic work with children and families

2.10.2 Practical skill and competence in monitoring and evaluation of therapeutic intervention through the use of appropriate methodologies

## **2.11 Personal Skills and Qualities**

- a) Responsibility, including an awareness of when to involve others, and where and how to get advice and support
- b) Appreciate the impact of the disclosure and management of upsetting situations the ability to access necessary support
- c) Appreciate own value and the value of others in a inter- and intra-agency context
- d) Practical creativity, flexibility, self-motivation, autonomy and ability to work proactively
- e) Skills of self-reflection
- f) Ability to respond professionally to challenge
- g) Maintain records of placements and periods of observation
- h) Ability to manage consequences of applied solutions
- i) Use supervision appropriately including evidence of understanding of the context of the child
- j) Appropriate emotional competency and emotional warmth in relation to children, including the capacity to explore and resolve personal issues arising from engaging in therapeutic work with children.

## **3. Theoretical and Philosophical Practice Base**

Section and Institutional Members should require Training Member Organisations to articulate and rationalise the extent to which they feel it appropriate for applicants to seek AP(E)L for elements of the course which articulate the core philosophical basis of the training process, and where this is deemed relevant, to seek appropriate evidence that this element of the training process is incorporated into the philosophical and practice base of the applicant.



## 4. Qualifying Criteria

All individuals accepted onto a UKCP accredited Child Psychotherapy Training Course by a UKCP Training Member Organisation can apply to have elements of their learning and/or experience recognised where such learning meets the standards set by that course. It is incumbent on the training organisations to determine the process whereby such an application is made, the nature of the evidence required in support of the application, the maximum proportion of the course that can be AP(E)Led, and the procedure whereby the application will be considered, as well as the basis upon which an appeal can be launched against the AP(E)L decision.

Section and Institutional Members should therefore require Member Training Organisations to have in place appropriate procedures for the management of APL applications, including a clearly articulated acceptance and refusal policy.

The intensity of psychotherapeutic work with children makes it particularly important for Section and Institutional Members to address the issue of personal emotional competence, resilience and personal resources. This is particularly challenging due to the nature of the AP(E)L procedure and the probability of a limited relationship between the applicant and the Training Member Organisation. Section and Institutional Members should therefore ensure that the procedure for the consideration of AP(E)L applications is robust, and that it includes clear evidence of the emotional competence of applicants.

## 5. Selection and Admissions Procedures

While it is recognised that in most cases applications for AP(E)L will come from the existing students, where applications for admission onto an accredited training course either contain a substantial element of AP(E)L, or is made on the basis of an AP(E)L claim, Section and Institutional Members should ensure that Training Member Organisations apply the approved selection and admission process, as detailed in “Guidelines for Section and Institutional Members for the Development of Training Standards in Child Psychotherapy: 4 Year Training Courses”.

## 6. Diversity and Equality

Section and Institutional Members should ensure that Organisations apply the approved procedures to ensure equality and support diversity at all levels, and that AP(E)L procedure for UKCP Member Organisations is congruent with their ethos and practice and with the standards espoused by UKCP.

## 7. Training Process

Section and Institutional Members should ensure that Organisations develop a clearly articulated AP(E)L policy document in which it clearly states those elements of the training process for which it is prepared to accept AP(E)L, as well as the proportion of its approved training process against which such an application can be considered. Section and Institutional Members should help Training Member Organisations to develop an AP(E)L process that is equitable while ensuring that standards in all areas of the training process are maintained.

## 8. AP(E)L Procedure

Section and Institutional Members should ensure that Organisations define and publish details of their AP(E)L procedure. These should include:

- Conditions under which AP(E)L may be considered
- The nature of the evidence required for an AP(E)L claim
- The composition and qualifications of the body which will consider AP(E)L applications
- Timescales within which applications will be processed
- Appeals procedures
- Costs associated with an AP(E)L