

UK Council for Psychotherapy Standards of Education and Training

Guidelines for Sections for the Development of Training Standards in Child Psychotherapy: Full training

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

1. Introduction

This document outlines a framework for Sections who wish to develop Training Standards for courses that could lead to UKCP Registration as Child Psychotherapist. It is 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.

This document forms one of the core UKCP policies for standards of education and training, and stands alongside the minimum UKCP Training Standards for Psychotherapy, overarching all UKCP Modality Sections.

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

Section Training Standards Documents should integrate their unique modality based processes and needs with the requirements outlined below. Initial approval of courses and subsequent inspection processes will be based on these Section Training Standards Documents.

Training Requirements must be based on a minimum curriculum as defined by the Learning Outcomes specified in Section 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 & Behavioural Difficulties & Issues of Mental Health
- Supporting Transitions
- Research and Monitoring
- Personal Skills & Qualities.

Additionally, Sections will need to specify training requirements based on modality specific needs and processes, UKCP guidance documents and government guidance and statutory regulation in the following areas:

- Theoretical and Philosophical Rationale of the Course
- Entry Requirements
- Selection and Admission Procedures
- Diversity and Equality
- Length of Training
- APEL Procedures
- Required Policy Documents
- Training Process, including - specification of student / tutor contact hours - written work and assessment - observation studies - clinical placement settings - client age groups - multi-disciplinary experience - experience of mental health settings - personal development and / or personal therapy - supervision

Documentation required from Training Member Organisations must fall within existing Section requirements, 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 Sections 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, Sections will need to provide a sound and substantiated rationale in respect of training requirements (i.e. number of training hours and the way in which evidence of meeting learning outcomes is gathered).

Additionally, Sections 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 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 post-qualifying course, or an APEL 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 & 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 & 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 & 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 & 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 & Ethical Issues - Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the child

(Should be read in conjunction with Guidelines for Sections 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 & 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 & Behavioural Difficulties & 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 & 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 & 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 & evaluation of therapeutic intervention through the use of appropriate methodologies.

2.11. Personal Skills & 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 Rationale of the Course

This must be a clearly articulated definition of the philosophical and theoretical rationale of the course. A coherent theoretical and philosophical approach must be reflected in all aspects of the course.

4. Entry Requirements

In line with UKCP standards, entry is at a postgraduate level of competence. Sections should specify standards and procedures whereby Member Training Organisations should assess applicants' ability to undertake training at postgraduate level. These should normally include one or more of the following entry requirements:

- An undergraduate degree
- A relevant professional training
- References
- Enhanced police check (essential)
- Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL)
- Accreditation of Prior Certificated Learning (APCL).

Additionally, Sections should require Member Training Organisations to have in place appropriate procedures for the recruitment, acceptance and refusal of applicants, including published criteria for acceptance and feedback, and recommendations to those who are not accepted.

The intensity of psychotherapeutic work with children makes it particularly important for Sections to address the issue of personal emotional competence, resilience and personal resources. It is recommended that organisations be required to define the qualities that they consider essential for a child psychotherapy trainee, and that this be part of any advertising material.

5. Selection and Admission Procedures

Sections should require Training Member Organisations to outline Admission Procedures including:

- Number of places on the course
- Interviewing procedure

- Selection procedure, including reasons for refusal.

6. Diversity and Equality

Sections should support Training Member Organisations to develop and implement a process to ensure equality of admissions and to encourage diversity commensurate with that found in society at large. Additionally, Sections should encourage Training Member Organisations to ensure that the skills and competencies relating to diversity and equality in work with children and young people form part of the ethos and ethical framework of both the training process and the organisation itself.

7. APEL Procedures

Sections should clarify levels of entry and require Member Training Organisations to specify both the conditions under which Accreditation for Prior Learning (APL) and Accreditation for Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) apply and the procedures by which such claims are processed. In all cases, the Learning Outcomes specified in Section 2 of this document must form the basis for training standards and AP(E)L procedures. UKCP Registration as Child Psychotherapist is in all cases dependent on the evidenced achievement of these learning outcomes. Post Qualifying Courses and AP(E)L should take account of the UKCP guidelines developed for these purposes.

8. Required Policy Documents

Training Member Organisations must have the following written policy statements in accordance with the relevant and current legislation and in keeping with UKCP standards:

- Equal Opportunities/Anti Discriminatory Practice
- Code of Practice and Ethics for Child Psychotherapy
- Complaints Procedure for Child Psychotherapists
- Complaints Procedure for Trainees
- Health and Safety
- CPD.

9. Training Process

The training process should be based on the minimum curriculum as defined by the Learning Outcomes in Section 2 of this document, as met within the modality specific needs and processes of each section. Sections should therefore provide a substantiated rationale for the training requirement levels as set in the following areas (in each case account should be taken of UKCP Psychotherapy with Children Policy and Guidance Documents where available):

9.1. Student / tutor contact hours

These should be specified on the basis of the integration of the minimum curriculum with Section and modality specific needs, and should clearly define Sections' definition of 'contact hours'.

9.2. Written work and Assessment

Assessment should be in the form of both formative and summative feedback and should include an evaluation of the personal qualities of trainees as these relate to their competence to practice. The nature of

the assessment process should be clearly articulated, and should include details of the way in which individual achievement of learning outcomes will be assessed.

The assessment process should cover the following areas of competence:

- Personal qualities and emotional competence as relevant to therapeutic practice
- Achievement of specified learning outcomes
- Practical competence and skill as a child psychotherapist.

9.3. Observation Studies

This relates to the observation of children and young people, and Sections should require Member Training Organisations to provide a modality based rationale for the nature and length of required observation hours.

9.4. Clinical Placement Settings

The number of clinical placement hours must be specified in accordance with Section principles for best practice and the specific needs of Children and Young People. In view of the requirements outlined under points 9.5, 9.6 and 9.7 below, it is recommended that students with no prior experience of working with children will need at least 450 supervised clinical hours in order to meet all learning outcomes appropriately.

9.5. Client Age Groups

The minimum curriculum specifies experience of working with a range of age groups. It is therefore necessary for Sections to define the way in which Member Training Organisations ensure the achievement of this.

9.6. Multi-disciplinary experience

Information sharing and intra- and inter-disciplinary co-operation is key to successful work with children. Sections should therefore specify the way in which Member Training Organisations ensure student competence in this area.

9.7. Experience of Mental Health Settings

Sections need to specify the way in which Member Training Organisations require trainees to obtain experience of Mental Health Settings.

9.8. Personal Development and / or Personal Therapy

Personal development, process and therapy requirements should be defined in line with UKCP, Section and modality practices and requirements. Account should be taken of the special needs of children and young people in setting these requirements, including the need for particular skills in working with the relational dynamics involved, the need for an in-depth awareness of transference processes and the potential emotional cost of working in areas of great need, distress and deprivation. The extent to which work with children may re-activate individual childhood experiences must also be taken into account. Trainees must be encouraged to enquire into and work with any unresolved issues relating to their own relationship with issues of dependency and the dynamics of power.

9.9. Supervision

Supervision requirements and the ratio of client contact hours to supervision hours should be set with reference to the UKCP Standards for Supervision with Children.

10. Organisational documentation

UKCP Standards for Training Member Organisations apply, and should include:

10.1. Organisation Background

- Name of the institution and the relevant officials, for example senior administrators.
- Name of the head of the institution.
- Relevant history of the institution.
- Management structure of the institution – roles, lines of responsibility and communication.
- Description of the premises used.

10.2. Course Details

- Title of the course.
- Degree conferring body if relevant.
- Duration of the course.
- Name of the course director.
- Names of staff members and roles (Staff member CVs required).
- Names of visiting lecturers (CVs required).
- Name(s) of External Examiner(s) (CVs required).
- Details of course assessment, moderation procedure, appeals procedure, external examination process and board of studies.
- Professional registration criteria and requirements.

10.3. Resource Provision

- Accommodation within the Institution.
- Administration: - Fee and Budget administration - Application processing - Record keeping - Placement advice - Specialist resources - Computing provision where appropriate.
- Library facilities.
- Course Manual/Handbook.