

University Training College (UTC)

Standards of Education and Training in Child Psychotherapy

1. Introduction

The College includes University psychotherapy programmes which represent a broad range of modalities. University programmes are all subject to rigorous quality assurance processes within their host university. They share a commitment to the highest professional as well as academic standards. These programmes draw on, and contribute to, a wide range of research traditions within the fields of counselling and psychotherapy.

These Standards of Education and Training conform to UKCP's minimum Core Criteria as stipulated in the UKCP Standards for Education and Training for Child Psychotherapy (2008) and the UKCP's Standards of Education and Training (2012) document. They have also been written in reference to QAA's subject benchmarks in Counselling and Psychotherapy. They incorporate the UTC Standards of Education and Training for adult psychotherapists where relevant.

The title of Child Psychotherapist, without a descriptor is a generalist qualification title, and denotes a competence to work with the full range of ages in contexts of relevance.

Descriptors are both indicators of specialism and of 'limitation', in that their use denotes the qualification to work with a special age group or within a particular context. In this document the core curriculum for Child Psychotherapy is defined first, followed by relevant definitions and additions for different descriptors and titles. The use of titles and descriptors are therefore based on the achievement of specific knowledge and competencies. The changing and /or adding of descriptors can therefore only occur when the new competencies have been evidenced via formal learning or AP(E)L. This acknowledges both the specialism implied by the descriptor, and any resulting limitation in another area.

2. Guiding Principals

The following over-arching Guiding Principles have been agreed:

- Programmes should recognise the existence of different psychotherapies, based on different theories, and should promote respectful understanding of differences and similarities between theories.
- Programmes should be theoretically informed and practise based.
- Programmes should be related to clinical work in occupational settings.
- Programmes should provide transparency and accountability in their assessment processes.
- Programmes should operate within an ethical, equal opportunities and diversity framework.

In addition the following Guiding Principles are of particular relevance to Child Psychotherapy

- 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

3. Entry Requirements

3.1. Entry is at postgraduate level of competence. University based Psychotherapy programmes should have in place appropriate procedures for assessing applicant's ability to undertake such a programme. These should normally incorporate the following:

- An undergraduate degree (essential)
- A relevant professional qualification (as relevant)
- Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (as relevant)
- Accreditation of Learning (as relevant)
- Disclosure and barring service clearance (essential)

3.2. Applicants will be assessed in relation to the following qualities:

- A capacity for critical reflection and self-directed learning
- An ability to listen and respond with compassion and respect
- An awareness of prejudice and the ability to respond openly to issues of race, gender, age, sexual orientation, class, disability, ethnic, spiritual/religious and cultural differences, and diversity.
- A capacity to reflect on their own potential areas of prejudice and discrimination.
- Self-awareness and a commitment to self-development.

3.3. Selection Procedures

Programmes shall have in place:

- Published selection criteria
- Robust assessment processes for the selection of applicants. Interviews will normally take place with at least 2 members of staff.
- Equal opportunities policies and procedures to ensure that applicants are not discriminated against with regard to race, gender, class, age, sexual orientation, disability and cultural differences.

The intensity of psychotherapeutic work with children makes it particularly important for professional programmes 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.

4. Minimum Curriculum

The Learning Outcomes detailed in this section must form the basis of all psychotherapeutic programmes, and Programmes need to provide evidence of the ways in which competence is achieved for each of these outcomes, whether the programme in the form of a full and basic qualification, a post qualification option, or an APEL procedure.

ACCREDITED PROGRAMMES MUST:

- Lead to a postgraduate award in a psychotherapeutic subject by a UK University.
- Provide a programme normally over a 4 year period (this may include an introductory year).
- Train students to the level appropriate for independent practice as Child psychotherapists.

THE COURSE MUST LEAD TO A METHOD OF PSYCHOTHERAPY WHICH:

- Is well defined
- Has a sound theoretical basis
- Is recognised by UTC
- Is research based
- Integrates theory and practice.

CHILD PSYCHOTHERAPY LEARNING OUTCOMES

Courses must address the following outcomes and practical competencies:

4.1 Child and Young Person Development

4.1.1 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 attachments form and change
- f) The role of play and self-directed play as a component of child development

4.1.2 Practical skill and competence in:

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

4.2. Theories and Modalities

4.2.1 Knowledge base and critical evaluation of:

- a) The study of the theory and practice of psychotherapy with specific reference to children from assessment to termination, including:
- b) A model of the person and mind.

- c) A model of gendered and culturally influenced human growth and development.
- d) A model of human change and ways in which change can be facilitated.
- e) An extensive literature which includes critiques of models being taught.
- f) The philosophical underpinnings of models being taught.
- g) An understanding of a broad range of psychotherapeutic approaches.
- h) The process of therapeutic change within chosen modality.
- i) Strengths and limitations of own modality

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

4.3. Context Specific Competencies

4.3.1 Knowledge base and critical evaluation of:

- a) An understanding of the social context in which psychotherapy takes place
- b) The position of the child or young person in the family or caring network, as well as the wider social context
- c) The key role and value of parents and carers and an appreciation of their support, information and advice needs
- d) The relative importance of peer- and community influence within different cultures
- e) The impact of adult functioning and mental health on the physical, emotional and mental health of children
- f) 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)
- g) Theories of attribution and range of factors that give rise to the difficulties experienced by young people

4.3.2 Practical skill and competence in:

- a) Working with parents
- b) Appropriate management of 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)

4.4. Therapeutic Communication, Relationship and Process

4.4.1 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

4.4.2 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

4.5. Information Sharing

4.5.1 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

4.5.2 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

4.6. Legal & Ethical Issues - Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the child

4.6.1 Knowledge base and critical evaluation of:

- a) An understanding of the role of diversity and equal opportunities in the context of psychotherapeutic work

- b) The concept of competence and the right to self-determination of the child or young person
- c) Rights of parents and carers
- d) The concept of harm and situations potentially harmful to children and young people
- e) 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)
- f) The laws and key policy areas related to children, including the most current legislation
- g) Government and local guidance policies and procedure and how they apply in the wider working environment
- h) The role and remit of the Local Safeguarding Children Board
- i) Data protection issues in the context of the therapeutic process
- j) Current legislation and the common law duty of confidentiality and legislation which specifically restricts the disclosure of certain information
- k) 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
- l) Variations in child protection procedures, legal frameworks and use of terminology across agencies
- m) Codes of ethics of UKCP & other relevant professional organisations
- n) Ethics relating to the maintenance of professional boundaries
- o) Implications of the use of medicines to treat mental and emotional conditions in children

4.6.2 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

4.7. Multi-Agency Working

4.7.1 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

4.7.2

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

4.8. Special Educational Needs; Emotional, Social & Behavioural Difficulties & Issues of Mental Health

4.8.1 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) An understanding of psychopathology and complex presentations in psychotherapy.
- e) Psychopathology and mental conditions relating to children
- f) The effects of trauma, neglect and physical and sexual abuse
- g) The physical and psychological implications of the use of medicines to treat mental and emotional conditions in children 4.8.2

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

4.9. Supporting Transitions

4.9.1 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

4.9.2 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

4.10. Research and Monitoring

4.10.1 Knowledge base and critical evaluation of:

- a) Recent and current developments in the therapeutic work with children and families
- b) The relevance of studies and research findings in human development, psychopathology, sexuality, and ethics.
- c) Different approaches to research into psychotherapy practice.
- d) Evidence based practice of both open ended and time limited psychotherapeutic work.

4.10.2 Practical skill and competence in

- a) Monitoring & evaluation of therapeutic intervention from assessment to termination through the use of appropriate methodologies
- b) The capacity to critically understand a research report in relevant clinical and professional journals.
- c) The capacity to evaluate the significance of research findings with respect to their own practice.
- d) A working knowledge of research findings in relation to assessment for therapeutic intervention, and a capacity to critique these.
- e) A working knowledge of research findings regarding psychotherapy process and their implications for practice.
- f) The development of the skills necessary to engage critically with psychotherapy research evidence and the ability to design and implement a research project.

4.11. 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
- e) Ability to respond professionally to challenge
- f) Maintain records of placements and periods of observation
- g) Ability to manage consequences of applied solutions
- h) Use supervision appropriately including evidence of understanding of the context of the child
- i) 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.

The unique needs and vulnerability of children must be borne in mind at all times, and Programme Leaders need to ensure that practitioners who seek professional registration for work in this area maintain the highest standards of professional competence and personal skill

Programme Leaders 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 programme processes, and to ensure that they are able to support registered practitioners in the management of such changes.

5. Programme Requirements

5.1 Student- Tutor Contact Time

Courses should include a minimum of 600 student tutor contact hours, excluding supervision and personal therapy hours.

5.2. Observation Studies

Courses should include the requirement for child psychotherapy students to undertake infant and child observations over two year years of their studies. This should include sustained infant observation for a period of at least 1 year. Further observations should include children of different ages, tracing a child in different contexts and across different age ranges. Observations should normally take place at weekly intervals, and should take account of the modality of the programme.

5.3. Clinical Placement Settings

Student Child Psychotherapists will need to undertake a minimum of 450 hours supervised clinical placement during the period of study in order to meet all the learning outcomes appropriately. Of these at least 300 must be with children and adolescents in line with the registration descriptor.

Students must undertake their clinical placement in more than one type of setting, to include at least two of the following:

- Schools
- CAHMS or other NHS setting
- Voluntary sector
- Specialist placement (e.g. hospice)
- Local authority multi-disciplinary placement

For the general descriptor, students must demonstrate competence with the full client age range up to age 18.

5.4. Client Age Groups

The minimum curriculum for Child Psychotherapists specifies experience of working with a range of age groups. It is therefore necessary for Child Psychotherapists to demonstrate clinical competence with children and young people up to the age of 18.

5.5. Multi-disciplinary Experience

Information sharing and intra- and inter-disciplinary co-operation is key to successful work with children. Programmes must ensure that students obtain a thorough grounding in both the theory and practice of multi-agency working.

5.6. Experience of Child Mental Health Settings

The curriculum should include the opportunity for students to gain familiarity with the operation of statutory and other mental health service provision. Programmes should specify how learning and experience is achieved. A mental health placement is a highly desirable way for the achievement of this. Programmes should specify how such placements are supported.

5.7. Supervision

The supervised practice of psychotherapy is central to all UTC accredited professional programmes. This requirement is achieved through individual practice as a candidate in training supported by an appropriately trained, experienced and qualified supervisor. This may occur either through appropriately supported and supervised independent practice or in a practice placement or through a combination of these approved by the relevant University programme. Supervision of Child Psychotherapists must be in accordance with the UKCP 2008 Guidelines for the supervision of Child therapists.

Supervisors should be UKCP, UPCA or BPC registered Child Psychotherapists, or equivalent, and trained in a modality congruent with that of the programme being undertaken.

Programmes must provide and operate an effective system for approving and monitoring all placements and supervisors for individual clinical practice.

Consistent with their modality philosophy, programmes should stipulate whether their requirements with regard to long and short term work and clearly define these terms to candidates.

Supervision must be at a ratio of 1:4 and 1:6 as relevant, and be arranged in accordance with the requirements outlined in the UKCP Standards for Supervision with Children

At least half of this supervision requirement should be on a one to one basis. Where group supervision is delivered in groups of 4 or less, the ratio may be counted in the same manner as for individual supervision. Groups of between 5 and 8 can be counted at half this ratio.

5.8. Personal Psychotherapy

Personal Therapy is an essential aspect of the professional development of Child Psychotherapist. Students need to develop personal understanding of the particular relational dynamics involved in working with children and young people, the need for awareness of transference processes and the potential emotional cost of working in areas of great need, distress and deprivation. Additionally, work with children may re-activate individual childhood experiences. 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.

Programmes shall include arrangements to ensure that candidates can identify and manage appropriately their personal involvement in, and contribution to, the process of the psychotherapy approach they practice. This will normally be achieved through the experience of personal psychotherapy delivered by a UKCP, UPCA or BPC registered psychotherapist, or equivalent, and will not normally be less than 40 hours per year for four years.

6. Assessment

- a) Throughout the course the candidate's clinical and professional progress will be adequately assessed according to the guidelines of the university concerned.
- b) All university based programmes will have external examiners monitoring the quality and fairness of assessment criteria and feedback.
- c) Tutors involved with programmes should avoid, wherever possible, the holding of dual roles in relation to the candidate in training (e.g. supervisor and trainer or personal psychotherapist and trainer).
- d) All university programmes have published appeals procedures in the event of disagreement over assessment.
- e) Assessment procedures will be designed in order to ensure that candidates can demonstrate fitness to practise as a Child Psychotherapist.
- f) Programmes should ensure that handbooks clearly describe the assessment requirements for progress within and between each stage of the program.

7. Diversity and Equality

Programme teams should demonstrate their commitment to processes that ensure equality of admissions and to encourage diversity commensurate with that found in society at large. Additionally, programme teams should provide evidence of the ways in which they seek 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 their training process and their organisational structure.

In line with UKCP Standards of Education and Training, all programmes should include:

- A broad understanding of some of the key systemic hurdles affecting those, but not exclusively those, covered by the Equality Act 2010
- The contemporary and significant discriminatory discourses throughout the programme
- Raising awareness of conscious and unconscious bias
- Equipping students and trainees to work with clients across the diversity spectrum
- Equipping students and trainees to engage with their own fears and prejudices, and those affecting clients, re difference
- Arrangements to ensure that the students and trainees can identify and manage appropriately their personal involvement and contribution to the processes of the psychotherapies that they practice

8. Qualifications and Registration

- a) Programme documentation shall specify whether qualification coincides with recognition of candidates as eligible for Registration by UKCP.
- b) Where qualification and registration do not coincide, organisations are to specify what further professional development is required for registration. Additionally, documentation must clearly and explicitly describe the difference between the achievement of an award in child psychotherapy and the right to use the UKCP title Child Psychotherapist, which is only possible following professional registration.
- c) The definition of such further professional development might include considerations relating to the nature of supervision and the range, quantity and intensity of practice and/or study.
- d) Where qualification and Registration do not coincide, the process of assessment of readiness for Registration shall correspond in general to the requirements of Section 3 above.
- e) Programme Providers must demonstrate how the learning outcomes associated with their accredited courses(s) support graduates in meeting the UKCP's and UPCA's standards of proficiency for registration.

9. Child Psychotherapist (Adolescent Psychotherapist)

The descriptor “Adolescent Psychotherapist” is used where the course and subsequent practice is exclusively with children aged 12 to 18. Programmes for Adolescent Psychotherapists must meet all the criteria for Child Psychotherapists, with the placement focussing on young people.

10. Post Qualifying Training

Post qualifying programmes in child psychotherapy leading to entry onto the UKCP child register refers to programmes specifically designed for UKCP registered adult psychotherapists, who wish to achieve registration as child psychotherapists.

Entry onto the Child Register involves the achievement of all the standards articulated above. Programmes which aim to deliver post qualifying programmes need to demonstrate how students meet these standards and achieve the specified learning outcomes.

Formal post qualifying programmes must meet all the requirements for Child Psychotherapy and must include the minimum of a 2 year taught component, and incorporating:

- 300 hours student-tutor contact time
- 300 clinical supervision hours with children at a minimum ratio of 6:1.
- Personal therapy of 40 hours per year, totalling 80 hours over 2 years
- Infant and young person observations as specified for child psychotherapists 60 hour child and adolescent mental health placement

10. Accreditation of Prior Learning

Programmes must specify the extent to which accreditation of prior experiential and / or certificated learning can be applied in respect of individuals who wish to gain entry onto the UKCP child register. Normally no more than 50 percent of any training should be achieved through accreditation of prior learning.

Programmes must articulate a clear and equitable AP(E)L procedure that standards in all areas of the training process are maintained.

Programmes must 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