

The Service

The Low-cost Counselling Service of Dartford, Gravesham and Swanley Mind is delivered by qualified and trainee counsellors who volunteer to take on this work. We currently have 28 counsellors, providing a service to around 75 clients at any one time.

The service is available to clients by arrangement in the daytime, evening and at weekends, at our office base in Dartford, and at venues in Swanley and Gravesend.

What kind of Counselling is available?

Our counsellors, both male and female, come from different walks of life and different cultural backgrounds, and we currently can offer counselling in English, French, Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi, Marathi and British Sign Language. We have also created a special fund to provide interpreters, if needed.

Most of our counsellors have been trained in a number of approaches to counselling and will adapt to the needs of the client. This is called an Integrative Approach.

We strive to match the needs of the client with the skills and approach of the particular counsellor.

We agree the number of sessions with each client, and review this during the counselling process: we do not set rigid boundaries around maximum number of sessions as is the rule in many other counselling organisations.

How do I refer?

Self referrals, or referrals from any professional, are made to the office usually by phone. We will then contact you to discuss your needs, to explain the charging system, and to inform you of how long you can expect to wait before counselling will start. As this is a popular service, there is sometimes a waiting list. Sometimes we might suggest another service of DGS Mind is more appropriate to your needs.

When you are allocated a counsellor they will be in touch with you to arrange the first session.

So, how much do you charge?

Our policy is that clients will be charged as follows: where clients are unwaged the charge is £8.00 per session, and where they receive a salary, at £14.00 or more per session. This will be discussed during the first telephone contact.

This service is separate from the Psychological Services that we provide via the NHS, and which are free. The Low-cost Counselling Service is designed for people who have counselling needs not able to be met through the NHS service, or who wish to work further on issues once their NHS-allocated therapy is completed.

We also provide an Anger Management course, where participants work in a group for 10 sessions. This is charged at £10 per session.

What is expected of clients?

Clients will be charged for each session that is booked for them. If you do not turn up to a booked session, we expect you to pay the next time for the session you missed. If you are going to be away on a planned holiday, we need 4 weeks' notice of this in advance.

We also expect clients to complete a feedback form at the end of the counselling, so we have some way of knowing how useful the service has been to you.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is a key part of the counselling relationship, and counsellors are trained to keep confidential the content of counselling sessions. However, from time to time a counsellor might have serious concerns about the safety of the client, or others. In these rare circumstances, it is appropriate for the counsellor to discuss this with us. All this is explained in the counselling agreement signed by clients.

For further information contact:

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Aims of the low-cost counselling service:

To offer a high quality, low-cost counselling service. Minimum age of clients is 15 years.

To provide clients with space and time to work with an individual counsellor to meet their individual needs.

To create positive changes in clients' lives by addressing specific problems, identifying ways of coping, developing personal insight, understanding thoughts and feelings, and considering the implications of actions that may be taken.

To encourage clients to make appropriate use of other services provided by DGS Mind or other agencies.

To provide a counselling service which is also appropriate to the needs of people with significant mental health issues.

What clients said about the service:

"The counselling has given me the help to heal a great deal of sadness. I've been on a wonderful, albeit painful journey of self-discovery. "

"enabled me to get my life back"

"I would like to say how over the years I have seen quite a few therapists/ counsellors and none of them come close to how [you have] been a massive help to me"

"always come away feeling calmer and more in control"

"excellent service"

DGS Mind provides other services in a variety of locations in Dartford, Gravesham & Swanley:

Community Services:

A wide range of open sessions, activity sessions, Coping with Life courses, self-development and support groups, mindfulness course, recovery groups, mentoring, individual assistance, assisted volunteering, vocational and employment help.

Psychological Therapies

Provided on behalf of the NHS: Counselling, CBT, Psychoeducation, Guided Self-Help, Group Work. Self-referral or referral via GP.

Supported Housing:

Long and short-term housing.

Education:

Placements for social work students, mental health nurse trainees and trainee counsellors. Mental health training sessions in various settings.

All our leaflets are available in large print, Braille, or other formats, on request.

In DGS Mind we are committed to continuously improve our services through quality review and service user feedback. .

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www.dgsmind.co.uk

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Low-cost Counselling Services