



# **Counsellor Recruitment & Training Pack for Applicants**

**(N. Ireland Applicants)**

**April 2024**

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## **Introduction**

Dear applicant,

This pack has been compiled to help you navigate the process for applying for a place on the Certificate in Relationship Counselling (CRC) course and to understand the training on offer.

The CRC is planned to start in April 2024 with the first training weekend held on the weekend of 19th & 21st April in Tobar Mhuire, Crossgar. We will be selecting applicants from both Northern Ireland and England. The Selection Day process is essential part of the recruitment process.

The Selection Days for N. Ireland applicants will take place on Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2024 at 10am. .

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

With best wishes,

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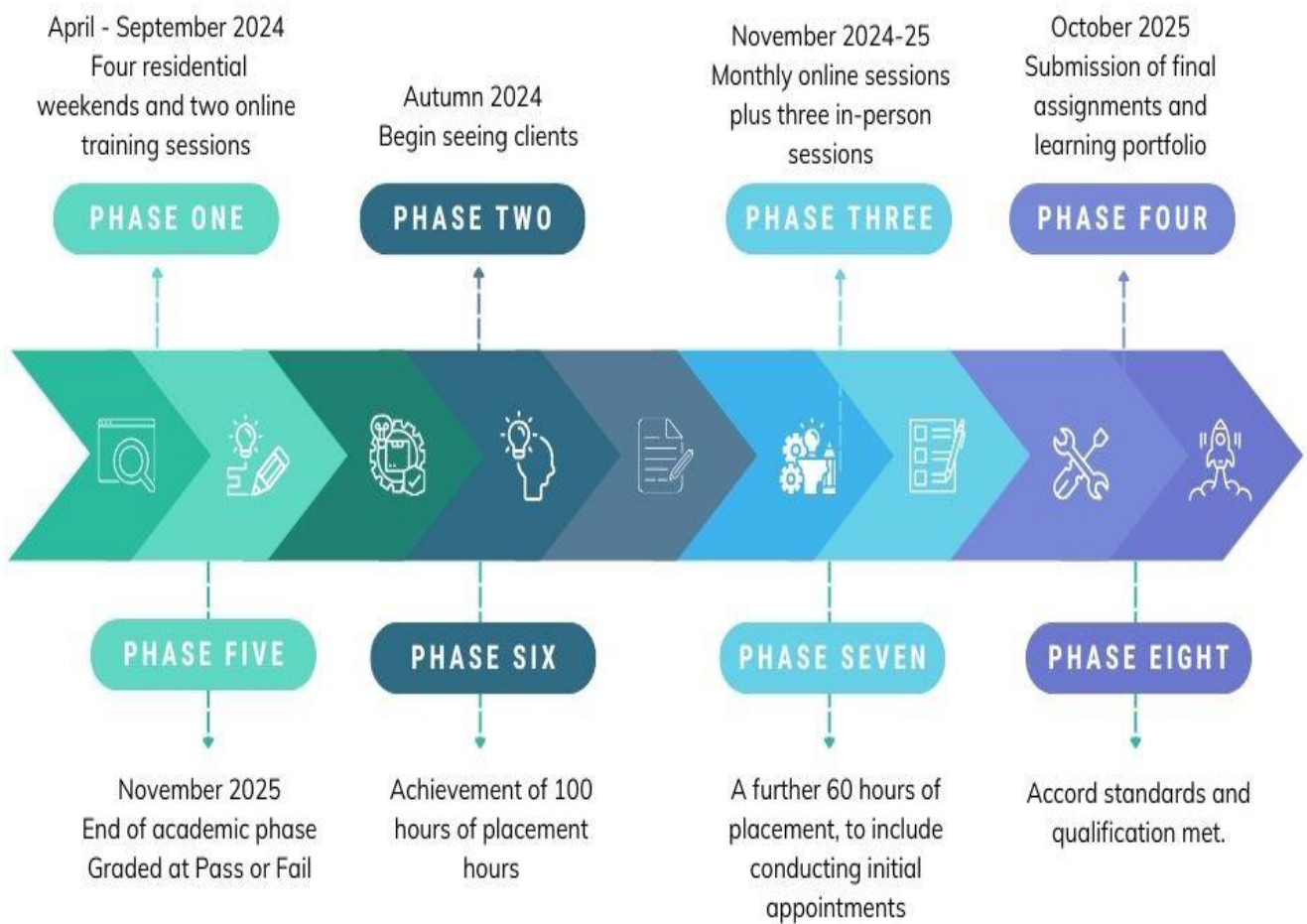
## **Certificate in Relationship Counselling**

ACCORD NI, in partnership with Marriage Care UK, is offering a **Certificate in Relationship Counselling (CRC)**. This initial training course offers an opportunity to train to become a counsellor with us, without having any prior training or experience.

### **Course Overview**

The Certificate in Relationship Counselling (CRC) training commencing in 2024 consists of 19 months of academic content delivery and assignments, and 160 hours of counselling delivered via webcam and face to face. The aim is for trainee counsellors to start their 160 hours of working with clients in Autumn 2024, after the fourth residential weekend. This is subject to progress, and the final sign-off to begin seeing clients is decided by tutors and supervisors. Trainees will be required to offer webcam and in-person sessions. To meet BACP standards, at least 51% of the first 100 placement hours will need to be face to face sessions. Trainees will work with individuals and couples, but at least 60% of counselling hours should be with couples.

## Training Journey Process



## **Likely profile**

The likely candidate profile will be someone who can subscribe to and share ACCORD NI's ethos and values and who like to offer some of their time on a voluntary basis. Initially, this would be for their training and thereafter working with our clients, including attending mandatory supervision sessions, their continued development through CPD, and attending virtual and in-person events. They will have an interest in people and be curious about what helps to make a relationship work. We are looking for those who demonstrate empathy and who are non-judgemental. They may well be the sort of person their friends go to with a problem. They will enjoy helping others to help themselves and will possibly work in a caring profession already. They will be looking to develop their skills to make a real difference and be prepared to make the commitment required (see details below). It is not a requirement to have done any prior counselling training. However, short courses in basic counselling and listening skills are readily available and you might find one of these a useful way to prepare for this training.

**Commitment involved:**

Attendance at all residential weekends and online training is mandatory. We do however understand that sometimes things come up that are unavoidable. If your attendance falls below 90% in either year then you will not be able to proceed with the course. Acceptable reasons for missing sessions will be outlined in the course handbook. Permission to miss a session, or reasons for having missed one, must be sought or given from the Head of Relationship Counselling. Responsibility for catching up on any work missed rests with you, but please be aware that not all input lends itself well to catch up. The residential weekends are an example. In such cases the missed session would mean that you could not proceed further.

Supervision: a minimum of 1.5 hours per month.

**Other details:**

- The continued place on the course is dependent on an Access NI check which will be requested prior to starting work with clients.
- To be able to take part in the online elements of the course and to deliver online counselling sessions, a degree of computer literacy is required, including an ability to use and connect to Zoom. For this purpose, a laptop or computer (rather than phone or tablet) is considered essential, as is stable internet connection and a quiet, private place to work.

**Counselling Commitment**

As a guide, we ask ACCORD NI counsellors to commit to delivering a minimum of 60 hours of counselling per annum, of which at least 50% (30 hours) could be delivered via webcam. The CRC trainees will have to complete a placement of 160 hours in order to qualify.

## Cost

The training is being offered **free of charge** thanks to the contribution of our volunteer training body, funding from the Northern Bishops Diocesan funding and a contribution from couples who attend the ACCORD NI marriage preparation programme. However, CRC candidates will be asked to support the costs associated with selection and the residential element of the training as follows:

- A non-refundable deposit of £200 will be payable within 14 days of selection in order to secure the place;
- Selected candidates will also be invited to set up a monthly standing order donation to go towards the cost of their accommodation and meals at the residential elements of the course. We are suggesting £40 per month (plus gift aid) for the duration of the training course. This is a donation, **not a fee**, and as such is at the discretion of the individual. We do not want anyone to be excluded based on their ability to pay and equally, if someone feels they can donate more, that would be very welcome.
- The residential element of the training is not optional.



## Overview of the selection process

Prospective candidates should apply via the online application form which can be found on our website [www.accordni.com](http://www.accordni.com) or by clicking this link: <https://publuu.com/flip-book/304932/706671>

Once the application has been received and initially assessed, the next step is for the candidate to be interviewed locally (via Zoom or in person), by Accord NI Regional Office and your local Accord NI Chairperson. Accord NI centres are listed in the application form. If, following that interview, they are considered suitable, a centre recommendation will be made, and they will then go forward for regional selection.

## Regional Selection Day

This will take place on Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2024 at:  
ACCORD N. Ireland Catholic Marriage Care Service CLG  
St Marys Church, Chapel Lane, Grotto Entrance, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, 68 Berry Street, Belfast, BT1 1FJ

**Please note: We cannot accept applicants on the CRC course if the applicant will be involved in another counselling or therapeutic course elsewhere during the training.**

**On the selection day** applicants will go through a series of interviews with selectors to explore their experience of relationships, their values and their personal growth and development. They will also spend part of the day in a group, where they will be observed doing some basic roleplay and taking part in topical discussions. They are scored from A – D across the different elements of the day, with only those scoring B and above sure of a place.

If selected, they will then be offered a place and asked to pay the £200 non-refundable deposit to secure it for them. A continued place on the course is dependent on an Access NI check which will be requested prior to starting work with clients.

## Starting Counselling

The trainees will be able to start counselling after the fourth residential weekend, subject to progress and providing their tutors and supervisor think they are ready. Once they have successfully completed all the elements of the course including the 160-hour placement, they will be signed off as having completed the training and will have their trainee status removed. We would expect most of the trainees to complete the course by early 2025. However, in practice, each trainee will finish the course in their own time.

## Is there any chance I might not pass the CRC?

As the candidates must pass all elements of the course to achieve the certificate, there is potential for some to fail to meet the set standard. Those who do struggle to pass usually have problems with the marked assignment. If this is the case, there is the potential for them to be awarded a certificate of attendance instead. Each case will be considered on an individual basis and will be awarded at the discretion of the MCKUK Head of Relationship Counselling and the ACCORD NI Regional Director.

## Course Dates

For the full course structure please see Appendix 1 & 2.

## **Appendices**

### **Qualified Marriage and Relationship Counsellor Role Description**

#### **1. Responsible to**

Locally they are responsible to the Northern Ireland Regional Director, who has clinical responsibility for all counselling practitioners.

#### **2. Purpose of Role**

To offer Accord NI marriage and relationship counselling to couples or individuals.

#### **3. Key tasks and responsibilities**

To offer a minimum of 60 voluntary counselling hours annually at a time when clients are available (usually in the evening). A minimum of 50% of sessions should be offered via webcam.

To be familiar with and abide by the BACP Ethical Framework and Accord NI policies

To abide by Accord NI's policy for client contributions.

To attend regular supervision and CPD as provided by ACCORD NI and Marriage Care UK

To attend planning meetings and centre meetings as appropriate.

To maintain up-to-date records by regularly updating the counsellor portal (Salesforce)

#### **4. Person Specification**

An enthusiasm for supporting adult relationships.

Experience of a long-term committed relationship – whether things worked out or not.

Able to subscribe to and share in the Catholic ethos and values of Accord NI and Marriage Care and work within its policies.

Empathic understanding and ability to hold couples.

Ability to work as part of the centre team.

## 7. Course Structure

### Outline for Phase One (2024)

<b>Dates</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Duration</b>	<b>In Person/ Online</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Academic Work Due</b>
Friday 19 <sup>th</sup> – Sunday 21 <sup>st</sup> April 2024	Residential Weekend One	Min. of 14 teaching hours	In Person	Tobar Mhuire Retreat and Conference Centre	Sunday 5th May
Friday 17 <sup>th</sup> – Sunday 19 <sup>th</sup> May	Residential Weekend Two	Min. of 14 teaching hours	In Person	Tobar Mhuire Retreat and Conference Centre	Sunday 2nd June
Friday 21 <sup>st</sup> – Sunday 23 <sup>rd</sup> June	Residential Weekend Three	Min. of 21 teaching hours	In Person	Tobar Mhuire Retreat and Conference Centre	Sunday 7th July
Saturday 20 <sup>th</sup> July 9:30 – 12:30am	“Getting Started with Clients” CPD	3 hours	Online	N/A	N/A
Thurs 12 <sup>th</sup> - Sunday 15 <sup>th</sup> September	Residential Weekend Four (3 full days including Domestic Abuse Training Day)	Min. of 14 teaching hours	In Person	Tobar Mhuire Retreat and Conference Centre	Sunday 29th September
Saturday 12 <sup>th</sup> October	Review and Progress	2 hours	Online	N/A	N/A
Saturday 16 <sup>th</sup> November 9.30am—5pm	“Working with a Sexual Focus” CPD	6 hours	Online	N/A	N/A

Continued on next page.

**Outline for Phase Two (2025) – Dates are provisional.**

<b>Title</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Where</b>	<b>Duration</b>	<b>Trainers</b>
Self-care of the therapist	11 January 2025	Online	9 – 5pm	
Know Your Limits	15 February 2025	Online	9 – 5pm	
Mental Health Awareness	15 March 2025	In-person	9 – 5pm	
Progress Review Two	26 April 2025	Online	9 – 11.30	
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	23 May 2025	In-person	9 – 5pm	
Endings in counselling	28 June 2025	Online	9:30 – 5pm	
Progress Review Three	6 September 2025	Online	9 – 11.30	
Domestic Abuse, initial assessment and revisiting contracting	11 October 2025	In-person	Weekend 5	Tom Andrew and Helen McMullan
Review & Ending	22 November 2025	In-person	9 – 5:30pm	
Introduction & Familiarisation with FOCCUS & REFOCCUS	2024/25	-	3hrs	-
Observation of PTA or MP	2024/25	-	6hrs	-