

Constitution

Forum for Counsellors & Psychotherapists

Fforwm Cwnselwyr a Seicotherapyddion

*A set of standards to guide Forum members
through the financial, legal and ethical obligations
of being an association.*

Introduction

Forum was formed in March 1994 as the *Association of Counsellors in General Practice* (ACGP). Coming together as a group enabled support and representation of counsellors and psychotherapists working in the health service at a time when professional bodies had little or no resources to offer this area of the profession. Attracting members from across Shropshire, Mid and North Wales, ACGP began organising training events to meet the demand for continuing professional development (CPD). In the early 2000s, to reflect a more diverse membership of therapists working in a range of settings, it changed its name to *Forum for Counsellors and Psychotherapists/Fforwm Cwnselwyr a Seicotherapyddion*.

Today Forum is an unincorporated association¹ run for, and by, its members. It provides workshops for individuals whose prime interest is in the provision and practice of psychological therapies. The workshops give both educational and experiential opportunities to enhance professional and personal development. The themes and subjects of workshops are varied in order to address the many needs and interests of the members. Forum arranges workshops and talks by well-known and creditable speakers.

1. Purpose

Forum is established to encourage best practice in counselling and psychotherapy; to provide professional and personal development; and to stimulate research and discussion within ethical frameworks.

¹ see Appendix I

2. Membership

1. Membership of Forum for Counsellors and Psychotherapists is open to qualified counsellors and psychotherapists. Members of allied professions may also become members.

At the online AGM on 7th October 2020 another level of membership was accepted for Retired members, and Students training to become therapists

2. Individuals or organisations become Forum members by paying membership fees on an annual basis. Termination of membership can be made by (a) not renewing the annual subscription; or (b) contacting the Membership Secretary to cancel their membership.
3. As a community of members functioning as an association, we are all collectively responsible for the actions of Forum.

3. Events Team

1. The Events Team members are elected and work as a committee, making routine decisions concerning the running of Forum.
2. The Events Team acts for all members of Forum.
3. The Events Team will be elected at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) which may include the following office-bearers:

- Chair
- Treasurer
- Secretary
- Membership Secretary
- Website Manager
- Training Coordinator(s)
- Team Members

4. Additional members may be co-opted onto the Events Team at the discretion of the Events Team.
5. Other roles may be identified and created as appropriate by the Events Team.
6. Role descriptions of the various positions are kept by the Secretary and are available on the Forum Website www.forumforcounsellors.co.uk

Meetings

4a. Events Team Meetings

1. In order to manage and operate Forum s training programme the Events Team will endeavour to meet approximately every 2 months or 5-6 times a year.
2. The meetings will be led by the Chair or a nominated deputy.
3. All questions that arise at any meeting will be discussed openly and the meeting will seek to find general agreement that everyone present can agree to.
4. If a consensus cannot be reached a vote will be taken and a decision will be made by a simple majority of team members present. If the number of votes cast on each side is equal, the chair of the meeting shall have an additional casting vote.
5. It is the Chair s responsibility to assess which decisions can be made via digital means such as group emails or video conferencing.
6. Minutes will always be taken and circulated to Team Members, and will be available for members to read on the Forum Website www.forumforcounsellors.co.uk
7. The quorum² for the Events Team Meeting will be half the members of the Team plus the Chair or a nominated deputy.

4b. Annual General Meeting (AGM)

1. An Annual General Meeting (AGM) will be held within 15 months of the previous AGM.
2. All members will be notified in writing at least 3 weeks before the date of the AGM, giving the venue, date and time.
3. Nominations for the committee may be made to the Secretary before the meeting, or at the meeting.
4. The quorum for the AGM will be 10% of the membership or 10 members, whichever is the greater number.
5. Any proposals given to the Secretary at least 7 days in advance of the meeting will be discussed.

² a quorum is the minimum number of people needed in order to conduct business

6. Whether presented or not, annual reports will be made by the following office-bearers:

- Chair
- Treasurer
- Membership Secretary
- Training co-ordinator(s)
- Secretary

7. Minutes from meetings and AGMs will be posted on the Forum Website
www.forumforcounsellors.co.uk

4c. Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM)

1. The Secretary will call an Extraordinary General Meeting at the request of the majority of the Events Team, or at least eight other members giving a written request to the Chair or Secretary stating the reason for their request.
2. The meeting will take place within twenty-one days of the request.
3. All members will be given two weeks notice of such a meeting, giving the venue, date, time and agenda, and notice may be by telephone, email or post.
4. The quorum for the Extraordinary General Meeting will be 10% of the membership or 10 members, whichever is the greater number.
5. Minutes from EGMs will be posted on the Forum Website
www.forumforcounsellors.co.uk

5. Policies & Procedures *(this section to be confirmed/completed)*

1. Forum will work within the bounds of its policies & procedures in relation to the following:
 - Expenses
 - Membership
 - Events & Workshops
 - Contracts with speakers and external providers
 - Contracts with other services

6. Finance

1. An account will be maintained on behalf of Forum at a bank agreed by the Events Team. Three cheque signatories will be nominated by the Events Team (one to be the Treasurer). The signatories must not be related nor members of the same household.
2. All cheque payments will be signed by two of the signatories. **In 2023 the Bank permitted BACS payments from the account whereby one of the three signatories will set up a payment and one of the other two will approve the payment.**
3. Records of income and expenditure will be maintained by the Treasurer and a financial statement given at each meeting.
4. Forum will endeavour to protect members legally and financially by making formal contracts when engaging the services of speakers or purchasing other services. Contractual decisions will be agreed by the Events Team.
5. Forum will not sell event tickets or services to non-members.
6. Any annual surplus or profit will be used for the benefit of Forum and its members.
7. Forum's Events Team will seek to ensure that the association's financial reserves do not fall below £3,000. If, due to exceptional circumstances, Forum's financial reserves do fall below this limit, the Events Team will seek permission from the membership to continue Forum's activities.
8. Bursaries, grants and donations will be made at the discretion of the Events Team. The amounts payable will be reviewed annually by the Events Team and payment thereof will be sanctioned by the membership by a vote at the AGM.
9. Honoraria³ will be paid annually to officers of the Events Team. The amounts payable to each office-bearer for the following financial year will be determined at the AGM. These office bearers are:
 - Chair
 - Treasurer
 - Membership Secretary
 - Secretary
 - Website Manager
 - Training Coordinators

³ an honorarium is a voluntary payment that is given to a person for services for which fees are not legally or traditionally required.

7. Privacy, Confidentiality and Ethical Practice

1. Disputes arising between members will be facilitated by the Chair. A nominated deputy will facilitate disputes if the Chair is involved or unable to do so.
2. All members are expected to understand and abide by Forum's GDPR policy, available on the Forum Website www.forumforcounsellors.co.uk
3. As counsellors and psychotherapists we endeavour to hold confidential other members' personal disclosures and/or vulnerabilities evident during Forum workshops and events, unless harm to self and/or others is clearly a risk.
4. Forum's Eventbrite account was closed following the Covid pandemic Lockdown.
5. Members' personal information held by Events Team members (e.g. Membership Secretary) will be kept and managed according to Forum's GDPR policy.

8. Publicising Events

1. Forum will not publicise or endorse non-Forum events on behalf of individuals or organisations.
2. On the day of their workshop Speakers may announce events and make material available to participants for such events.

9. Amendments

1. The Events Team has no existence separate from its members and any changes of purpose or rules can only be made with the consent of the members of Forum. Such changes will be made at an Annual General Meeting (AGM), or an Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM), with a quorum of 10% of the membership or 10 members, whichever is the greater number.

10. Dissolution

1. The organisation may be dissolved if deemed necessary by the members in a majority vote at an Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM). Any assets or remaining funds after debts have been paid and membership subscriptions refunded (where funds allow) shall be allocated to local or national non-profit making organisations working for the benefit of the counselling and psychotherapy professions at the discretion of the Events Team.

11. Safekeeping of Constitution

1. This Constitution will be kept secure by the Secretary and will be available on the Forum Website.

This constitution was agreed at the Forum AGM on:

DateWednesday 30th April 2025

Name and position in group ...Linda Widdows, Chair



Signed

Name and position in group ...Hilary Stock, Secretary



Signed

Updated April 2025

Appendix I

1. An **unincorporated association**, such as a club or society, is formed of members who operate and manage the organisation. It is an organisation set up through an agreement (e.g. a constitution) between a group of people who come together for a reason other than to make a profit.

In the eyes of the law an unincorporated association is not a legal entity, and therefore has no legal rights. Therefore, individual members – particularly those involved in running the organisation – are legally responsible for the decisions and actions of the whole association.

From the government's point of view certain conditions must apply to unincorporated associations, especially in terms of profit and tax status:

“HMRC will treat the unincorporated association as dormant (i.e. not trading) for tax purposes if it is active but both the following conditions apply:

- *Your organisations' annual Corporation Tax liability must not be expected to exceed £100.*
- *You run your club or organisation exclusively for the benefit of its members”*

www.gov.uk/unincorporated-associations

www.gov.uk/guidance/corporation-tax-trading-and-non-trading#when-hmrc-will-treat-clubs-and-unincorporated-organisations-as-dormant

2. **Quorum:** a quorum is the minimum number of people needed in order to conduct business
3. **Honorarium:** an honorarium is a voluntary payment that is given to a person for services for which fees are not legally or traditionally required.