

## Keeping you and your family safe

When you use the HelpFinder, you need to remember that *beat* does not endorse or recommend any of the services listed on it. However, there are ways that you can check that the services you are using are properly registered and regulated.

### *NHS Services*

NHS Services are inspected by the Healthcare Commission. They also now have simpler systems for you to register complaints and concerns. For further information on how to comment/complain about a service you have received through the NHS, visit: <http://www.nhs.uk/england/aboutTheNHS/complainCompliment.cmsx>

Many people affected by eating disorders look for services in the non-statutory or private healthcare system. Just because you are referring yourself or someone in your care to private treatment, does not mean that you should not ask questions about the service, its quality and its regulation.

### *Questions to ask when using private healthcare providers*

#### **What is a private healthcare provider?**

Private Healthcare providers run services that are not directly managed by the National Health Service. These might include private hospitals or treatment centres, counsellors, therapists, psychologists and psychotherapists.

Sometimes you may be referred to one of these services by a GP or Consultant. In these cases, there will be a contract between the local NHS Primary Care Trust (who commissions and pays for the service) and the provider. The PCT will therefore be responsible for ensuring that the healthcare provider works to agreed quality standards and is regulated by a professional body or authority.

Many non-private providers allow you to access or refer yourself to their services directly. This can be a way of accessing help and support sooner. However, if you do self-refer to these services, you will be responsible for paying their fees or charges. You are also responsible for checking that they are registered with an appropriate body.

### *Questions to ask when referring your self or someone in your care to a private hospital or clinic*

#### **Does this Clinic take referrals from the NHS?**

If the answer is yes: ask who is responsible for monitoring and how do they do this?

If the answer is no: ask who is responsible for inspecting this service and how is its quality monitored.

Even if you are self-referring to a clinic, you are still entitled to ask questions about its registration and how it monitors quality and service standards. A clinic taking referrals from the NHS will have to fulfil criteria for standards of care set by the commissioning authority and this can be reassuring. It is also worth asking what complaints procedures the Clinic has in place and how it would deal with concerns.

## Is this in-patient clinic registered with the appropriate authority?

There are three regulatory bodies in the UK.

They are:

- The Healthcare Commission [www.healthcarecommission.gov.uk](http://www.healthcarecommission.gov.uk)
- CSCI (Commission for Social Care Inspection) [www.csci.org.uk](http://www.csci.org.uk)
- Ofsted [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

Each is responsible for registering particular types of organisation or service:

- The Healthcare Commission is responsible for registering and inspecting private healthcare
- CSCI is responsible for registering and inspecting care homes, some types of adult day care and placement schemes
- Ofsted is responsible for registering and inspecting Children's Residential Care homes and therapeutic communities and some types of day care.

If a Clinic is not registered, you are entitled to ask why not and can always approach the relevant registering authorities for further information about how registration works. Copies of inspection reports are public documents and are downloadable from the relevant website.

## *Questions to ask a counsellor, psychotherapist, psychologist or other independent provider*

### **Are they a member of or registered with a professional body?**

There are a number of professional bodies that register and self-regulate counsellors and therapists. It is always worth asking if your counsellor/therapist is registered and you can also check this before you make an appointment by contacting the relevant body. A list of some of the major professional bodies is listed below.

At the moment, there is no statutory requirement for counsellors, therapists and psychologists to be registered. In February 2007, the Government published a White Paper which signalled the introduction of statutory registration. However, no timeframe was given; *beat* will be campaigning to ensure that this is introduced in a timely and effective fashion.

### *Other questions*

A good practitioner should be comfortable answering the following sorts of questions:

- What qualifications do you have?
- What training have you received?
- How long have you been qualified/worked in this field?
- Do you receive on-going supervision from another therapist or practitioner?
- Do you have a complaints policy?
- What is your confidentiality policy?

If they are offering services to young people under 18, you should check if:

- They have undergone a Criminal Records Bureau check
- They have a child protection policy.

They should tell you about how they hold information and what access clients have to their personal records, the likely length of treatment or support, the therapeutic approach they take and the fee structure.

For further information about using counsellors and therapists, *Mind*, the mental health charity has comprehensive information, visit [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)

## ***Professional Bodies***

This is a list of some of the professional bodies which regulate counselling, psychology and psychotherapy or register individual practitioners.

**BACP (The British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy)** [www.bacp.co.uk](http://www.bacp.co.uk)

The BACP has over 20,000 registered counsellors and psychotherapists. BACP registered counsellors' work to a comprehensive ethics framework and the BACP will investigate causes of concern and complaints about individual practitioners.

**United Kingdom Register of Counsellors (UKRC)** [www.ukrconline.org.uk](http://www.ukrconline.org.uk)

This is a list of counsellors who have been accredited through a range of bodies including BACP, COSCA (Counselling and Psychotherapy in Scotland and Federation of Drug and Alcohol Professionals (FDAP) and the United Kingdom Association of Humanistic Psychology Practitioners (UKAHPP).

**The British Psychological Society** [www.bps.org.uk](http://www.bps.org.uk)

This is the representative body for psychology and psychologists in the UK. Anyone can call themselves a psychologist or psychotherapist but only someone registered with the BPS can call themselves a Chartered Psychologist. A Chartered Psychologist has to achieved a level of qualifications and undergone relevant training. BPS keep a register of members and you can contact them to check out an individual. They will also investigate concerns about Chartered Psychologists.

**United Kingdom Council of Psychotherapy (UKCP)** [www.psychotherapy.org.uk](http://www.psychotherapy.org.uk)

UKCP keeps a register of psychotherapists who have to have been trained to a certain level and be a member of an appropriate organisation like BACP. They must agree to an approved code of ethics and are accountable to the UKCP's Complaints and Appeals Procedure.

## ***Other disciplines***

A number of other disciplines including Hypnotherapy and complementary medicine have their own representative organisations and registers, these include:

- National Register of Hypnotherapists and Psychotherapists [www.nrhp.co.uk](http://www.nrhp.co.uk)
- British Association of Hypnotherapists [www.hypnotherapy-association.org](http://www.hypnotherapy-association.org)
- British Psychoanalytic Council [www.bcp.org.uk](http://www.bcp.org.uk)
- Institute for Complementary Medicine [www.i-c-m.org.uk](http://www.i-c-m.org.uk)

## ***Other Voluntary Organisations***

**Mind** [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)

Mind provides comprehensive information service to users of mental health services. They have a range of comprehensive information leaflets and operate national helplines including the Mind *info*Line and Mind Legal Advice line.

**WITNESS** [www.popan.org.uk/](http://www.popan.org.uk/)

WITNESS provides a national helpline for anyone who has experienced abuse or has concerns about the practice of a health or care worker. This includes private counsellors and therapists. They will also provide advocacy support.