

School Counsellor

Organisation	Make A Melody Ltd.
Job Role	Counsellor in Post-Primary Mainstream Schools
Salary	£31,590 pro rata
Location	Belfast Post-Primary Schools
Contract Type	Term-Time 38 Weeks Permanent
Hours Per Week	From 7.5 hrs – 30 hrs
Reports To	Stuart Watson: Area Coordinator
Additional Information	Applications which arrive after the advertised closing date/time will not be considered. A waiting list may be compiled for any similar posts that arise over the next 12 months.
Job Closing Date and Time	Monday 11 th August 2025 Due to time-restrictions, we reserve the right to start interviewing prior to closing date. It is recommended to get application form submitted as soon as you are able too.
Interview Date	TBC

JOB SUMMARY

Make a Melody is currently managing a contract for the Education Authority, to provide counselling and therapy services within post-primary schools.

As a counsellor working in Post-Primary Schools, your role will be to provide and maintain a high standard of therapeutic care for referred pupils. You will be a professional link within the school setting, collaborating with educators, other healthcare team members, and relevant agencies to support the well-being of the students.

PERSONNEL SPECIFICATION

JOB TITLE AND BAND

Counsellor

DEPARTMENT / DIRECTORATE

Post-Primary Mainstream Schools

Notes to applicants:

1. *You must clearly demonstrate on your application form under each question, how you meet the required criteria as failure to do so may result in you not being shortlisted. You should clearly demonstrate this for both the essential and desirable criteria. Shortlisting will be carried out on the basis of the essential criteria set out in Section 1 below, using the information provided by you on your application form.*
2. *Proof of qualifications and/or professional registration will be required if an offer of employment is made – if you are unable to provide this, the offer will be withdrawn.*

ESSENTIAL CRITERIA

SECTION 1: The following are **ESSENTIAL** criteria which will initially be measured at shortlisting stage although may also be further explored during the interview/selection stage. You should therefore make it clear on your application form whether or not you meet these criteria. Failure to do so may result in you not being shortlisted.

Factor	Criteria	Method of Assessment
Qualifications	Counsellors must have a Diploma, Degree (Level 4/Level 7 Scotland) or Masters, or equivalent counselling or psychotherapy qualification as regulated by the Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) or the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) and from a recognised or a relevant validating organisation e.g. Counselling and Psychotherapy Central Awarding Body (CPCAB).	Shortlisting by Application Form
Experience	<p>A minimum of 100 hours post qualification, clinically supervised practice providing counselling for Children and Young People up to the age of 18.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Have a minimum of 100 hours post qualification counselling experience of working with adults and have successfully completed the Level 5 CPCAB Diploma in Counselling Children & Young People.</p>	Shortlisting by Application Form

Accreditation	<p>Counsellors must hold accreditation with the British Association for Counselling & Psychotherapy (BACP - Accredited Member), Irish Association for Counselling & Psychotherapy (IACP - Accredited Member) or the National Counselling & Psychotherapy Society (NCPS - Accredited Professional Registrant), or PTUK accreditation.</p> <p>- Or open to working towards this.</p>	Shortlisting by Application Form
Membership	<p>All counsellors must be a member of a professional body (not a student member) as follows: Counsellors must be registered members of either British Association for Counselling & Psychotherapy (BACP), Irish Association for Counselling & Psychotherapy (IACP), National Counselling & Psychotherapy Society (NCPS) or United Kingdom Council for Psychotherapy (UKCP).</p>	Shortlisting by Application Form
Other	Possess Full Driver's Licence and have access to a vehicle	Shortlisting by Application Form
SECTION 2: The following are ESSENTIAL criteria which will be measured during the interview/selection stage:		
Skills / Abilities	<p>Ability to plan, organise, and prioritise own workload and caseload.</p> <p>Ability to work in a multi-disciplinary setting.</p> <p>Computer literate, with advanced keyboard skills and ability to use software programmes.</p> <p>Ability to work with shared objectives as part of a team.</p>	Interview
Knowledge	<p>Have the skills and knowledge in working safely and ethically and are practising within their relevant Competency Framework and Standards in counselling 11-18-year-olds and its relevance to their counselling context i.e. BACP, NCPS PTUK, HCPC etc.</p> <p>Knowledge of special educational needs and the use of your creative art medium to work therapeutically.</p> <p>Knowledge of Psychoanalytic Theory and how it underpins and guides therapeutic work.</p>	Interview

SECTION 3: The following are **DESIREABLE** criteria which will be measured during the interview/selection stage:

General	<p>Two year's experience of working with children and young people with additional support needs.</p> <p>Experience using assessments such as the Young Peoples Child Outcome Results Evaluation (YP-CORE) or the Child Outcome Results Survey (CORS).</p> <p>Safeguarding Level 3 for vulnerable children</p>	Interview
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As part of the Recruitment & Selection process it may be necessary for Make A Melody to carry out an Enhanced Disclosure Check through Access NI if you cannot provide certification before any appointment to this post can be confirmed.

KEY DUTIES / RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Attend weekly meetings with the Key Contact.
2. Deliver the service as set out in the HOPE service Handbook.
3. Make referrals to an appropriate external support service such as CAMHS, SHIP, etc., as required.
4. Carry out safety planning with pupils presenting with self-harm and suicide ideation.
5. Promote awareness and understanding of the HOPE service regularly and as required among school staff, parents/carers, and pupils.
6. Provide a service of high professional therapy standards to pupils.
7. Work within the school's Child Protection Policy.
8. Maintain accurate pupil therapy session records.
9. Complete required records and statistical returns.
10. Complete initial assessments and provide therapy sessions (individual, group, and drop-in) as required.
11. Provide pupils with an Evaluation Tool at the end of the therapy intervention.
12. Adhere to all professional expectations and standards.
13. Provide therapy following a critical incident, as required.
14. Provide a monthly monitoring report at the end of each month
15. Provide a report on service usage at the end of each term.
16. Fully engage with the annual review on service provision.
17. Maintain and enhance therapy skills.
18. As per a term-time contract, no holiday leave is permitted during the school year when pupils are in.

Clinical Practice

1. Collaborate closely with the primary contact in each school or EOTAS.
2. Receive and manage referrals from the primary contact.
3. Conduct initial assessments with parents or primary caregivers.
4. Perform regular assessments using the Young Peoples Child Outcome Results Evaluation (YP-CORE) or the Child Outcome Results Survey (CORS).
5. Maintain confidentiality in line with GDPR standards and follow the Safeguarding Policy.
6. Assess any pupil exhibiting self-harm or suicidal ideation who has not yet been referred to an appropriate external support service, such as CAMHS or SHIP, to determine the need and suitability for onward referral.
7. The school retains responsibility for maintaining waiting lists. When a written referral is made and discussed with the key contact and the counsellor/therapist, the pupil will be assessed within fifteen school days of receiving the written referral.
8. The primary contact at the school is the main point of communication for the therapist.
9. All communications with the therapist by staff, pupils, or parents/caregivers should be arranged through the key contact. A strong working relationship between the therapist and the key contact is essential for the therapy support to effectively meet pupil needs and be an integral part of the school's pastoral care provision.
10. The key contact and school therapist must meet weekly. Details of these meetings will be recorded on the Monthly Monitor Returns (MMRs), signed by all parties, and submitted to the EA. These meetings will typically be face-to-face within the school to discuss new referrals, review the waiting list, and share relevant information about pupils's therapy priorities. It also provides the opportunity to address other issues or concerns as they arise.
11. Therapists will provide no more than five therapy sessions and one drop-in session per school day.
12. Therapists must allocate adequate time for administrative tasks, including writing notes, meeting with the key contact, meeting with parents/caregivers, and promotional activities during assemblies and staff meetings.
13. Therapists will have regular line management meetings with their clinical lead, who oversees the organisational aspects of their work.
14. All therapy work will adhere to the ethical framework of the professional body, and the service provided will align with the arrangements set out in the EA HOPE Handbook.
15. Therapists must complete the EA Child Protection and Safeguarding online training within their first week of employment. This is provided by Make A Melody.
16. Therapists will receive a minimum of 1½ hours of clinical supervision per month. A list of all ongoing clients should be maintained by the therapist and presented to the supervisor at the start of the session. Each client will be discussed at least once with the Clinical Supervisor during therapy interventions, and this will be recorded in clinical notes. Make A Melody will provide these sessions.
17. The therapist's base will be the school closest to their home. Travel mileage will be reimbursed for travel beyond the commute to and from their base.

18. Therapists will offer the following sessions in schools:
 1. Individual Therapy Sessions
 2. Group Therapy Sessions: for 2-6 pupils
 3. Drop-In Sessions: for pupils to visit the therapist without an appointment.
19. All clinical notes, records, and documentation will be stored online using SmileNotes, the clinical software used by Make a Melody.
20. Therapists will complete Monthly Monitoring Returns, including the number of sessions attended, assessment sessions, DNAs, and reasons for DNAs.
21. Accurate clinical records of individual sessions with pupils must be maintained in the pupil's file.
22. A clear conclusion to the therapy intervention must be documented in the clinical notes, including evidence that:
 - a. The end of therapy was discussed with the pupil before their final session.
 - b. The pupil was reminded that the drop-in service remains available.
 - c. The pupil was provided with a QR code for the EA HOPE End of Intervention Survey.
23. Pupil Files: All notes are part of the individual pupil's file and must be treated as confidential. Any safeguarding disclosures will be recorded in the pupil's file, along with details of the parties with whom information was shared and any actions taken. Information on any relevant changes in the pupil's circumstances between sessions, any telephone calls made on behalf of the pupil, or other actions taken should be recorded. The file should also include a record of session attendance, any missed sessions, and a copy of the pupil's agreement to engage in the process. Files must be retained following Make A Melody's record retention policy, which adheres to GDPR requirements.
24. Therapists will record anonymised statistical information on pupil gender, age, ethnicity, reason for referral, and other details as advised by the provider.
25. Therapists will maximise service delivery by attempting to reuse DNA sessions where possible.
26. Therapists will familiarise themselves with and follow the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding policy and procedures.

EDUCATION AND LEARNING

1. Be responsible for personal continuing professional development and the maintenance of professional competence as outlined by HCPC.
2. Contribute to the development, delivery and evaluation of educational initiatives that address the needs of patients.
3. Contribute to the dissemination and implementation of the learning from feedback, compliments, complaints, incident reporting and near misses to facilitate the delivery of safe, effective, person and family services.

LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT

1. Build and maintain multidisciplinary relationships, through effective networks with key stakeholders in the schools and EOTAS.
2. Demonstrate compassionate leadership including self-care and the care of others.
3. Identify gaps in service provision and participate in service improvement initiatives.
4. Use relevant information systems to inform service delivery, monitor and improve performance.
5. Ensure effective and efficient use of resources and monitoring of same ensuring value for money in the delivery of services within schools and EOTAS.

RAISING CONCERNS – RESPONSIBILITIES

1. The post holder will promote and support effective team working, fostering a culture of openness and transparency.
2. The post holder will ensure that they take all concerns raised with them seriously and act in accordance with Make A Melody's 'Your Right to Raise a Concern (Whistleblowing)' policy and their professional code of conduct, where applicable.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

The post holder will be required to:

1. Ensure the company policy on equality of opportunity is promoted through his/her own actions and those of any staff for whom he/she has responsibility.
2. Co-operate fully with the implementation of the Practice Health and Safety arrangements, reporting any accidents/incidents/equipment defects to his/her manager, and maintaining a clean, uncluttered and safe environment for clients, members of the public and staff.
3. Contribute to ensuring the highest standards of environmental cleanliness within your designated area of work.
4. Co-operate fully regarding company policies and procedures relating to infection prevention and control.
5. All employees of the Company are legally responsible for all records held, created or used as part of their services within schools and EOTAS including client records, whether paper-based or electronic and also including emails. All such records are public records and are accessible to the general public, with limited exceptions, under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 the Environmental Information Regulations 2004, the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018.
6. Represent the Company commitment to providing the highest possible standard of service to clients and members of the public, by treating all those with whom he/she comes into contact in the course of work, in a pleasant, courteous and respectful manner.