



Scottish
Alcohol
Counselling
Consortium

Guidance for SACC member organisations on the recruitment,
training and supervision of volunteer counsellors.

Contents	Page
Introduction	2
Background to SACC	3
SACC volunteer training pathway	4
Essential resources – key points	5-8
SACC's 30 hour Counselling People Towards Behaviour Change course <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - access to courses and attendance - registration of participants 	9
Requirements of host organisations supporting the supervised practice element of the training <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - recruitment and selection of volunteer alcohol counsellors - supervising and supporting participants - number and range of clients - providing a suitable counselling environment for participants - submission of portfolios 	10-14 10 13 13 14 14
Example volunteer counsellor agreement	15

Introduction

The Scottish Alcohol Counselling Consortium facilitates the sharing of knowledge and experience across its membership.

The aim of SACC's training programme and accreditation process is to ensure volunteer alcohol counsellors have access to high quality training and the opportunity to develop their counselling skills in a supportive and supervised environment.

This guidance supports other essential resources developed by SACC and is aimed specifically at staff with management responsibility for the training and support of volunteer alcohol counsellors.

It aims to ensure that, as a SACC member, you are well placed to support volunteer alcohol counsellors within your organisation - and that all members are offering the same level of training and support.

It offers a standardized approach to the recruitment, training and supervision of volunteers undertaking SACC training - ensuring that all SACC trained volunteer alcohol counsellors receive the same quality of training and support - wherever they are based.

Each section highlights key points for member organisations and provides links to relevant resources.

SACC recognizes that member organisations vary in levels of funding, staffing and resources – please let us know if you have any difficulties meeting the requirements outlined in this guidance.

If you feel you need more information on any aspect of the guidance please contact sacc@scotacc.org

We're here to help.

Background to SACC

The Scottish Alcohol Counselling Consortium is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO). Its membership is made up of local, voluntary alcohol/addiction support agencies whose principle activity is the provision of alcohol/addiction counselling and support.

All member organisations have voting rights at the general members' meeting and are responsible for electing trustees to serve on the board. In line with SCIO guidelines, all members must act in the interests of SACC and seek to ensure that SACC continues to operate in line with its charitable purposes.

Our member organisations deliver services in line with SACC's mission and aims below:

SACC's mission is to make a meaningful contribution to communities across Scotland by improving counselling and support for individuals and families affected by alcohol and other addictions.

Our aims are

1. High standards and consistency of practice in the training, accreditation and delivery of counselling for alcohol and other addictions are provided by member organisations across Scotland.
2. Volunteers and paid workers have access to a nationally recognised workforce development and accreditation process for developing knowledge and skills in alcohol /other addictions counselling and other interventions.
3. More volunteers from local communities are recruited and trained in alcohol counselling skills by member organisations.
4. There is increased partnership working between organisations concerned with the training and accreditation of alcohol /other addictions counsellors.
5. The interests and views of our member organisations, and the people who use their services, are promoted nationally.
6. The Scottish Alcohol Counselling Consortium is recognised as the national network of good practice in training, accreditation and delivery of volunteer counselling for alcohol and other addictions.

All members recognise and work to COSCA www.cosca.org and/or BACP www.bacp.org code of ethics.

All training and services provided by SACC are governed by SACC's Equality and Diversity Policy and SACC's Complaints Procedure. These are available to members at www.scotacc.org/policies



Volunteer alcohol counsellor training pathway

Entry requirements

**COSCA Counselling Skills
Modules 1-4 (120 hours)**

**Generic counselling training
e.g. HNC, HND, other
diploma**

Selection process by host organisation
Evidence of counselling knowledge, skills, competency and suitability

**SACC Specialist Alcohol Course
(30 hours)**
Counselling People Towards Behaviour Change

Certificate of completion awarded by SACC/COSCA

**Two years supervised practice with SACC
member organisation (120 hours)**
Development of portfolio

**Assessment of portfolio by SACC accreditation
panel**

**SACC Volunteer Counsellor Accreditation
Certificate in Advanced Alcohol Counselling Skills**

Continuing professional development

Essential resources

There are four main resources that organisations require to train and support volunteer alcohol counsellors:-

1. **SACC's Volunteer Alcohol Counselling Programme and Accreditation Process Guidance for trainees and supervisors**
2. **Certificate in Advanced Alcohol Counselling Skills – Aims, Learning Outcomes, Range, Methods and Activities**
3. **SACC volunteer alcohol counsellor training pathway diagram**
4. **Procedure for discontinuation of training (Certificate in Advanced Alcohol Counselling Skills)**

All documents are available at www.scotacc.org and the sections below highlight some key points for organisations.

SACC's Volunteer Alcohol Counselling Programme and Accreditation Process Guidance for trainees and supervisors

This is the main guidance for any organisation wishing to train volunteers in advanced alcohol counselling skills

The guidance and related templates are available for organisations, supervisors and participants to download from the resources page of SACC's website (a password is required).

Key points

- The main guidance provides information on all aspects of the SACC training pathway, including entry requirements; training and types of assessment; amount and range of supervised practice involved; supervision requirements and evidence that needs to be included in the portfolio for accreditation.
- This organisational guidance aims to provide additional information necessary to support management teams – however management teams should also have an overview / understanding of the main guidance.
- Supervisors supporting volunteer alcohol counsellors can join SACC's Supervisors' Network. The network provides opportunities to attend workshops on different aspects of SACC training and to meet up with colleagues from other member organisations. Contact sacc@scotacc.org for more info/to join.

Certificate in Advanced Alcohol Counselling Skills – Aims, Learning Outcomes, Range, Methods and Activities

This outlines the aims of the supervised practice element of the training and the learning outcomes to be achieved during the 120 hours of supervised practice and can be downloaded at www.scotacc.org

Key points

- The aims and learning outcomes ensure prospective participants know what to expect from this part of their training. They should have had sight of these before commencing the supervised practice element of the course.
- Counselling supervisors have the key role and responsibility for supporting participants to achieve the learning outcomes and in assessing their progress.
- The learning outcomes have been developed from the counselling competencies which have always been part of the SACC portfolio requirements. Counselling supervisors will be familiar with these counselling competencies, even if they have not been involved in SACC training previously.

SACC volunteer alcohol counsellor training pathway diagram page 4

Key points - entry requirements

- Participants must have attained COSCA Counselling Skills modules 1- 4 or equivalent before commencing the 30-hour Counselling People Towards Behaviour Change course.
- 'Equivalent' examples are listed as HNC, HND or other diploma. The content of these courses may vary from college to college. Organisations should satisfy themselves that candidates have had some experience of counselling skills practice during the course.
- Acceptance onto the course requires knowledge of counselling skills and approaches and some experience of self -reflective practice - albeit within a learning situation.
- Organisations should be satisfied that applicants are able to evidence knowledge, skills, competency and suitability in relation to listening, acceptance, self-reflection and empathy.
- Selection processes should ensure that individual participants will be comfortable with the content and expectations of the 30-hour course; will be able to build on their current skills; and will not be put into training situations they are not yet ready for.
- Time lapse since initial training – organisations needs to also consider when the candidate completed initial training and if a refresh of knowledge / more current training might be required. SACC would recommend that entry qualifications should be less than 3 years old. However, if following the selection process, the organisation is satisfied that the candidate has the required level of counselling skills they may extend this. Any related experience may also be taken into account.

Key points – SACC certification and accreditation

- Successful completion of the 30 hour course leads to a SACC certificate in Counselling People Towards Behaviour Change which is validated by COSCA. This is awarded to successful participants, whether or not they go on to do 120 hours supervised practice element of the training programme.
- The Counselling People Towards Behaviour Change course forms the face-to-face training element of the Certificate in Advanced Alcohol Counselling Skills.
- Participants who complete the 120 hour supervised practice element of the training - and have their portfolio accredited by the SACC panel - receive a Certificate in Advanced Alcohol Counselling Skills from SACC, again validated by COSCA.
- The Certificate in Advanced Alcohol Counselling Skills does not qualify participants as COSCA accredited counsellors.

Training with SACC provides:-

- ✓ the skills, knowledge and experience to work as a volunteer alcohol counsellor within a SACC member organisation
- ✓ an excellent foundation for participants who may want to go on to further counselling training and qualifications in the future
- ✓ additional specialist training in counselling for behaviour change, specifically around alcohol issues, for students on more generic counselling courses
- ✓ a potential springboard into a range of paid employment for volunteers.

Procedure for discontinuation of training (Certificate in Advanced Alcohol Counselling Skills)

This is available within the main guidance but is highlighted here as it is a new (Feb 2020) requirement arising from COSCA validation.

Key points

- In line with COSCA requirements participants on SACC courses **must** be given written information on the process should their training be discontinued.
- In relation to the face to face 30-hour training course this is provided within the Participants Handbook and explained by the trainers.
- Organisations must ensure that all participants going onto the supervised practice element of the course are provided with/know where to find written information on the procedure for discontinuation of training.

- Organisations must ensure any discontinuation of training - whether instigated by the participant or the organisation - adheres to the discontinuation process provided by SACC
- Participants are expected to maintain the professional standards required by their host organisation.
- Participants have the right to make a complaint to SACC if they do not agree with decisions about discontinuation of their training. www.scotacc.org/complaints/

SACC's 30 - hour Counselling People Towards Behaviour Change course

This SACC course is held at various locations, usually a couple of times a year – but courses can be organised at different locations if there are sufficient numbers of participants.

Contact SACC for dates and locations of courses – or to discuss setting up a course
sacc@scotacc.org

In line with its Equality and Diversity Policy, SACC aims to ensure that its training courses are accessible to all. If you have any participants who have specific needs in relation to accessing the course, please contact SACC to discuss.

Key points

- All volunteers must successfully complete the SACC 30-hour course before going on to complete their supervised practice with the host organisation.
- The course consists of 12 units, usually taught over 30 hours face to face training. It can be run over 6 full days, 12 half days/evenings or a mix of both. Trainers will try to accommodate the needs of participants as far as possible. SACC will explore any options for training delivery which would make the course more easily accessible.
- It is essential that organisations ensure their participants realise that attendance at all training sessions is necessary for successful completion of the course.
- All participants must complete a Participant Registration Form and return it to SACC **before** starting the course. This ensures GDPR compliance and enables registration with SACC and COSCA. This is available from SACC.
- If there are any issues regarding participant's attendance - which cannot be resolved between the organisation, participant and trainers - then please contact SACC for guidance.

COSCA guidance on course attendance

'Trainers should inform participants that they should plan for 100% attendance on the course. Participants should commit in advance to this level of attendance. Planned absences should be discussed in advance with the trainer and may or may not be acceptable.'

*As a minimum, it is expected that participants attend *85% of each block of training. If this is not met the COSCA office should be contacted. Due to the experiential nature of the course and the possible impact on the group, absences are to be avoided.*

*As it is the duty of the course provider to ensure every opportunity for participants to meet and achieve the learning outcomes of the course, in the event of attendance falling below the above level, the trainer should seek **COSCA guidance as to whether it is appropriate for the participant to catch up and to continue or, if it is possible, to offer them the opportunity to attend the appropriate sessions with another group at a later date.'*

**25.5 hours of 30-hour course*

*** contact SACC in the first instance*

Requirements of host organisations supporting the supervised practice element of training

On successful completion of the Counselling People Towards Behaviour Change course, participants may go on to complete the supervised practice element of the training.

This involves 120 hours of supervised practice as a volunteer with a host organisation and enables participants to build their skills and knowledge through self-reflective practice - supported by a counselling supervisor.

SACC member organisations, who provide the supervised practice element of the training, benefit from the time and skills provided by their volunteers – during training and beyond.

However, before offering opportunities for people to train as volunteer alcohol counsellors, host organisations need to ensure that they can meet SACC requirements in relation to:-

- 1. clear procedures for the recruitment and selection of volunteer counsellors**
- 2. supervision and support for participants**
- 3. number and range of clients**
- 4. a safe and suitable counselling environment for participants**
- 5. submission of portfolios.**

Recruitment and selection of volunteer alcohol counsellors

The SACC training pathway is aimed primarily at local people who wish to train in alcohol counselling skills so that they can volunteer with their local voluntary alcohol support organisation.

To ensure consistency across SACC members, organisations are asked to please check their own procedures for recruitment and selection of volunteers against the SACC suggested processes on page 11.

Key points

- Selection processes will vary according to the number of volunteers organisations need and the number of applicants coming forward.
- The selection process should be held before acceptance onto the Counselling People Towards Behaviour Change course (also see Selection process for course participants who are not volunteering p.12)
- Most organisations prefer to have a formal signed agreement which states the participant's and the host organisation's responsibilities in relation to training as a volunteer alcohol counsellor. An example agreement can be found at the end of this guidance.

- Some organisations offer COSCA Counselling Skills training modules. If the organisation interviewed participants before they commenced the initial COSCA Counselling Skills modules, they should meet again with volunteers before accepting them onto the specialist course. This ensures that the participant is clear about the requirements of supervised practice element of the course and that the organisation is satisfied with the participant's competence and availability.
- Organisations should ensure that their selection process identify participants who:-
 - ✓ have core counselling competencies
 - ✓ are able to commit time to training, study and volunteering
 - ✓ are most likely to commit to longer term volunteering within the organisation.
- A trained counsellor should be involved in some part of the selection process
- All successful volunteer counsellors should understand and agree to the requirements of the Protecting Vulnerable Groups Scheme (PVG)

Selection process for volunteer counsellors

Following consultation with member organisations who regularly recruit volunteers to train in counselling skills, SACC suggests that a good application process would include :-

Advertising (if required)

Advertising for local volunteer counsellors should outline the training offered and commitment expected as well as usual agency information.

Written application form

This should be submitted to the member organisation - not SACC

Screening of written applications

As well as the organisation's own requirements, applications should be screened for essential entry requirements for SACC training:-

- ✓ evidence of completion of COSCA Counselling Skills modules or equivalent
- ✓ capacity to commit necessary time and study to training

Pre-interview information /selection process

This could be a group session or individual informal discussion, depending on number of applicants, and should cover:-

- ✓ introduction to your organisation - values and aims etc.
- ✓ what your organisation can offer - training, SACC (COSCA validated) awards, supervision and support, continued professional development
- ✓ SACC training pathway, expectations of attendance, time and commitment, types of assessment, discontinuation of training etc. (questions and answers)
- ✓ end qualifications and how these can be used
- ✓ essential criteria and shortlisting process
- ✓ outline of recruitment process - interviews, PVG requirements, etc.

Group exercises and feedback (optional)

Continued over/

Selection interview

This provides the opportunity to:-

- ✓ confirm candidate meets the essential criteria – check qualifications, previous experience etc.
- ✓ satisfy interviewers that candidate has/has potential for the required competencies for volunteer counselling – listening skills, acceptance, empathy etc.
- ✓ confirm candidate's availability fits with organisation's requirements, supervision availability and completion of portfolio within reasonable time scale etc. (NB please refer to SACC's Equality and Diversity Policy and ensure the training can be offered to all)

Selection process for course participants who are not volunteering.

Some member organisations offer the 30-hour training to students on placement, self-funded participants or other participants who do not intend to go onto volunteer.

Key point

- Participants, who are **not** intending to volunteer or to continue onto the 120-hour supervised practice element of the training, must still meet the required entry requirements and evidence core counselling competencies to be accepted onto the 30 hour course.

The selection process should include the following as minimum:-

- ✓ application form including written evidence of previous knowledge and experience
- ✓ face – to - face meeting / telephone interview with either host organisation or trainer before commencing the course.

Key points

- Applicants should still be provided with information on the content of the Counselling People Towards Behaviour Change course; the ongoing assessment process; formal assessment requirements such as reflective logs and assignment; and minimum attendance required.
- Any concern about an applicant's suitability for the course should be discussed with the trainers. If still unsure please contact SACC for further advice.

Information on the Counselling People Towards Behaviour change course is available on pages 14-16 of the main guidance www.scotacc.org

Supervision and support

Information on the purpose and regularity of supervision for participants, during the supervised practice element of the training, is outlined in the main guidance p 17-18.

As well as providing supervision of counselling practice, supervisors will also support the development of the participant's portfolio for submission to SACC.

It is good practice to enable participants to attend other related training and development opportunities as available.

Key points

- Supervisors should have completed the COSCA Counselling Supervision Skills Certificate or the COSCA Counselling Supervision Certificate or an equivalent course from another recognised agency such as BACP.
- Supervisors must have regular supervision of their own in line with COSCA/BACP requirements. This may be from within or outwith the organisation.
- All counsellors who are supervising participants on the SACC training programme must be familiar with and work to the SACC Volunteer Training and Accreditation Guidance and the aims and learning outcomes for the practice supervision element of the training.
- Supervisors are encouraged to join SACC's Supervisors Network where they will receive updates and opportunities to attend workshops with colleagues from other member organisations.

NB Please contact SACC if cost or distance are barriers to any of the above.

Number and range of clients

All information relating to the number of clients, client profiles and presenting issues required for completion of the training is outlined on page 19 of the main guidance.

Key points

- Organisations should consider the number of people coming forward for counselling, and the range of presenting issues, before deciding if they are able to provide the experience required for participants to complete their training. Participants training with local organisations that have a smaller number of clients may take longer than two years to complete the supervised training element of the course and submit their portfolio.
- Organisations should have a client screening process in place to ensure that, as far as possible, volunteers only work with clients within their current skill set and experience.

Suitable counselling environment

Organisations must adhere to COSCA code of ethics in relation to safety and confidentiality in the counselling environment – whether face-to-face, on-line or phone counselling.

Key points

- Training participants should only work in situations where there are more experienced members of the team available, both before and after the counselling session, for immediate advice or support if required. This includes face-to-face, on-line or phone counselling.
- Organisations should ensure that the participant is familiar with all the policies and procedures required to provide a professional and confidential counselling service.
- All reasonable adjustments must be made to accommodate participants with disabilities.

Submission of portfolios

It is the responsibility of host organisations to ensure that participants completing the supervised practice element of the volunteer alcohol counsellor training programme are aware of the requirements and submission dates for portfolio accreditation.

SACC will inform member organisations of accreditation panel dates and host organisations will inform SACC of the names of participants submitting portfolios.

SACC accreditation panel dates will be set in advance each calendar year, along with dates for the submission of portfolios (usually 4-6 weeks prior to the meeting).

Key points

- The practice supervisor should be confident that the participant is competent to practice and the evidence of achievement of learning outcomes (template 7) must be completed before the portfolio is submitted.
- Any portfolio submitted to SACC should be endorsed by someone (additional to the practice supervisor) on behalf of the host organisation as to authenticity and content.
- The host organisation is responsible for ensuring the portfolio reaches the lead assessor safely. SACC will help with these arrangements if required.
- All portfolios must be transported in a sealed package, treated as strictly confidential and be clearly marked with the host organisations name and address. (Some organisations maintain a copy of the portfolio as a back-up).
- After each panel meeting SACC will inform the participants and their host agencies of the outcome of the panel.
- Any trainee volunteer counsellor who is unhappy with the accreditation process is entitled to make a complaint using SACC complaints procedure which can found at www.scotacc.org/complaints/

The Scottish Alcohol Counselling Consortium is responsible for development, delivery and assessment of the COSCA validated Certificate in Advanced Alcohol Counselling Skills.

All training is provided in line with SACC's Equality and Diversity policy and all participants and host organisations can access SACC's complaints procedure www.scotacc.org

As host organisation (*insert name*) will:-

1. provide access to a Counselling People Towards Behaviour Change course
2. provide all required supervision and support as laid out in SACC's 'Volunteer Alcohol Counselling Programme and Certificate in Advanced Alcohol Counselling Skills: Guidance for participants and practice supervisors'
3. adhere to the 'Guidance for SACC member organisations on the recruitment, training and supervision of volunteer counsellors' and provide suitable environment and conditions for training
4. ensure each volunteer counsellor completes and returns a PVG Disclosure Scotland application form
5. provide opportunity for other related training and development as considered appropriate.

As a participant on the Certificate in Advanced Counselling Skills programme I:-

1. meet the minimum qualifications for acceptance into the training programme
2. will attend a selection process by host organisation
3. will attend all sessions of the Counselling People Towards Behaviour Change course (30 hours) and complete all course work
4. will undertake to work towards the Certificate in Advanced Alcohol Counselling Skills(120 hours min) including counselling sessions with clients; supervision sessions; completion of all course work and gathering evidence for submission of portfolio to SACC
5. intend to continue to support the host organisation through volunteering
6. will complete organisational induction for volunteer counsellors and adhere to necessary organisational procedures required of volunteer counsellors including confidentiality and data protection procedures
7. will adhere to SACC's 'Volunteer Alcohol Counselling Programme and Certificate in Advanced Alcohol Counselling Skills: Guidance for participants and practice supervisors'
8. have read, understood and accept the procedure for discontinuation of training.

We, the undersigned, accept the above responsibilities and obligations

	Signature	PRINT NAME	Date
Participant (Trainee Volunteer Counsellor)			
Host organisation representative			

