

Provider's name: Sherwood Psychotherapy Training Institute Ltd

Provider's UKPRN: 10023458

Legal address: 22 Eldon Business Park, Eldon Road, Attenborough, Beeston, NOTTINGHAM, NG9 6DZ

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Student protection plan for the period 2024-25

1. An assessment of the range of risks to the continuation of study for your students, how those risks may differ based on your students' needs, characteristics and circumstances, and the likelihood that those risks will crystallise

The Sherwood Psychotherapy Training Institute Ltd has been offering psychotherapy and counselling programmes since 1987. Programmes are accredited by UKCP and BACP. BSc and MSc degree programmes offer a dual academic and professional qualification with professional body accreditation and university validation of degree programmes since 1995 (MSc) and 2008 (BSc).

The risk that we are no longer able to deliver programmes in this highly specialised field in the next three years is low:

- Risk of not maintaining validation or accreditation: We have a strong history of professional accreditation of BSc and MSc programmes. Since inception of the programmes accreditation with PSRBs has been maintained, our counselling programmes have been accredited with BACP since 1994 (the BSc since 2008) and Masters programmes have been accredited with UKCP since 1995. We have a strong history of university validation of our degree programmes. Where a change in validating partner has been necessary for strategic reasons, in all cases existing students have been enabled to complete their training through either teach out arrangements with the former university or full transfer of students to the new validating partner. With our excellent reputation and significant experience of providing joint academic and professionally validated programmes, successful transfers have been made to new partners without significant impact on the training provided to existing students. We currently have a strong long-term validation agreement with Staffordshire University commencing in August 2015 so risks of provider closure are considered very small.
- Closure of an individual programme: The core programmes at SPTI are the BSc and two MSc programmes, these programmes are long established and successful programmes offering specialised academic and clinical training and qualifications to Master's level. They have been successfully recruiting for over 10 years (BSc) and over 20 years (MSc) with increases seen in the levels of recruitment in the last five years. Historically, the most significant reasons for student withdrawal has been unforeseen financial difficulties for individual students. Post graduate loans for MSc programmes have improved accessibility and financial stability for students and so it is anticipated improved financial stability across the programmes. The risk of having to close a current programme due to low enrolments is therefore considered to be low.
- Risk of reduced income: We are a not for profit organisation solely funded by student fees. With recruitment and income maintained at current levels financial forecasts have been prepared and submitted to the Office for Students which demonstrate that the organisation will remain financially viable. These forecasts estimate a surplus to be maintained which allows for reinvestment in the training delivery.
- The risk that we would not be able to deliver material components of our programmes is low. We have a stable team of experienced facilitators, all of whom have specialist areas but who are able to deliver all components of the training if necessary, so mitigating tuition risks.

- The risk of strategic decisions to close current programmes is low. Strategic planning is undertaken on annual basis at Senior Leadership and Director level for both the short term and long term (5 years) there is in place a strong commitment to maintenance of current courses and further development of areas of specialism as a strategic aim for the next five years
- The risk that we not be able to deliver training at our current site in the next three years is very low. We have a long-term lease agreement on the premises and in the event of emergency are able to rent alternative premises in the vicinity with insurance in place to cover any unanticipated costs.
- OfS approval for student support purposes: SPTI are a registered provider with OfS, therefore support for the BSc and MSc programmes has been granted successfully and enables BSc and MSc students to apply for Tuition Fee Loans, Maintenance Loans and DSA support. SPTI fulfil the requirements of the OfS regulatory requirements.
- Registered Provider: in the event that SPTI were de-registered or suspended and therefore teach-out would be required, we would endeavour to transfer existing eligible students to an OfS registered provider, should they so wish.

2. The measures that you have put in place to mitigate those risks that you consider to be reasonably likely to crystallise

- In the event that enrolments into a course were low for any one year and SPTI was unable to recruit a viable cohort our commitment to students is that this would not affect existing students on a programme. Flexible part time facilitators mean training can be adjusted to student numbers so reducing impact on the financial viability of a course. Risk of this situation is however considered to be low.
- If strategic decisions were made to close a programme, for example due to changes in the field of psychotherapy training or changing mission or ethos of training, then closure of a programme would be through no new intake and existing current students being able to continue on a teach out basis until completion of training. This is incorporated into the validation agreements with Staffordshire University and also the Student Contract signed by students before commencement of their training.
- In the event of unforeseen events necessitating closure of a programme then APEL into similar programmes would be negotiated directly with other institutions offering similar professional/academic programmes or students would be offered refunds if other options are not available to them. This is written into the validation agreement with Staffordshire University. Cash reserves are maintained, and facilitators are available on a flexible basis to mitigate this risk. We have a facilitator training programme and actively assess training needs on an annual basis and we recruit facilitators in accordance with need. Hence this is considered to be very low risk
- Closure of a specific site: Planned closure of a specific site would not be undertaken during an academic year and would be planned over one year in advance. If it were considered necessary to close a specific site on an unplanned basis, for example on health and safety grounds, alternative venues for training would be sought and hired in the immediate vicinity, ensuring accessibility for all students and that all resource needs were provided for. The nature of the training means courses are offered in weekend blocks of three to four days, in small groups of up to 18 students and in two buildings in Nottingham city centre. There are many other premises in the immediate area which can be hired on an ad-hoc basis and which offer suitable alternative premises. Hence training would be uninterrupted and accessible to students.

3. Information about the policy you have in place to refund tuition fees and other relevant costs to your students and to provide compensation where necessary in the event that you are no longer able to preserve continuation of study

A copy of our refund and compensation policy is available upon request and on Moodle, our student VLE . As a not for profit organisation solely funded by student fees, SPTI currently only offers refunds where it is unable to offer the training as described and where fundamental changes have to be made to programmes. In cases of withdrawal part way through an academic year all students are fully liable for their tuition fees once they have signed their student contract. This is made clear to students at all stages of admissions and enrolment. It is incorporated in advice to students given at information days and in advance of training, in the student contract issued prior to enrolment and in student handbooks issued at induction. An exception to this is where students withdraw due to exceptional circumstances which can be certified by doctors or other evidence.

A proportionate refund system is in place for students withdrawing who are in receipt of funding to pay their full tuition fees, i.e. tuition fee loan from the SLC and students with tuition fees paid in full by a sponsor. This is on the basis of withdrawal in exceptional circumstances and ensures that students with genuine reasons for withdrawal and who have funding in place to pay their fees are not disadvantaged. It also ensures that students who may need to withdraw due to illness or disability are not disadvantaged.

To ensure that we continue to meet the financial implications of our refund policy we have cash reserves in place which would be sufficient to provide refunds and compensation for those small number of students who we have identified as at risk of non-continuation of study.

4. Information about how you will communicate with students about your student protection plan

Our student protection plan is updated in consultation with students forming a student facing document. This is via the student combined programme committee process whereby the draft document is circulated to student representatives and students for feedback. It continues to be an agenda item for discussion at the combined programme committee.

We publish our student protection plan and Refunds & Compensation Policy on our website, on Moodle and via information days for prospective students.

The documents are signposted to prospective students along with the privacy notice and student contract prior to acceptance of an offer. This ensures transparency for applicants before enrolment.

We will ensure that facilitators are fully aware of the implications of our student protection plan via briefing on all team days held three times per year and via Programme Leader meetings where strategy and regulations are considered. This will enable dissemination to teams via Programme Leaders.

Should the student protection plan need to be implemented we will:

- Liaise with the OfS, Staffordshire University, BACP and UKCP to advise them of the situation and plan for students.
- Formally write to all affected students within a two-week period of a decision being formally approved at Director level.
- Students will be advised of their rights and options in accordance with the protection plan and CMA advice and guidance.
- We will work with students to discuss options and resolution for example transfer to alternative providers, refunds etc.

