

## **Independent Counselling Service for Schools (ICSS)**

### **COVID -19 Contingency Plan for the provision of Counselling for Post Primary aged pupils in Mainstream or Special Schools**

#### **Information for Schools**

The Education Authority (EA) has developed contingency plans for the continued provision of the Independent Counselling Service for Schools (ICSS). During these unprecedented times, more than ever, it is important that we continue to provide counselling for the young people who need emotional support.

Your ICSS Provider will be in contact with you to discuss the contingency arrangements as follows:

#### **Counselling Sessions**

Counselling sessions will be provided for your current and new young people via telephone or secure online video calling. This will be provided at the same time and day as the Counsellor is usually in your school.

#### **Drop-In Sessions**

'Drop In' sessions will be provided via telephone. Counsellors will provide a telephone contact number for young people to contact them at the same time and day as it is provided in your school.

## **Referrals**

Referrals from young people, teachers and parents will be arranged as usual via the Key Contact/Deputy Key Contact who will manage the waiting list. The Key Contact/Deputy Key Contact will liaise closely with the Counsellor to ensure that all young people who require counselling receives it.

## **Urgent Referrals**

ICSS Providers will provide a telephone contact point for school staff to address urgent referrals.

## **Key Contact/Deputy Key Contact and Counsellor Weekly Meetings**

The weekly meetings between the Key Contact/Deputy Key Contact and School Counsellor will continue via telephone.

## **Communication with Young People and Parents**

Schools are required to communicate the interim arrangements for the provision of counselling through their usual communication systems. EA will also provide communication via its website [www.eani.org.uk/covid-19](http://www.eani.org.uk/covid-19), Facebook and Twitter platforms.

## **Safeguarding Concerns**

Counsellors will continue to respond to safeguarding disclosures and concerns as per the school Child Protection Policy. Any safeguarding concerns will be discussed with the Designated Teacher/Deputy for Child Protection.