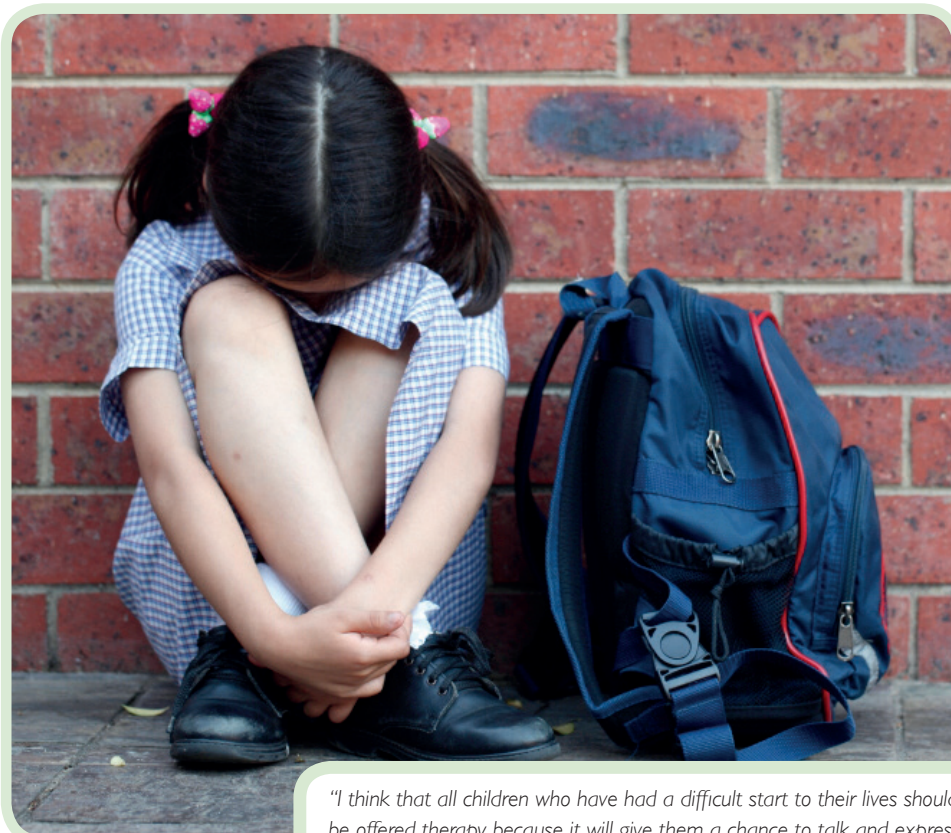


The ACP and Child and Adolescent Psychotherapy



"I think that all children who have had a difficult start to their lives should be offered therapy because it will give them a chance to talk and express their feelings about what has happened to them." 15-year-old girl.

What is child psychotherapy?

Child psychotherapists work with some of the most vulnerable children in the UK, including those with long-term mental health problems, histories of severe neglect, abuse and attachment difficulties. ACP registered and trained child psychotherapists pay close attention to how a child or young person communicates their feelings and experiences, for example, through play or by their behaviour.

A child psychotherapist will seek to bring about symptom relief by helping the child or young person to make sense of their experiences and feelings. It is hoped that by being understood and through developing a thoughtful relationship with their therapist, they will find new and healthier ways of managing their difficulties.



"I didn't think talking would help – what's the point of talking, I said? But there was something about being with someone who didn't put any pressure on me, she just waited for me to find my own answers – I didn't have to think of something clever to say - straight away". **Boy 14**

Who are we?

The Association of Child and Adolescent Psychotherapists (ACP) is the main professional body for psychoanalytic child and adolescent psychotherapists in the UK. It was established in 1949 and is recognised by the Department of Health as an NHS core profession and training. It has over 900 members working in the UK and abroad.

The ACP is now registered with the Professional Standards Authority (PSA) and the ACP's register has been accredited under the Accredited Registers programme. This means that NHS employers, community service providers and the public will be able to choose a child psychotherapist from a register vetted and approved by the Professional Standards Authority for Health and Social Care. The PSA is an independent statutory body, accountable to Parliament. Our members are trained to provide a high standard of psychotherapy for children, parents and families in a range of settings, including Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), Social Care, schools and community centres.

ACP Mission and Goals

The ACP promotes and upholds high standards of child and adolescent psychoanalytic psychotherapy in the NHS, community and private settings.

It aims to do this through:

- Maintaining and monitoring ACP accredited trainings and the overarching continued professional development of our members.
- Working in partnership with the public and a range of other groups, including relevant professional bodies, to increase awareness and understanding of psychoanalytic psychotherapy with children and young people.

What can we treat?

ACP trained child and adolescent psychotherapists serve the emotional and psychological needs of children and young people and their families and have done so for over 50 years. They have considerable experience of treating:

- Depression (approximately 30 sessions of child psychotherapy plus parent work is a National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) recommended treatment - updated 2015)
- Anxiety
- Behaviour and conduct disorders
- Learning difficulties
- Eating disorders
- Self harm
- Trauma and attachment problems
- Developmental difficulties
- Maternal mental ill-health (parent-infant work)
- Looked after children (LAC) and adopted children.

An Independent Systematic Review of research into the effectiveness of psychoanalytic psychotherapy (2004) found that child psychotherapy was effective in treating sexually abused girls, those who have suffered severe deprivation and children with poorly controlled diabetes.

There is also a growing evidence-base for psychoanalytic work with children and young people (Midgley and Kennedy, 2011; Palmer, Nascimento and Fonagy, 2013; Abbass et al., 2013), and short-term psychoanalytic psychotherapy is a NICE - recommended treatment for children with moderate or severe depression (NICE, 2015).

What is our Training?

The ACP child psychotherapy training is based in NHS (CAMHS) teams and lasts for four years. All trainees will also have completed a two year infant/child observation training. The Association of Child Psychotherapists recognises and monitors trainings in child and adolescent psychotherapy at five training schools:

- **Birmingham Trust for Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy, Birmingham**
- **British Psychotherapy Foundation, London**
- **Human Development Scotland, Edinburgh**
- **Northern School of Child and Adolescent Psychotherapy, Leeds**
- **Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust, London**

Working in multi disciplinary teams

In addition to completing a four year NHS CAMHS based training, child psychotherapists work as specialists within multi disciplinary teams. They are skilled at supporting large and complex networks, bringing together professionals through consultation, training and therapeutic thinking. Many of our members have been instrumental in developing specialist services or projects and can also provide supervision for those working in community and front-line services, such as youth workers, school/college counsellors and primary mental health workers.

PSA Registration - Why is it important?

"The quality mark is important for our practitioners, who have undergone a rigorous NHS training in child mental health settings and are serious about maintaining high standards in clinical practice. This is also good news for the public - letting them know that anyone who holds the mark sits on an independently regulated register as approved by the Professional Standards Authority."

Heather Stewart, ACP Chair

"We are very pleased to accredit the ACP's register of child and adolescent psychotherapists, bringing them as professionals into a broad framework of assurance. This is good for patients, service users and the public, promoting quality. The programme also offers enhanced consumer protection to anyone looking for health and social care services, and gives child psychotherapists the opportunity to demonstrate their commitment to good practice."

Harry Cayton, Chief Executive of the Professional Standards Authority

If you would like to know more about the ACP, child and adolescent psychotherapy, or PSA registration, please contact us at: admin@childpsychotherapy.org.uk. You can also find out more about us through our website: www.childpsychotherapy.org.uk

References:

A Systematic Review of Psychoanalytic Approaches - Kennedy (2004)

A Thematic Review - Midgley and Kennedy (2007)

Psychodynamic Psychotherapy for Children and Adolescents - Abbass, A et al. (2013)

Process and Outcome Research in Child and Adolescent and Parent-Infant Psychotherapy - Palmer, Nascimento, and Fonagy (2013)

NICE Guidance - Depression (2015)

The Association of Child Psychotherapists.

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