

Open Letter to the Leadership and Ethics Committees of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy

18 Feb 2026

To the Leadership and Ethics Committees of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy,

We, the undersigned BACP members and other therapeutic professionals, are deeply concerned by the growing incorporation of critical social justice frameworks into the BACP's definitions of ethical practice and competence.

The President's column in the October 2025 *Therapy Today* is a clear example: it framed "whiteness" as an inherently problematic identity requiring interrogation. This treats one contested ideology as orthodoxy – a position many members and clients reject on intellectual, clinical, or ethical grounds.

Many practitioners now risk being deemed lacking in cultural competence or unethical simply for prioritising individual experience over group-identity analysis, while clients may also feel pressured to adopt a political framing of their distress.

Therapy must remain a space where the client's subjective experience is sovereign, where evidence-informed approaches from all traditions are equally legitimate, and where no single social or political ideology is imposed as "best practice."

We therefore urge the BACP to reaffirm its core commitment to evidence-informed practice, theoretical pluralism, safeguarding ideological impartiality and free exploration, and protecting open discourse without fear of censure.

To demonstrate its commitment to genuine theoretical pluralism and ideological neutrality, we invite the BACP to adopt the following constructive steps:

Issue a public statement reaffirming its longstanding support for theoretical and viewpoint diversity, and clarifying that no single social-justice framework is treated as a primary requirement for ethical practice.

Establish (or support) an advisory panel tasked with reviewing recent publications and guidance, with a brief to ensure that language and examples remain inclusive of the full range of legitimate therapeutic approaches.

Devote at least one full issue of *Therapy Today* in 2026 to exploring pluralism and viewpoint diversity in counselling and psychotherapy, actively welcoming contributions from all major theoretical orientations.

Agree to participate in (or co-sponsor) an open professional conference or public panel discussion on the proper place of social and political frameworks within therapeutic training and practice.

Implementing them would show that the BACP is prepared to listen to the many members who feel alienated by its present course. This is not an attack on equality or social awareness, but a defence of the open, pluralistic, client-centred profession we trained to practice. Together, we encourage the BACP to lead with transparency and respect for the full spectrum of professional thought.

Signed,

Dr Jude Adcock – Psychotherapist
Andrew Armour – Executive Coach
Ursula Barnes – Integrative Counsellor, Systemic Psychotherapist
Sue Beaney – Psychotherapist
Lucy Beney – Counsellor
Mark Birbeck – Child and Adolescent Psychoanalytic Psychotherapist
Ian Andrew Boss – Counsellor
Antoine Bowes – Psychotherapist
David Britten – Counsellor, Psychotherapist
Jennie Cummings-Knight – Psychotherapeutic Counsellor
Heather Dale – Supervisor, Therapist
Andrew Deakin – Counsellor
Windy Dryden – Professor
Wendy Durell – Art Therapist
Sandi Durnford-Slater – Doctoral Student
Audrey Elliot – Counsellor, Psychotherapist
Deborah Evans – Counsellor
Richard Evans-Lacey – Psychotherapist
Birgit Ewald – Counsellor, Supervisor
Paula Farson – Registered Psychotherapist
Colin Feltham – Emeritus Professor
Jo Fretwell – MBACP (Accred)
Mary Garner – Counsellor
Christie Harrison – Counsellor
Vanessa Haynes – Counsellor
Jim Holloway – Counsellor, Therapist, Supervisor
Christopher K. Johannes – Counsellor, Therapist, Coach
Nick Karr – Psychotherapist
Ryan Karter – Counsellor
Margaret King – Counsellor
John Landaw – Psychotherapist
Dr Nicholas Lewin – Jungian Psychoanalyst
Sonia Lucas – Psychotherapist
Mary MacCallum Sullivan – Psychotherapist
Tom MacKay – Psychotherapist
Thalia Martin – Counsellor

Alex Maunder Taylor – MBACP
Annie McKinney – Counsellor, Therapist
Mark Neary – Counsellor & Trainer
Kitty Newman – BACP Accredited Psychotherapist
Sue Parker Hall – Psychotherapist
Terry Patterson – Counsellor, Clinical Supervisor
Nick Perkins – Therapist
Steve Perkins – Psychotherapist, Supervisor
Nalini Persaud – Psychotherapist
Dr Nash Popovic – Personal Consultant
Erin Rose Puttock – Cognitive Behavioural Psychotherapist
Peter Rigg – Psychotherapist
Marijke Roberts – Counsellor
Becky Seale – BACP Senior Accredited Counsellor
Ben Sears – Counsellor
Dr Carole Sherwood – Clinical Psychologist
Deborah Short – UKCP Registered Psychotherapist
Lyndsey Simpson – Psychotherapist
Jacob Smith – Counsellor
Mark Smith – CBT Therapist
Alasdair Stokeld – Psychoanalytic Psychotherapist
Johnathan Sunley – Psychotherapist
Dr Val Thomas – Psychotherapist
Tim Toon – Psychotherapist
Dulcie Tudor – Trainee Counsellor
Jane Vincent – UKCP Accredited Psychotherapist
Chloe Ward – HCPC Registered Sport & Exercise Psychologist
Sarah Willocks – Therapist

Convenors: Steve Perkins, Nash Popovic