

### Guidelines for referrers

The Medical Foundation is a human rights organisation and a registered national charity. We provide care and rehabilitation for individuals and their families who have been subjected to torture or organised violence.

The Medical Foundation plays an important national and international role in documenting evidence of torture and it seeks to educate and influence Governments and decision makers worldwide.

Some 99% of our clients are asylum seekers and refugees, coping not just with past suffering, but with the pain of exile. This can include the loss of family, friends, home, job, culture and identity, as well as the fear of being returned to face further persecution.

The North West Centre provides a counselling and psychotherapy service for survivors of torture or organised violence.

### What do we mean by torture and organised violence?

By 'torture and organised violence' we mean both severe physical and mental suffering deliberately inflicted on a person in the custody or under the control of such organised bodies as police and security forces and other agencies of Governments, military and paramilitary units, and also organised non-state groups. It includes rape and sexual abuse perpetrated by such agencies. It cannot include the violence suffered by adult military personnel in a combat situation, but it does include abuse as described above either experienced as a prisoner of war or at the hands of superiors in the victim's own military unit.

The Medical Foundation will consider taking up cases of survivors of organised violence depending on the capacity of the service at the time of referral.

### Who can be referred for Counselling?

The Medical Foundation is committed to working with survivors most in need of our help. We want to ensure that those who need our service can see us as soon as resources allow, although we are not a crisis service. It is helpful to us if you could think through the following questions before you refer a client to us:-

- ✓ Is the person a survivor of torture?
  - If they are in need of urgent or immediate help then refer to GP or crisis service initially.
  - If they are under 18 years of age then refer to children and young people's services rather than the Medical Foundation.
- ✓ Is the person in need of a specialist service because they are distressed as a result of torture or organised violence?
- ✓ Is their distress mainly related to the torture or violence they have experienced although this distress may have been increased by the losses and difficulties of living in exile?
- ✓ Is the person isolated or finding it difficult to access support from their community, family or friends?
- ✓ Do they want to talk to someone, or have some form of help or treatment?

Refer to Medical Foundation

### How do I refer?

Referrals are usually made in writing using our referral form. The form asks for information to ensure that the client is appropriate for our service.

A client can refer him or herself or be referred by an agency, GP, refugee community organisation, a relative, or friend.

Please ring the centre if you are unsure whether to make a referral and want to discuss it with us. We are always happy to discuss potential referrals but will not be able to give an acceptance over the phone.

If you are supporting a torture survivor who is not appropriate for our service and you are having difficulty finding them appropriate help, then please ring the centre and we will try and suggest a local service able to support your client.

Please fill in as much of the form as you can, as it helps us to identify those survivors most in need of our services.

Where possible ensure that you ask the client if they need an interpreter and whether they would prefer a man or woman. We can then aim to meet the interpreting needs of each client if the language is not spoken by any of our volunteer team.

### What happens next?

Once we have received your referral form we will write to you and your client.

If we are offering your client a first appointment, we will send them an appointment letter. If your client is not appropriate for the service we will contact you and your client to suggest other services that may be able to help.

The first two - five appointments will explore what sort of help is needed and whether counselling or psychotherapy would be helpful. The counsellor and client will also discuss if there are other services that can give support alongside the Medical Foundation or another counselling service that the person can be referred to. If the survivor becomes our client, they will be offered a medium term or long-term counselling contract.

We will usually try to ensure that the person who sees a client for a first appointment continues to see them during the period of the counselling contract.

## Referrer Guidelines



**MEDICAL FOUNDATION**  
for the care of victims of torture

North West

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Registered Charity No. 1000340

To make a donation contact  
the fund raising department at  
our Central Office in London  
on 020 7697 7799.

If you are interested in  
becoming a volunteer, please  
contact the North West Centre  
on 0161 236 5744.