

Institution: Metanoia Institute

Unit of Assessment:

Main Panel A: UoA 4, Psychology, Psychiatry and Neuroscience

1. Unit context and structure, research and impact strategy

Metanoia Institute is a small but well-established educational charity and professional training institution specialising in the field of counselling and psychotherapy. This REF submission represents the first time Metanoia Institute has submitted evidence of a growing, collaborative and vital research environment to the Research Excellence Framework for assessment.

Over the past years the Institute has increasingly engaged in research and applied field work, as evidenced by involvement in ongoing funded research projects and a growing bank of publications and doctorate completions that can be accessed [here](#).

Metanoia Institute specialises in professional body accredited training programmes for counsellors, psychotherapists, counselling psychologists, supervisors, coaches and organisational development consultants. For over 30 years, Metanoia Institute has provided high-quality professional training through university validated undergraduate, postgraduate and doctoral programmes in Counselling, Psychotherapy, Counselling Psychology and allied fields.

Doctoral students are registered on joint programmes with Middlesex University, with all taught aspects and first supervision resting with Metanoia Institute. Current registered numbers are:

- 99 Doctorate in Counselling Psychology and Psychotherapy by Professional Studies
- 13 PhD
- 61 Doctorate in Psychotherapy by Professional Studies
- 13 Doctorate in Psychotherapy by Public Works

The number of awarded doctoral students during the current assessment period comprises:

- 54 DCPsych
- 6 Doctoral Conversion Programme (no longer running)
- 30 DPsych by Professional Studies
- 12 DPsych by Public Works

More recently, Metanoia Institute has grown a developing centre of research and a reputation for practice-based evidence through our own clinic and services. Crucially, the research environment at Metanoia Institute is wholly inclusive of service-users. Through the Metanoia Counselling and Psychotherapy Service (MCPS), an on-site clinic established in 1997, the Institute offers a confidential, low-cost service for the community, providing individual weekly sessions for up to a year in duration. MCPS offers counselling and psychotherapy services for help with depression and anxiety, post-natal depression, alcohol and/or drug use, parenting difficulties, sexual difficulties, relationship difficulties, self-harm, personality problems and coping difficulties. MCPS is the largest community counselling and psychotherapy service in the local area and provides support to approximately 500 clients per year, considerably enhancing mental health provision in west London. This contribution is recognised by the continued statutory grant funding from the London Borough of Ealing, which it achieved in 2015 as a part of the Talking Therapies Consortium.

MCPS is based within Metanoia Institute and is partially funded by the LB of Ealing, with clients being both NHS and self-referred. The Metanoia clinic allows the Institute to provide placements for students, as well as operating a centre for practice-based research. All counsellors,

psychotherapists and psychologists at MCPS are in fully supervised training at Metanoia Institute, with practitioners representing diverse backgrounds and ethnicities.

Alongside affordable therapeutic treatment, in 2010 MCPS was established as a research clinic using Routine Outcomes Monitoring. This methodology provides a base for practice-based research projects in psychotherapy and counselling contributing to the development of knowledge within the profession, as evidenced in Section 4. The clinic is a recognised practice-based research setting which attracts many academic partners seeking to work with Metanoia Institute in the development of knowledge and evidence-based research on the development of psychological therapies for mental health and wellbeing. Currently, Metanoia Institute is in the process of applying for UKRI registration, based on a successful track record of research funding through partnerships, joint awards and research grants from independent sources, detailed in Section 3.

Over the past 12 months of a restricted pandemic situation, MCPS has continued to provide counselling and psychotherapy services, both in-person and online. Not only did this ensure service continuity through a time of significant need but allowed the ongoing clinical work of professional trainees and researchers, fully supported through regulated supervision.

In addition to the research environment provided by MCPS, Metanoia Institute provides a school-based counselling service, Here4You, offering high quality and professional mental health services to students in secondary schools and colleges in London. Here4You also provides support to secondary school and college staff in order to promote wellbeing. The service provides qualified counsellors, trained in the humanistic approach, delivering a professional, evidence-based service in collaboration with the young person and school staff.

The established provision of community-based services at Metanoia Institute is integral to the research mission of the Institute. Whilst these services provide crucial and ongoing access to community-based psychological therapies, they also provide a fertile ground for practice-based research leading to evidence-based practice. Metanoia has become a much sought-after collaborative partner for research projects. Furthermore, the community-based psychological services offered by Metanoia Institute are centres of excellence for students studying on professional programmes, allowing them to engage with clinical placement and service users within a fully supervised research environment. Over 150 Metanoia Institute students undertake clinical placements within MCPS each year. The interface between the clinic, academic programmes and research is a strong attraction for recruitment of trainee professionals, through to doctoral level.

The impact of the Metanoia Counselling and Psychotherapy Service on mental health and wellbeing is evidenced through the activities of MCPS as an active research clinic within the London Borough of Ealing. MCPS is the largest voluntary sector provider of counselling and psychotherapy in the borough, complementing statutory services by providing treatments to patients with complex presentations, for a longer duration, and with effective outcomes.

The mission of Metanoia Institute is to provide excellence in counselling, psychotherapy, counselling psychology and applied psychology training and qualifications. In conjunction with this, it is the stated purpose of Metanoia Institute to develop and enhance the work and reputation of the Institute in sustainable practice-based research and scholarship, through fostering an active research culture and provision of accessible and effective educational and clinical services to the wider community. The Metanoia Counselling and Psychotherapy Service clinic and Here4You are fundamental to this mission, operating at the service-user level to advance understanding and evidence-based practice in psychological therapies responsive to emerging priorities in the field of mental health and wellbeing.

2. People

Metanoia Institute is a small, charity-based training organisation for psychological therapies. It is fundamental to the Institute to contribute to knowledge, practice and society in the field of mental health services. Employing staff with responsibility for research is demonstrable evidence of a vital and sustainable culture of research.

Dr Biljana van Rijn, Faculty Head of Research and Doctoral projects

Dr Joel Vos, Senior Researcher with a responsibility for the clinic data and the RCT in Transactional Analysis

Dr Peter Pearce, Faculty Head of Applied Social and Organisational Sciences

Dr Sophie Bager-Charlson, Director of Studies PhD/DPW and Development, responsible for the managements and supervision of these doctoral programmes, and development within the doctoral school.

Professor Simon du Plock, previously Faculty Head of Doctoral Programmes

Dr Evi Chryssafidou, European Project Officer/Researcher. Currently responsible for the European Grant projects, previously responsible for the Research Clinic data Analysis (2015-2020)

3. Income, infrastructure and facilities

The research infrastructure at Metanoia Institute promotes an active, lively and contemporary research culture which supports evidence-based practice to influence public and professional understanding and policy in counselling and psychotherapy. This is achieved through the Research Centre in Faculty Two, which operates as a hub for developing subject-related research groups and initiatives. Engagement in research groups is open to the wider Metanoia Institute community, leading to the development of an inclusive and supportive research culture and knowledge exchange.

Metanoia Institute is organised across three Faculties; Faculty One (Psychotherapy and Counselling), Faculty Two (Research and Doctoral Programmes) and Faculty Three (Applied Social and Organisational Sciences). There are 132 staff employed at the Institute, representing academic and teaching staff, institutional management and administration, clinical and support staff. Many contracts are part time, reflecting not only the size and business needs of the institution but that many employees are also active practitioners.

Metanoia Institute is based in the London Borough of Ealing. The Institute owns, outright, two large Edwardian buildings, in close proximity, situated around Ealing Common. The buildings replicate the therapeutic environment for training, providing a supportive and inclusive atmosphere. The property in Gunnersbury Avenue also houses the Metanoia Counselling and Psychotherapy Service (MCPS). The clinic is partially funded by the London Borough of Ealing. The Metanoia clinic allows the Institute to provide placements for students, as well as operating a centre for practice-based research. All counsellors, psychotherapists and psychologists at MCPS are in fully supervised training at Metanoia Institute, with practitioners representing diverse backgrounds and ethnicities.

In addition, Metanoia Institute provides a school-based counselling service, Here4You, offering high quality, professional mental health services to students in secondary schools and colleges in London. Here4You also provides support to secondary school and college staff in order to promote wellbeing. The service provides qualified counsellors, trained in the humanistic approach, delivering a professional, evidence-based service in collaboration with the young person and school staff.

Projects, impact and activity developing from the Research Centre is channelled through the Metanoia Institute Research Committee. The membership of this committee includes academic, teaching, clinical and administrative staff as well as students. The Institute's ethos of quality training and practice leads us to engage in developing research partnerships, both locally and internationally, with a variety of professional, academic and community groups.

The oversight of Metanoia Institute research strategy, its monitoring and implementation, is delegated to Metanoia Institute Research Committee and approved by Academic Board. The strategic aims are:

- To encourage, support and monitor research, scholarship and innovation to make a significant contribution to the Institute's academic standing.
- To support the development of high-quality research of relevance to clinical practice and the professional field of psychological therapies and related disciplines.
- To develop a community of practice and facilitate the exchange of research knowledge and ideas.
- To support the development of intra and inter-disciplinary research.
- To support the development of applications for external funding for appropriate research

The Metanoia Institute Clinical Ethics Research Committee oversees all research applications and proposals and acts as a reference point for clinical ethics matters.

The strategic aims are further elaborated by the Metanoia Institute Research Centre which clarifies the Institute's research emphasis on practise-based research; specifically the development of psychotherapy practise and a practitioner-researcher voice in clinical practice and research, development of psychotherapy treatment theories, routine psychotherapy practice and community engagement. To that cause, publications by Metanoia Institute staff and students are primarily focused on psychotherapy and counselling publications which are widely read within the profession.

Metanoia Institute is committed to promoting a sustainable research culture. This is given structure through the Faculty of Research and Doctoral Programmes, where academic staff linked to project management and the research clinic are based. An annual Research Academy and regular research seminars are supported by Metanoia Institute. Members of the wider Metanoia Institute community are invited to attend. In March 2020 a Communications and Marketing Officer was appointed at Metanoia Institute, a post which has facilitated a lively and active engagement with and promotion of research. Over the past 12 months Metanoia Institute has considerably increased social media presence and voice in relation to research activity, outputs and public engagement.

Research project funding received during the assessment period:

Assessment of Mental Health of Refugees and Asylum seekers by Youth Workers (AMORAY)

Grant Recipient: Metanoia Institute (partner)
 Period: 2020-2022
 Total amount awarded: 214 000 E
 Funders: Erasmus. EU programmes

Transactional Analysis psychotherapy as treatment for depression. Randomised control trial.

Grant recipient: Metanoia Institute
 Period: 2019-2022
 Total amount awarded 150 000 euro
 Funders: European Association for Transactional Analysis

Reviewing and validating the scientific foundations of Transactional Analysis theory and practice

Grant recipients: Metanoia Institute

Period: 2019-2020
 Total Amount Awarded: £16 461
 Funders: European Association for Transactional Analysis

Avatar Based Counselling with Pro Real in Secondary Schools. Case Study

Grant Recipients: ProReal Ltd.
 Funders: NHS Small Business Research Initiative (SBRI) Healthcare
 Period: 2015-2016
 Total Amount Awarded: £970 000
 Metanoia Award: £15 400
 Role: PI

Avatar Based Counselling with Pro Real in Secondary Schools. Evaluation

Grant Recipients: ProReal Ltd.
 Funders: NHS Small Business Research Initiative (SBRI) Healthcare
 Period: 2015-2016
 Total Amount Awarded: £970 000
 Metanoia Award: £38.302
 Role: Research Associate

Avatar Based therapy within Prison Settings: Pilot Evaluation

Grant Recipients: ProReal Ltd.
 Funders: NHS Small Business Research Initiative (SBRI) Healthcare
 Period: 2013-2014
 Total Amount Awarded: £150 000
 Metanoia Award: £40 000
 Role: PI

Pluralistic Therapy for Depression/Pilot Project

Grant Recipients: University of the West of England
 Funders: British Psychological Society
 Period: 2014-2015
 Total Amount Awarded: £1500
 Role: Joint PI

London Borough of Ealing :
 2015-2019 £143.500
 2019-2023 £111.800

4. Collaboration and contribution to the research base, economy and society

The publications and impact case studies submitted as Metanoia Institute's first REF submission outline the collaborative nature of research within the Institute and the contribution made to knowledge, society and community in the field of mental health, counselling and psychotherapy.

The development of a vibrant and impactful research culture based on the long-standing work of Metanoia Institute is evidenced in the publications written by Institute staff, often in collaboration with colleagues in the field as part of the co-operative, open and participatory nature of the research culture at Metanoia. Research and resulting publications and impact derive directly from the practice-based evidence flowing from the Metanoia Institute Clinic and the school and community-based services provided by the Institute. In all cases, research centres around interventions, understanding and resources to improve mental health and wellbeing, with evidence originating from the practical work of Metanoia Institute.

Three submitted case studies outline the impact of Metanoia Institute's practice-based research and the contribution of MCPs and Here4You, through collaborative projects, to the developing knowledge base in counselling and psychotherapy interventions.

Research centred around young people's mental health within educational settings arises from the work of Dr Peter Pearce within the Faculty of Applied Social and Organisational Sciences. Metanoia Institute supports the availability and best evidence -based practice for children and young people's mental health services, specifically in educational settings, through the Here4You programme which offers school-based counselling in secondary schools in London . Through a range of inter-related activities, including collaborative research, professional advocacy and advice as part of a range of health and professional body expert advisory committees, the development of specific post-qualification career development trainings for professional therapists is directly derived from this evidence-based best practice and the establishment of a unique, school-based counselling service.

This research has occurred alongside and contributed to an increasing government recognition of the need for 'transformation' of existing Child and Adolescent Mental Health services, set out in the Green Paper (*Transforming children and young people's mental health provision*. London: Department of Health and Department for Education, 2017)

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/664855/Transforming_children_and_young_people_s_mental_health_provision.pdf

The practised-based research has contributed to a Trailblazer site for this National innovative policy rollout through the creation of Education Mental Health Teams with Ealing, led by the Here4You school-based young people's mental health service at Metanoia Institute.

The impact of professional community-based practice in working with young refugees is evidenced through the work developed at the Metanoia Institute Clinic through the AMORAY project. This Erasmus funded European project provides evidence of the impact of the work of Dr van Rijn on developing an approach to clinical assessment developed within the MCPS research clinic, and further elaborated with European partners: Asociación La Bien Pagá Espacio Escénico, Spain; Institut Corse de formation et recherche en travail social, France; IASIS NGO, Greece. The project will be completed in the autumn of 2021, with outputs which include training programmes for those working with young refugees and the provision of materials freely available to youth workers working with refugees throughout the EU and the UK. This project demonstrates practice-based evidence from the Metanoia Institute clinic providing practice-based evidence to impact beyond the field of counselling and psychotherapy, addressing broader mental health issues amongst young refugees and providing practical materials for those working with them.

Further cutting-edge research is evidenced through projects exploring digital interventions in counselling and psychotherapy. This is an emerging field with a potential for considerable future impact in health and social welfare. In counselling and psychotherapy practice, advancement in digital technologies provides scope for developing wide ranging interventions for the benefit of clients with limited access to mental health services. A series of research projects developed within the Metanoia Research Centre, led by Dr Biljana van Rijn, have impacted the development of practice and new interventions, with a potential to impact policy in treating vulnerable populations. The evaluation of avatar-based technology as an adjunct to counselling within a therapeutic community prison (2013-2014) and in school counselling with adolescents (2014-2015) was supported through a collaborative project with Roehampton University, commercial enterprise and the NHS.