



## Student Protection Plan

Provider's name: Matrix College of Counselling and Psychotherapy

Provider's UKPRN: 10023453

Legal address: 6 Griffin Court, Wymondham, NR18 0GU

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### Student Protection Plan

***This Student Protection Plan sets out the measures we have in place to protect students in the event of a risk to the continuation of studies. The measures contained in this plan apply to all Matrix students. They are in addition to the protection students have under consumer protection law and do not impinge on their consumer rights.***

***We commit to:***

- ***Being open and transparent with students in the event of a risk to the continuation of their studies, informing them as soon as possible if such a risk occurs.***
- ***Taking reasonable steps to protect student's studies and minimise any disruption.***
- ***Consult with students in a timely manner before deciding to make any substantial change to the course or its delivery.***
- ***Consult with students and consider their views on this plan.***

**Matrix College is committed to communicating any changes as early as possible, setting out clear information and options. We will take all reasonable steps to minimise disruption and to enable students to complete their studies as intended.**

**We are required by the Higher Education and Research Act (2017) to have a Student Protection Plan, like this, to protect student's interests and detail the steps we would take where significant material changes must take place which would alter the quality and/or continuation of study.**

**We carry out a quarterly risk assessments to decide how likely material changes (which may affect the continuation of the business or our ability to deliver the course) are to occur.**

**Risk levels are assessed on their measures of both impact (minimal to severe) and likelihood (rare to probable) to give an overall category of risk.**

# **1. Assessment of the range of risks to the continuation of study for students at Matrix**

## **1.1 College Closure (for financial or other reasons)**

Risk level: Low

As with other providers there may be an extreme set of events which cause the College to close. These may be triggered by the College becoming insolvent through, for example, falling student demand, becoming no longer financially viable due to loss of government funding, lack of available teaching staff, retirement of the Director with no successor in place.

We consider the possibility of the College closing due to insolvency to be low. The College has been running for 20 years and have always been able to meet our financial obligations, we pay creditors swiftly. We have a good track record of audited financial statements. We have cash reserves to ensure financial security and have no borrowings.

If government funding for student loans is withdrawn, we will work with the relevant authorities to enable us to 'teach out' the current courses.

The risk to the course closing due to low student numbers is also low. We are the only provider of a counselling degree programme in Norfolk. We are diversifying and run other courses (Introduction to Counselling Skills and Supervision Diploma).

The risk of closure due to lack of teaching staff is low. We have an excellent reputation and receive many applications when advertising for tutors.

We have a contingency plan in place to manage the sudden departure (through illness or retirement) of the Principal.

## **1.2 Venues being no longer available**

Risk level: Low

Matrix currently operates from one venue in Wymondham. We have 10-year lease on our main teaching building until 2031 and a 5-year lease on our secondary teaching building until 2028. We would have a minimum of six months' notice before the end of either lease if they were not being renewed which would give us time to find alternative local premises.

## **1.3 Loss of validation**

Risk level: Low

Matrix has a longstanding relationship with our validator, and it is highly unlikely that there will be a change of validating partner.

If we did lose validation, we would offer, where possible, the chance to move to another training provider with the relevant accreditation to protect your student experience

## **1.4 Key Programme Lead unavailable**

Risk level: Medium

This may happen because of long-term sickness, death or leaving Matrix College. We would replace the Programme Lead with another experienced tutor at Matrix to ensure minimal disruption to your studies and support. Alternatively, we may recruit a suitably qualified, external tutor to take on the role.

## **1.5 Programme changes and amendments**

Risk level: Low

The programme and modules are reviewed regularly. Our latest validation review was in July 2024, and we received five commendations for the programme. It is possible that the curriculum may alter slightly over the duration of the six-year validation agreement in line with current thinking in counselling.

## **2. Measures we have put in place to mitigate the risks that we consider to be reasonably likely to crystallise**

### **2.1 College Closure**

#### **Cancellation prior to the start of an academic year**

Should Matrix take the decision to close it will endeavour to give prospective students at least 8 weeks' notice.

We will then investigate alternative courses available and offer to transfer students to an alternative, appropriate programme with an equivalent qualification. We would discuss the proposed transfer with each individual student.

Please see the Matrix College Refund and Compensation Policy <https://matrix.ac.uk/compliance/> for further details.

#### **Cancelling the course during the course of study**

It is Matrix policy that should the College decide to close we will teach out the course a student is enrolled on. The business plan is structured in such a way that there is sufficient income to cover the costs of teaching during the duration of a student's studies. We have sufficient, flexible staff to cover all teaching.

If it was not possible for Matrix to teach out the courses, the contingency plan with Middlesex University (detailed in the Memorandum of Cooperation) would come into effect.

If, for any reason, this was not possible we would support students to transfer to an alternative, appropriate, local programme with an equivalent qualification.

Any arrangements associated with course closure would be managed in close association with Middlesex University our validating partner.

### **2.2 Loss of venue**

We have a good relationship with our Landlord and would be given ample warning if the venue was to become unavailable at the time of our lease being renewed.

In the unlikely event the venue becomes unavailable we would acquire alternative accommodation of the same, or higher standard as the current premises within 10 miles of the current location. We have insurance to cover the cost of this.

The process would be carefully planned and managed by the Operational Team, and would involve consultation with students.

We would maintain a sufficient cash balance to be able to provide a travel contribution if it is necessary in accordance with the Matrix College Refund and Compensation policy.

### **2.3 Loss of validation**

The current validation agreement with Middlesex University is for six years from July 2024.

Matrix and Middlesex University maintain strong ties to ensure the continued smooth running of our successful relationship. If validation was lost at our next re-validation (2030) we would endeavour to obtain validation from an appropriate, alternative University. If this was not possible, we would help students transfer onto to an alternative, appropriate, local programme with an equivalent qualification.

### **2.3 Loss of registration with the Office for Students**

If registration with the Office for Students is withdrawn we would apply for 'teach out' designation allowing students in receipt of student loans access to funding for the duration of the course. Our business plan allows for loss of designation and we would be able to teach out all current courses.

If teach out designation was not possible students would be helped to transfer onto an alternative course with a designated provider.

If loss of designation occurs Matrix does not anticipate the closure of the College and has a business plan for that eventuality.

### **2.4 Programme Changes**

Amendments to the programme will be considered by the Academic Board and passed to the Operational team for approval. The Academic Board has student members who are involved in the decision making of the Board.

Where a significant change to a module is proposed approval is sought from the students (via the student reps). If a consensus is achieved any proposal will be forwarded to Middlesex University for approval.

We will inform students of any material changes to the curriculum at least two months prior to the start of the new academic year.

### **Communication with students about this Student Protection Plan**

This Student Protection Plan is available to current students on Moodle and will be available to prospective students on the Matrix website.

Staff are made aware of the Student Protection Plan in their induction and it is available to them on Moodle.

The Student Protection Plan is reviewed yearly. Students will be encouraged to take part in this review via their student reps. Informal discussions with students and the Operational team may also occur and these will form part of the review process.

If we need to implement measures in our Student Protection Plan we will use the Programme Lead team to communicate with and support students.

Advice and support will be offered by the management team who will also arrange to have independent advice available (with support from Middlesex University).