



General Information

"Acorns supports children, young people and families affected by domestic and sexual violence and abuse"



Children and Young People Counselling and Play Therapy

Acorns offer children and young people between 6 and 18 years old (and sometimes younger siblings) who live in North Tyneside, time to share any difficulties or problems they have because of experiences of domestic violence or sexual abuse.

Some people like to talk about their feelings and what has happened whereas others like to use drawing, paint, clay, toys and games to help to let others know how they feel.

At Acorns the counsellors help children and young people to find the best way to express what may be worrying them on a one-to-one basis, and to have **FUN!**

Respecting their values, choices and lifestyle means that we work together with children and young people towards making choices or changes that feel right for them. Sessions take place in a comfortable and private setting and usually last for 50 minutes.

"Acorns is a loving caring place and is the place for me".



Women's Support Work

We understand that the effects of domestic and sexual violence and abuse do not usually stop after the events but often continue to affect personal and family life. The women's support worker can offer practical and emotional support for mother's and carers of children and young people who are coming to Acorns.

This may include housing and benefits advice, support to attend solicitor's or court, children's services meetings or medical appointments. Emotional support gives a safe space to share thoughts and experiences and explore how domestic violence and abuse has affected women, carers and children and can help towards feeling safer, healthier, and more confident about the future.

"Thank you so much for the kindness, support and encouragement you have shown to me and to my son you have never given up on either of us and helped us both to learn to trust again – something I thought would never happen".

Children and Young People's Support Work

The children and young people's support worker accepts referrals directly from the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference and through Acorns referral process. Sometimes we need to assess safety concerns or bridge the gap during the waiting time for counselling and play therapy. In all cases, the child or young person is offered one to one sessions, usually held in school, where the focus is on safety and where, for example, we may use a sport orientated method of 'who is on your side' to help them understand and reflect on safe and unsafe.

This can help them make sense of what has happened which in turn can reduce confusion and fear and improve safety. The C and YP support worker may also act as an advocate on behalf of the child or young person with their consent in MARAC or Child Protection meetings to ensure their views are presented, heard and inform future plans.

"It feels like a weight's been lifted off my shoulders"

Young People's Preventative Work

The Young People's Preventative Worker works with young people age 13-18 who have experienced or are at risk of experiencing domestic and sexual violence and abuse in their own relationships. We can offer information, advice, support,

safety planning and advocacy on a one to one basis to increase safety and offer emotional support. We also provide group work in schools, colleges and community settings to increase young people's knowledge and awareness of healthy and unhealthy relationships. We offer training for other professionals and organisations to share best practice and offer guidance to improve responses to teen domestic violence and abuse and to ensure young people who do experience relationship abuse get the support they need. Referrals are taken and assessed through Acorns referral process.

"Thank you for getting me back to myself. I don't know how bad I would be if I never came to Acorns! It's not just me whose a happier person, but everyone around me as well, I can't thank you enough!"

Is it Confidential?

Acorns works within the guidance issued by the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy, 'Ethical Framework'. This means that we do need consent from a parent/carer so that they can be involved in supporting their child through the counselling process.

However, what children and young people decide to share is kept private unless they tell Acorns staff that they, or someone else, is being hurt or is likely to be hurt or is in danger. Women are offered confidentiality on the same terms. In most situations nothing will be shared with anyone outside of the project unless you ask.



Services Offered at Acorns

Individual work with Children and Young People

- Counselling
- Play Therapy
- Safety Work
- Creative Therapy (using paint, clay and other messy or tactile materials)

Groupwork and Young People

- Healthy relationships
- Support and Information for Young People

Specialised Work

- Theraplay® techniques with children and mam/carer to heal attachments/relationships
- EMDR for relief of trauma symptoms

Women/Carers

- Group and individual support
- Informal support to help them support their children through therapeutic process

Professionals

- Training
- Support

We acknowledge difference and diversity and welcome people from BME, cultural, religious and LGBT communities and regardless of age, disability or status.

Acorns Children's Service (Main Office)

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