Becoming a UKASFP-accredited solution focused practitioner

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Introduction

This document sets out the process by which members of the UKASFP can attain the title of UKASFP-accredited solution focused practitioner, the meaning of this title and the requirements for updating their accreditation after a five-year period.

The document also includes precise details of the criteria against which accreditation applicants’ work will be assessed, and the process by which a decision is made on whether or not to grant accredited status. A checklist is also included so that applicants can see what additional information they need to supply.

The document is intended to give a complete enough picture of what is involved in applying for accreditation to enable both members and non-members to make an informed decision on whether to apply for accreditation.

It is a prerequisite of applying for accreditation that individuals are current members of the UKASFP. Furthermore, there are additional resources available to members, via the UKASFP website, that are intended to assist anyone applying for accredited status. These resources include a film which takes the viewer through the accreditation process, and a document entitled “Notes for accreditors and applicants” which includes more detailed description and discussion of the different ways in which applicants may meet each of the criteria, together with video links to live recordings giving examples of work which would meet these criteria.

This document, and the accompanying materials on the members’ area of the website, will be periodically updated to reflect developments in the process of accreditation.
1. UKASFP-accredited solution focused practitioner - definition

An accreditable solution focused practitioner is a member of the UKASFP who...

1. ...abides at all time by the UKASFP Code of Ethics (a condition of UKASFP membership);

2. ...has demonstrated competent and appropriate use of the full range of observable solution focused behaviours, set out in Appendix 1, section 1);

3. ...has demonstrated their ability to maintain the solution focused approach (as set out in Appendix 1, section 2) throughout a complete initial (first) “session” (helping conversation) with a single client

2. How to become a UKASFP-accredited solution focused practitioner

2.1 The UKASFP will grant the title of UKASFP-accredited solution focused practitioner to individual practitioners who have demonstrated, to the satisfaction of the nominated accreditors, that they meet the above criteria, as detailed in Appendix 1 of this document, having followed the accreditation application process set out in section 4.

2.2 The title of UKASFP-accredited solution focused practitioner is intended to be a marker of competence in all settings in which solution focused practice may be used. For this reason, the list of the observable behaviours (Appendix 1, section 1) in which a competent solution focused practitioner is expected to be proficient – and to be able to cover in the context of a full-length (30 to 60 minute) one-to-one first ‘session’ is deliberately inclusive and comprehensive. The UKASFP acknowledges that some practitioners will not be routinely carrying out single pieces of work that demonstrate all of these behaviours. However, it is incumbent upon the applicant to seek out opportunities to work in this way in order to provide material for their accreditation application.

2.3 The UKASFP also recognises that practitioners will not necessarily work at all times in a solution focused way: some practitioners may work in roles that require them at times to use other approaches for their work. The UKASFP only accredits the work that is identified by the practitioner as solution focused.

2.4 An accreditable solution focused Practitioner is therefore defined as a member of the UKASFP whose practice meets the criteria for accreditable solution focused practice at all times when the practitioner, their employer, commissioning organisation or any other body making claims about the practitioner’s work on their behalf, promotes, advertises or otherwise publicly describes it as being solution focused practice.
3. Assessing Accreditable Solution Focused Practice

3.1 The criteria listed in section 1 will be assessed as follows:

1. It is assumed that all UKASFP members abide by the Code of Ethics unless it is proven otherwise, since this is a condition of UKASFP membership: no further assessment of this criterion is therefore needed for accreditation purposes.

2 and 3. Competent and appropriate use of the full range of solution focused observable behaviours and ability to maintain the solution focused approach throughout a complete initial “session” (helping conversation) with a single client, will be assessed through submission of a recording of the practitioner’s work, accompanies by a transcript. Further details of this are given below.

3.2 The recording submitted for assessment should...

- ...ideally be a video recording or, failing that, a high-quality audio recording...
- ...showing a single, initial (first) solution focused conversation, between the practitioner and a single “client” (i.e. person seeking help from the practitioner)...
- ...which is not dominated (in terms of time) by the need for the practitioner to pursue issues relating to risk, safeguarding procedures or other activities such as evaluation, appraisal, advice giving, etc. that detract from the solution focused direction of the conversation.

3.3 The recording can be of either:

- a conversation which has arisen naturally from the practitioner’s usual work (e.g. a therapy, counselling or coaching session);
- a ‘demonstration conversation’ set up specifically for the purpose of accreditation but with an individual who is genuinely seeking help.

3.4 The recording must be accompanied by a full, accurate, verbatim transcript and a very brief description of its context.

3.5 If the transcript provided is seen to contain significant inaccuracies then the applicant’s work will not be assessed and they will be asked to resubmit the work with a revised transcript. There may be a small additional charge for this depending upon how much time was spent reading and viewing the work before the inaccuracies became apparent.
4. **Application and assessment process**

4.1. If you are considering applying for accreditation, please first contact the current accreditation lead, whose contact details are given on the Accreditation Overview page on the UKASFP website [https://ukasfp.org/page/Accred](https://ukasfp.org/page/Accred), to discuss the timing of your application, agree a process for sending your recording and transcript to the accreditation team and making arrangements for the payment of the current accreditation fee as specified on the Accreditation Overview page [https://ukasfp.org/page/Accred](https://ukasfp.org/page/Accred).

4.2. If you are submitting a video recording, you will be asked to upload this as an unlisted video to the UKASFP Accreditation YouTube channel where it will be accessible only to the accreditation lead and nominated accreditors, for the duration of the period of assessment. If this is not possible, the accreditation lead will discuss alternative ways in which your video or audio recording may (securely) be made available to the UKASFP accreditors.

4.3. The accreditation lead will also inform you of the likely timescale for assessing your application. This will depend upon the availability of the accreditors to assess your work.

4.4. Upon receipt of your transcript and recording in the agreed format, along with your payment, the accreditation lead will distribute these to the accreditors who have agreed to assess your work. A list of current accreditors from which these will be drawn appears on the accreditation overview page [https://ukasfp.org/page/Accred](https://ukasfp.org/page/Accred).

4.5. While the accreditation system is still relatively new, we are continuing to monitor consistency between accreditors. In order to do this, some applications will be assessed independently by all listed accreditors. At the very least, your application will be assessed independently by two accreditors in the first instance, with one or more others being brought in to resolve any differences of opinion, if necessary (see 4.6, below). You can therefore be assured that the assessment of your work is as fair and thorough as possible.

4.6. The process for reaching an agreed decision is as follow:

- selected accreditors independently assess your work against the criteria set out in sections 5 and 6, and pass their assessments and comments to the accreditation lead
- if the selected accreditors are in agreement as to whether the work is accreditable, no further discussion of this takes place
- if opinion is divided on whether the work is accreditable, the accreditation lead will take steps to resolve this, which may include:
  - organising a discussion between the selected accreditors;
  - bringing in a further accredits to have the ‘casting vote’ (in cases where two accreditors have opposing views and cannot resolve them through discussion);
  - widening out the discussion to the whole pool of accreditors.
4.7 Once a decision has been reached, the accreditation lead informs the applicant of this and begins preparation of detailed feedback for the applicant, if this is in line with the applicant’s wishes.

4.8 Applicants whose work is assessed as accreditable will be sent a certificate that confirms their status as UKASFP-accredited solution focused practitioner. Their status on the UKASFP website will also be changed to indicate this.

4.9 A checklist for applicants to refer to before sending in their application, is provided in Appendix 3 of this document.

5. Reapplication and renewal of accreditation

5.1 Applicants whose first submission to the accreditors is assessed as not accreditable will be given a 12 month period (dated from the time of receiving the decision on their first application) to submit one other application, free of charge. Applicants who do not submit an application that is successful within this 12 month period will be subject to a further application fee, should they subsequently wish to reapply.

5.2 Successful applicants will be able to use the title UKASFP-accredited solution focused practitioner for a period of five years, provided they maintain their membership of the UKASFP throughout this time.

5.3 After five years, accredited members will be required to update their accreditation by providing written evidence of having kept their practice up-to-date by keeping abreast of important developments, discussions and dilemmas in the field of solution focused practice. As yet, the precise detail of this evidence has not been finalised, although it is likely to be in the form of written answers to a number of key questions. These are to be devised and modified on an ongoing basis by members of the Accreditation Review Panel, a new body of eminent practitioners, including some accredited members of the UKASFP, some accreditors and some of the other practitioners who were identified as “Core” UKASFP members following the initial proposal for a new accreditation system, in June 2013. A list of current members of this Panel can be found on the Accreditation Overview page on the UKASFP website https://ukasfp.org/page/Accred .

5.3 An example of the types of question that are likely to be asked of members wishing to renew their accreditation status, is given in Appendix 2. Please note that this document is subject to change and an updated version of the question set will be added to the website as soon as it become available.
Appendix 1: detailed assessment criteria

1. Solution Focused Observable Behaviours

To be accredited, practitioners must demonstrate the following observable behaviours:

1 Developing and sustaining interrelated sequences of questions

...such that successive questions are clearly linked to the client’s preceding answers and are based on the client’s ideas about their desired outcome, their preferred future, their present situation, what’s currently working and (if applicable) progress to date.

2 Selective use of summarising or echoing-back

...so that the practitioner shows acknowledgement of what the client says, and is selective about what to amplify or ask more about, choosing those elements of the client’s narrative that contribute to the building of descriptions as detailed below.

3 Structuring the conversation so that its overarching theme is that of the client’s movement towards their desired outcome

...using the key solution-focused ingredients as listed and described in detail in 4-7, below.

4. Contracting (agreeing the desired outcome)

4.1. Asking the client – at an early stage in their first solution-focused conversation with them – what they are hoping will come from their work with the practitioner.

4.2. Using the client’s response to the above to agree a desired outcome from the work, which then serves to structure the whole of the conversation that follows.

5 Eliciting Preferred Future Descriptions

5.1 Inviting the client to elaborate on the desired outcome from the work to describe what complete achievement of the desired outcome would look like, in the important areas of their life in which differences would be apparent.

5.2. Inviting the client to say what they might notice was different if they were to be making (further) progress towards this desired outcome.
5.3 Structuring questions to enable the client to construct detailed, granular descriptions of what day-to-day life would be like, EITHER if the desired outcome were completely achieved (as in 5.1) OR if there were to be (further) progress towards it (as in 5.2).

The descriptions elicited should be of concrete behaviours, thoughts and feelings located in specific time(s) and place(s) and cover those areas of the client’s life in which progress is desired. The descriptions should include:

- first small signs of the desired outcome (or of progress towards it);
- details of how one ‘event’ (behaviour, feeling, thought) leads to another, and so on.
- multiple perspectives: what would be noticed by others;
- interactional change: details of responses of relevant others and the effects of these responses on the client, etc.

6 Inviting the client to evaluate the present situation in relation to the preferred future

6.1 Using a solution-focused scale, asking the client to assess how close their present situation is to the preferred future they have described in 5.1 (and, in some cases, 5.3)

6.2. Asking the client to elaborate upon this, as appropriate, by describing either

- what tells them that they are this number and not a lower one (if the number given is greater than zero)
- what is helping them to cope, get by or remain hopeful, etc (if applicable).

7. Exploring what’s working and (if applicable) progress to date

7.1 Structuring questions to enable the client to construct detailed, granular descriptions of anything that has already happened, or is happening in their life, that fits with or contributes to the achievement of their preferred future. The descriptions elicited should be of concrete behaviours, thoughts and feelings located in specific time(s) and place(s) and should include examples of:

- instances (specific occasions when aspects of the preferred future have happened);
- exceptions (specific occasions on which problems have been absent, or less troublesome – if applicable);
- ways in which things have improved recently in a more general sense (if applicable)

7.2 Eliciting as much detail as possible in relation to:

- how clients brought about or achieved the instances, exceptions or progress that they have mentioned;
• the skills, strengths and resources that the client has used or is using to move them towards their preferred future;
• the ways in which the instances and/or exceptions described have contributed, are contributing, or may contribute further to progress towards the preferred future.
• first signs that the instances, exceptions or progress described was happening;
• details of how one ‘event’ (behaviour, feeling, thought) led to another, and so on.
• multiple perspectives: what others noticed about the instances, exceptions or progress and what difference it has made to them;
• interactional change: how others responded (or were involved in) the instances, exceptions or progress and what effect this has had on the client.

2. Staying with the Solution Focused Approach

To be accredited, practitioners must also demonstrate the ability to stay within the solution focused approach for the duration of a full (30 -60 minute) initial conversation with a client. Here, staying with the solution focused approach means working within the assumption that the sole purpose of the practitioner’s questions is to elicit the client’s descriptions, as detailed above, rather than to gather information for assessment or other purposes.

The practitioner should therefore refrain from:

• analysing problems
• offering solutions or giving advice (but see Note, below)
• introducing their own ideas
• interpreting what the client says
• imposing their own view about what constitutes progress
• offering theories of human behaviour or psychology
• information gathering for purposes of assessment (but see Note, below)

Note:

There may be times when practitioners have to step temporarily out of the solution focused approach in order to meet some of the obligations of their role, which may include elements of assessment, information gathering, advice-giving, statutory intervention, etc. In these cases, practitioners need to ensure that these elements are clearly separate from the overall solution focused direction of the conversation even though the conversation around these matters may still be informed by solution focused principles.
Appendix 2: Renewal of accreditation: sample questions

An initial sample set of the type of question likely to be used in the renewal process is provided below, for information only, so that newly-accredited members can be aware of the sorts of activities they need to undertake over the next five years in order to keep their accredited status.

The question set will be updated in due course, by the Accreditation Review Panel.

Sample question set:

1. Which aspects of a recent session or sessions have helped you to reflect further on your practice?
   How was that useful?

2. What have you read, participated in or seen recently (e.g. a relevant book, article, discussion board thread, conference presentation or training exercise that made you think you might do more of something or do it differently?
   What difference did that make?

3. Who has been having an influence on you in a way that has helped you to develop your solution focused practice further?
   How have these developments been helpful?

4. Where might you suggest someone start if they are new to solution focused practice?
   Point out a recent development that they might find useful.

5. Where would you place your current practice on a scale of 0 to 10, where 10 = your practice is the best it could ever be, in solution focused terms, and 0 = your practice is not at all solution focused?
   What’s going well that made you pick this number?
   What would your colleagues say about this?
   Where would you hope your practice would be on the scale in a year’s time?
   What would be the signs that told you that your practice had moved up to this point?
Appendix 3: accreditation application checklist

1. Have you read and understood this document, viewed the Accreditation Film online and read through the document Notes for Accreditors and Applicants?
2. Do you have a good quality audio or video recording of an initial (first) session, lasting between 30 and 60 minutes?
3. Is the recording of a full, initial conversation with someone genuinely seeking your help?
4. Does the recording involve only you and one other person (your client)?
5. Have you sought written consent from your client which permits you to share this recording and transcript with us?
6. Have you agreed with the accreditation lead the process for sharing this recording?
7. Do you have a full verbatim transcript of this recording which you have checked for accuracy?
8. Have you agreed with the accreditation lead the format and layout of this document, and the means by which it will be shared?
9. Have you made arrangements with the accreditation lead and/or the UKASFP admin officer, for the payment of the appropriate fee?

If the answer to all the above questions is “Yes”,
then you are ready to go!

Good Luck!!

The UKASFP Accreditation Team

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