**Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

1. **How do I access the telephone helpline?**

There are 3 ways you can access the telephone helpline:

* Ring: **0330 380 0658 or 0800 023 9324**(free from any standard UK landline or mobile phone).
* Via the [Vivup employee benefits platform](https://shropshire.vivup.co.uk/users/sign_in).
* Via Your Care Platform (in order to access this platform you will need to register with Vivup employee benefits). The employee could use the accessibility form on Your Care to request the team reach out to them.

1. **What happens when I phone the telephone helpline?**

You will speak to a member of Vivup’s Triage Team who will determine, via a telephone assessment, which is most appropriate - ‘in the moment’ support or structured counselling. You can complete the telephone assessment during the phone call or arrange a more convenient time (the helpline is open 24/7, 365 days a year to accommodate different types of working patterns and home circumstances). A counsellor will take your full details, including GP information, and any other relevant details along with a risk assessment.

1. **How many times can I ring the helpline for ‘in the moment’ support?**

You can ring the helpline for ‘in the moment’ support as many times as you require; access is unlimited. ‘In the moment’ support (ITMS) will be provided by an ITMS counsellor and this could involve advice in relation to a specific concern, signposting to further help i.e. local support agencies, sending out supportive information, along with signposting to Vivup’s online CBT booklets and resources.

1. **How long will I have to wait for ‘In The Moment’ Support (ITMS)?**

Vivup receive varying levels of demand throughout the day, which means that you can sometimes get through to an ITMS counsellor very quickly, but there are other times where there might be a wait in the queue. To address this variability, Vivup are currently recruiting additional ITMS counsellors.

1. **Is there an eligibility criteria for counselling?**

Yes. Vivup’s Triage Team will complete a telephone assessment with you to determine whether you need ‘in the moment’ support or more structured counselling.

1. **Do I have to pay anything if I am eligible for counselling?**

No. Counselling will not cost you anything. It is free to all staff employed by Shropshire Council.

1. **Can I access face to face counselling?**

No. Counselling is available by telephone only.

1. **How is Vivup’s counselling service different to accessing counselling through my own GP?**

Vivup offers short-term counselling only. (Depending on the clinical need of the individual, this could range from anything between 1 to 6 sessions.) Vivup’s counselling service should be viewed as interim support if you require more long-term counselling. It is advised that you make contact with your GP in a timely manner and enquire as to whether your GP Surgery has a counselling service and waiting list you could be added to.

1. **Can I have sessions alongside my existing psychological support?**

No. If you are already receiving support from another psychological service, it is not clinically appropriate for you to access Vivup’s counselling service alongside the other provider.

1. **How long will it take until my first counselling appointment?**

You should receive an appointment within five working days of your initial referral subject to completing and returning a Core assessment and Statement of Understanding (which sets out details of the counselling provision, confidentiality and attendance).

1. **What can I do while I wait for my counselling appointment?**

Vivup has a range of self-help tools and workbooks that sit within the Your Care platform that service users may find helpful and supportive.

1. **How often will I speak to my counsellor?**

The gap between sessions tends to be around 2 weeks; however, that may be shorter or longer depending on clinical need.

1. **Is it possible to get a counselling appointment sooner than scheduled?**

Vivup will look to book appointments at the optimal distance apart based on clinical need. However, if you feel anxious in the interim, or even potentially in crisis, our ‘in the moment’ support line is available 24/7.

1. **What will happen at my first counselling appointment?**

The counsellor will go through your completed Core Assessment and Statement of Understanding and start to offer some support in the session.

If you do not have access to a computer or an email address (personal or work - there are pockets of the organisation where this may be the case) you can complete the Core Assessment in the first session with your counsellor.

1. **How many sessions can I have?**

The number of sessions offered is based on an individual’s clinical need; the maximum number of sessions an individual can receive is 6.

1. **How long are the counselling sessions?**

Each session can last up to 50 minutes.

1. **The telephone help line for ‘in the moment’ support is open 24/7, 365 days of the year. Is this the same for structured counselling?**

No. If an individual is eligible for structured counselling this service is open 7 days a week between 8am – 8pm, which is helpful for individuals who work long/unsociable hours (shift work), or if week days are not convenient.

1. **Who will know that I have accessed the counselling service?**

No one, unless you tell someone.

There are, however, some circumstances where Vivup’s counsellors may need to provide information to a third party, which could include your employer. These situations are detailed as follows:

* Where there is immediate and/or serious risk of harm to yourself or others
* A situation regarding the abuse of a child
* A court order for disclosure of information
* Whereby you have given written consent in writing, to disclose specific information to a named third party (for example your GP, OH dept. etc.)
* A requirement of the law e.g. a contravention of the Drug Trafficking Act (not possession) Or the Prevention of Terrorism or Money Laundering Acts
* A Safeguarding issue where there is threat to yourself, another, or a child protection issue

Vivup would always endeavour if possible, to discuss any such disclosure of information with you beforehand, and to do this with your consent.

1. **What happens if I do not like my counsellor?**

Speaking to a counsellor is a very personal thing and it is therefore important that you are able to build a rapport so that you feel comfortable about sharing your worries, concerns, and anxieties.

If you do not like your counsellor or feel unable to speak openly then Vivup can arrange for you to speak to another counsellor. Just ring the telephone helpline to discuss this further*.*

1. **What happens if I am dissatisfied with the service I have received?**

If you wish to make a complaint please complete the Service issue form.

The complaints procedure outlines the process and timeframe when a complaint is made.

1. **I need to rearrange or cancel my appointment. How can I do this?**

When you are given your appointment, you will be sent an email with your ID number and a link to our booking site. If you need to rearrange or cancel your appointment, you will be able to log in here to do it. Please note that you will not be able to rearrange your appointment within 48 hours, you will only be able to cancel it. Any cancellations within 48 hours of your appointment will see that session marked as used and you will lose that session.

1. **What is the Statement of Understanding and why is it important?**

This is a [document](https://sou.tercltd.co.uk/uk/Statement-of-Understanding.awp?P1=aDRrV1dtTT0=&COPYTO=HERE) that you will need to sign which outlines how Vivup is going to look after you and your data and keep it confidential (as well as the rare and specific grounds for when Vivup might need to break that confidentiality) and, importantly, how you would like Vivup (or not like them) to contact you. Counselling can be a very private matter and there may be some communication channels you would rather Vivup did not use.

**(23) What records will be kept about me?**

Please see Vivup’s [Privacy Notice](https://www.tercltd.co.uk/privacy-policy-2/) and [Statement of Understanding](https://sou.tercltd.co.uk/uk/Statement-of-Understanding.awp?P1=aDRrV1dtTT0=&COPYTO=HERE) form for information on how your data is used and held.