

# BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT

## INTERIM INSPECTION (Independent Higher Education)

**INSTITUTION:** Karuna Institute

**ADDRESS:** Natsworthy Manor  
Widdecombe-in-the-Moor  
Newton Abbott  
Devon  
TQ13 7TR

**HEAD OF INSTITUTION:** Ms Maureen Sills

**ACCREDITATION STATUS:** Accredited

**DATE OF INSPECTION:** 7 May 2020

**ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE DECISION AND DATE:** Continued accreditation, 16 July 2020

## **PART A – INTRODUCTION**

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### **1. Background to the institution**

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Karuna Institute (KI/the Institution) is a privately-owned provider that offers mindfulness-based short courses, retreats and two Master's programmes. It was founded in 1984.

The Institution is based in an old manor house, within Dartmoor National Park, Devon. The seclusion offered by its remote location is an important feature of its provision. KI moved to its present location in 1991.

KI aims to provide opportunities for deepening embodied awareness and cultivating presence and open heartedness in relationships by drawing upon its Buddhist principles.

The Institution is a not-for-profit limited company with two Directors. One of the Directors also serves as the Company Secretary and Director of Training. The two Directors constitute the senior management team and they are supported by the staff team. The staff team includes the Academic Support Tutor and the Master of Arts (MA) link person and a number of committees. The Directors, three administrators and Head Cook are full-time staff. The Finance Officer, 13 academic staff and one cook are part-time.

Since the last inspection, the Institution no longer recruits students onto the Master's programmes. Succession planning has begun to ensure that the Institution continues after the founding Directors retire.

### **2. Brief description of the current provision**

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The Institution offers two Master's programmes, postgraduate diplomas, Continuing Professional Development (CPD) short courses and retreats. All students study part time. The students attend the Institution for intensive weeks of study. Although 21 students can be accommodated face to face, the Institution seeks to limit attendance to a maximum of 18 students at any one time.

Programmes are offered in core process psychotherapy, which is a mindfulness-based psychotherapy training. Training is also provided in Craniosacral Biodynamics.

Students from both MA programmes can continue through the clinical pathway and achieve accreditation with the United Kingdom (UK) Council of Psychotherapy (UKCP) as psychotherapists. This pathway consists of three five-day, part-time residential modules over a year.

The MA Mindfulness Based Core Process Psychotherapy four-year programme is validated by Middlesex University and accredited, at the point of graduation, by the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP). Its taught component, which is studied part time over three years, comprises nine residential weekend modules and one five-day residential module each year.

The Institution has decided not to seek re-validation of its MA programmes by Middlesex University. Therefore, KI is no longer recruiting students onto its Master's programmes. The Institution and Middlesex University have an agreement to support students to 2022 and beyond if necessary to ensure that all students will be able to complete their programmes of study. In accordance with the requirements of Middlesex University, students are then allowed a further, non-taught year when they are not required to attend the Institution, to comply with graduation requirements, including writing the requisite dissertation.

The professional training in Craniosacral Biodynamics is a postgraduate diploma training course, comprising modules lasting for five days, along with five four-day modules over two years. The clinical aspects of this course are delivered in Bristol, with the residential component provided at the Institution's premises in Devon. The Institution also offers postgraduate advanced craniosacral training. This is offered as five-day modules either twice or three times a year.

The Institution also offers CPD courses and meditation retreats, which last between one and three weeks part time, and some foundation training in Core Process Psychotherapy.

Two courses in craniosacral training were running at the time of the inspection. There were 174 students enrolled and the students were working independently online. All the students are over the age of 18. The majority of students are from the UK, but a minority are drawn from countries such as Russia, India, Bahrain, South Africa, Australia and Finland. The majority of students are female.

Enrolments onto the postgraduate course follow traditional academic year patterns. The foundation courses are offered three times a year, in September, March and July. Applicants for the postgraduate courses need to be graduates and undertake an interview to assess their suitability for the course. International students need to demonstrate fluency in English, such as through the International Language Testing System (IELTS) at Level 6.5.

### **3. Inspection process**

The inspection was conducted over one day by one inspector. The inspection was undertaken remotely, making use of online video calls and telephone calls. The inspector had discussions with senior management, administrative staff, academic staff and students. Documentation was scrutinised. The website was also scrutinised, and this included viewing a promotional video of the Institution that featured comments by students. It was not possible to inspect the premises, so feedback was sought from the students on their quality. The Institution engaged very constructively with the inspection process.

### **4. Inspection history**

<b>Inspection type</b>	<b>Date</b>
Full Accreditation	9–10 January 2014
Interim	3 March 2015
Re-accreditation	26–27 March 2018

## **PART B – JUDGEMENTS AND EVIDENCE**

*The following judgements and comments are based upon evidence seen by the inspector during the inspection and from documentation provided by the institution.*

### **1. Significant changes since the last inspection**

The Institution no longer recruits to the Middlesex University Master's programmes.

Training facilities have been established in Bristol in order to deliver a Core Process Psychotherapy course. The clinical aspects of the course will take in place in Bristol, supported by additional workshops at the main centre on Dartmoor. The course develops a mindfulness-based form of psychotherapy.

### **2. Response to actions points in last report**

There were no action points identified in the previous report.

### **3. Response to recommended areas for improvement in last report**

*The Institute is recommended to establish how they will communicate with students' next of kin who may not be able to communicate well in English.*

For students with next of kin who may not be able to communicate well in English, staff now record details of any contacts of delegates with appropriate English language skills. These contacts can support communication with the next of kin, as required.

*The Institute should consider the provision of a second computer, not located in the library, to enhance students' access to this facility.*

An additional computer has been installed in a communal space outside the library for students' use.

### **4. Compliance with BAC accreditation requirements**

#### **4.1 Governance, Strategy and Financial Management (spot check)**

**The standards are judged to be:**

Met

Partially Met

Not Met

**Comments**

The Directors are well qualified and experienced and operate within a clearly defined operational structure. Staff are kept well informed through regular meetings and e-mail.

Effective strategic and succession planning has been undertaken, resulting in clear action plans. Inspection findings confirm this. Training facilities have been established in Bristol where clinical aspects are covered. This is a non-residential facility and has been designed to help reduce costs for students going forward, and therefore to be more accessible to a wider range of potential students.

Appropriate risk management includes a succession policy for the Directors and a contingency plan for the placement of students within another institution if necessary.

The Institution's accounts are drawn up by a firm of external accountants and are, in accordance with legal requirements, submitted to Companies House.

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#### 4.2 Academic Management and Administration (spot check)

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**The standards are judged to be:**

Met

Partially Met

Not Met

**Comments**

The administrative arrangements are effective and appropriate for the size of the provision and numbers of students. This results in the Institution being well run.

Policies and procedures are clearly and comprehensively documented. Information for internal use and for external bodies is reviewed regularly and is of a high quality.

The quality of classroom teaching is monitored through a combination of informal joint teaching sessions and formally as part of the staff appraisal process. Detailed reports are drawn up and reflected upon, which encourages enhancement of teaching performance.

The low staff turnover reflects the effectiveness of the staff recruitment and induction procedures. The Institution has very clear policies on all aspects of employment, including equality and diversity and complaints and appeals.

A well-planned committee structure, with regular meetings, ensures that communication is clear, and staff understand their roles well. The communication includes joint meetings with external bodies to help ensure compliance with the rigorous standards required.

The Institution satisfies the requirements of the relevant professional bodies and validating university. The external reports produced by these bodies are complimentary about the Institution's academic management.

Academic staff are encouraged to keep their professional practice up to date. Recently, academic staff have undertaken training on teaching online and using video-conferencing materials.

The details on the Institution's website describe course content clearly and accurately.

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#### 4.3 Teaching, Learning and Assessment (spot check)

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**The standards are judged to be:**

Met

Partially Met

Not Met

**Comments**

Academic staff are very well qualified. They are experienced psychotherapy practitioners with Master's degrees and Doctorates. Students interviewed report that they have benefited enormously from the input of the knowledgeable staff.

Senior managers have been successful in moving courses online. Staff have been trained in the use of technologies such as online video tools. Online platforms are now used widely to support and teach students remotely. Students report that they are being well supported remotely through the technology used.

External examination reports comment favourably on the effective assessment practices and the outcomes achieved. For example, the recent UKCP annual report comments on how applicants demonstrate exceptionally high standards of learning and notes that the applicants will be an asset to the psychotherapy profession overall. They have the skills to address the huge societal changes that are currently taking place and their impact on individuals and groups.

Students interviewed report that the courses undertaken have been life changing. They value the high-quality teaching and the combination of theory and opportunities to apply theory to psychotherapy practice within a supportive environment. Students report that they have been well prepared to undertake their clinical practice as a result of the courses.

Tutors make good use of small-group work through which students reinforce the techniques learned and are encouraged to reflect on their practice.

Students are provided with helpful links to online resources to support their learning. In addition, tutors currently provide online support.

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#### 4.4 Student Recruitment, Support, Guidance and Progression (spot check)

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**The standards are judged to be:**  Met  Partially Met  Not Met

**Comments**

External examiner reports identify that student welfare is a high priority within the Institution.

Staff take good care to ensure that applicants are well briefed on the course requirements. A formal interview is undertaken with applicants to check their suitability for the course.

Students interviewed report that the course undertaken meets their requirements and that they are very well supported on their courses. This support continues through the supervision arrangements made by the Institution's staff for students when they begin their psychotherapy practice.

Students receive good academic support, including help with their dissertation, for example through training in referencing methods. Teaching is well supported by additional learning resources.

Students are well prepared to progress and to run their own psychotherapy practice. The support includes helping students with establishing arrangements for marketing their professional practice.

Students have access to an appropriate complaints procedure and can also use the UKCP's procedures.

International students receive comprehensive advice and guidance. The Institution's website provides sufficient and useful information for international students to refer to prior to applying, including details regarding visa requirements.

The small student numbers help staff to monitor students' progress and attendance closely and to provide timely interventions when required.

Students report that the residential accommodation is of a high quality and provides a very relaxing and peaceful environment within which to study and reflect on their therapy practice.

The social programme includes access to walking on Dartmoor, which is very popular with students.

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#### 4.5 Premises, Facilities and Learning Resources (spot check)

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**The standards are judged to be:**  Met  Partially Met  Not Met

**Comments**

The students report that the premises are of a high quality. The students also reported that the location within the beauty and remoteness of Dartmoor enhances the residential experience.

The library is well stocked with a wide range of core texts, contemporary therapy books and journals.

Staff are making good use of online resources to support learning remotely. The online video-conferencing facilities used allow a good level of interaction using chat and audio interaction. The technology adopted is easy to use and readily available on laptops and smart phones.

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4.6 Quality Management, Assurance and Enhancement (spot check)

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**The standards are judged to be:**

Met     Partially Met     Not Met

**Comments**

Managers are aware of the Institution's qualities because the Institution's performance is monitored, evaluated and reported on extensively. The Institution is subject to regular scrutiny and re-validation by its validating university and professional bodies. Committees meet frequently and regularly to review progress made.

Considerable stakeholder feedback is sought and reviewed. The feedback comes from students, staff, the validating university and professional bodies. External examiner and assessors' reports are very positive. Staff consider the reports carefully and take action accordingly. Students report that any issues raised are responded to promptly. Inspection findings confirm this.

There is a strong culture of enhancement at the Institution. Committee meetings take place frequently and regularly. As part of these meetings, views on encouraging and supporting the Institution's enhancement are canvassed.

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4.7 Compliance Declaration

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**Declaration of compliance has been signed and dated.**

Yes     No

**PART C – SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS AND ACTION POINTS**

**STRENGTHS**

Senior managers undertake strategic and succession planning well, resulting in clear plans for the future that are well understood by staff.

Very well-qualified and experienced academic staff teach students effectively.

Students benefit from a very supportive and caring environment within which their skills in psychotherapy can flourish.

Managers are aware of the Institution’s qualities because the Institution’s performance is monitored, evaluated and reported on extensively.

**ACTIONS REQUIRED**

None

High     Medium     Low

**RECOMMENDED AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT *(to be reviewed at the next inspection)***

None

**COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS – FURTHER COMMENTS, IF APPLICABLE**