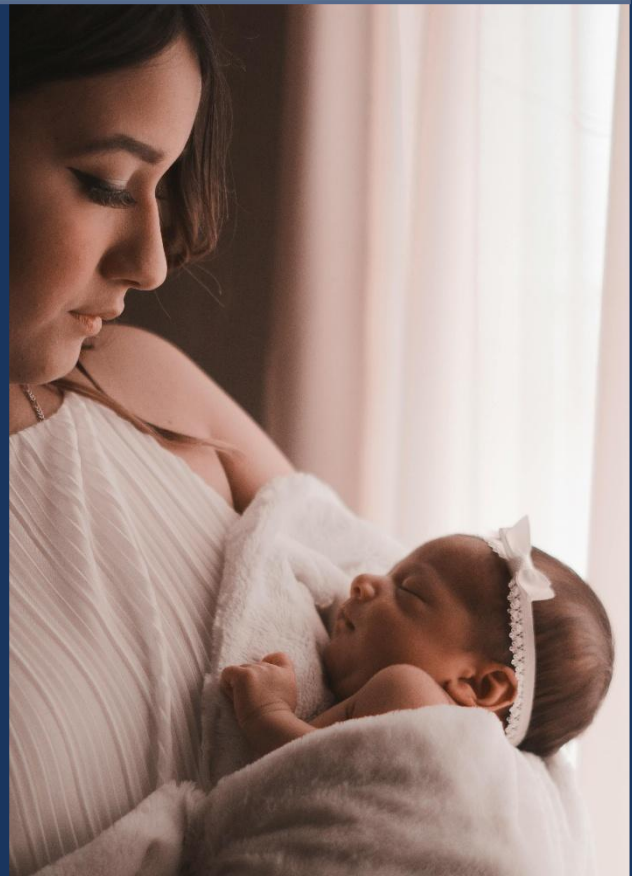




The Association for  
Group and Individual  
Psychotherapy

# Introduction to the Infant Observation Course



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This prospectus is prepared in advance of the course starting. AGIP reserves the right to make any necessary changes. All such changes will be notified to course members as soon as possible.

AGIP is a Member organisation of



AGIP offers an Infant Observation course as a stand-alone course or to be taken as part of the AGIP clinical training. The course is rigorous, rewarding and fully engaging. Directly observing infant development from birth up to the first birthday, alongside supportive supervision, provides moving insights into the life of an infant.

## THE ASSOCIATION FOR GROUP AND INDIVIDUAL PSYCHOTHERAPY

AGIP is a charity established in 1974 under the Lady Balogh Psychotherapy Trust (LBPT) to offer a contemporary psychotherapy training. It is located at 1 Fairbridge Road, Archway in a house owned by the LBPT which houses the AGIP office, library, teaching rooms and a 10 roomed therapy clinic together with a group therapy room. The clinic is staffed by AGIP professional members, trainees and non-AGIP therapists who in turn make room rental contributions to the LBPT. The LBPT uses the income to maintain the house, a large Victorian villa, to support the work of AGIP and in particular its training programmes, and to offer small donations to other charities in support of their own work.

An Infant Observation component has always been part of the AGIP psychotherapy training and in 2024, following a review and implementation of a new structure to the main clinical training some 10 years earlier, it was decided to review and revise the structure and requirements of the Infant Observation course. Up to this point the course had only been accessible to AGIP trainees: from January 2026, it is open to suitable external candidates.

AGIP is a member organisation of the UK Council for Psychotherapy through the College of Psychoanalysis and Jungian Analysis. UKCP was formed out of the Standing Conference on Psychotherapy, and AGIP members have played key roles in both the Standing Conference and subsequently, UKCP.

## TRAINING COMMITTEE

AGIP has a Training Committee that oversees all aspects of training at AGIP. It comprises AGIP members together with a number of senior psychotherapists from other organisations. This mix of interests allows the committee to remain up-to-date in its thinking and planning of all AGIP's courses.

Arianna Pulsoni has been appointed as the course co-ordinator for the Infant Observation course. Arianna undertook her own training as a Child Psychotherapist at the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust and she has extensive experience in clinical work with patients and clinical supervision, and in research and training. In addition to her work in private practice and for organisations, she is also a lecturer in Psychotherapy in the Department for Psychoanalytic and Psycho-Social Studies at the University of Essex.

## COURSE AIMS

The course has three distinct aims . . .

1

### **To support the AGIP clinical psychoanalytical psychotherapy**

To support the AGIP clinical psychoanalytical psychotherapy training and to form a compulsory part of that training. The TRAINING COMMITTEE believes that careful observation of infant/carer/family interactions can lay a solid groundwork for a psychoanalytic understanding of child development and in turn can lead to greater flexibility and creativity when working with adult patients.

2

### **To give students on the AGIP Foundation course an opportunity to take an Infant Observation course**

To give students on the AGIP Foundation course an opportunity to take an Infant Observation course whether or not they plan to apply for the full clinical training. One of the aims of the Foundation Course is to provide an introduction to psychoanalysis – however course has been opened up to Foundation students to open to enable them to explore the significance of infant observation in psychoanalysis in greater detail. This in turn will enable students to decide if they wish to take their training in psychoanalysis further.

3

### **To offer an opportunity for non-AGIP members to study infant development**

From January 2026, TC agreed to offer an opportunity for non-AGIP members to study infant development as part of their own professional CPD requirements or for other personal or professional purposes. The course should be of particular interest to, for example,

- Counsellors
- Infant mental health workers
- Social workers
- Psychotherapists
- Psychologists
- Drug and alcohol professionals
- Doctors and nurses
- Child psychotherapists

It can also offer an in-depth taster of psychoanalysis where ideas from the course can be taken back into the course members' existing professional roles. It can also help determine whether applying for the full clinical training might be of interest.

## COURSE MEMBERS

The course members will comprise of trainee psychoanalytical psychotherapists, students attending the foundation course in psychoanalytical psychotherapy, and external candidates who have opted to take the course for personal and/or professional reasons. The groups will be adult learning groups where members will bring their previous, diverse and rich experiences to the group learning.

## COURSE DELIVERY

The course is taught over four terms commencing in either January or October each year.

The first term is a series of 10, one hour per week introductory seminars on Zoom. In the following three terms (terms 2 – 4), there are weekly supervision sessions with a group supervisor and four course participants. These group supervisions are to support the weekly one-hour home visits undertaken by course members to carry out their observations. Full notes from each observation session have to be recorded and it is expected that this will take one further hour per week.

The group supervisor, who is normally constant through the course, is in an emergency, available for contact between group supervisions.

## COURSE COSTS

The course fee for October 2025 and January 2026 is £1,895 for the four terms.

## COURSE CONTENT

The introductory seminars in term 1 include: safeguarding, finding a family to observe, keeping notes, the supervision process, the process of observation. These are essential seminars so that course members understand the processes and demands of the observation process, and they serve to support course members with information, and details of processes and procedures, so that they can begin their observations with confidence.

The weekly one-hour observations of an infant and carer(s) happens in the family home at the same time each week over terms 2 - 4. Acting as an observer can sometimes be challenging as the family may wish to draw you into a conversation or seek advice. The weekly group supervisions help with these and other difficulties.

An important part of the learning happens when course participants write up detailed and accurate notes of what they observed: sometimes things that happened in the moment might have passed you by but on later reflection, they come more into focus. These notes are used for regular presentations in the one-hour Zoom supervision group where the group supervisor together with the group members can reflect on the observation experience. Thus, these notes are key to the whole process of observation. We expect that they will take up to an hour to write up after each observation. Because of their importance, the group supervisor may ask to see notes at any point in the course.

## APPLICATION DETAILS

Applications are accepted up to two months before the start of the course. This allows time for the selection process and interviews. For the October start, application have to be received by the Training Organiser in the AGIP office no later than the end of July: for the January start, the closing date is the end of October.

There is a non-refundable application fee of £80 to cover the interview and application processing.

AGIP has a policy of not specifying a minimum age for any of its courses, however it must be satisfied that any candidate has the necessary maturity to cope with the demands of the course: this will be explored during the interview process.

AGIP welcomes applications from people with diverse backgrounds and disciplines but with the right level of experience to get the full benefit from the course.

## APPLICATION PROCESS

There are separate processes depending on whether you are a non-AGIP member applying for the course, or whether you are already enrolled on an AGIP training course.

For candidates who are not already enrolled on an AGIP training, we require:

- The completed the application form, available form the AGIP web site
- A 500-word personal statement about why you wish to take the course
- The names of two referees in support of your application. You must ask them to complete the reference form and return it to the AGIP office. Copies of the reference form can be found on the AGIP web site.
- The application fee of £80, usually payable by bank transfer. The AGIP office can provide the bank details for payment.

As already mentioned, this course is a compulsory part of the AGIP clinical training. The Training Committee therefore prioritises applications from existing AGIP trainees and students. It is anticipated that there will usually be spaces for non-AGIP candidates.

For AGIP Foundation students and AGIP clinical trainees, the application process is simpler as AGIP already holds on file application forms and referees' recommendations. When you feel ready to take the course, you should contact the Infant Observation Co-ordinator for an interview. The interview is compulsory as AGIP has to be sure that you are ready to meet the emotional demands of the observations. For example, someone who has just recently had a baby join their family may not be quite emotionally settled enough to observe an infant in another family.

AGIP students and trainees also have to pay the application fee of £80 for their interview.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

All course at AGIP have an attendance requirement of a minimum of 80%. If for any reason you are not able to attend either a group supervision or a home visit, you must contact your group supervisor as soon as possible. In the event of cancelling a home visit, we need to consider any effect on the family and the ongoing observations; we also need to bear in mind the reputation of AGIP in the way in which our course members deal with vulnerable people (families with new babies are vulnerable).

It has already been mentioned that you are expected to maintain full, accurate and detailed write ups of each observation. These are essential to take full advantage of the learning on offer on the course. It will be regarded as a serious matter if these notes are not kept and it may threaten your ongoing place on the course.

## COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

There are three options in relation to the end of course written assignment, and the options depend on why you are taking the course.

1. For AGIP trainees on the clinical training, a written assignment of 5,000 words is compulsory. Without satisfactorily completing this assignment, you will not be able to complete the clinical training.
2. Foundation students who do not intend to apply to take the clinical training, and non-AGIP members, may opt to submit a shorter, 2,500 essay. This would qualify you for the award of Certificate of Completion.

3. Non-AGIP members may opt not to submit an essay at all and so qualify for a Certificate of Attendance (usually for CPD purposes).

When writing assignments, we expect you to keep in mind the ethics of Infant observations including safeguarding and confidentiality.

These essays are not marked as pass/fail but as used as an indicator of your learning.

## SUPPORT FOR COURSE MEMBERS

Course members are supported in four ways. First, through the weekly group supervisions with the group supervisor and up to three other course members. This group is the place to raise any concerns and seek advice or reassurance. Second, the supervision peer group are able to offer support through sharing their own experiences and thinking helping in thinking through what might be best practice. In the event of an emergency, your group supervisor will be available for advice and support. Finally, for those completing the course assignment, the group supervisor will offer a post essay feedback tutorial.

## COURSE ETHICS

All course participants are required to understand and follow the AGIP Code of Ethics and Practice in relation to all aspects of this course. The Code was written with work with patients in mind, so for this course the word 'patient' is understood instead as 'infant, care giver or family'. Copies of the Code are available from the AGIP office and can also be found in the AGIP Handbook.

AGIP also has a safeguarding policy, and you are advised to become familiar with it: it is also available from the AGIP office and in the AGIP Handbook. Infants and their carers are particularly emotionally vulnerable, so you are expected to remain aware of their vulnerabilities at all times.

AGIP has a Safeguarding Officer who is tasked with offering advice to any member of AGIP who encounters a safeguarding issue. For participants on this course, if you have a concern, the first step will be to raise it with your group supervisor. If the group supervisor has concerns, then they will contact the Safeguarding Officer who may take the matter further. Under no circumstances are course participants expected to contact a third party about their concerns.

AGIP trainees who already have permission to work with training patients will already have Professional Indemnity insurance in place. For those who do not have such insurance in place, it is compulsory. Advice will be given in the first term during the introductory seminars.



## POLICE CLEARANCE

Because the course participants are in direct contact with vulnerable people, it is a requirement that all candidates must apply for a Disclosure and Barring check with the police, for which there is a small fee. The Training Organiser is able to help with the DBS check process.

## MORE DETAILS

If you require any further details, please check our web site or contact the AGIP Training Organiser.