

## **EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION POLICY**

### **1. INTRODUCTION – Policy for Personnel and Clients**

It is the policy of the Mid-Sussex Counselling Centre (MSCC) to offer its counselling service to everyone who is assessed as being able to benefit from it. People will not be excluded on grounds of age, ability to pay, class, culture, gender, marital status, physical ability, race, religion or sexual orientation etc.

It is the policy of the Mid-Sussex Counselling Centre to employ staff at the Centre who are able to carry out the duties of their posts and in this process not to exclude any person on the grounds of age, class, culture, gender, marital status, physical ability, race religion or sexual orientation etc. – in line with the Equalities Act 2010. The Management of and provision for staff will be underpinned by these principles of equality of opportunity.

### **2. PUBLICITY**

When presenting the Mid-Sussex Counselling Centre to agencies likely to reach potential Clients, positive steps will be taken to ensure that Equal Opportunities issues are addressed so as to ensure equal access to the MSCC services.

Publicity material will make clear the extent and limits of the Mid-Sussex Counselling Service and the means by which access to it may be obtained. This material should include information about the possibility of a Waiting List and the variability of waiting times; also information about disability access.

### **3. INITIAL CONTACT WITH CLIENTS**

Whether initial contact is made by e-mail or telephone, all potential Clients will be informed in writing about the extent and limits of the Mid-Sussex Counselling Service and the intention to offer equal opportunity of access. All clients will receive an equal-opportunities form to complete to ensure that we are able to meet any access needs; and to enable us to monitor whether we are reaching represented groups in the community.

Should it be necessary to give a potential client information about alternative sources of counselling, this will be from a list of resources known to operate an equal opportunities policy. If this information about an alternative agency is not known, the potential Client will be told that such information is not available at present.

### **4. ASSESSMENT AND ALLOCATION OF CLIENTS**

Each client will be considered individually. Serious attention will be given to particular requests, or indications of need, from potential Clients for a Counsellor with particular attributes e.g. in terms of gender, disability, ethnic origin, sexual orientation or religious affiliation. At the same time it has to be recognized that availability of such Counsellors, and clinical considerations, have also to be taken into account and such requests may not be met. The Assessor will make this clear when such requests are made.

## **5. SERVICE PROVISION – Staff awareness of Equal opportunities**

It has to be recognized that reluctance to operate equal opportunities policies may exist within staff. Counsellors, in particular, need to be alert to any such manifestation within themselves in their work with clients and pay particular attention to it in their own therapy and in supervision. Training will be provided within our CPD program on this issue.

### **5a. PROVISION FOR STAFF AT WORK**

The Centre will endeavor to make any arrangements for staff requiring any particular provision to carry out the duties of their role. This may include access to a ground floor room for their work, or access to the disabled parking space outside. We will actively engage with any member of staff to ensure that any special requirements are met and inform them of any limitations of the Centre in this respect.

## **6 . MONITORING**

To ensure that the measures detailed in this Policy are properly implemented, monitoring will be carried out by senior members of the staff (The Head of Service, Clinical Lead and Supervisors)

This will include

1. an analysis of the Client population from time to time in relation to their Gender, age, ethnic origin, physical ability and presenting problems.
2. an annual review of the practices and procedures designed to ensure equality of opportunity within the counselling service for both staff and client. (see EDI Strategy doc)
3. Regular review of areas of training required for management and clinical staff.
4. Opportunity to be given for feedback from staff/clients in this regard

When the monitoring process brings to light an area where further work is needed, steps will be taken to address this.