



## **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION**

Under the Equality Act 2010, we have a legal duty as a public body to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination and foster good relations between key equality strands.

### **Our aims and values:**

- SBC is committed to the promotion of Equal Opportunities for all its staff and users. This is reflected in all aspects of the agency.
- SBC values diversity, recognising that different perspectives on ideas, opinions, histories, knowledge and culture are a source of strength to the community. SBC sees differences as an asset to our work as they improve our ability to meet the needs of the people we serve.
- Our core belief is that people are treated with dignity and respect. We recognise that discrimination operates consciously and unconsciously in our society, which means some people have greater access to opportunities than others. We aim to challenge inequalities, anticipating and responding positively to different needs.
- SBC is a non-profit making charity, providing access to affordable counselling for all those in the local community, regardless of disability, belief, culture, class, ethnicity, gender or sexual orientation. Our target population includes all adults over the age of 18 in the local area, who we feel could benefit from psychodynamic or integrative counselling and who are able to make a financial contribution according to their means. We are careful to monitor our client demographics and anonymised data regularly, to ensure we are adhering to our Equal Opportunities, Diversity and Inclusion principles.

### **Employment:**

- As an employer, South Bucks Counselling is committed to promoting equality and diversity amongst our workforce. We value and welcome the different ideas and experiences of our colleagues. We also aim to foster an inclusive culture enabling colleagues to feel part of our work community, and thrive.

- South Bucks Counselling opposes all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination. The aim is for our workforce to be representative of all sections of society, and for each employee to feel respected and able to give their best.
- It is our aim that no employee or job applicant receives less favourable facilities or treatment in recruitment or employment on grounds of age, disability, gender, marriage/civil partnership, pregnancy/maternity, race, religion, sex or sexual orientation.
- SBC monitors the make-up of our workforce regarding information such as age, gender, ethnic background, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and disability. We will consider and take any appropriate action to address any problems that may be identified as a result of the monitoring process.
- SBC recognises that all employees have the right to work in a safe and supportive environment. We are committed to providing a working environment which is free from bullying and harassment.
- We ensure that training, development and progression opportunities are available to all staff.
- All SBC employees are required to comply with our equality aim to treat colleagues with dignity and respect.

#### **Accessibility:**

It is our aim to make access to our services and facilities as equal and dignified as possible, whilst also recognising our limitations and ensuring we are making reasonable adjustments:

- ***Physical:***

South Bucks Counselling is located in a small, Victorian property in the centre of High Wycombe. Despite good public transport links, we recognise that not all people can travel. Additionally, because of the footprint of the building, we are unable to accommodate clients who need to use a wheelchair. We can however adapt and offer online counselling for clients with physical disabilities which reduces their mobility and their ability to travel.

A downstairs room is also reserved for those clients who have some reduced physical mobility, but do not require a wheelchair.

- ***Financial:***

As a non-profit charity, South Bucks Counselling is committed to offering affordable counselling to those clients who have limited financial income. Fees are set in discussion with the client according to their means.

## Miscellaneous:

### ***Office Accommodation***

- SBC makes every effort to ensure that premises used in relation to its work are as accessible, comfortable and inviting as possible for both staff and service users.

### ***Purchasing:***

- SBC reserves the right not to purchase goods and services from suppliers whose activities are contrary to the principles outlined in this policy.

### ***Promotion of policy:***

- Copies of this policy are freely available to all staff and any other interested parties and can be downloaded from SBC's website:  
<https://www.southbuckscounselling.org/>

### ***Grievances:***

- SBC respects the rights of individuals to hold their own views and values, but will not allow these to be manifested in a way that intimidates or humiliates, or is hostile or degrading to others. SBC will take any complaint seriously and will seek to resolve any grievance it upholds. Grievances will be dealt with fairly and in a timely manner according to SBC's Client Complaints Policy.

A successful equality and diversity strategy requires the active support of the entire organisation. Commitment, involvement and good practice is therefore encouraged and expected from all our staff in the support of this statement.

### **Our equality objectives for 2024 - 2025 are:**

- To monitor and review all employment practices to ensure fairness through our full range of policies and procedures.
- To continue with regular monitoring of client demographics and collecting anonymised data, to ensure we are meeting the needs of the community.
- To address and adapt to any changes and issues arising in a timely way.
- To investigate the feasibility of having a wheelchair accessible room for clients at SBC

Progress is reviewed and reported annually.

August 2024

Date for review: August 2025