

CONFIDE HANDBOOK

Chapter 3.2. 1 Equality and Diversity

Date 4/05/2016 Version 2

EOP1: EQUALITY & DIVERSITY STATEMENT OF INTENT

1. Introduction

1.1 This Policy uses the social model of equality & diversity, which takes as its starting point the removal of barriers which limit opportunities. In order to achieve this, positive action is encouraged, to ensure that people are aware of the opportunities that are available and have equal access to them.

2. The law

2.1 The Equality Act came into force from October 2010 providing a modern, single legal framework with clear, streamlined law to more effectively tackle disadvantage and discrimination. It sets out the characteristics that are protected by the law and the behaviour that is unlawful. Everyone in Britain is protected by the Act. The 'protected characteristics' under the Act are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion and belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

2.2 Under the Act people are not allowed to discriminate, harass or victimise another person because they have any of the protected characteristics. There is also protection against discrimination where someone is perceived to have one of the protected characteristics or where they are associated with someone who has a protected characteristic.

- **Discrimination** means treating one person worse than another because of a protected characteristic (known as **direct discrimination**)
or
putting in place a rule or policy or way of doing things that has a worse impact on

someone with a protected characteristic than someone without one, when this cannot be objectively justified (known as **indirect discrimination**).

- **Harassment** includes unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic which has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity or which creates a hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for someone with a protected characteristic.
- **Victimisation** is treating someone unfavourably because they have taken (or might be taking) action under the Equality Act or supporting somebody who is doing so.

3. Policy

3.1 Confide will work continuously towards the improvement of equality & diversity practice, in a way which informs all Confide's work and is integral to Confide's organisation and development.

Confide will strive to develop policies and establish practices to ensure that all concerned, or who would be concerned, with Confide, as clients, trainees, volunteers or staff are offered equal opportunities and access, and are not demeaned.

3.3 Confide will base its practices in counselling, training, management and employment on the Ethical Framework of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy and will use selection, assessment, appraisal and complaints procedures which are as fair, transparent, available, accessible and publicised as possible.

3.4 There will be regular monitoring, evaluation and review of the Policy. Where needs for training or change are identified, positive action will where possible be taken within the resources of the centre; changes designed to correct the disadvantage of any one group of people will be considered in relation to their impact on others.

3.5 Confide has adopted guidelines covering the implementation of this Policy in the following areas:

- EOP2 Governance and management
- EOP3 Counselling
- EOP4 Training
- EOP5 Employment
- EOP6 Disabled People
- EOP7 Publicity and language
- EOP8 Monitoring, Evaluation and Review.

EOP2: GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

1. An understanding of and commitment to equality & diversity will be required attributes when Trustees and Advisory Body members are appointed.
2. The appointed Equality & Diversity Representative, reporting directly to the Management Committee and ideally having a degree of independence from Confide's management, will:
 - 2.1 Highlight areas for improvement in Confide's procedures.
 - 2.2 Be available to any Confide personnel or service users to discuss issues of equality & diversity.
3. Adherence to the Equal & Diversity Policy will be written into all Confide job descriptions.
4. The Policy will be reviewed by the MC annually (see EOP8).
5. Confide will include equality & diversity awareness in training made available to trustees, managers, staff and volunteers.
6. Confide will promote equality & diversity wherever it has influence - with other bodies with whom it has organisational or contractual links.

EOP3: COUNSELLING

1. Confide will offer its counselling services to everyone assessed as able to make use of them; where appropriate people will be re-referred on clinical grounds if Confide's services are deemed unsuitable for their needs.
2. For clinical reasons the service currently is not able to accept as clients young people under the age of 16.
3. When publicising or representing Confide's services through networks likely to reach potential clients, Confide will take positive steps to increase accessibility to those services by under-represented groups.
4. Pre-counselling information provided for clients will make clear the extent and limits of the service and the means by which access to them is obtained, and of Confide's intention to offer equality of access within these.

6. If information is requested from clients for the purposes of preparing statistics, monitoring or supporting fund raising, the purpose of the information will be made clear and it will be separated from clinical information and kept unidentifiably.

7. Confide is committed to the provision of affordable counselling services. All clients are asked to make some financial contribution towards their counselling (unless covered by a contract with another body), but this is carefully negotiated with each client; no one is turned away because they are unable to pay the full contribution.

8. Serious attention will be given to particular requests or indications of need on the part of potential clients for a counsellor with particular attributes or characteristics. At the same time it is recognised that the availability of such counsellors and clinical considerations also have to be taken into account and may result in requests not being met. The assessment counsellor will make the parameters clear to the client when such requests are made. (Requests for 'experienced' counsellors cannot normally be met except on clinical grounds at the discretion of Confide).

9. Confide will endeavour to be flexible in arranging counselling sessions for those people whose work or other commitments (e.g. shift work) mean that they cannot come at the same time each week.

10. Confide will actively seek to build a team of counselling service personnel which reflects a balance of the local population, especially with regard to ethnic origin.

11. Counsellors and supervisors are expected to be alert to prejudice and stereotyping both within themselves and in their work with any client/counsellor, and especially to how language and behaviour embody such attitudes. Counsellors and supervisors are expected to adopt a contemporary approach to psychodynamic counselling which is appropriate to a multi-cultural society and acknowledges and values difference.

12. Clients will be informed of the existence of Confide's client complaint procedure and how to access it.

EOP4: TRAINING

1. Confide will so far as is reasonably practicable strive to make its training accessible, attractive, suitable and relevant to all, and to be equitable in selection and assessment processes.

2. Where courses are advertised, Confide will strive to target publicity material so as to reach under-represented groups.
3. The criteria for selection will be clearly stated in the training prospectus, and applicants will be made aware of the selection procedure.
4. The procedure for selection may include, where deemed appropriate, the giving of feedback to unsuccessful candidates; this will, however, be oriented towards strengthening a future application and will not include feedback on personality factors.
5. Confide will ensure that interviewers and selectors are trained in how to conduct interviews so as to bring the issue of equality & diversity into the interview process. Interviewers will give candidates the opportunity to ask about Confide and the training.
6. Where trainees are allocated to subgroups within a year (e.g. for experiential groups) the course organiser will bear in mind the group mix as well as clinical considerations; as far as possible.
7. All trainees will be given the opportunity each academic year to comment on their experience of training, with attention being drawn to the equality & diversity aspect of training, as well as clinical and academic issues; provision will be made for these comments to be made anonymously. Course organisers are responsible for acting on these comments where appropriate.
8. Trainees will be informed of the existence and function of, and of how to contact, Confide's Equality & Diversity Representative.
9. Confide will actively seek to build a training team which reflects a balance of the local population (where suitably qualified staff are available).
10. Trainers are expected to adopt a contemporary approach to psychodynamic counselling which is appropriate to society and acknowledges and values difference. A critique of the discriminatory aspects of some older theoretical formulations (e.g. in attitudes to sexual orientation and gender roles) will be encouraged. Language used and books recommended will include this perspective.
11. Trainers and trainees will be informed that Confide abides by the BACP Ethical Framework and will be given copies of all the relevant Codes; they will also be informed of Confide's grievance and appeal procedures.

12. Details of all assessment processes and appeals procedures will be made explicit to trainees. In particular, any decision appealed against will be referred to an independent assessor, who will ensure that any issues of equal & diversity are covered in the process of the appeal.

EOP5: EMPLOYMENT

1. Confide strives to treat all existing and prospective employees/volunteers/contractors (i.e. self-employed people contracted by Confide) with fairness, respect and integrity.

2. Confide will embody its commitment to equality & diversity in its recruitment practices. It will design advertisements, job descriptions, person specifications, short-listing, interview, selection and appointment procedures which ensure as far as possible that decisions are based on objective and job-related criteria. These practices will be detailed in Confide's staff appointment procedures.

3. Adherence to the Equality & Diversity Policy will be written into all job descriptions in Confide. Induction of new appointees will include familiarisation with the Equality & Diversity Policy.

4. Confide will include equality & diversity in ongoing staff training, particularly in recruitment, selection and appraisal training.

5. Confide recognises the importance of clear procedures for complaints against Confide or Confide personnel, and when Confide needs to take action when a person's work or conduct has been found to be unsatisfactory. Confide's Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures will be publicised and readily accessible to all personnel.

6. Confide will be as flexible and considerate as is reasonably possible concerning such working arrangements as:

- job-sharing and flexible working hours.
- pregnancy, maternity, paternity, compassionate leave.
- annual leave at times of religious festivals.

EOP6: DISABLED PEOPLE

1. Confide will ensure that its services, so far as is reasonably practicable, are accessible to

disabled people.

2. Confide will provide appropriate staff with training disability awareness and in ensuring access to services.
3. All Confide's publicity and pre-admission information (for counselling, training or employment) can be made available in large print. Contacts will be made to enable any requests for such information on audio-tape or Braille to be responded to promptly; this will be provided free to the recipient.
4. Confide will normally have at least one counselling room and toilet accessible to wheelchair users, and a counselling room with an induction loop within the Roy Fletcher Centre.
5. Externally hired rooms used for training or counselling will be accessible to wheelchair users (with an accessible toilet available) and have loop facilities where necessary.
6. Confide's office is accessible to wheelchair users.
7. Representatives of disabled people's community will be asked to advise on any planned improvements to premises to make them more user-friendly for people with various impairments.
8. Application forms (for counselling, training or employment) will include a question asking if the person has any particular needs which would assist Confide to help them at initial interview (e.g. "Do you have any particular needs that would assist us to help you - for example for large print, wheelchair access").
9. Counsellors/training staff/managers of people with particular needs will monitor the meeting of those needs making any necessary adjustments to service provision, within the limits of Confide's resources.
10. Confide will maintain awareness of local and national organisations which may assist (by advice, facilities or grants) in providing support for disabled people.

EOP7: PUBLICITY AND LANGUAGE

1. The following statement of Confide's Equality & Diversity Policy (or an abbreviated form thereof) will normally be included in publicity material (for counselling, training and

employment):

"Confide aims to remove any barriers which may limit people's access or opportunity to utilize Confide Counselling Service. All sections of the community are welcome."

2. Confide aims to reflect the diversity of the surrounding community in material displayed or circulated concerning Confide's services.

3. Confide recognises that language not only reflects attitudes, it also helps to define them. Consequently all personnel have an obligation - in the spoken and written word - to use words, images and phrases that do not reinforce stereotypical, offensive or discriminatory attitudes and to avoid terms that belittle, ignore or cause offence to sections of society.

EOP8: MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

1. This Policy will be the subject of an annual review, which will:

- Review Statistics and consider the diversity of the client base
- Review current policies and procedures.
- Review the results of measures taken to increase the representation of under-represented groups.
- Receive feedback on problems that may have arisen during the year.
- Make recommendations to the Management Committee based on the input above.
- Prepare a report for inclusion in the Annual Report.