

## **Equality and Diversity Policy**

Riverwood Counselling and Wellbeing Practice are committed to the promotion and development of equality and diversity. We work under a statutory duty in line with the Equality Act (2010) which recognises the following Protected Characteristics: Age, Gender, Reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion and Belief, Sex (gender), Sexual Orientation and Disability. We ensure that all clients have equal access to our services and do not discriminate against any individual.

### **Responsibilities**

All staff working at Riverwood Counselling and Wellbeing Practice are responsible for promoting and embedding Equality and Diversity needs in their practice. It is the duty of all staff to avoid discriminatory practices, to challenge other staff in the appropriate manner and to accept personal responsibility for discriminatory actions in reference to the Equality Act (2010).

Clients wanting to access the counselling service at Riverwood Counselling and Wellbeing Practice will be considered on the basis of a needs assessment, in line with the waiting list procedure and not because of disability, age, gender(sex), race, religion or belief, pregnancy or maternity, marriage or civil partnership, gender reassignment and sexual orientation.

Any referrals to external agencies/organisations made outside of the counselling service will be chosen through specialism, quality and in the best interests of the client's needs.

Riverwood Counselling and Wellbeing Practice work within the Ethical Framework (2013) of the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy where counsellors are obliged to be just and fair to all clients whilst respecting their human rights and dignity.

Riverwood Counselling and Wellbeing Practice respect the client's confidentiality and where sensitive data regarding a client's medical or mental health are kept securely and safely in line with the Data Protection Act (1998)

### **Working Environment**

Where appropriate Riverwood Counselling and Wellbeing Practice will provide the required access for clients with a disability or additional needs and understand reasonable adjustments to be made for clients whose circumstances change during therapy. Our counselling rooms are on the first floor and staff will try their best to make alternative arrangements where needed, due to disability or mobility difficulties.

Staff working within the service have a responsibility to make the practice aware of changes to their health needs which could put them at a disadvantage or at risk regarding their working environment. Riverwood Counselling & Wellbeing Practice will provide reasonable adjustments for staff regarding disability or additional needs in line with the Equality Act (2010)

### **Raising Concerns**

Riverwood Counselling and Wellbeing Practice will not tolerate harassment, victimisation or discrimination. Clients who feel they have been harassed or discriminated against may raise the issue in the first instance with a member of Riverwood Counselling and Wellbeing Practice staff, or alternatively through stages stated in the Complaints Procedure.

Staff who feel they have been unfairly treated with issues relating to this policy may raise their concern through the staff grievance procedure.

### **Related Policies and Procedures**

- Grievance, Dismissal and Disciplinary Procedure
- Health and Safety Policy
- Appointments and Assessments Procedure
- BACP Ethical Framework (2013)
- Equality Act (2010)
- Data Protection Act (1998)
- Equality & Diversity