



# Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy

## Reviewed Jan 2022

### Definitions:

- **Equality:** Creating a fairer society where everyone can participate and has the opportunity to fulfil their potential.
- **Diversity:** Recognising, respecting and valuing difference.
- **Inclusion:** Making sure that people are not segregated, isolated or marginalised. Providing personalised responses to meeting people's needs.

St Barnabas Counselling Centre is committed to equal opportunities. We strive to be a service where diversity is celebrated. We aim to be supportive, fair and free from discrimination. All volunteers, clients and paid staff will be treated with equal regard. We recognise that power differentials are preserved and maintained through systemic prejudice and structural inequalities. There may be times therefore where we will need to take affirmative action to bring more balance. We will create a supportive and reflective environment where our practitioners will be actively encouraged to reflect on their own biases and privileges.

We will challenge discrimination and offer our services to all, regardless of disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, race, ethnicity, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation or social class.

This policy sets out how we will ensure that no job applicant, staff member, volunteer or client is unfairly discriminated against. In an instance of unlawful discrimination, we will take appropriate procedural action.

The Board of Trustees takes responsibility for the implementation, monitoring and reviewing of the Equal Opportunities Policy.

We have a Complaints and Grievance Procedure so that individuals who feel they may have been discriminated against may lodge a complaint.

All literature and publicity produced by or displayed by us is regularly examined and changes made to any language that is sexist, racist or which could suggest that certain groups of people would be excluded either as staff, volunteers or clients. This also applies to job application forms.

Job application forms and related advertising states that the St. Barnabas Counselling Centre is an equal opportunities employer.

Consideration is given to the fact that some people may have difficulty reading. For this reason, information will be written in simple English and be available, if possible, in large print.

St Barnabas Counselling Centre recognises that historically certain prejudices and oppressions have disadvantaged some groups and individuals so seek to counteract destructive long-term discrimination. We will monitor whether any minorities or groups do not use our service and will take positive steps to address this if appropriate. Examples may include presenting our services at forums where demographics may be different to our dominant client group; actively looking

to establish new partnerships with other agencies and invitations for CPD training on relevant topics.

We recognise the need to make all its services physically accessible to everyone. For instance, providing clients or counsellors who have a disability or mobility issues with the option of accessing online services. Where provision falls short of this goal, each instance will be subject to a report justifying this limitation.

Our staff will be expected to comply with the Equal Opportunities policy and will not practice discrimination towards clients or volunteers. We are committed to providing a working environment that is free from bullying and harassment and where everyone is treated with dignity and respect.

Staff will positively address discriminative practice by individuals or organisations. This is facilitated by creating an inclusive environment, where people are encouraged and supported to express concerns early on. The Director has an open-door policy and can be approached or contacted at all times during work hours. Group supervision, Community Meetings and access to the Advisory Council are other examples of how staff can access support around issues relating to equality, diversity and inclusion.

The structure of the panel of Trustees and Trustee Directors will be representative of the local community, including both volunteers and clients. Positive steps will be taken to invite members of representative groups to join in consultations with the Centre staff where their knowledge and contacts would be of benefit.