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# **TCF Strategy for addressing accessibility limitations**

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| **Review Date & Version #** | October 2014 |
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| **Reviewed by** |  |
| **Support/Co-review** | Sue Clements |
| **Date due for review** | October 2015 |

**1. Context**

The Foundation provides affordable counselling for those over 18 years of age.

We recognised the challenge in reaching our target population at the Executive Away Day on 31 October 2014 and undertook to review this annually with a view to addressing, within our means, any issue preventing people from accessing our service.

Accessibility limitations addressed were:

1. Cultural inclusivity
2. Car parking
3. Finance
4. Physical disability (mobility, hearing, sight)
5. Waiting area for carers/divers
6. Financial

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| **Cultural Inclusivity** | **Strategy** |
| Supporting cultural diversity and cultural inclusion on our training courses and access to counselling. In particular we have large Muslim population centres, especially Luton. | We monitor ethic minority representation, and for example in our training centre reports 5.8% of students as BME.  We seek and support trainees who are fluent in other languages. Clients who seek counselling in languages other than English are allocated accordingly to our bilingual counsellors where possible. Current language options include Polish, Serbian, Gujarati and Urdu. When we cannot meet the need, we signpost the client to another service for example Nyabingi in Luton. |
| Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans-sexual community. | Our staff and counsellors include LGB members. We have no reported complaints or of discrimination on these grounds. Dealing with diverse community is part of the induction and training. We continue to monitor feedback forms from our clients. |
| Gender: male students, counsellors and clients are under-represented in our cohort. | We continue to encourage and support males, from advertising across a range of media which are selected to appeal to a broad cross section of our populations, for example selecting bus sides and train stations as a hub for our latest advertising campaign. |
| Actions for the forthcoming period | Ensure that our advertising for counselling courses continues to reach a diverse population.  Continue to use Facebook and Twitter feeds emphasise material that supports this. Eg, use of Men’s Sheds, studies of men needing counselling, LGBT and ethnicity issues.  Trustee recruitment will include a search for more ethnically balanced membership. |

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| **Car Parking** | **Strategy** |
| We recognise that there is limited car parking at the St Albans site for clients and staff.  All clients and trainees are directed to park off site and leave time to park.  Disabled clients are advised about nearest disabled parking.  Other centres have street parking. | Any new premises to have at least 6 car parking spaces and good street lighting.  Any new premises to be accessible by public transport.  Exterior lights to be checked weekly in winter. |
| **Waiting areas and crèche facilities** | **Strategy** |
| To improve the waiting area space in the centres; St Albans, Stevenage and Broxbourne | Strategy; new centres planned for St Albans and Stevenage will have private waiting rooms. At Broxbourne, we are negotiating with council offices to provide a client waiting room. Clients to Broxbourne and Stevenage are currently advised to arrive on time, and that there is no waiting area for those who accompany them (but drivers of disabled are excepted where possible).  Clients are advised there are no crèche or other facilities for children (although newborns can accompany mothers when this is arranged). |
| Actions for the forthcoming period | A review of property includes relocating any of the centres which are not easily or safely accessible. |
| **Finance** | **Strategy** |
| We offer affordable, but not free, open ended counselling. This is a barrier to some of our target group. | The Foundation will continue to seek grants that will support counselling or offer free time-limited sessions.  .We will continue to offer 8 x £300 bursaries to students in training who might requires the funds due to financial hardship.  . We continue to seek ways to reduce running costs in order to be able to increase subsidised counselling. |

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| **Disability** | **Strategy** |
| Mobility impaired  Counselling rooms for people with mobility impairment are offered at all centres, whether in the centre itself or hired at a nearby venue.  St Albans: Handrails, riser chairs and ground floor rooms are offered to those who cannot manage stairs. | Our Broxbourne, Ware, Luton, Bedford and Stevenage centres provide full access to disabled clients where there is mobility impairment.  Our strategy in Stevenage is to find another site which will reduce the need for clients who are mobility impaired to take the lift to the 6th floor of a building.  At St Albans we use the St Albans Baptist Church for clients who are mobility impaired, so that our counselling operation in St Albans is accessible to all. Our strategy is to find new counselling premises in St Albans in 2015, which offers greater access to all clients.  All centres to sweep and grit access areas after snowfalls. |
| Sight impaired  Blind or partially sighted clients are communicated with in preferred method ie phone, large print and scribe for forms. We do not have Braille forms. | Lighting inside and outside buildings is constantly checked.  H&S check to include monitoring lighting and trip hazards. |
| Hearing impaired  We are not able to provide signing interpreters but can refer deaf clients to appropriate services. Hard of hearing clients are offered preferred means of communication with administrators, ie text or email. Hearing loop available in St Albans Centre. | The St Albans centre received a grant and implemented a hearing loop.  The strategy is for the other centres during 2015 to seek grants of £3,000, to invest in hearing loops. We will continue to seek counsellors or trainees with signing skills but have noted they are rare nationally. |
| Supporting clients with learning difficulties  We regularly discuss ways to ensure our services are accessible to clients with specific learning disabilities, such as Aspergers Syndrome or ADHD. We aim to pick these up during the application and assessment process with a view to providing them with a counsellor who can work with their abilities. | To provide CPD classes in counselling people with learning disabilities/differences.  Highlight learning differences in application and assessment processes so ensure client is allocated to a counsellor trained or experienced in that disability.  Continue to build relationships with organisations such as Mencap and Mind who can support clients for whom psychodynamic counselling is not the best choice. |

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| **Equal opportunities** | **Strategy** |
| All clients are asked to fill in an equal opportunities form at the beginning of training or counselling (both NHS and open ended). We monitor these forms for feedback on accessibility, attitude of staff and counsellors and whether the setting was comfortable and best suited to their needs.  Staff and counsellors are trained to and expected to give appropriate attention to the diverse range of client needs.  Staff are provided with a family friendly environment as part of the philosophy of caring for self and others. | To continue to monitor forms and feedback passed on informally by clients, administrators and counsellors.The aim is to provide support as much as possible that does not require the client to seek individual assistance. The Foundation takes pride in having a family friendly working environment and policies. For example all employees can request flexible working hours between 7am and 3pm, to meet any family or personal requirements. The organisation closes between Christmas and New Year to ensure that everyone has time with family and friends. |

Issues within this policy will be raised at Executive meetings quarterly.

The policy will be reviewed each October and the new edition published on the Foundation website.