**SARC ACCESSIBILTY CHARTER**

SARC is committed to working to remove barriers to accessing our services so that all members of our community and all communities in our city can receive the support and assistance that our specialist team of advisors provide.

We meet our obligations under the Disability Equality Act (81% of our clients have a disability as defined by the Act) but strive to go further and recognise that different sections of our community may face specific issues in accessing our services.

As a small local charity, we do face some limitations on the resources available to us when meeting client needs but we make every effort to offer everyone a service tailored to their needs.

**General Steps to deliver Service Access -**

***Service location*-**our main office in Woolston is based close to a number of public transport hubs and where resources permit, we provide some limited outreach services elsewhere in the city.

***Buildings*-**our Woolston building has reasonable physical access arrangements.

***Service Delivery*-** SARC offers a range of alternatives for service access ranging from in person appointments at our office to telephone and social media consultations and support.

***Cost-***our services are offered free of charge to all eligible clients**.**

***Communications*-**subject to resource constraints SARC can help with translation services where a client does not have English as a first language, British Sign Language support is also available.

***Trust***-some clients may feel trepidation in approaching an advice service on a matter which is deeply personal to them, we can give them the assurance that we are completely independent, professional and on their side. We provide our services in a safe, welcoming environment and observe strict professional standards of confidentiality when helping clients.

***Equality of Treatment***- SARC has a comprehensive Equal Opportunities Policy which is regularly reviewed and actively informs the daily practice of our staff. We recognise that everyone deserves equal treatment, but this requires recognition of each individual’s specific needs.

**How SARC operates to promote access**

* SARC treats all our clients as individuals and does not make assumptions about their abilities and needs.
* SARC will always discuss with any client the best way to access our services and will seek to offer solutions that meet client needs and remove barriers to access.
* SARC staff who have many years’ experiences can demonstrate real empathy when dealing with clients’ concerns. One human being will help another and work with them to identify the support needed.
* SARC regularly reviews its policies, practices, and procedures to ensure both legal compliance and embedded commitment to the principles of equal access to our service. We hold the Advice Services Alliance quality mark and have external audits.
* SARC regularly reviews and updates its staff training to ensure that they meet the needs of our clients and deliver our usual high quality professional services to all.
* SARC works closely with a number of NHS services who refer clients to us as “social prescribing” this allows more feedback to us on how effective accessing our services is.
* SARC regularly monitors in an anonymous way some key client data around gender and ethnicity to ensure we are reaching communities across our city.
* SARC conducts an at least annually, a client survey and invites comments on the quality and accessibility of our service which informs service improvement.
* SARC consults on and publicises our Accessibility Charter, and welcomes feedback and suggestions on how we can improve service access.