



Dear

Please find enclosed BESIDE's Membership Pack, details about our services and an application form.

If you would like to become a Member, please spend some time going over our current programme of groups and identifying the types of groups or services that you might want to participate in. Then fill in the application form including the names of two people who know you, like a community mental health team worker, a social worker, or GP who can provide us a few details and a risk assessment. When we get the application form we will send off for the references. When received, we will phone or write to set up a welcome meeting with one of our staff to explain more about Beside, and how we might meet your needs.

Please do ring our office if you would like to discuss any of the above. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours sincerely,

BESIDE



## **AIMS STATEMENT**

BESIDE is a Tower Hamlets Mental Health Community Project. We have been offering community mental health services in Tower Hamlets since 1992. We are a small but dynamic organisation which provides 13 regular activity-based and self-help groups to over 360 members. Our members are Tower Hamlets residents who experience mental health difficulties

**Beside aims to help people achieve outstanding outcomes that maintain or improve their mental health. Groups focus on self-empowerment and self-development, so that people with mental health difficulties can take an equal and valued place in our community.**

We support members to develop a range of self-empowering strategies in a supportive and safe environment. In doing this, Beside members develop their own inner resources such as self-esteem, awareness, creativity, emotional insight and learning potential. In addition we provide a sense of community for everyone, with opportunities for simply sharing and socialising. Beside supports a mixture of short term and long term groups e.g.

- Anxiety Support
- Hearing Voices Self Help and Support
- User-led activity groups
- Short term self-help courses for Healthy Eating, Creative Writing, Relaxation
- Training in facilitation skills for service users
- One-to-one Peer Support

**Beside is supported by a small core team of staff, volunteers, and service users. We are an independent, non-statutory, local voluntary sector organisation**

## BESIDE MEMBERSHIP

BESIDE is a Tower Hamlets Mental Health Community project that offers services to people:

- With mental health concerns
- Who live in Tower Hamlets
- Who are between 18 and 65 years old

### How do I become a Member?

- You need to complete a short application form in order to become a member. If you find the form difficult we could help you complete it.
- We ask for a reference from 1 professional who knows you well and sees you regularly e.g psychologist, social worker, G.P
- We then send a reference form to your referee. Please note that we do ask all referees to disclose whether a potential member presents a threat to themselves or others
- Once we receive a satisfactory reference, we will invite you to a “Welcome Meeting” to discuss your membership application, Beside services, and how we can best support you
- When you become a member, we will not feedback any information about you and we will not disclose your personal details to anyone without your consent, unless we have serious concerns about your safety or the safety of others
- As a Beside member, you are invited to join our groups and events and you will receive our NEWSLETTER. A few groups are closed groups and there is a waiting list e.g the Hearing Voices group, the Anxiety Support Group
- If you have been absent from Beside for more than a year, we will gladly welcome you back. However, we will appreciate it if you call our offices before turning up.
- Members and staff endeavour to abide by BESIDE’s basic rules in order to ensure the safety and emotional well-being of everyone in our premises.

## **BASIC RULES**

### **Conduct**

Abusive or threatening behaviour by either a member or staff is not acceptable. Beside reserves the right to withdraw services from members who:

- Display aggressive, threatening, disrespectful, or violent behaviour
- Use abusive language and verbal threats to others
- Display racist, sexist, homophobic attitudes and behaviours towards members or staff
- Attend Beside groups under the influence of drugs, non-prescribed medication, or alcohol

### **Confidentiality**

Information disclosed in Beside activities and our members' personal details are confidential within our organization and will not be given to a third party. This confidentiality does not cover the following:

- Serious injury or harm will be caused to another individual or yourself
- Child abuse has been disclosed
- A miscarriage of justice will occur
- A member of staff is summonsed by a Court of Law

Where possible, Beside will always inform you first if confidentiality is to be broken.

### **Complaints**

If you feel you have been treated unfairly by a member of staff, Beside has a complaint policy which is available upon request. Ask staff for further details

### **Financial contribution**

Beside groups are free except for a few activities. Swimming and Cinema tickets range between £1.00-3.50. Outings may cost up to £5.00 for places outside London

### **Attendance**

Attendance to groups is not compulsory. However, it will be hugely appreciated if you give as much advance notice for your absence as possible.

### **Carers**

Beside offers information about carer groups. Ask a member of staff for more information.

### **Member involvement at Beside**

We respect and actively encourage input from all our members. So, Beside:

- Invites all members to the MEMBERS' FORUM meeting held once a quarter
- Holds an annual THINK DAY where members, volunteers, professionals and staff discuss current groups and develop ideas for future activities
- Welcomes members to contribute to our NEWSLETTER. If you have an article, a poem, a response, or anything else get in contact with a member of staff

### **Pets**

Members are welcome to bring their pets to some of our meetings with the understanding that other members do not mind. Pets, however, are not allowed where cooking or eating takes place.

### **Personal belongings**

Beside is not insured against theft of Members' personal belongings, so please keep your items with you at all times. Beside will not be held liable for theft, loss, or damage to any person's property.

# **BESIDE MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM**

## **CONFIDENTIAL**

<b>Name:</b>	<b>Email:</b>
<b>Address:</b>	
<b>Contact phone no. :</b>	<b>Date of Birth:</b>

**Please describe your mental health concerns. Is there anything you would like us to be aware of in order best to support you? (For example, do you suffer with panic attacks?):**

**Which Beside groups/services do you think you might be interested in attending or joining?**

**Are you referring yourself?**  **Or is someone else making this referral?**

Do you have a Carer? Yes  No

**Name:** **Telephone:**

**Address:** **Email:**

We will contact this person to let them know about services that are available to them in the borough.

In order for you to become a Member of Beside, we ask that a statutory worker complete a short reference form for us. Please could you provide the details of your mental health professional (e.g. community nurse, psychiatrist, social worker), or of your GP, and then sign the declaration below.

**Name:** **Profession:**

**Place and address of work:** **Telephone:**

**Email:**

*I am happy for you to contact this person, inform them that I would like to become a Member of Beside, and request background information for risk management purposes.*

**Signed:** **Date:**

Please return, marked CONFIDENTIAL, to: *Beside, 60-61 Old Nichol Street, London E2 7HP*

## **Equal Opportunities with BESIDE**

### Declaration of Intent

Beside is committed to equality of opportunity in the delivery of services to members, in the employment of staff and volunteers.

The policies and practices of our organization aim to promote an environment that is non-discriminatory and values the diversity of each individual, be they an applicant for membership, member, job applicant, employee, or volunteer.

We will respect individuality and treat people fairly, taking into account their gender, sexual orientation, age, race, colour, religion, nationality, national origin, ethnic origin, disability, HIV/AIDS status, or mental health diagnosis.

We will continually review and monitor the effectiveness of our equal opportunities practices.

## Beside Member Equalities Monitoring

**1.1** Please put an X in the category in which you would include yourself

Age/ Ethnicity	18 - 65	65 +
Asian/British Indian		
Asian/British Pakistani		
Asian/British Bangladeshi		
Other Asian Background		
Black/British Somali		
Black/British African		
Black/British Caribbean		
Black/British Other		
Mixed White and Asian		
Mixed White and Caribbean		
Other Mixed Background		
White British		
White Irish		
White EU		
Other White		
Vietnamese		
Chinese		
Other		

**1.2** Gender: please describe your gender.

Female	
Male	
Trans gender	
Prefer not to say	

**1.3** **Sexuality:** Please mark 'X' in the category that describes your sexual orientation

Sexuality	
Heterosexual	
Gay	
Lesbian	
Bisexual	
Don't know	

**1.4** **Disability:** If you have a disability please indicate which category best describes it

Disability	
Physical Disability	
Sensory Impairment	
Mental Health	
Long Term Condition	
Learning Disability	
Other	
Prefer not to say	

**1.5** **Religion/Belief:** Please indicate the category that best describes your religious beliefs.

Religious belief	
Muslim	
Christian	
Hindu	
Buddhist	
Jewish	
Sikh	
Other religious beliefs	
Prefer not to say	
No religion	