

Relate Mid Thames & Buckinghamshire - Counselling For All

Accessibility Strategic Document February 2019

Our vision:

A future in which healthy relationships are actively promoted as the basis of a thriving society.

Our mission:

We aim to develop and support healthy relationships by:

- Delivering inclusive, high-quality, professional services that are relevant at every life stage
- Helping couples, families and individuals to make relationships work better
- Helping both the public and policy makers improve their understandings of relationships and what makes them flourish

We are here for people of all ages and backgrounds, we work to reach out and extend our services beyond the barriers that many people may face.

We serve disadvantaged and vulnerable people within the community, providing a high quality, reliable and confidential service for people who are feeling isolated and vulnerable.

Although we request a fee from clients who are in a position to pay, many are not and the balance of the cost of delivering skilled, expert counselling and support is met from our Bursary Funding Scheme.

Relate MTB has been serving our local community since 1960.

Access to Relate MTB counselling rooms:

- Relate MTB aims to provide accessibility for all to our counselling. To ensure that we serve all our local communities to the best of our ability, some sessions are hosted in the premises of other providers where accessibility is out of our control. Our intention is that our counselling rooms are informal, welcoming and peaceful spaces where you can relax and feel safe.
- We will ask when booking in your initial appointment if there are any access issues for us to consider. We are able to offer telephone counselling if you are unable to get to our locations.
- Our combined counselling venues offer sessions during weekdays, on weekday evenings and on Saturday mornings. Depending on availability waiting time for popular times may be longer than for others. We recognise that with increased funds and counselling times the availability of evening and Saturday morning sessions could be increased. We continue to fundraise and to recruit with this aim in mind.
- Please do tell us in advance if there is anything we can help with in advance of your Relate MTB counselling session. If you have particular accessibility requirements or mobility needs please contact our friendly admin team who will be able to advise you on the most appropriate venue.

Review & measurement: We carefully maintain our counselling rooms and regularly review their suitability for our clients and our staff. We welcome feedback and comments on the accessibility and suitability of our counselling rooms – please talk to your counsellor, a Relate MTB receptionist or send comments by email to enquiries@relateMTB.co.uk.

Access to Relate MTB counselling rooms			
Locations	Address	Accessibility	Contact for further information / requirements
High Wycombe	Kite Ridge Centre Verney Avenue High Wycombe HP12 3NE	Disabled parking spaces. Ground floor access to counselling rooms and toilets, incl disabled toilet.	01494 791180 enquiries@relatemt看b.co.uk
Maidenhead	4 Marlow Road Maidenhead SL6 7YR	Disabled parking spaces. Ground floor access to counselling rooms. Lift to access toilets, incl disabled toilet.	01628 633726 enquiries@relatemt看b.co.uk
Windsor	Apple Physiotherapy Essex Lodge 69 Osborne Road, Windsor SL4 3EQ	Parking on site and a space can be reserved close to the entrance by arrangement. Stairs and no lift access however we are able to arrange an alternative private room on the ground floor.	01628 633726 enquiries@relatemt看b.co.uk
Aylesbury	2a Pebble Lane, Aylesbury HP20 2JH	Steep stairs and no lift access. We are able to arrange an alternative private room in on the ground floor.	01296 427973 enquiries@relatemt看b.co.uk
Princes Risborough	Wellington House Surgery Stratton Road Princes Risborough HP27 9AX	Disabled parking space. Ground floor counselling room and toilet, incl disabled toilet.	01296 427973 enquiries@relatemt看b.co.uk
Chesham	The Chess Medical Centre 260-290 Berkhamstead Road Chesham HP5 3EZ	Disabled parking space. Ground floor counselling room available. Toilets, incl disabled toilet on the ground floor.	01494 791180 enquiries@relatemt看b.co.uk

Keeping Relate MTB counselling sessions low-cost:

- Relate MTB is a 'not for profit' registered charity and the money that we charge goes straight back into providing the best service possible. We try to keep the cost of counselling as low as possible, but we need to make a charge to cover the cost of what we spend. We do not receive any government funding.
- We request that clients contribute to the cost of their counselling by paying a fee according to their means, rather than at the full market rate.
- To ensure efficient use of our resources and to keep waiting time to a minimum, clients must give at least 48 hours notice if they need to cancel an appointment and a reminder is sent out.
- As a registered charity, we apply to charitable trusts, foundations and organisations for donations towards the Relate MTB Bursary Funding Scheme which, funds allowing, clients can apply to, to make up the difference between the cost of their counselling and the amount they can afford to pay.
- Off Peak counselling sessions are available, depending on demand, which have a reduced fee. Please ask about availability when you book.

- We deliver 'funded services' through partnerships with particular organisations. These currently include: Macmillan (for people with a cancer diagnosis referred by a Buckinghamshire Health Trust Consultant); Couple Therapy For Depression through the local Healthy Minds IAPT service (for clients registered with a Buckinghamshire GP. Please call Healthy Minds on 01865 901688 for an assessment); RAF through the Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund. For more information please call or email us.
- Our counsellors work for Relate MTB for below the market rate and also donate a number of their hours free of charge. We also have in our team counsellors-in-training who see clients under close supervision.
- Our paid staff are kept to a minimum and all except 1 position is part-time.

Review & measurement: The Relate MTB Board of Trustees monitors our costs and income throughout the year and we produce an Annual Report with our audited accounts, in accordance with Charity Commission requirements. These are published on our website.

A friendly welcome for all at Relate MTB:

- Relate MTB's professionally trained counsellors support clients without judgement. Our counsellors will always treat all clients with respect.
- We have experience in counselling people from a wide range of ages and backgrounds, including LGBTQ+ individuals and couples.
- We do our best to accommodate any language issues and if a BSL interpreter is required we will try to arrange for this. There will be an additional cost for translators.
- Everyone in our team is trained in awareness of particular needs including cultural, mental health, LGBTQ+, people with a cancer diagnosis, Asperger's and Autism.
- Relate MTB has an Equal Opportunities Policy which we rigorously uphold.

Meeting the diversity of the communities we serve:

- We strive to increase the diversity in our counselling team to better reflect the diversity of our communities.
- We attend networking events to inform different audiences about our services and we have strengthened our links with local colleges that offer Level 3 counselling courses and invited potential Relate MTB placement students to an open day to find out about becoming a counsellor before they commit to making an application.
- Translation needs present a challenge for any confidential service. At present any clients who are not comfortable to access counselling in English are invited to arrange their own interpreter at their own cost.
- We can do more to reach out to minority communities to raise awareness of our counselling service and to support this we have a new mobile information stand (funded by Aylesbury Vale District Council New Homes Bonus) which we will be taking to various events. We would be delighted to hear about any suitable events in your community. Please email enquiries@relatemt看.co.uk
- If you, or someone you know is interested in training to become a Relate MTB counsellor, please visit our website to find out more <http://www.relatemt看.co.uk/about/work/>

Review & measurement: All Relate MTB clients are invited to complete an evaluation and feedback form at the start and end of their course of counselling. The anonymised data is collated into a regular evaluation report The Difference We Make. This measures client postcodes, age group, ethnicity, gender, level of service satisfaction and their perceived improvement across a range of criteria. This feedback is shared with the Relate MTB team and Trustees, and it informs how we can make improvements to our systems and service. A summary is published in our Annual Report.