



What Clients can expect from BEAP Community Partnership

BEAP aims to provide a good quality, confidential, free advice service to the people of Manningham and surrounding areas in the Bradford District

Any person coming to the centre has the right to expect that they will receive a service which meets our minimum standards. This means that we will try to keep to the following guidelines and rules:

1. Equal, Diversity & Inclusion

Regardless of race, religion, gender, age, marital status, ethnicity, nationality or disability, everyone coming to BEAP will be treated with respect and courtesy.

2. The help we can give

We understand that many people coming to BEAP are in difficult circumstances and may be under a lot of stress. We will try to help anyone who comes to us with a problem. Our advice staff team has access to resources and receives training in the areas of Welfare Rights, Debt, Employment, and Housing. The levels of help we can give in these, and other related issues varies but if we cannot help, we will try to find an agency who can.

When a client asks us for help, we work with them to find a solution to their problem. Because we believe it is important to find sustainable solutions to problems, we try wherever possible to ensure that the client fully understands the problem, how it arose and how future difficulties can be avoided. We will present clients with options that could be pursued and will help to pursue the course they choose. We will not help with any action which is not fully legal (e.g. is fraudulent in the broadest sense).

Our staff are not trained in counselling.

Staff will only assist with issues unrelated to the broad areas outlined above in exceptional circumstances.

We will try to help anyone who comes to us but if someone behaves in a way which is threatening or offensive to other users or staff they may be asked to leave by a member of staff. We will treat everyone fairly and will not tolerate offensive or discriminatory language or behaviour.



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Anyone being asked to leave for this reason should be offered copies of our equal opportunities and complaints policies.

If anyone is unhappy in any way with any aspect of our service, they are encouraged to let us know. They can ask a member of staff for the complaints policy

3. Accessibility of the service

BEAP is on the ground floor of the building with level access, suitable for wheelchairs and pushchairs.

We provide telephone advice two mornings per week to deal with immediate or short queries. We also offer a triage service to assess urgency, complexity and vulnerability of clients. Appointments are made when necessary. When appropriate, clients are signposted or referred out.

We aim to be able to offer advice in the preferred language of the client, and can offer help in English, Bangla, Sylheti, Punjabi, Urdu. (see below for issues of interpretation)

We display our opening times both inside and outside the centre. We try to minimise variations of our opening times but if, for reasons such as staff sickness or holidays, we must alter our service we will put clear notices up and give reasonable notice where possible.

5. Free advice and information

We will not charge service users for advice, information, help with forms or for other assistance with the cases they bring to us (e.g. interpreting, telephoning in connection with a case, writing letters). If we are asked to help with an issue which is not related to the work we do, for example to use the photocopier or make a phone call for a personal reason, we may ask for a payment to cover costs. If we intend to charge for anything we will explain this clearly before the cost is incurred.

We are a small voluntary organisation and accept donations.

6. Quality help

All our advisers undergo regular training in advice work issues. We will be applying for subscriptions to legal periodicals and buy books on relevant subjects which are regularly updated.



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If we do not know the answer to a question we will try to find out the answer. If we cannot give the help that is needed, we will try to find an organisation that can help and arrange to refer the issue to them if appropriate. If we do this, we will not pass on any details without the client being present or pass on any papers without the client's written consent. If we do have to refer on a case, we will always try to find an organisation which has standards as high as our own and is free. If we must signpost a client to a service which will charge for its help, we will make this clear and will not recommend any commercial service above any other without good reason (e.g. they are the only provider specialising in that type of help in the locality).

7. Confidentiality

We believe that it is important that issues discussed in the centre are kept private. We have interview rooms and try to ensure that conversations with advisers are not overheard by other people in the centre.

As people enter the centre they are advised to wait in the waiting area. Reception worker will assess the client's situation at reception and decides whether the client's enquiry can be dealt with quickly at the reception, or whether it is a complex matter needing attention from one of the advisers in an interview room. If it is a lengthy matter an appointment will be made.

The reception desk is kept in the open plan area; although every effort is made to keep it private it may be inappropriate for the client to discuss the query at the reception. We will respect this and will ask clients if they want an interview room to discuss their query.

We will not discuss any issue raised in the centre with any other person *unless* the matter needs to be discussed with another staff member for the benefit of the client or other staff, for example for training purposes. Staff will never discuss client matters with anyone who does not work for advice team at BEAP Community Partnership without the client's express permission.

Beap often has volunteers who are training in advice work. Such trainees may sit in on interviews or, at late stages of their training, see a client on their own. In either case they will have signed the confidentiality policy and will not give advice unsupervised. Their presence will be noted on the case sheet.

8. Record keeping

After giving any advice, staff will record the advice given. This case record is filed under the name of the client. We will never show this file to any other person unless we have the written consent of the client saying who they agree we discuss their case with.



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For staff training and funding or quality audit purposes we may need to have some files examined by a third party. We will not show any part of a file to an outside person without express permission from the client or without first removing any identification from it first.

If the client wishes to see their file they may, but it remains the property of BEAP Community Partnership. If the client is unhappy with any aspect of our records, they may ask us to note any amendment in the file or may go through the complaint's procedure.

If we write a letter or complete a form on behalf of a client, we will keep a copy of parts which may be of importance in the future. If the client wishes to take an additional copy, we may charge for this.

We will keep records for a period of six years. We keep statistical records of the advice given. All records used for external reporting purposes are anonymised.

9. Interpreters

If client cannot communicate in English or requires sign language, BEAP Community Partnership will provide an interpreter whenever possible. The first option will be to see a member of staff or a volunteer who can assist them in the correct language. They must have signed our confidentiality clause and be aware of the need to treat the case professionally. If BEAP is unable to provide an interpreter, the client will be asked to provide their own interpreter or agree to be referred to another advice project.

An interpreter must always be above the age of 16 even if provided by the client, unless all other options have been exhausted and the client has no other means of seeking advice. In no case will a person under 14 be relied on to provide interpretation, even at the request of the client.

In all cases the interpreter who is involved will be noted on the case sheet.

10. Conflicts of interests

As an advice agency there may be occasions when it would be inappropriate to advise a member of the public due to a conflict of interests. This situation would arise for example if the adviser was aware that a colleague was assisting another party to a dispute (e.g. a landlord/tenant issue or family dispute), or that they were known on a personal basis to a relevant party in a dispute in such a way that their ability to be impartial may be in question. If a staff member feels there may be any such conflict of interest, they may refer on a case and record their reasons for doing so on the case sheet but should not disclose to a client that another person is accessing our service.



11. Our Policies

BEAP Community Partnership has policies setting out what we will do in certain circumstances. These have been written by the Management Committee and are reviewed from time to time.

The policies we have include the following:

- Health and Safety
- Confidentiality
- Complaints
- Equal, Diversity & Inclusion

Our Equal, Diversity & Inclusion Policy and our Complaints Policy are clearly displayed in the waiting area. Our constitution (which sets out the basic rules of how we work) is also displayed. All the points set out above are subject to these policies.

Anyone who would like to have a copy of any policy can do so.

If anyone is unhappy in any way with any aspect of our service, they are encouraged to let us know. We have a comments box, and copies of our complaint's procedure are in a dispenser in the waiting area.