

Equal opportunities policy

The Microbiome Group practitioners and our clients represent a diversity of identities and characteristics. All practitioners within the Microbiome Group have a deep respect for – and celebrate – human diversity, alongside the ecological diversity of the human microbiome. This includes having a personal commitment to antiracism, addressing our own internalised ableism and ageism, as well as an appreciation of neurodiversity and all LGBTQIA+ identities.

We are committed to fostering equal opportunities within the Microbiome Group and in the service we provide to clients. We appreciate that our clients and practitioners will be representative of all aspects of society and it is our aim to ensure that each person is treated with respect and professional, dignified treatment, irrespective of their age, disability, gender identity or reassignment, sex or sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership status, pregnancy or parental status, race (including nationality and ethnic or national origins or heritage), religion or belief.

While the Director of The Microbiome Group has overall responsibility for this policy and for equal opportunities and discrimination law compliance by The Microbiome Group, all practitioners have a personal and legal obligation to ensure compliance with this policy, to always treat clients and each other with dignity, and not to discriminate against, intimidate or harass clients or fellow Associates.

Our commitments

The Microbiome Group is committed to ensuring that equality underpins all aspects of our training, policies, procedures, and work practices.

Our Clients

The Microbiome Group recognises we have a duty of care to ensure that all clients are treated fairly and without prejudice. Our clients will not be treated less favourably because of their identity or personal situation, including age, disability, gender identity or reassignment,

sex or sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership status, pregnancy or parental status, race (including nationality and ethnic or national origins or heritage), religion or belief.

We will monitor services and solicit feedback from our clients about the quality of service they have received. Our [online feedback form](#) enables anonymous feedback if preferred.

We have an expectation that our clients will not harass, discriminate against or intimidate our Associates, and will treat them fairly and equally. The Microbiome Group reserves the right to terminate service provision to any client that does not meet these expectations.

Our Associates

The Microbiome Group will ensure that our Associates can work in a safe environment which promotes dignity and respect to all. No form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated, and such behaviour from our practitioners will be treated as potential misconduct. We will seek to provide the necessary safeguards and guidance to ensure that our practitioners are adequately responsive to their client's needs. We encourage the development of understanding and appreciation of diversity and lifestyles.

- In the provision of services, all practitioners will treat all clients fairly and without prejudice and will not discriminate against any group or individual.
- When communicating with clients, our practitioners will be respectful of diverse identities and endeavour to use inclusive language.
- In our commitment to growth, understanding and inclusivity, all practitioners welcome any feedback gratefully and nondefensively.

Our obligation

The Microbiome Group will fulfil our legal obligations under equal opportunities legislation. Any breach of our equal opportunities policy or legislation will be taken very seriously and addressed urgently.

We will provide clear information on how to complain and seek to act upon complaints within an agreed timeframe – through contacting Viola Sampson directly or using our contact or feedback forms on our website: www.themicrobiomegroup.com/contact

This policy will be monitored and reviewed annually by the director of the Microbiome Group, and we encourage suggestions on ways in which this policy may be improved at all times.

Appendix

Discrimination occurs in different ways, some more obvious than others. Discrimination on the grounds of any Protected Characteristics, including disability, sex, sexual orientation and race, is prohibited by law, even if unintentional, unless a particular exception applies.

Direct discrimination

Direct discrimination is less favourable treatment because of one of the Protected Characteristics. Direct discrimination can arise in some cases even though the person complaining does not actually possess the Protected Characteristics but is perceived to have it or associates with other people who do.

Indirect discrimination

Indirect discrimination arises when there is a practice, policy or rule that applies in an apparently neutral way to everyone, which in fact puts individuals with a particular Protected Characteristic at a disadvantage statistically and this is unjustified.

Victimisation

Victimisation means treating a person less favourably because they have made a complaint of discrimination or have provided information in connection with a complaint or because they *might* do one of these things.

Harassment

Harassment is any unwanted physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. A single incident or behaviour that has continued for a long period of time without complaint can amount to harassment. It is not necessary for an individual to intend to harass someone for their behaviour to amount to harassment. It is also not necessary for an individual to communicate that behaviour is unwelcome before it amounts to harassment.