



NORTH EAST AMBULANCE SERVICE NHS TRUST

Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Policy

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1.0 Introduction

This Policy provides the North East Ambulance Service NHS Trust with the overall framework to meet its' commitment to promoting equality, diversity and human rights. The Trust recognises the need to tackle discrimination and to promote equality between different groups in the community whilst also addressing the diverse needs of individuals.

This Policy illustrates the Trusts' commitment to provide an inclusive culture which treats all individuals with dignity and respect. The Trust values diversity highly and recognises that different people bring different perspectives, ideas, histories, opinions, knowledge and culture, and that this difference brings great strength.

The benefits of a diverse workforce are well recognised and include a culture where difference is visibly welcomed and where people are actively included in order that they can use their unique talents to the full in the provision of a healthcare service that respects and responds to the diverse needs of the local population it serves.

Benefits for policy and service delivery include:

- Increased confidence in public services amongst service users
- Improved 'openness' about policy making
- Equitable targeted policies
- The ability to improve the delivery of suitable and accessible services that meet varied needs
- The development of good practice

Benefits for employment include:

- Encouraging the workforce to be more representative of the community it serves
- To achieve/retain 'Model Employer' status, thus attracting potential staff to the service
- Retention of staff
- Improvement in staff morale and ultimately improved patient care

There is an increasing range of equality legislation which the Trust needs to respond to in its' employment policies and practices, and provision of services. Whilst the policy is not driven solely by legislation, it recognises the importance of ensuring that the Trust can meet its' statutory duties.

The Trust is committed to meeting its duties under equality legislation and aims to follow the good practice set out in the statutory codes of practice which accompany the legislation.

The relevant legislation includes:

- Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006
- Equality Act 2006
- Disability Discrimination Act 2005
- Employment Equality (Sex Discrimination) Regulations 2005
- Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003
- Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003
- Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000
- Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations 1999
- Human Rights Act 1998

- Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended)
- Race Relations Act 1976 (as amended)
- Sex Discrimination Act 1975
- Equal Pay Act 1970
- Religious and Racial Hatred Act 2006

This legislation is underpinned by Human Rights as set out in the Human Rights Act 1998.

2.0 Policy Statement

The overall objective of this Equality, Diversity and Human Rights policy is to achieve the following in employment policies and practices, in services, and in engagement with partners and with the communities across the Trust's region.

- Develop an organisational culture which embraces an inclusive approach;
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment;
- Promote equality of opportunity;
- Promote good relations and positive attitudes between people of diverse backgrounds
- Foster a culture of respect and understanding between people of diverse cultures, backgrounds, circumstances and identities

The Trust aims to ensure that no job applicants, employees, volunteers, contractors, patients or service users receive less favourable treatment on any grounds which cannot be shown to be justified. This covers race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, gender, marital status, responsibility for children or other dependants, disability, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, age, trade union membership or political activities, social class, or where the person lives.

The Trust recognises that:

- discrimination may occur on more than one ground at the same time
- people have a range of diverse needs and services should be designed or delivered in different ways to respond to these needs.

3.0 Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to all staff working within the Trust including employees, contractors, volunteers and staff from other organisations working on Trust premises. It also applies to patients and visitors.

This policy will apply to all Trust premises and all staff working in other premises, including any place where the occasion can be identified with either the requirements of the Trust, or with social events linked to the Trust.

4.0 Aims of the Policy

In meeting the overall objective of this policy, a number of more detailed aims have been identified covering general aims, services and employment.

The Trust will :

- Incorporate consideration of equality, diversity and human rights principles from the onset in all its policies, plans, strategies and services:
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- Undertake equality impact assessments to measure the impact of policies and services and to determine the needs of its employees, patients, service users and the public:
- Identify equality and diversity outcomes it requires for employees, patients, service users and the public as necessary:
- Reflect the diversity of the geographical areas it serves in publications, events and other marketing and communications activities:
- Follow the social model of disability;
- Apply the principles of this policy to suppliers of goods and services to the Trust:

4.1 Service Provision Aims:

The Trust aims to:

- Provide appropriate, accessible and effective services and facilities to all sections of its communities without discrimination or prejudice;
- Provide clear information about its services in appropriate formats or languages which meet people's needs;
- Monitor its services to ensure that all sections of the community are receiving fair access and outcomes and take action to address any inequalities that are apparent;
- Consult with and involve all sections of the community when making decisions about services:
- Respond promptly and fairly to any complaints received about its services including those relating to discrimination.

4.2 Employment Aims:

The Trust will:

- Ensure that its employment policies and procedures do not discriminate directly or indirectly against any group or individual on unjustifiable grounds:
- Work to achieve a workforce that represents the community it serves:
- Monitor the recruitment and selection processes, training and development opportunities, disciplinary, grievance, bullying and harassment and capability procedures by ethnic group, disability, gender, age, sexual orientation and religious belief and take action to address any inequalities that are apparent:
- Promote a culture of fairness and respect in its employment policies, procedures and practices:
- Provide appropriate training for employees at every level on equality, diversity and human rights issues:
- Protect employees from bullying, harassment and violence and investigate all claims of bullying and harassment that are made:

- Respond to the particular needs of employees including those relating to ethnic group, disability, age, gender, sexual orientation or religious belief:

5.0 Responsibilities

The Trust has taken into account and will continue to do so, the duties placed on it by legislation on race, disability, gender, age, religion/belief and sexual orientation. It is committed to applying good practice to all the equality areas to ensure equity of health outcomes and employment.

The following groups are responsible for delivering assurance to the Trust Board that the Trust is meeting its equality, diversity and human rights objectives:

- Equality and Diversity Group
 - North East Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Leads Group
 - Ambulance Diversity Forum
 - Assurance Committee
- **The Trust Board** will monitor the Trust's commitment to working in partnership across the NHS North East and will ensure that it regularly demonstrates a commitment to promoting equality in everything it does. The Trust Board is also ultimately responsible for ensuring the Trust complies with its obligations under the Equality Duties and with the commitments set out in this policy. It will consider annually the information published under the Single Equality Scheme and agree actions on any under performance by the Trust. It will also ensure that steps which have been taken to promote equality and tackle discrimination. Finally, it will consider recommendations made in relation to any further or other steps which are considered desirable in view of the Trust's duties to promote equality and tackle discrimination; and review and amend the scheme.
 - **The Assurance Committee** will monitor progress of the Equality and Diversity group on behalf of the Trust Board by oversight of the minutes of the meetings of this group on a regular basis.
 - **Equality and Diversity Group** is responsible for providing assurance that the Trust is delivering on both its general and specific equality duties and taking other steps to promote equality and tackle discrimination. The Equality and Diversity Group also has responsibility for monitoring progression of the Trust's Single Equality Scheme. Each year the Trust will produce an annual report on the Single Equality Scheme which will be published online and be available in other formats upon request.
 - **Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Leads Group and Ambulance Diversity Forum**
The Trust will review all Equality, Diversity and Human Rights progress with the North East Strategic Health Authority (NESHA) and other Trusts across the region to ensure sharing of best practice. In addition to this, the Trust will work in partnership with other Ambulance Trusts on the equality and diversity agenda through membership of the Ambulance Diversity Forum.
 - **Directors/Managers** are required to ensure that the policy is observed and applied consistently and fairly within their areas of responsibility.
 - **The Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development** has prime responsibility for the implementation of this policy and to ensure it is regularly monitored, reviewed and updated.

- **The Human Resources Department** will be responsible for ensuring the implementation of this policy, advising managers, staff and trade unions on the content of this policy and its interpretation, providing training and advice to managers and staff on the operation of this policy, ensuring that all complaints of discrimination or harassment are dealt with in a fair and consistent manner, and that remedial action is taken where necessary.
- **Employees** should ensure that their behaviour at work creates an environment which is free from any form of harassment, victimisation and all other forms of discrimination. Employees should be aware that if they are involved in discriminatory actions or practice they may not only face disciplinary action but also legal proceedings against themselves as individuals.

6.0 Other considerations

- **NHS North East Staff Networks** – The Trust fully supports and participates in these networks for staff who work within the NHS in the North East. The Equality and Diversity Department have responsibility for publicising the activities and work of the networks.
- **Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Awareness Training** - the Trust provides Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Awareness, and Dignity at Work Training to all staff as part of the Statutory and Mandatory training programme. Details of this are available from the Organisational Development Department. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Awareness Training is also included in the Induction programme which all new staff attend. The above training includes sexual orientation equality awareness. Managers will receive awareness training on this policy as part of the wider Equality, Diversity and Human Rights training course for Managers.
- **Dignity at Work** - The Trust supports a working environment for individuals in which dignity at work is paramount and a working environment and culture in which bullying and harassment is unacceptable. All complaints will be treated with due regard and without prejudice to the employee or their career. Please refer to the Dignity at Work Policy (QSSD 316) for further information.

7.0 Monitoring compliance

The Trust will review all Equality, Diversity and Human Rights progress with the North East Strategic Health Authority (NESHA) and other Trusts across the region to ensure best practice.

Healthcare Commission Core Standards

The requirement for Equality Monitoring has legislative and Health Care Commission Inspection drivers. The aim of these drivers is to develop appropriate and equitable service delivery for patients and career development opportunities for existing staff. The Trust needs to demonstrate compliance with the equality and diversity standards set out by the Healthcare Commission and in particular the following standards:

Core standard C7 - The Trust challenges discrimination and respects human rights in accordance with the Human Rights Act 1998, No Secrets: Guidance on developing and implementing multi-agency policies and procedures to protect vulnerable adults from abuse (Department of Health, 2000), The Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment Regulations 1999, the Employment (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003, the Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation Regulations 2003, and The Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006.

Core standard C8b - The Trust will ensure that staff from minority ethnic groups are offered opportunities for personal development to address under-representation in senior roles

Core standard C11a - The Trust recruits staff in accordance with relevant legislation and with particular regard to the Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations 1999, the Employment (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003, the Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003, the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006, the Race Relations Act 1976 (as amended), the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 and the Equality Act 2006.

Core standard C13a - The Trust ensures that staff treat patients, carers and relatives with dignity and respect at every stage of their care and treatment, and, where relevant, takes action where dignity and respect has been compromised. The Trust also meets the needs and rights of different patient groups with regard to dignity including by meeting the relevant requirements of the Human Rights Act 1998, the Race Relations Act 1976 (as amended), the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 and the Equality Act 2006

Core standard C16 - The Trust provides suitable and accessible information on the services it provides and in languages and formats relevant to its service population which accords with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 and the Race Relations Act 1976 (as amended) Patients and, where appropriate, carers (including those with communication or language support needs) are provided with sufficient and accessible information on their individual care, treatment and after care

Core standard C17 - The Trust seeks the views of patients, carers and the local community, including those from disadvantaged and marginalised groups, when planning, delivering and improving services in accordance with Strengthening Accountability, patient and public involvement policy guidance — Section 11 of the Health and Social Care Act 2001 (Department of Health, 2003). The Trust also demonstrates to patients, carers and the local community how it has taken their views into account when planning, delivering and improving services for patients in accordance with Strengthening Accountability, patient and public involvement policy guidance — Section 11 of the Health and Social Care Act 2001 (Department of Health, 2003)

Core standard C18 - The Trust ensures that all members of the population it serves are able to access its services on an equitable basis including acting in accordance with the Sex Discrimination Act 1975, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, the Disability Discrimination Act 2005, the Race Relations Act 1976 (as amended) and the Equality Act. The Trust offers patients choice in access to services and treatment, where appropriate, and ensures that this is offered equitably

Core standard C21 - The Trust has taken steps to ensure its fleet is well designed and well maintained including in accordance with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 and associated code of practice

8.0 Equality and Diversity Statement

The Trust is committed to providing equality of opportunity, not only in its employment practices but also in the services for which it is responsible. As such, this document has been screened, and if necessary an Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out on this document, to identify any potential discriminatory impact. If relevant, recommendations from the assessment have been incorporated into the document and have been considered by the approving

committee. The Trust also values and respects the diversity of its employees and the communities it serves. In applying this policy, the Trust will have due regard for the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination
- Promote equality of opportunity
- Provide for good relations between people of diverse groups

For further information on this, please contact the Equality and Diversity Department.

9.0 Definitions of terms used

The following is a list of terms with definitions that appear in this policy and associated equality and diversity policies, documents and the Single Equality Scheme.

Term	What it means
Access	The extent to which people are able to receive the information, services or care they need and are not discouraged from seeking help (e.g. premises suitable for wheelchairs; information in Braille/large print and other formats and languages; and the provision of culturally appropriate services).
Ageism	Discrimination against people based on assumptions and stereotypes about age.
Black and Minority Ethnic (BME)	Term currently used to describe range of minority ethnic communities and groups in the UK – can be used to mean the main Black and Asian and Mixed racial minority communities or it can be used to include all minority communities, including white minority communities.
Champion	Someone who is appointed to stand up for the interests of a particular user group or issue (e.g. Equality and Diversity).
Commissioning	The process of specifying, purchasing and monitoring services to meet the needs of the local population.
Compliance	To make sure the Trust meets the requirements of different Equality and Diversity legislation.
Consultation	Asking for views on services or policies from service-users, staff, decision-making groups or the general public. Consultation can include a range of different ways of consulting, e.g. focus groups, surveys and questionnaires or public meetings.
Culture	Relates to a way of life. All societies have a culture, or common way of life, which includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language — the spoken word and other communication methods • Customs — rites, rituals, religion and lifestyle • Shared system of values — beliefs and

Term	What it means
	<p>morals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social norms — patterns of behaviour that are accepted as normal and right (these can include dress and diet).
Direct Discrimination	Treating one person less favourably than another on the grounds of race / disability / gender / age / religion or belief / sexual orientation or other grounds.
Disability	The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 defines disability as ‘a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long term adverse effect on a person’s ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities’.
Discrimination	Unfair treatment based on prejudice. In health and social care, discrimination may relate to a conscious decision to treat a person or group differently and to deny them access to relevant treatment or care.
Diversity	Appreciating diversity goes beyond the mere recognition that everyone is different; it is about valuing and celebrating difference and recognising that everyone through their unique mixture of skills, experience and talent has their own valuable contribution to make.
Duty	Under equalities legislation public authorities have gender duties and specific duties. These are things that have to be done by the authority in order to meet with the requirements of the law.
Equal Opportunities	This is a term used for identifying ways of being disadvantaged either because of, for example, race, disability, gender, age, religion/belief or sexual orientation. ‘Equal Opportunities’ is an attempt to provide concrete ways to take action on the inequalities revealed by analysis of the differences and barriers that exist for people in the above groups.
Equalities	This is a short hand term for all work carried out by an organisation to promote equal opportunities and challenge discrimination, both in employment and in carrying out functions and delivering services.
Equality	Equality is about making sure people are treated fairly and given fair chances. Equality is not about treating everyone in the same way, but it recognises that their needs are met in different ways.
Ethnicity	A sense of cultural and historical identity based on belonging by birth to a distinctive cultural group.
Gender	Gender options are male or female
Gender Dysphoria	Gender dysphoria is a condition in which a person feels that they are trapped within a body of the wrong sex.
Genuine Occupational Requirement	In strictly limited situations, each piece of anti-

Term	What it means
(GOR)	discrimination legislation allows for a job to be restricted to a person of a particular race, disability, gender, age, religion / belief, sexual orientation if it is proportionate to apply a GOR to the job.
Harassment	Behaviour which is unwelcome or unacceptable and which results in the creation of a stressful or intimidating environment for the victim amounts to harassment. It can consist of verbal abuse, racist jokes, insensitive comments, leering, physical contact, unwanted sexual advances, ridicule or isolation.
Homophobia	An irrational fear of, aversion to, or discrimination against people who are gay and homosexual.
Indirect Discrimination	Setting rules or conditions that apply to all, but which make it difficult for a group to comply with on the grounds of race, disability, gender, age, religion or belief, or sexual orientation.
Institutional Racism	Occurs when the systems and procedures in an organisation discriminate against a person – or a group of people – on the basis of race.
Interpreting	The conversion of one spoken language into another, enabling communication between people who do not share a common language.
LGB	Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual
Monitoring	The process of collecting and analysing information about people's gender/racial or ethnic origins/disability status/sexual orientation/religion or belief/age to see whether all groups are fairly represented.
Multicultural	Of, or relating to many cultures; including people who have many different customs and beliefs. For example, Britain is increasingly a multicultural society.
National Origin	Relates to the country where someone was born, regardless of where they are now living and their current citizenship.
Positive Action	Activity intended to improve the representation in a workforce where monitoring has shown a particular group to be under-represented, either in proportion to the profile of the total workforce or of the local population. Positive action permitted by the anti-discrimination legislation allows a person to: - provide facilities to meet the special needs of people from particular groups in relation to their training, education or welfare, and - target job training at people from groups that are under-represented in a particular area of work, or encourage them to apply for such work. Positive action is not the same as positive discrimination.
Positive Discrimination	Is currently illegal and means selecting someone for a job / promotion / training / transfer etc purely on the basis of their race, disability, gender, age,

Term	What it means
	religion or belief, or sexual orientation, and not on their ability to do the job.
Prejudice	Is a negative assumption or judgement about a person – or a group of people – that we do not know.
Procurement	Procurement can be defined as the responsibility for obtaining (whether by purchasing, lease, hire or other legal means) the services, equipment, materials or supplies required by an organisation so it can effectively meet its business objectives.
Race	A human population considered distinct based on physical characteristics such as skin colour. This term is often interchanged with ethnicity. Ethnicity is a term which represents social groups with a shared history, sense of identity, geography and cultural roots which may occur despite racial difference.
Racial Group	A group of people defined by race, colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins. All racial groups are protected from unlawful racial discrimination.
Racism	Belief (conscious or unconscious) in the superiority of a particular race, leading to acts of discrimination and unequal treatment based on an individual's skin colour or ethnic origin or identity.
Religion	The term religion – sometimes used interchangeably with faith or belief system – is commonly defined as belief concerning the supernatural, sacred, or divine, and the moral codes, practices and institutions associated with such belief.
SES	Single Equality Scheme
Sexism	A prejudice based on a person's gender in which one gender is seen as inferior. Also may be used to describe discrimination on grounds of gender.
Sexual Orientation	Within the sexual orientation regulations, sexual orientation is defined as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An orientation towards persons of the same sex (lesbians and gay men) - An orientation towards persons of the opposite sex (heterosexual) - An orientation towards persons of the same sex and opposite sex (bisexual) It is often a preferable term to use to that of sexuality.
Sexuality	This term refers to the general sexual preferences of people i.e. both lesbian and gay and heterosexual.
SLAs	Service Level Agreement is a form of contract between two parties.
Social Model of Disability	A model created and endorsed by disabled people internationally, this emphasises the barriers and structures which exclude disabled people, rather

Term	What it means
	than their disabilities.
Stereotypes	Generalisations concerning perceived characteristics of all members of a group – rather than treating people as individuals.
North East Strategic Health Authority (NESHA)	The North East Strategic Health Authority is responsible for the development of health services in the north east, on behalf of the Department of Health. Its role is to make sure that services are fit for purpose, that quality and improvement targets are met and that NHS organisations in the region, such as primary care trusts, hospitals and the ambulance trust, are providing well-planned, good quality services to meet the needs of local communities.
Transsexual / Transgender People	Transgender, transsexual or trans person describes a person who appears as, wishes to be considered as, or has undergone or is undergoing surgery to become a member of the opposite sex.
Victimisation	Treating people less favourably because they have made a complaint or intend to make a complaint about discrimination or harassment.
Workforce Profile	Make up of the people who work for an organisation. Analysing the workforce profile allows us to see how many people from different groups work for the organisation, e.g. how many men, how many women, how many disabled people, how many people from different ethnic groups, how many lesbian and gay people. It assists us in our target to have a diverse workforce which meets the needs of the communities we serve.

10.0 Related Documents

Single Equality Scheme (QSSD 1507)
 Dignity at Work Policy (QSSD 316)
 Religious Observance Policy
 Policy on Sexual Orientation Equality
 Policy on Gender Equality
 Race Equality Policy (QSSD 1502)
 Disability Equality Policy

11 Dissemination and Implementation

11.1 Dissemination

Once ratified this policy will be added to the Document Quality Control System and added to the Intranet site to which all staff have access. Earlier versions of the document will be archived in the quality system.

The policy will also be added to the NetConsent system once it is implemented. This system will require staff to read the policy before allowing access to IT systems, and will record the date and time staff members have read the document.

11.2 Implementation of Procedural Documents

Information about this policy will be added to Statutory and Mandatory Training which is delivered to all staff on an annual basis.

12 Consultation, Approval and Ratification Process

12.1 Consultation Process

This policy has been discussed with the Equality and Diversity Group which includes representatives from staff side and all directorates.

12.2 Policy Approval Process

This policy has been submitted to the Policy Review Group for approval.

12.3 Ratification Process

This policy has been approved by the Policy Review group and submitted to the JCC for ratification.