

West of England Academic Health Science Network

Equality Policy

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Related Policies & Guidelines:	<p>West of England Academic Health Science Network Equality Impact Assessment Process</p> <p>Royal United Hospital NHS Trust:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raising Concerns Policy • Grievance Procedure • Bullying and Harassment Policy
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1.0 Policy Summary

The purpose of this policy is to confirm the West of England Academic Health Science Network's commitment to equality. It describes the processes by which this commitment will be delivered and to ensure the delivery of the Public Sector Equality Duty. This Duty which is in The Equality Act 2010 is an additional requirement on public bodies

This policy applies to all employees, contractors, and partners delivering activities on behalf of the West of England Academic Health Science Network.

In line with the Public Sector Equality Duty in carrying out its functions of putting innovation at the heart of healthcare, improving patient outcomes and contributing to wealth creation, the West of England Academic Health Science Network must pay due regard to:

- Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010.
- Advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not (see section 3.2)
- Fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

2.0 Policy Statements

It is a requirement that all individuals or agencies that fall within the scope of this policy, in carrying out their work or activities on behalf of the West of England Academic Health Science Network should:

- Not discriminate unlawfully, harass or victimise, employees or contractors of the West of England Academic Health Science Network, colleagues employed by partners, or service users.
- Take action to advance equality and foster good relations between groups of staff or service users who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Make reasonable adjustments to remove barriers for disabled people.
- Undertake education and training as prescribed by the West of England Academic Health Science Network and this policy.
- Follow processes agreed by the Board, to support the West of England Academic Health Science Network equality aims.

3.0 Definition of Terms Used

3.1 What is Meant by Discrimination?

The Equality Act 2010 outlaws a number of forms of discrimination:

- An individual or organisation that provides services to the public must not treat someone worse just because of one or more protected characteristics (this is called direct discrimination).

- An organisation must not do something to someone in a way that has a worse impact on them and other people who share a particular protected characteristic than it has on people who do not share that characteristic. Unless the organisation can show that what they have done is objectively justified, this will be what is called indirect discrimination. 'Doing something' can include making a decision, or applying a rule or way of doing things.
- An employer or service provider must not treat someone worse than someone else because they are associated with a person who has a protected characteristic.
- An employer or service provider must not treat someone worse than someone else because they incorrectly think that person has a protected characteristic (perception).
- An employer or service provider must not treat someone badly or **victimise** them because they have complained about discrimination or helped someone else complain, or done anything to uphold their own or someone else's equality law rights.

3.2 Protected Characteristics

The protected characteristics identified in the Equality Act are as follows:

- Disability*
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity (which includes breastfeeding)
- Race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins)
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation.
- Age (including children and young people)**

* **Disability:** A person has a disability if s/he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

** **Age** discrimination laws only apply in the provision of services to people 18 or over.

Marital status including civil partnership does not constitute a protected characteristic but does fall within the discrimination laws.

3.3 Paying due regard to *advancing equality* means:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people (including taking steps to take account of disabled people's disabilities).

- Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

3.4 Fostering good relations means

- Tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people from different groups.

3.5 Duty to make reasonable adjustments

The duty to make reasonable adjustments to remove barriers for disabled people aims to make sure that a disabled person can use a service as close as it is reasonably possible to get to the standard usually offered to non-disabled people.

4.0 Duties and Responsibilities

4.1 The Chair and Managing Director

- 4.1.1 The Chair and Managing Director are responsible for leading the work of the Board to ensure achievement of the West of England Academic Health Science Network's equality aims and the Public Sector Equality Duty, and compliance with this policy. They are responsible for ensuring that the aims of this policy are embedded in the way of working for the organisation.
- 4.1.2 The Chair and Managing Director will be responsible for ensuring that patient and public involvement and equality and inclusive practices are central to the work of the Board.

4.2 West of England Academic Health Science Network Board

- 4.2.1 The Board is responsible for delivering the West of England Academic Health Science Network equality aims and the Public Sector Equality Duty through the effective implementation of this policy.
- 4.2.2 The Board will review and monitor the equality impact of its decisions as relevant; in particular in deciding the strategic priorities for the organisation, in awarding challenge or research funds, and in its procurement activity.
- 4.2.3 The Board will agree equality objectives annually, together with an outline plan as to how these will be achieved.
- 4.2.4 The Board will receive an annual equality report that describes the progress on achieving its equality objectives and how it is meeting the Public Sector Equality Duty, including an effectiveness review of this policy.
- 4.2.5 Board members will role model behaviours that support delivery of the West of England Academic Health Science Network equality aims.

4.3 Director of Development

- 4.3.1 The Director of Development will be responsible for leading the development, implementation and embedding of all systems and processes to ensure the effectiveness of and compliance with this policy. In particular the role will oversee the implementation of the agreed annual objectives.
- 4.3.2 The Director of Development will ensure that appropriate education, training and development and other information resources are in place to support delivery of this policy and will monitor effectiveness.
- 4.3.3 The Director of Development will be responsible for contracting with the host employer for the delivery of NHS Litigation Authority compliant systems and processes for the recruitment and management of staff that meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.
- 4.3.4 The Director of Development will be responsible for contracting with the host supplier of financial services for the delivery of procurement arrangements that meet equalities best practice.
- 4.3.5 The Director of Development will present an annual equality report that describes the progress on achieving the organisation's equality objectives and how it is meeting the Public Sector Equality Duty including an effectiveness review of this policy. The equality annual report will include required monitoring information.
- 4.3.6 The Director of Development will be responsible for the development and implementation of a publication scheme to ensure that the West of England Academic Health Science Network complies with the Public Sector Equality Duty and demonstrates transparency in its equality work.

4.4 Other Directors/Managers

Directors will be responsible for ensuring that Equality Impact Assessments will be undertaken on relevant decisions, policies and all projects to ensure compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty. Actions arising from the assessments will be proportional to the resources available to the organisation. In line with its ethos of using objective evidence to support practice, the West of England Academic Health Science Network will support the development of information sources to underpin good quality impact assessments.

Managers are responsible for ensuring all their staff undertake the type of initial and refresher training that is commensurate with their role(s) to enable them to fulfill the requirements of this policy. Further information will be available on the West of England Academic Health Science Network equality web page on the available education, training and development opportunities. Staff must keep a record of all training in their learning portfolio.

4.5 Patient and Public Involvement Manager

The Patient and Public Involvement Manager, together with the University of the West of England Patient and Public Involvement expert lead, will ensure that the duties and processes laid down in this policy are embedded in all aspects of patient and public involvement work.

The Patient and Public Involvement Manager will ensure that all patient and public involvement representatives have adequate training to assist in reviewing our processes.

In addition, they will be key in reviewing which process and performance measures to use to assess how well we are embedding equality through all patient and public involvement activity.

The Patient and Public Involvement Manager will ensure that all patient and public involvement representatives have adequate training to assist in reviewing our processes.

4.6 Patient and Public Involvement Board Members

Patient and Public Involvement Board Members will work with the Board on how service users with protected characteristics can be engaged in the work of the West of England Academic Health Science Network order to meet its equality aims.

5.0 Policy

5.1 General Principles

5.1.1 The West of England Academic Health Science Network in delivering its strategic priorities is committed to equality and excellence, as captured in the first principle of the NHS Constitution:

'The NHS provides a comprehensive service, available to all irrespective of gender, race, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief. It has a duty to each and every individual that it serves and must respect their human rights. At the same time, it has a wider social duty to promote equality through the services it provides and to pay particular attention to groups or sections of society where improvements in health and life expectancy are not keeping pace with the rest of the population.'

5.1.2 The West of England Academic Health Science Network accepts the challenge described in 'High Quality Care for All' which emphasises the importance of knowing that high quality care is being delivered for each and every patient:

'Promoting equality and equity are at the heart of NHS England's values – ensuring thatno community or group is left behind in the improvements that will be made to health outcomes across the country'¹.

¹ DH website: High Quality Care for all Equality Policy

Our prospectus recognises that, *'despite overall good health status, the West of England is characterised by striking inequalities in health and we have too much variation in the quality of healthcare we can deliver. Addressing these issues is a core purpose of Academic Health Science Network's. Equalities are at the heart of this and we will be guided by the public sector equalities duties.'*

5.1.3 In carrying out its functions of putting innovation at the heart of healthcare, improving patient outcomes and contributing to wealth creation, the West of England Academic Health Science Network will pay due regard to:

- Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

5.1.4 In carrying out its work to improve healthcare the West of England Academic Health Science Network will make reasonable adjustments to remove barriers for disabled people to make sure that a disabled person can use a service, as close as it is reasonably possible to get, to the standard usually offered to non-disabled people.

5.2 NHS Equality Delivery System

The West of England Academic Health Science Network will adapt the NHS Equality Delivery System or other recommended tools as a method of developing and monitoring its progress on delivering its equality aims and the Public Sector Equality Duty.

6.0 Staff

6.1 Individual and team motivation, confidence and change orientation are qualities that are valued within our staff; we recognise that the strongest force for change are staff with a shared purpose, who understand the evidence base for good practice and are well trained and equipped to provide the best, patient centred care. All staff, contractors and partners carrying out work with or on behalf of the West of England Academic Health Science Network will be provided with the required education, training and development to understand the Public Sector Equality Duty and their role in fulfilling both the equality aims of the organisation and the Public Sector Equality Duty. In line with its ethos, the West of England Academic Health Science Network will seek innovation in learning, such as e-learning.

6.2 The West of England Academic Health Science Network will ensure that in all its recruitment and staff management practices, staff will be treated with respect and will not be subject to unlawful discrimination, victimisation or harassment. The West of England Academic Health Science Network will ensure that all staff have an opportunity to

participate fully in the work of the organisation and take positive action to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between staff who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. The West of England Academic Health Science Network will make reasonable adjustments to remove barriers to employment for disabled staff.

- 6.3 All staff must comply with the aims, principles and processes described in this policy and must endeavour to promote equality in their work. Failure to comply with this policy may lead to disciplinary action.
- 6.4 A member of staff who wishes to raise a grievance or a concern in relation to the operation of this policy should refer to the relevant policies provided by the host employer.

7.0 Patient and Public Involvement

- 7.1 The West of England Academic Health Science Network is committed to forging new relationships with diverse partners, openness and transparency and aims to be a leader in public involvement and engagement. Our ambition is to embed the public voice as business critical to the network's remit, from specific involvement in shaping research through public engagement with service change programmes to experience-led design driving wealth creation. Working with national partners, we will embrace this opportunity to identify, implement and evaluate best practice in public and patient involvement and use this national platform to share learning.
- 7.2 Existing and emerging technologies will be used to enable two way communication, in order to gain input from diverse constituencies, to inform priorities and share good practice. The West of England Academic Health Science Network will take positive action to engage service users who share a 'protected characteristic'.
- 7.3 A patient and public involvement advisory group with diverse membership will be established guide our work and monitor the impact of our approach.
- 7.4 The Equality Delivery System or similar tool will be adapted as a method to engage our diverse partners, patients and public.

8.0 Partnership Working and Collaboration

The West of England Academic Health Science Network recognises the capability and expertise across a wide range of matters, inherent in our partnerships. We will share good practice in relation to its equality arrangements to build capacity within the network and across other Academic Health Science Networks.

9.0 Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed as required by changes in legislation and the annual review

10.0 References

Department of Health website: NHS Constitution

West of England Academic Health Science Network Prospectus and Business Plan 2013

Commission for Equality and Human Rights website

Equality and Human Rights Commission: The essential guide to the public sector equality duty; revised (third) edition Nov. 2012

Department of Health website: High Quality Care for All