

Disability Equality Scheme

Published 16th March 2007

This Scheme will be subject to initial and ongoing consultation and the involvement of key stakeholders as indicated in Section 8 and Appendix 2 of this document

1 Introduction

Statement of Commitment and intent from the Chair, Chief Executive and Board to fulfilling the duties of the PCT under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended by the Disability Discrimination Act 2005).

The PCT wholly accepts and recognises its duties under the Acts to :

- promote equality of opportunity within the community it serves between disabled people and other people
- eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Disability Discrimination Act. This can be either direct discrimination which relates to less favourable treatment of a disabled person due to their disability, or failure to make reasonable adjustments, and can be people employed by the PCT or in receipt of services from the PCT
- eliminate harassment of disabled people within the community it serves that is related to their disability. This shall include not only disabled people who have complained about unfair treatment, but also others who might speak out to support a disabled colleague, relative or friend who they feel has been treated unfairly
- promote positive attitudes towards disabled people amongst both employees and more widely within the community it serves
- encourage participation by disabled people in all aspects public life within the local community
- to take steps to meet disabled people's needs, even if this requires more favourable treatment.

This scheme seeks to outline the arrangements established, or which the PCT will establish to ensure that the PCT fully meets it's responsibilities in respect of all of the above duties.

2. Designation of Responsibilities

The PCT believes that all employees have a role and responsibility in helping the PCT fulfill its responsibilities relating to the needs and interest of people with a disability within the community it serves, and the Action Plan, (see Appendix 1 and Section 9 below), will incorporate and on-going training programme to ensure that all staff have an understanding of their role and responsibilities, and also have an awareness of the needs and interests of people with differing disabilities (see Section 7 below).

The PCT will however designate :

- A lead Non-Executive Director to take the lead on behalf of the Board
- A lead Executive Director to take the lead in the management and measurement of progress in implementing this scheme
- A designated Disability Action Plan manager, to manage and co-ordinate activities and the achievement of targets across the PCT.

Notwithstanding the responsibilities of all employees, the PCT recognizes the particular responsibilities and contributions of :

- Managers - in respect of employment practices within the PCT
- Service lead managers and planners – to take account of the needs and interest of people with a disabilities in the planning and delivery of services.
- Commissioner leads – to ensure in the commissioning of services from providers – that those services take and full and relevant account of the needs and interest of people with a disabilities.
- Patient and Public Involvement, and Patient Advice Liaison Service Leads.
- HR leads – to ensure that employment practice and employment policies and procedures meet the needs and interests of people with a disabilities.

The PCT will establish an Equality Scheme Action Group, involving representatives of the above, and representatives from ‘key stakeholders’ (See Section 8 below), to be responsible the further development and measurement of progress of the Disability Equality Action Plan (see Section 9 below). This group will also have responsibility for actions and progress in respect of other areas of equality and diversity, including equality issues relating to race, gender, age, sexual orientation, and religious belief.

3. Mapping and initial assessment of current position.

A priority responsibility of the Equality Action Group will be to undertake an initial assessment of the current position of the PCT in relation to its disability equality duties. This will included an examination of current employment policies (see Section 5 below) and services to identify what is working and where the gaps and main priorities are. This will enable them to assess how the PCT is performing on disability equality and prioritize areas for action.

The group will need to make use of information available relating to employment of disabled people and the use of, and access to services of people with a disability, to assess the PCTs current position. The group will also need to review and improve arrangements for the on-going gathering of information to enable the PCT to monitor and improve services and policies and procedures (see Section 4 below). The Group will also consider establishing a set of relevant performance indicators and setting objectives to measure successful outcomes of proposed actions within the Disability Equality Action Plan.

Arising from this assessment the Group will be responsible for producing and regularly updating a rolling 3 year Disability Equality Action Plan (see Section 9 below).

The Action Plan (see Appendix 1) will include a programme for the review and updating existing policies. (see Section 5 below).

4. The gathering and use of information

The PCT recognizes that in order to monitor services effectively for any relevance to disability equality, it is necessary to have information on how many of staff and service users are disabled.

The PCT will review current arrangements for the gathering and use of relevant information, and will make use of a full range of methods for data capture and use, including :

- the outcomes of staff and service user surveys

- the use of targeted surveys
- consulting with disability staff network groups
- consulting with voluntary and statutory organisations
- organising specific focus group sessions.

The PCT will ensure that relevant questions are included in the annual staff opinion survey.

The PCT will also review the capture and accuracy of data captured by the PCTs workforce information systems (PRISM/ESR).

The PCT may also initiate one-off pieces of research where necessary, and will also consider and make use of information and reports from relevant external sources, such as the current Disability Rights Commission.

5. Assessing and reviewing current policies

The PCT has a range of existing policies relating to the promoting of equality and the combating of disadvantage and discrimination which are relevant to the situation of employees with a disability. These include the PCT's :

- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Recruitment and Selection Policy and Guidelines
- Dignity and Respect at Work Policy
- Policy and Guidelines Sickness Absence and the management of ill health sickness absence
- Policy and guidelines on flexible working
- Policy on Special Leave for Domestic, Personal, Family and other Reasons

The Disability Equality Action Plan will include a programme the assessment of existing policies for relevance and how they will be prioritised in order of relevance to disability equality. In addition, a timetable will be drawn up for the assessments to be completed within the initial three year lifetime of the disability equality scheme.

6. Impact Assessment

The PCT recognizes the value and importance of undertaking impact assessments in relation to both current and new policies, and services.

The PCT will screen each new or changed policy or service to establish it's relevance to disability equality. Those policies and services, or service developments, identified as relevant will be subject to a full impact assessment.

The PCT has established a framework and protocol for Equality Impact Assessment which will be used in this context. All relevant managers and service planners will receive training and briefing in the Impact Assessment process. All relevant reports and service development proposals considered by the PCT Board, and other relevant bodies within the PCT, will include the outcome of the Impact Assessment as part of their consideration for approval.

7. Training – Staff Awareness, Understanding and Skills

The PCT recognizes the importance of ensuring that all staff :

- Have a proper awareness of the requirements of this scheme, of relevant legislation and of other relevant PCT policies and processes.

- Are aware of their responsibilities under the provisions of this scheme and other relevant policies.
- Have the knowledge, skills and confidence to undertake duties relevant to the scheme, such as the undertaking of impact assessments.
- Are aware the range of differing circumstances, needs and requirements of both employees and service users who have a disability.

The PCT will have an on-going programme of training for staff to meet the above needs. A general Equality and Diversity session will be part of the required 'mandatory training' for all PCT employees.

8. Involvement and Engagement – key stakeholders

The PCT recognizes the value and need to actively involve disabled people in achieving disability equality and that involving disabled people from the outset will help the PCT identify priorities for actions on disability.

This scheme and its implementation will be the subject of on-going and regular consultation with and development in light of feedback from, disabled people and groups.

The PCT will establish a Register of Key Stakeholders, of individuals and groups of disabled people who can be asked to participate and contribute to the development and implementation of this scheme, in the review of existing policies (see Section 5 above), and in the Impact Assessment Process (see Section 6 above). This register will include :

- disabled service users with a wide range of impairments and from a range of diverse backgrounds
- carers and advocates of disabled people
- disability representative organisations
- patient forums (with disabled members)
- disabled people from the wider community
- disabled staff
- staff disability network groups
- trade unions.

An initial Register of Key Stakeholders is attached to this scheme – see Appendix 2. This register will be the subject of continuous and on-going development and updating.

The PCTs Disability Equality Action Plan will ensure that disabled people are actively involved in:

- developing methods of data collection
- research into barriers to participation
- disseminating evidence
- identifying gaps in employment functions and services to the public
- agreeing the way forward, including what should be incorporated into the action plan.

The PCT will make use of existing arrangements for consultation and involvement such the PCT's JSP, but also recognizes the need to use as relevant and necessary other methods such as :

- events specifically organised for the purposes of consultation, inviting disabled people to take part
- forums and workshops
- one-to-one interviews with volunteers.

9. Action Plan

An initial Disability Equality Action Plan is attached to this scheme (Appendix 1)

This will be the subject of on-going review and updating. The lead responsibility will be that of the Equality Scheme Action Group (see Section 2 above), but the Action Plan, and changes to it will be the subject of the involvement of, and consultation with 'key stakeholders' (see Section 8 above) and agreement by the PCT Board.

The Action Group will ensure that the Action Plan is developed to ensure that it includes :

- proposals for monitoring all policies and functions which have a disability equality dimension
- proposals for carrying out impact assessments, with timescales for completion
- proposals for future involvement and engagement with disabled people and how disparities in employment and service delivery will be addressed
- proposals for ensuring access to information and services, including physical access to premises, as well as action to improve written and verbal communication
- proposals for training staff on the requirements of the DDA
- proposals for publishing the results of monitoring, impact assessments and progress against targets and making information available to staff and the public
- a timetable for taking this work forward, including clear targets, and outcomes
- an indication of resources needed to take actions forward
- an indication of responsibilities for taking actions forward and who will be ultimately accountable.

The Action Group will also define arrangements for monitoring on how progress in implementing the Action Plan will be monitored. This will include the identification key relevant performance indicators and relevant PCT objectives or targets relating to these indicators.

10. Commissioning – contracts and the provision of service by other providers

It is recognized that the PCT has a duty under the legislation to ensure that services it commissions meet the requirements of the law. As the PCT will review it's commissioning processes to ensure that disability considerations are built into the process.

As such the PCT will ensure that services commissioned by providers, including independent contractors are also assessed for any relevance to disability Equality and that this includes ensuring that the provider/contractor has measures in place to meet the Disability Equality Duty.

A programme will be undertaken to ensure that all current contracts are reviewed and revised to include criteria which :

- information on the DDA in standard terms and conditions for contracting services
- inserting a clause in contracts specifying that the contractor must comply with the anti-discrimination provisions of the DDA
- specifying in a contract what evidence the contractor needs to gather to demonstrate compliance with the duties
- ensuring that disability equality is appropriately reflected and given due consideration in the specification, selection and award criteria, and the contract conditions
- ensuring that contractors fully understand the disability equality requirements of the contract
- monitoring the performance of disability equality where relevant to the contract.

11. Reporting on Progress

As a minimum progress on the action plan will be reported at least once a year to the PCT Board and information included in the PCT's Annual Report.

The results of impact assessments will be reported as they are carried out and will include in reports and proposals submitted to the PCT Board for consideration/approval.

Reports on progress to staff will be made through the JSP, PCT staff newsletters and the PCT's websites.

It is recognized that it is important that information is given to service users and the general public on progress and the results of impact assessments in accessible formats to those who need this information.

Information which is posted on the website will also be made available in hard copy for those who do not have the ability to access to computers and other formats, on request, such as audio, Braille, large print, and Easyread.

Appendix 1

Initial Disability Action Plan – March 2007

This Action Plan is the initial plan of actions and objectives agreed for the PCT to achieve and fulfil it's duties under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended by the Disability Discrimination Act 2005).

It will be the subject of ongoing development and review by the PCT Equality Action Plan Group who will ensure that all proposed changes are reported to and agreed by the PCT Board.

Section Ref.	Activity	Target Date	Lead Responsibility
1	Consideration and agreement of Scheme by the PCT Board	28 th March 2007	Head of Workforce, Learning & Dev.
8	Consultation with a view to agreement with PCT JSP	10 th April 2007	Head of Workforce, Learning & Dev
10	Dissemination of Scheme to staff via Newsletter and websites	31 st March 2007	Head of Workforce, Learning & Dev
2	Designation of Director Leads and Action Plan Manager	31 st March 2007	Head of Workforce, Learning & Dev
2	Establishment of Equality Scheme Action Group	30 th April 2007	Head of Workforce, Learning & Dev
3	Completion of initial assessment of current position. Updating of this Equality Scheme Action Plan in light of assessment.	31 st August 2007	Equality Scheme Action Group
4	Review of available data relevant to disability equality. Development of plan to improve data capture and accuracy and arrangements for reporting on data	31 st August 2007	Equality Scheme Action Group
5	Development of a plan to review and update existing policies and procedures to take account of disability equality issues	31 st May 2007	Head of Workforce, Learning & Dev
6	Dissemination of Impact Assessment Protocol, Documentation and Guidance to relevant staff within the PCT. Commencement of a programme of briefing and training on the process with relevant staff.	31 st May 2007	Head of Workforce, Learning & Dev
7	Development and commencement of a full training programme to meet the needs of all staff in relation to Disability Equality issues – as outlined in Section 7	30 th June 2007	Head of Workforce, Learning & Dev
8	Update of Register of key disability equality stakeholders	31 st May 2007	Head of Workforce, Learning & Dev
10	Establishment of arrangements and programme to review contracts and commissioning arrangements to ensure consideration of disability equality issues	31 st August 2007	Director of Commissioning and Redesign
11	Ensure dissemination of this scheme and updated Action Plan to staff and all 'key stakeholders'	30 th September 2007	Head of Communications

**Disability Equality Scheme
Register of 'key stakeholders'**

(as at 16th March 2007 – to be the subject of priority review and development)

Disabled Service Users/Employees

Stafford and District Access Group

Derek Boulton, Vice Chairman

Tel: 01785 605187

Email: Derek.boulton@ntlworld.com

<http://www.staffordanddistrictaccessgroup.co.uk/>

Mid Staffs SCOPE

Betty Cartman MBE

Greenhall Complex

Second Avenue

Holmcroft

Stafford

ST16 1PS

Tel/Fax: 01785 255526

Email: midstaffscope@tinyworld.co.uk

<http://www.scope.org.uk>

Stafford Swallows (Sports for Disabled)

Ms Gay Fritz

18 Rydal House

Corporation Street

Stafford

ST16 3LW

<http://www.sportacrossstaffordshire.co.uk>

Stafford and District Disabled Persons Association

Ms Susan Vella

12 Young Avenue

Stafford

ST16 1PW

Mid Staffs MENCAP

Mrs J Fletcher

Chairperson

131/141 North Walls

Stafford

ST16 3AD

Tel: 01785 244270

<http://www.midstaffsmencap.com>

Dyslexia Institute (Stone)

Mrs Gina Plant
Bank House
Granville Square
Stone
ST15 8AB
Tel: 01785 818783
Fax: 01785 815920
Email: stone@dyslexia-inst.org.uk
<http://www.dyslexia-inst.org.uk>

Gateway (Mencap) Club

Claire Byrne
25 Salcombe Avenue
Weeping Cross
Stafford
<http://www.mencap.org.uk>

Staffordshire Association for the Welfare of the Blind

Mr Bob Sharpe
Chief Executive
North Walls
Stafford

Tel: 01785 254572

Supporting Web Sites:

<http://www.papworth.org.uk>

<http://www.drc-gb.org>

<http://www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk/JCP/Customers/Helpfordisabledpeople>

<http://www.direct.gov.uk>

<http://www.workingwithouthearing.com>

<http://www.rnid.org.uk>

<http://www.disability.gov.uk>