
NHS Ayrshire & Arran
Organisation & Human Resource Development Policy

Equality, Diversity & Human Rights Policy

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Reviewers

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Approvers

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If 'no', name of previous policy and reason for replacement	
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Section:	
Section:	
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1. Policy Statement

NHS Ayrshire & Arran wholeheartedly supports the principle of equal opportunities in employment as outlined by the Scotland Act which supports Equalities and Human Rights legislation. It understands that the key to this is recognising and valuing difference. The Equality Act 2010 replaced previous anti-discrimination laws with a single Act and ensures that everyone who is protected under law from discrimination, harassment or victimisation is afforded the same level of protection.

The Equality Act 2010 introduced the concept of nine protected characteristics which are age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion and belief; sex and sexual orientation.

NHS Ayrshire & Arran's policies strive to ensure that individuals are treated in a fair and consistent manner, making reasonable adjustments where necessary. This policy sets out the approach to be followed in order to ensure that such principles are consistently met.

While successful implementation of this policy will ensure compliance with current legislation and national policy, NHS Ayrshire & Arran also recognises both the moral and business case for maintaining good employment practice in relation to equality, diversity and human rights.

NHS Ayrshire & Arran recognises that it also has a unique opportunity to influence the practice of those other organisations with which it engages and to champion equality, diversity and human rights within society more generally.

As such, equality, diversity and human rights must be at the heart of NHS Ayrshire & Arran and everything it does.

This policy has been developed in partnership with local trade union/professional organisation representatives. It reflects the best practice, and meets the minimum standards, set out within the Embracing Equality, Diversity and Human Rights in NHS Scotland Partnership Information Network (PIN) Policy.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all those who work within or apply to work within NHS Ayrshire & Arran, regardless of employment status. It therefore includes permanent and fixed-term employees, members of staff on zero-hours contracts, those working within NHS Ayrshire & Arran on behalf of other agencies, those on secondment to NHS Ayrshire & Arran, volunteers, and those on work experience or training placements.

3. Definitions

Equality is described by the Equality and Human Rights Commission as 'ensuring that every individual has an equal opportunity to make the most of their lives and talents, and believing that no one should have poorer life choices because of where, what or whom they were born, or because of other characteristics'.

Managing diversity is defined as ‘valuing everyone as an individual’, recognising that a ‘one-size-fits all’ approach to managing people does not achieve fairness and equality of opportunity, given that people have different needs, values and beliefs.

Human rights are defined as ‘the basic rights and freedoms to which all humans are entitled’. They ensure that people are treated fairly and with dignity and respect.

4. Aims of Policy / Principles and Values

4.1 Aims of the Policy

This policy sets out the aims of NHS Ayrshire & Arran to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010 and less favourable treatment of other categories of worker as set out within other relevant legislation;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic (i.e. age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation) and those who do not;
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; and
- Ensure that the organisation has due regard for the European Convention of Human Rights (ECHR) in the discharge of its function.

4.2 Values

NHS Ayrshire & Arran’s values of Caring, Safe and Respectful are fundamental to the successful implementation of this policy. The policy will aid NHS Ayrshire & Arran in promoting and embedding the Caring, Safe and Respectful culture whilst supporting staff to demonstrate the required behaviours and to appropriately challenge when this does not happen.

4.3 Principles

The following principles are key to the achievement of the policy aims:

- Equality, diversity and human rights must be at the heart of NHS Ayrshire & Arran and everything it does;
- All employees should feel valued and respected for who they are and the skills that they bring to work and should, in turn, treat their colleagues with courtesy and respect;
- Disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics will be removed or minimised in order to create an environment in which individual differences and the contributions of all staff are recognised and valued;
- Reasonable steps will be taken to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people;

- Steps will be taken to reduce underrepresentation of people with particular protected characteristics and increase the diversity of our workforce, both at an organisational level and within different job roles;
- A zero tolerance approach will be taken to intimidation, bullying or harassment, recognising that all staff are entitled to a working environment that promotes dignity and respect for all;
- Working with Health and Social Care Partnerships, NHS Ayrshire & Arran will be a key stakeholder within local communities and will position equality, diversity and human rights at the heart of local delivery plans;
- While this will be achieved in part by being championed at a senior level, it can only be fully achieved through all those working within NHS Ayrshire & Arran recognising and adhering to their own personal responsibilities in this regard, and NHS Ayrshire & Arran will therefore take steps to ensure that everyone in the organisation understands their rights and responsibilities under the policy;
- NHS Ayrshire & Arran will ensure that arrangements are in place to support staff who have equality, diversity and human rights issues;
- Equality and diversity monitoring will be undertaken on a regular basis, with resulting improvement actions being identified and achieved; and
- This policy will be subject to ongoing monitoring to ensure that it is being fairly and consistently applied and that the stated principles and values are being met. The policy will be subject to regular review, in partnership, to ensure that it remains fit for purpose.

5. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Obligations During the Employment Relationship

5.1 Recruitment and Selection

NHS Ayrshire and Arran recognises the value of a diverse workforce and understands that it is to everyone's advantage to ensure that the human resources, talents and skills available are considered when employment opportunities arise. It is the policy of NHS Ayrshire & Arran to ensure that:

- All the provisions set out within the Safer Pre and Post Employment Checks PIN policy are complied with;
- All those involved in the recruitment and selection process have, or will have, learning and development support in both recruitment and selection, including equality and diversity;
- Where protected characteristics are suggested in the application form or subsequent selection process, this is not used to determine the success or otherwise of the applicant;
- Job descriptions and person specifications are not discriminatory, accurately describing the job and containing only those necessary or desirable criteria which are objectively justifiable, and which are capable of being tested objectively;

- Where appropriate, vacancies are advertised widely in order to select staff from as wide and diverse a pool of potential applicants as possible, with advertisements accessible to all those eligible to apply;
- Advertisements are not discriminatory, confirming that all applications will be considered solely on merit and that reasonable adjustments will be made for disabled people. Where a genuine occupational requirement exists which restricts applications to those with a particular protected characteristic, a statement will be included to this effect. Where there is a lack of representation from those with particular protected characteristics within the job role or the wider organisation, a statement will be included encouraging applications from such individuals;
- Any recruitment agencies operating on behalf of NHS Ayrshire & Arran are expected to have due regard for the promotion of equal opportunities in the undertaking of their role and to demonstrate that they have equivalent policies in place;
- Reasonable adjustments are made for disabled applicants, during both the application and selection process stages. Disabled applicants who meet the minimum criteria for the job and who indicate, on their application form, that they wish to participate in the guaranteed interview scheme, will in all cases be short-listed for inclusion within the selection process;
- Short-listing of applicants is based only on information provided in the application form;
- Selection methods are well designed, properly administered and recognised as a reliable method of predicting an applicant's performance in a particular job;
- Interviews are conducted strictly on the basis of the application form, the job description, the person specification, and the results of any selection tests, avoiding inappropriate or irrelevant questions;
- Employment decisions are based solely on objective application of agreed scoring methods. Where there is more than one appointable candidate at this stage, and one possesses a protected characteristic under-represented in the job role or wider workforce, recruiting managers are encouraged to use this as a tie-breaker, making a decision as a proportionate means of achieving the aim of addressing disadvantage or under-representation in the workforce;
- Except in the case of individuals who are barred from undertaking regulated work, criminal convictions do not automatically prevent employment being offered;
- References are only obtained, and, with the subject's prior consent, circulated to members of the selection panel, after a selection decision has been reached, and that where a reference is subjective and negative, the successful applicant is given an opportunity to comment on it;
- The terms on which successful candidates are offered employment are free from taint of discrimination;
- Having secured a preferred candidate, all unsuccessful short-listed candidates will be offered feedback.

Comprehensive records are kept, in line with the Data Protection Act 1998, Scottish Government Records Management and NHS Ayrshire & Arran practice which will allow NHS Ayrshire & Arran to justify each decision and the process by which it was reached, to respond to any complaints of discrimination and to enable regular monitoring to identify any significant disparities between groups of people sharing different protected characteristics. If disparities are found, NHS Ayrshire & Arran will investigate the possible causes in each case and take steps to remove any barriers.

5.2 During Employment

It is the policy of NHS Ayrshire & Arran to ensure that:

- For all staff, at all stages and in all aspects, their employment relationship with the organisation is free from discrimination, victimisation and harassment. This will be achieved through providing all staff with appropriate information, guidance or training, depending on their role;
- The local Bullying and Harassment policy is implemented consistently, with the commitment that inappropriate behaviour within or outwith (where still considered to be within the course of employment) the workplace, including that related to a protected characteristic, will not be tolerated;
- Consideration is always given to making reasonable adjustments for disabled members of staff so as to avoid their being placed at a substantial disadvantage compared to other staff. Such staff are assured that any information disclosed about a disability will be held confidentially, only disclosed to others with the individual's consent;
- Due regard is paid to the need to address pay inequality between women and men, making every effort to identify where equal pay is an issue and, where appropriate, taking steps to address such issues;
- All staff will have the right to make a request for flexible working and that any refusal of such a request will be objectively justified (in compliance with the Supporting the Work-Life Balance PIN policy)) and in accordance with the statutory provisions;
- NHS Ayrshire & Arran's Promoting Attendance and Wellbeing policy in relation to sickness and absence from work are non-discriminatory in design, and applied fairly and consistently;
- NHS Ayrshire & Arran will engage with relevant staff or groups to understand the requirements of their religion or belief, such as religious observances, and make appropriate provision to support them in doing so, where reasonably practicable;
- If a member of staff is undergoing gender reassignment, NHS Ayrshire & Arran will consult with them sensitively about their needs in the workplace and whether there are any reasonable and practical steps that can be taken to help them as they undergo their gender reassignment process;

- NHS Ayrshire & Arran will comply with the Supporting the Work-Life Balance PIN policy in providing appropriate support to mothers who wish to breastfeed their children;
- NHS Ayrshire & Arran will comply with the National Uniform Policy and Dress Code (as contained within CEL 42 (2010)), particularly in relation to specialist items which may be required to meet religious or medical needs;

5.3 Training and Development

- Training and development opportunities are made known to all relevant members of staff, with selection for training (including any criteria used for selection) being free from discrimination. Furthermore, NHS Ayrshire & Arran will take positive action in the provision of such opportunities to remedy disadvantage, meet different needs or increase the participation of people who share a protected characteristic.
- NHS Ayrshire & Arran will ensure that personal development planning and review/appraisal processes are free from discrimination, by ensuring that such processes are in line with the Personal Development Planning and Review PIN policy, with performance measured by transparent, objective and justifiable criteria using procedures that are consistently applied;

5.4 Operational Management of Staff

- NHS Ayrshire & Arran will ensure that work is assigned to staff by managers in a fair and consistent manner;
- NHS Ayrshire & Arran will ensure that decision-making processes in relation to displacement on organisational change grounds, subsequent redeployment decisions, and, where applicable, voluntary severance, are non-discriminatory in design and application, and meet the requirements of the Redeployment policy;
- NHS Ayrshire & Arran's commitment to equality, diversity and human rights is further reflected within employee friendly policies;
- NHS Ayrshire & Arran will ensure that locally developed policies comply with the Policies on Management of Employee Conduct, Management of Employee Capability, Promoting Attendance and Wellbeing, Dealing with Employee Grievances and Bullying and Harassment, ensuring that they do not discriminate against members of staff either in the way they are designed or how they are implemented in practice. Where changes to policies and procedures are being considered, in addition to consulting with recognised trade unions/professional organisations, NHS Ayrshire & Arran will also consult with trade union/professional organisation equality representatives as a first step towards understanding the diverse needs of members of staff;
- Proper records are maintained, in line with the Data Protection Act 1998, of decisions taken in relation to individual members of staff, and the reasons for these decisions; and
- Regular monitoring of overall workplace figures on matters such as promotion, training and disciplinary procedures is undertaken to identify any significant disparities between groups of people sharing different protected characteristics. If disparities are

found, NHS Ayrshire & Arran will investigate the possible causes in each case and take steps to remove any barriers.

6. Remedies

NHS Ayrshire & Arran will not tolerate behaviours that may constitute discrimination, harassment or victimisation of its staff in the course of their employment. Nor will it tolerate such behaviour by its staff whether directed against colleagues or other people with whom they come into contact during the course of their employment.

All staff must adhere to this policy, and a failure to do so may lead to disciplinary action.

6.1 Grievances

Any member of staff who believes that they have been treated less favourably because of their age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, part-time status, fixed-term contract status or membership (or non-membership) of a trade union/professional organisation is encouraged to raise the matter through NHS Ayrshire & Arran's local grievance policy developed in line with the Grievance policy.

6.2 Harassment

If the complaint is about harassment or victimisation, then the staff member should raise the matter using NHS Ayrshire & Arran local Bullying and Harassment policy.

6.3 Dealing with Grievances / Harassment

It is the policy of NHS Ayrshire & Arran to ensure that:

- Where a complaint is received, staff are not discriminated against in the way that the organisation responds to it; such matters will be taken seriously and investigated promptly and not dismissed as 'over-sensitivity' on the part of the member of staff;
- The matter will be thoroughly investigated using the NHS Ayrshire & Arran's local policy developed in line with the Management of Employee Conduct PIN Policy, and where an investigation recommends that a disciplinary process is appropriate, the alleged perpetrator will be given a fair hearing; and
- Members of staff who have raised allegations in good faith, regardless of whether or not they are upheld, and members of staff who have participated in the process, for example as a witness, must not be subject to any detriment because of having done so.

7. Assessing Impact

- NHS Ayrshire & Arran will consider relevant evidence in order to understand the likely or actual effect of policies and practices on those with protected characteristics, or those protected from discrimination/less favourable treatment under other relevant legislation, recognising that such assessing of impact is not an end in itself, but rather an important part of policy and decision-making, which will lead to enable us to take

effective action on equality; develop better policies and practices, based on evidence; and be more transparent and accountable;

- The extent to which policies should be subject to impact assessment will depend on questions of relevance and proportionality;
- NHS Ayrshire & Arran will ensure that our locally agreed process for undertaking impact assessment is consistently applied, by requiring that those participating in such a process are appropriately trained;
- In undertaking such assessment of impact, NHS Ayrshire & Arran will give due regard to the General Duty obligations to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and to foster good relations; and
- In the interests of transparency and accountability, NHS Ayrshire & Arran will make the results of such assessments publicly available.

8. Raising Awareness

To support fair and consistent application of this policy, NHS Ayrshire & Arran will ensure that all staff understand what this policy means for them, with regard to both rights and responsibilities, by:

- Ensuring that this policy is publicised widely using appropriate communication channels;
- Ensuring that our commitment to equality, diversity and human rights is included within the corporate induction programme;
- Requiring all staff to undertake learning and development on equality and diversity under this policy, appropriate to their role.
- Developing and delivering additional targeted training in response to any issues identified as part of the monitoring process; and
- Ensuring all those staff with a managerial responsibility participate in relevant management training (as soon as possible on becoming a manager and from time to time thereafter) on their vital role and responsibilities across a number of areas, including equality and diversity.

Whilst NHS Ayrshire & Arran have a responsibility to ensure equality, diversity and human rights are embedded, our employees also have responsibility as outlined below:

Employees must:

- Ensure they are familiar with the policy and procedures
- Comply with the policy
- Complete training as necessary

Managers must:

- Ensure they communicate with staff about the policy
- Consistently implement the policy at their local level

- Keep accurate records
- Enable appropriate training to be undertaken by staff

Staff Side Representatives must:

- Support the principles and procedures in the policy
- Act in accordance with NHS Ayrshire & Arran's Partnership Agreement
- Undertake training as appropriate

9. Equality and Diversity Monitoring

- NHS Ayrshire & Arran recognises the importance of monitoring, and as such equality and diversity monitoring will be undertaken on a regular basis, with resulting improvement actions being identified and achieved;
- NHS Ayrshire & Arran will only collect information which is required by law and can be used effectively;
- NHS Ayrshire & Arran will ensure that all those from whom we are seeking such information are made aware of how we will use this information, how they will benefit in the long term and that this data will be gathered, stored and used in line with the Data Protection Act 1998.

To show our commitment to equality and diversity, NHS Ayrshire & Arran require to produce and publish equalities data on its workforce. This information will be anonymised with no individual able to be identified. From 2015, the equality monitoring data will be published as part of the Workforce Plan.

10. Action Planning

By undertaking equality, diversity and human rights monitoring, NHS Ayrshire & Arran can:

- Establish whether this policy is effective in practice;
- Analyse the effect of other policies and practices on staff with particular characteristics;
- Highlight possible inequalities and investigate their underlying causes;
- Set targets and timetables for reducing disparities; and
- Send a clear message to applicants and members of staff that equality, diversity and human rights issues are taken seriously within the organisation.

NHS Ayrshire & Arran will agree, via its Corporate Management Team, equality outcomes, which will be monitored and reviewed annually, with a plan detailing how these objectives will be met. Such action plans will detail initiatives/developments that will help the organisation address short-term, as well as medium- to long-term goals, with the aim of improving equality, diversity and human rights within the organisation.

We will ensure that communication on progress against and achievement of such objectives is made to both managers, staff and trade union/professional organisation representatives, and are published in the annual report.

11. Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment

This policy has been subject to NHS Ayrshire & Arran's Equality Impact Assessment process and the final document published on our public website.

12. Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed every three years via the Policy Review Group and subsequently the Area Partnership Forum to ensure that it remains fit for purpose and to enable NHS Ayrshire & Arran to demonstrate adherence to our equalities duties.