

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Objectives 2021-2024

Whilst our Equality objectives for the next three years will build on the successes of our previous strategy we recognise the urgent need to take bold actions to make significant and lasting changes to the experiences of our staff and patients.

Our key objectives for the next three years are:

(i) Workforce

1. Equality Outcomes - including Workforce Race Equality Standard, Workforce Disability Equality Standard, Public Sector Equality Duty, Gender Pay Gap, and Equality Delivery System – We will ensure improvements in all equality outcomes as measured under national and local standards.

2. Staff Networks – We will continue to support our staff networks as a safe way for staff to have peer support and open conversations. Engagement with our staff networks provides the opportunity for the trust leadership to hear lived experiences of staff. This in turn will inform decision about how the trust supports our staff. We have 4 networks: Disability and Mental health, BAME and LGBTQ+ Networks. We will also support staff in developing local support networks within their own areas of work to encourage local engagement and to feed into the trust wide networks.

3. Lived experience - Listen to and act on the lived experiences of our staff through reverse mentoring and the continuation of listening events and the introduction of a regular “staff stories” at the trust board and other senior leadership fora. We have also started the “Let’s talk about Race” conversations during the festival of inclusion and plan to have more planned every month.

4. Leadership – We will develop inclusive and compassionate leaders to support a diverse workforce. We will have visible board leaders and leaders throughout the trust who encourage staff development and champion patient care for all those with protected characteristics. We recognise that leaders are present at all levels in the organisation and will support the introduction of Freedom to speak up champions who will work within their service areas supporting staff to speak out. We will support the development of coaching and mentoring skills amongst all trust managers to deliver inclusivity in skills development so that all staff are actively encouraged to realise their potential. Our managers will be developed to ensure they have effective listening skills to support staff and patients and act upon feedback where changes are needed. We will recruit to leadership positions based on skills, knowledge and behaviours that demonstrate our culture and a commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion.

5. Review our practices – We will overhaul our recruitment and promotion to make sure that staffing reflects the diversity of the community, and regional and national labour markets. We will establish an Employee Relations Case Review group to eliminate the ethnicity gap when entering into a formal disciplinary processes.

5. Health and Wellbeing – We will link equality, diversity and inclusion objectives with the trust Health and Wellbeing Strategy as part of the health and wellbeing conversations and to ensure the specific needs of staff are met and that any adverse effects of Covid-19 on specific groups are minimised.

(ii) Service Delivery

6. Inclusive patient access - we will ensure that Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) is a robust process that offers both assurance and opportunities for improvement that address inequalities in access to services. We will include work with all our local health and care partners to address health inequalities in access to and provision of services.

4. Inclusive patient feedback – we will collect data on the protected characteristics of people providing feedback where appropriate and feasible and use this insight to improve patient experience of care. We will work with local partners to understand the voices and experiences of seldom heard groups. We will implement learning from patient feedback into future service design

5. Inclusive patient involvement – through our Patient and Public Involvement we will continue to increase and diversify the range of patient partners and volunteers involved in our strategy and service improvement forums and projects.

6. Accessible information - we will ensure that there is a process in place to consistency identify and meet the information and communication needs of people with a sensory or cognitive impairment or loss.

Next Steps

The objectives outlined are ambitious and will require a commitment to doing things differently and having courage to question practices when things don't look or feel right. Achieving a shift in organisational culture to one that is truly inclusive and supportive for all is challenging and will require commitment from all staff and in particular from managers at every level in the Trust.

The ability as individuals for us to reflect on our own behaviours and to educate ourselves through active listening to the experiences of others will be a key foundation in achieving success. The trust's Inclusion Steering Group will oversee the implementation of the action plans and ensure delivery remains on track. As part of this oversight role the committee will also review the People Plan annually to ensure it remains relevant.

This year has been a watershed moment for equality, diversity and inclusion with Covid and Black Lives Matter shone a spotlight on racism and the inequalities that exist within our society, this presents ELHT with an opportunity to take bold actions to improve equality measures for both staff and patients.