

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy

2021-2024



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Equality

Everyone benefits from the same support



Equity

Everyone gets the support they need



Justice

The cause of the inequity was addressed

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy

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Values, vision and objectives

At Berkshire Healthcare, we want to be outstanding for everyone, both patients and people we employ. We're proud of the diversity of our 4,500 staff and want everyone to have a voice and feel they belong and are equally valued and important.

This means being a great place to work for our staff, where there is no differential in opportunities for career progression, diversity is valued and everyone feels they belong. Our patients will receive the best of our services by providing safe, compassionate, high quality accessible care.

This document provides a simple message about equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI). It's about everyone taking an active role to reduce inequalities. It's about respecting everyone, serving all our diverse populations equally well, and building an open and equitable culture within our organisation that celebrates diversity.

Our staff networks are key to our work – helping us achieve our objectives through a united approach that values and supports everyone and ensures that all our staff with a protected characteristic have a voice in the organisation.





Addressing inequalities

Data from surveys and research shows that a significant number of staff and patients from minority groups experience inequalities. These result in poorer experiences, or what we call differentials of experience.

Tackling this inequality and discrimination is our top priority and will require purposeful, collective effort.

To remove any inequalities, we need to bring about a cultural change focusing on creating allies at all levels of the organisation.

Everyone has a responsibility to make this change. The focus of this strategy is to equip our leaders and managers with the skills to support their teams with inclusive behaviours. They can then take the necessary actions to create an organisational culture that supports inclusion and belonging, ensuring civility of all staff and taking a zero tolerance approach to bullying and harassment.

We'll do this by:

- Embedding this cultural change focusing on allyship, and cultural and emotional intelligence
 - Eliminating differentials in experience for all our people
 - Equipping leaders with inclusive behaviours
 - Giving a voice to those who use our services
 - Addressing and eliminating health inequalities
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Hand in hand with our People Strategy

The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) strategy will be the golden thread that runs through our entire organisation and through our People and Trust Strategies.

These strategies have been developed collaboratively, and the workforce elements of the EDI strategy form a critical part of our People Strategy.

Aims and goals

We know the most diverse teams and organisations are the most successful in delivering the highest quality patient care. Everyone should feel welcome, included and supported in achieving their full potential.

This strategy aims to deliver this important work in a way that promotes allyship and addresses the intersectionality of our staff and patients.

Allyship

Being an ally means that you understand that a significant number of minority groups experience discrimination. Allies take responsibility for creating an inclusive and compassionate culture in their teams and the organisation.



Intersectionality

The term 'intersectionality' means each individual is a combination of many aspects of their identity and so each individual's experience is unique.

We're not just a race, gender or a particular sexual orientation. We're all a combination of these things and much more.

We'll make sure we maintain our focus on protected characteristics where targeted work is needed, while considering the individual needs of our workforce and patients through a nuanced lens of intersectionality, as we know that people with two or more protected characteristics have a significantly worse experience.

Three-year plan

This plan outlines the work we'll achieve in year one. A detailed plan for years two and three will follow once we've reviewed our progress and know what our future targets are.

To ensure we achieve these goals, the Diversity Steering Group will oversee the regular monitoring and reviewing of the EDI targets for both our people and patients.

Legislation

The EDI Strategy is underpinned by three acts of parliament:

- [The Human Rights Act 1998](#)
- [The Equality Act 2010](#)
- [The Health and Social Care Act 2012](#)



Where we are now

We've held several workshops with key stakeholders to agree our priorities. These priorities have also been informed by the results of the NHS Workforce Race Equality Standard (WRES), the NHS Workforce Disability Equality Standard (WDES), Stonewall and staff survey results from the past year.

The workshops and survey results show that we're above the national average in some of the key performance indicators. However, despite these good results, there has been no shift in some of the indicators that capture the negative experiences of some staff with protected characteristics. Ongoing and targeted intervention is needed to create an inclusive environment, particularly free of bullying, harassment and discrimination. We are also aware that people with multiple protected characteristics have a significantly worse experience - this is not good enough. More work is needed to ensure that this is a great place to work for everyone.

Workforce and people objectives

Our EDI strategy has pinpointed **five clear objectives** for our people to improve everyone's experience within Berkshire Healthcare.

This document outlines the focused work we will do in year one. Further implementation in years two and three will be based on progress achieved in the previous year.

1

Address and reduce inequalities and differentials in experience

2

Equip leaders to support teams with inclusive behaviours

3

Develop career progression and talent management

4

Develop and grow the three staff networks

5

Deliver the Ready for Change programme focusing on our managers and leaders

1

Address and reduce inequalities and differentials in experience

This objective focuses on ending bullying, harassment and discrimination and is key to making Berkshire Healthcare outstanding for everyone.

Based on the evidence from survey results and the [WRES](#), [WDES](#) and [Stonewall diversity champions programme](#), targeted work will identify areas requiring improvement and get to the bottom of behaviours that lead to bullying and harassment of our people. From this, we'll be able to change the working culture and move to a more compassionate and inclusive environment.

We'll continue with team-level training on micro-aggressions, encourage conversations that value diversity, inclusion and belonging, and liaise with stakeholders to identify the teams that need priority focus. Ultimately, we want to make sure that all our people have an outstanding experience working within our organisation.



2

Build on inclusive leadership

This objective involves embedding inclusive cultures through a review and refresh of the leadership training and development programme to support the development of inclusive leaders.

We want everyone to feel equally valued and it's the leaders who create a culture where everyone feels

they belong. When people are respected equally, they'll feel that there is no difference in experience or career opportunities.

We're completing a review of all Berkshire Healthcare leadership programmes. These should fulfil the dual objectives of creating inclusive cultures that are outstanding for everyone.

We'll create and deliver an updated leadership programme (to train people in the skills they need to be a successful leader). These will equip leaders with inclusive behaviours so that they can help create an organisational culture that supports inclusion and belonging.

3

Develop workforce progression and talent management

This objective will support the creation of fair career progression, clear career paths and talent management for our people at all levels. We've identified where there are gaps in career progression and talent management for all staff with identified inequalities, and will put in place the necessary measures to eliminate any differentials in experience

This includes career pathways and training development. Our new training programme to support career progression called Reaching My Potential is available to staff at all levels to outline the skills needed to be successful and how to develop in existing or future roles.





4

Develop and grow networks

This objective relates to giving our staff networks the help they need to support their members optimally as well as our work in eliminating differentials in experience within Berkshire Healthcare. This will help us work more collaboratively and promote intersectionality, as our three staff networks ensure their members' voice is represented in this work.

We'll review the structure of staff network support based on best practice from other organisations. We'll support our three staff networks to develop and grow so that they can support their members as needed, as well as help us in delivering the priorities of this strategy.

5

Deliver the Ready for Change programme

This objective includes the development and delivery of our inclusive Ready for Change Programme. This includes two modules focusing on allyship and cultural and emotional intelligence. This will focus on equipping managers to support their diverse teams to address the culture change required based on allyship and a greater appreciation of the different cultural norms that can cause misunderstandings and miscommunication. This is known as 'cultural intelligence'.

Patient and community objectives

Our EDI strategy has pinpointed [six clear objectives](#) to improve the experiences of everyone who uses the services of Berkshire Healthcare.

This document outlines the focused work we will do in year one. Further implementation in years two and three will be based on progress achieved in the previous year.

1

Embed use of the Accessible Information Standard in all services

2

Improve recording of patient demographics to improve health outcomes

3

Identify actions and resources needed to reduce health inequalities

4

Support our LGBT+ staff and communities through Stonewall and Reading Pride

5

Develop systems to ensure inclusive recruitment in all our services

6

Co-produce resources needed for trans patients' pathways

1

Achieve consistency in the implementation of the accessible information standard

[The Accessible Information Standard](#) is legislation introduced in 2016. Its purpose is to make sure we identify disabled patients' communication needs and provide information in ways that are accessible to them. We need to enable all services to meet the communication needs of all patients with disabilities, with a particular focus on our patients with hearing and visual impairments.



We receive a disproportionate number of complaints from our deaf patients. By far the largest proportion of complaints relates to a lack of communication tools and making reasonable adjustments for them.

We plan to adapt the form within our electronic care record system (ECR) so that we can capture the necessary information to make sure people with a disability or sensory loss are given information they can understand, and the communication support they need when using our services.

We will also develop training for all services to understand the requirements of the Standard and how to complete the form on our ECR, empowering our staff to feel confident in understanding and articulating why it is important to gather this information.



2

Improve the recording of patient demographics

To date, patient EDI data isn't captured recorded or reported consistently across Berkshire Healthcare.

We need to improve the recording of patients' demographics across all our services in order to make sure these services are accessible and that health inequalities are being addressed.

This means making sure that all datasets are complete and ready to support us in identifying any areas of health inequalities.

Covid has shown us that the existing health inequalities have grown and the subsequent NHS guidance states that all NHS organisations should proactively review and ensure the completeness of patient ethnicity data.

We need to agree consistent definitions across Berkshire Healthcare for capturing patient demographics, starting with ethnicity. These definitions then need to be aligned across all systems.

Having clear and detailed information regarding the protected characteristics of patients using our services, including age, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity leave, disability, race, including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation, will help us provide the best care to everyone who uses our services.

3

Identify actions and resources needed to identify health inequalities through community engagement

It's important to identify what we need to do to reduce healthcare inequalities in the communities we provide services to and improve our engagement with these communities.



The Covid emergency has shone a light on health inequalities which affected a number of minority groups with protected characteristics. This in turn has highlighted the need for better engagement and cooperation with all communities. We can then understand what the priorities are for these communities and make changes and improvements to our services.

We have pockets of excellent community engagement in services, but it's still inconsistent. This leads to a lack of representation across the full diversity of our local communities.

We want to identify any priority health inequalities and the resources needed to address them. To this end, we'll review all health inequality data and we'll engage with community groups across Berkshire to develop a plan to address priority areas through the [equality delivery system \(EDS\)](#) requirements.

We have to create robust systems to report all findings to all community groups, regardless of how difficult they might be to reach.

4

Build on our engagement with the lesbian, gay, bi, trans and other sexual and gender identities and gender expressions (LGBT+) community

Berkshire Healthcare has signed up to the Stonewall Diversity Champions' employer's index and has a long relationship with Reading Pride. These affiliations promote links between us and the public to reduce health inequalities in the LGBT+ community.

Inequalities for the LGBT+ community have widened further during the Covid emergency and the need for focused support for our staff, patients and communities is needed.

To this end, we're aiming to achieve Gold status within the Stonewall framework and continuing to support and participate in Reading Pride, whether or not the event is virtual as a result of further Covid issues.



5

Improve healthcare experiences for trans patients

We've made considerable strides in working with the trans community but making services accessible to the trans population is a national problem.

Trans patients have a higher prevalence of smoking, alcohol use and drug use and a lower uptake of screening programmes. This inevitably results in a higher risk of preventable ill health. There's also evidence showing high rates of suicide attempts and mental ill health.

Staff consistently report that they don't feel confident in supporting trans patients and need additional training.

To address these issues, we'll be engaging and co-producing priorities for an action plan for improved healthcare with trans patients and trans communities. This could include recording individuals' gender identity on the ECR database.



6

Make our recruitment processes more inclusive

Research shows that less than six percent of people with a learning disability, 15 percent of people on the autism spectrum and 20 percent of people with a severe or enduring mental health condition have access to paid employment. This is a talented and diverse workforce that we need to attract and support to work for us.

We've identified that our recruitment processes are the greatest barrier to accessing talented people from within these communities.

To address this issue, we're looking to produce accessible job descriptions, consider job carving and agree training support for disabled people, as well as other populations with identified inequalities.

We want to establish a partnership with a local specialist employment service, starting with our Learning Disability Services. We need to identify vacant posts within Berkshire Healthcare to recruit using a strengths-based approach to attract and employ an even more diverse workforce.





In conclusion

Throughout the first year of implementation of the EDI Strategy, we're looking to make significant progress in creating an equally outstanding experience for all employees, carers, patients and their families. We want everyone to be treated fairly and feel they belong.

Based on the work we complete and its effectiveness, the EDI Strategy will be reviewed and updated for years two and three. We'll keep the concept of 'outstanding for everyone' at the heart of everything we do throughout this time.

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