

ITEM: 10

Meeting: Trust Board
Date: 16 April 2008

Title: **Single equality scheme: key principles**

Executive Summary: The Trust currently has the following equality schemes in place, which meet existing legislation:

- Race equality (due for complete review May 2008)
- Gender equality (annual review May 2008, complete review May 2111)
- Disability equality (annual review due January 2008, complete review January 2010)

The Trust wishes to introduce a Single Equality Scheme to include the above and also include age, religion and belief as well as sexual orientation with effect from May 2008. The full Single Equality Scheme, based upon the principles within this paper, will be presented to the Trust Board in May for ratification.

Action: To note the core principles which will underpin the Trust's Single Equality Scheme

Report from: Margaret Boltwood, Director of Human Resources & Corporate Affairs

Sponsor:

Financial Validation

Lead: Director of Finance

Name of finance officer

N/a

Compliance with statute, directions, policy, guidance

Lead: All directors

Reference:

Equalities and discrimination legislation

Compliance with Healthcare Commission Core/Developmental Standards

Lead: Director of Nursing & Clinical Development

Reference:

C7, 8, 13, 14,15,16,17,18, 20, 22, 23

Compliance with Auditors' Local Evaluation standards (ALE) Lead: Director of Finance	Reference: N/a
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Evidence for self-certification under the Monitor compliance regime Lead: All directors	Compliance framework reference: N/a
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1. Introduction

The Trust currently has the following equality schemes in place, which meet existing legislation:

- Race equality (due for complete review May 2008)
- Gender equality (annual review May 2008, complete review May 2011)
- Disability equality (annual review due January 2008, complete review January 2010)

The Trust's Race Equality Scheme requires to be fully revised and agreed by the Trust Board by May 2008. The Executive Team has therefore decided that it would be timely, and appropriate, for the Whittington to take this opportunity to revise all three of its current equality schemes and to integrate them into one overall single equality scheme (SES). It will also take the opportunity to expand its equality scheme to include age, religion and belief, and sexual orientation which would fit with current equality best practice.

Healthcare organisations are increasingly introducing single equality schemes and the Whittington Hospital has been part of the national NHS pilot work to develop such schemes. As background it should be noted that the government intends legislating to provide for a single equality scheme, however the recent advice is that this will not be during the current legislative year (2008/09).

The Trust must ensure that any single equality scheme it developed still met the current legal requirements.

2. Principles upon which to develop a single scheme

- Ensure equality objectives are aligned with the Trust's overall strategic plans
- Provide a rationalised process in relation to equalities duties, minimising duplication
- Facilitate the identification of meaningful equality priorities
- Demonstrate the commonality of experience of disadvantaged groups and how these may be addressed
- Engage staff, patients, governors and the local community in developing the Scheme
- Ensure Trust Board agreement and monitoring of the SES action plans

3. Proposed format for a Single Equality Scheme

The chapter headings of the contents of the Single Equality Scheme are listed below, culminating in Action Planning to address issues arising under each heading. These headings are based on the Whittington's current Equality Schemes together with identified best practice by the Department of Health.

1. *Forward by Chief Executive & Chairman*
2. *Introduction*
3. *The legal framework*
4. *Aims of the Single Equality Scheme*
5. *Communication & Involvement*
6. *Responsibility for equality and diversity*
7. *Where we are now:*
 - *Current workforce monitoring*
 - *Information gathering & analysis – service delivery*
 - *Reviewing policies for adverse impact*
8. *The “Six Option” Approach*
 - *Race Equality Duty*
 - *Disability Equality Scheme*
 - *Age Discrimination*
 - *Gender Equality Scheme*
 - *Sexual Orientation*
 - *Religion/Belief*
9. *Diversity Awareness & Training*
10. *Publishing information*
11. *Monitoring progress*
12. *Taking the single equality scheme forward*

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Key Equalities Legislation

Appendix 2 – Definitions

Appendix 3 - Current equal opportunities monitoring

Appendix 4 - Draft SES Action Plan 2008 – 2011

4. Timescales

Work is currently underway to develop a Single Equality Scheme, which will be presented to the Trust Board in May for ratification. This will be essential as the Trust's current Race Equality Scheme expires that month. It is anticipated that the Single Equality Scheme, and in particular its three-year action plans, will require continued development after ratification, including ongoing consultation with interested parties.