

# Welcome to the RBCH eLearning module Equality, Diversity and Human Rights, including Dignity at work

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## Recognising Differences at Work

Some differences are obvious, but there are some that are hidden. Select each person below to see some examples.

### Person 1

#### Obvious Differences:

Female  
Asian  
Young  
Relaxed  
Theatre

#### Hidden Differences:

Christian  
Married  
Depressed  
ME sufferer  
Peanut allergy



### Person 2

#### Obvious Differences:

Male  
European  
Middle aged  
Serious  
Management

#### Hidden Differences:

Cancer Survivor  
Vegan  
Atheist  
Dyslexic  
Gay



Diversity is: Valuing individual differences and **taking positive steps to:**

- enable employees and volunteers to give their best and achieve their full potential
- better understand the different needs of colleagues, patients and visitors.

## What is Equality?

Equality is:

- making sure people are treated fairly and given fair chances
- working to prevent discrimination and harassment.

Equality is **NOT**:

- treating everyone the same way.

## What are Human Rights?

Human Rights are:

- The basic rights and freedoms that belong to every person in the world.
- Human rights are based on the principles such as:
- **Fairness, Respect, Equality, Dignity and Autonomy.**
- **FREDA** underpins the public service ethos, the NHS Constitution and the NHS Professional Codes of Conduct.
- By putting Human Rights at the heart of health services we not only comply with the law, but also improve quality of patient care and the working lives of our employees.

## Benefits of Embracing Equality, Diversity & Human Rights

### Benefit 1

- Valuing people's differences allows individuals to achieve their full potential.

### Benefit 2

- It broadens the pool from which we attract the best person for the job.

### Benefit 3

- If we are representative of our local community, we will be better able to respond to their diverse needs

### Benefit 4

- A diverse team works more effectively to solve problems and can be more innovative in delivering lasting solutions.

### Benefit 5

- It will enable us to provide excellent care for all our patients.

## Legal Standpoint

In 2010, the Equality Act came into force, extending the legislation to cover the following protected personal characteristics:

- gender
- disability
- gender reassignment
- age
- religion / belief
- marital status / civil partnership
- race
- sexual orientation
- pregnancy / maternity.

## The Human Rights Act

The Human Rights Act (2000) brought a series of protections from the European Convention on Human Rights into UK law, courts and tribunals.

All public authorities carrying out 'functions of a public nature', such as NHS or Police, must comply with the Act. Individuals can also take human rights cases in domestic (UK) courts on to the European Court of Human Rights. The Act sets out the 15 fundamental rights and freedoms that individuals in the UK have access to, including:

1. right to life
2. freedom from torture and inhuman or degrading treatment
3. right to liberty and security
4. freedom of thought, belief and religion
5. protection from discrimination in respect of these rights and freedoms.

## Human Rights Commission Website

You can learn more via the [Human Rights Commission website](#).

## Scenarios

The following scenarios describe situations you may encounter, try to:

1. recognise common situations: e.g. communication, and patient care
2. recognise how discrimination and harassment can occur
3. think about what positive action you can take if similar issues arise for you at work.

### Scenario 1

A patient is referred to the hospital with a medical problem that affects only women. She has difficulty discussing it because of its very personal nature. The woman does not speak English well and often asks her son to interpret for her.

However, because of the nature of the problem, she cannot ask him to do so. She asks the hospital for a female interpreter, the hospital only provides a male interpreter despite her request.

Let's look at the key messages in this situation.

- This may be unlawful discrimination on grounds of both sex and race.
- The patient may feel that their dignity has been breached and their 'Right not to be Discriminated Against'.
- Good communication is essential to effective healthcare. All patients and users should be kept informed about their treatment. They should be able to talk to those providing care or making decisions about their treatment.
- It is the responsibility of the health provider to overcome any problems with communication that may arise.

### Scenario 2

A colleague with mobility problems is struggling to carry out their duties because of excessive back pain. Despite reporting this to his line manager, nothing has been done.

Let's look at the key messages in this situation.

- Reasonable adjustments should be made to the task but the job should still be completed if possible. Therefore will adjustments be permanent or is an assessment for the role required?
- The colleague (staff member affected) and their manager are responsible for actioning changes.
- **Disability at work** is defined as physical / mental impairments which impact on day-to-day activities.
- It is likely to last 12 months or more and includes certain ongoing illnesses e.g., cancer, MS, diabetes.
- At work, disabled people often have to work harder to overcome these limitations
- Consider the 'health inequalities' associated with your service users.

### Scenario 3

A Muslim man has been admitted to hospital for tests. When he asks for a private space to pray he is told the only space available is a cluttered store room with no windows and no washing facilities.

Click to see the key messages in this situation.

Respect individual's religion and belief needs.

- These may relate to:
- Prayer and daily routine
- Food and diet
- Modesty and privacy

If in doubt, just ASK the person!

Everyone will have different requirements that we need to **try** to accommodate where possible.

**However, we don't need to provide everything.**

We must recognise the nature of this question – it's primarily a moral issue.

Also, there are practical considerations, could the patient pray beside his bed? Would the store room be appropriate if it was cleaned?

This is not just about Muslim faith – all different religions have different requirements and different ways of worshiping. The UK is a Christian country, but there are hundreds of different ways in which people may practice this. Ask your manager if there is a Faith Room nearby.

### What is Dignity at Work?

What does Dignity at Work mean to you?

What standards of behaviours do you expect from others?

What are effective behaviours in the workplace?

### Effective Behaviours

- reliable
- good listener
- constructive communication
- active participant
- share openly and willingly
- committed
- respectful & supportive
- problem solver
- pitches in
- flexible.

### Importance of Dignity at Work

- What can the effects be of **negative behaviour** at work?
- How can this affect employees and volunteers?

### What is Workplace Bullying?

There is currently no Legal Definition in the UK but the **CIPD** describes it as:

'Bullying at work involves repeated negative actions and practices that are directed at one or more workers. The behaviours are unwelcome to the victim and undertaken in circumstances where the victim has difficulty in defending themselves. The behaviours may be carried out as a deliberate act or unconsciously. These behaviours cause humiliation, offence and distress to the victim. The outcomes of the bullying behaviours have been shown to cause psychological distress which affects social and work behaviour.'



## What is Workplace Bullying?

Workplace Bullying can take many forms and may be characterised as:

- ignoring or excluding someone
  - spreading malicious rumours or gossip
  - humiliating someone in public
  - an abuse or misuse of power
  - giving someone deliberately unachievable or meaningless tasks
  - constantly undervaluing someone's work performance
  - can extend for months or years before it's recognised.
- 
- Bullying can be:
  - making assumptions
  - stereotyping
  - office/ward 'banter'
  - comments, including 'jokes', emails, pictures etc

Inappropriate behaviour **MUST** be challenged.

## What is harassment?

:

- is prohibited conduct under the Equality Act 2010
- is unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristics
- has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity
- involves the perpetrator's creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

## Resolving Issues

- try to resolve this informally
- talk to the perpetrator
- consider mediation as a way forward
- consider putting this into writing

## Mediation

- Mediation is an **informal** process, which aims to support the victim and perpetrator to reach a solution before their relationship breaks down completely. It gives a safe environment to discuss issues and agree solutions.
- The Trust now has access to a number of internal mediators. These are members of staff who have been formally trained and assessed in mediation techniques.
- We can also access external mediation via organisations such as ACAS.
- It does require both parties to be willing to take part in the mediation and sign up to the agreed actions.

## Management or Bullying

- It is not acceptable for managers to bully their employees in any circumstances.
- **However**, managers must be able to take appropriate action to improve the performance and/or conduct of an individual.
- This must be dealt with professionally and in line with the Trust's policies.
- If dealt with fairly, these actions would not normally be seen as bullying or harassment.

## Help & Advice

If you need help or advice you should speak to the following, in the order below:

1. **Volunteer Coordinator**
2. **Department lead**
3. **HR department**
4. **Training Department**
5. **Trade Union Representatives**
6. **Trust Intranet: Policies**

## Raising a complaint



## Our Own Responsibilities

The minimum level of responsibility is 'KSF Core Dimension 6, Level 1', shown below:

- recognise that people are all different
- treat everyone with dignity and respect
- avoid discriminating against other people
- recognise inappropriate behaviour
- challenge unacceptable behaviour.

Some roles will require Level 2 or 3. You may need to book yourself onto additional modules via the Training Department.

## Our Own Responsibilities

We all have a personal responsibility to adhere to the principles of Trust policies.

Bullying and harassment is never acceptable.

We have a duty to report any bullying and harassment or suspected unacceptable behaviour occurring within the Trust whether by colleagues, service users, visitors or contractors. The Trust will not tolerate any form of bullying and harassment.

Be aware of the Trust's Harassment and Bullying in the Workplace Policy on the intranet.

## Summary

That completes this module on:

## **Equality, Diversity and Human Rights**

Please complete the knowledge quiz and return to your Volunteer Coordinator