

Health Professions Council

Council meeting, 11th September 2007

Draft Equality and Diversity Scheme

Executive Summary and Recommendations

**Introduction**

A draft copy of the equality and diversity scheme is appended.

The Executive has received feedback from an equality advisor (Diane Hodgson, Director, Management Development, JSB Training and Development) and is continuing to work on incorporating these comments.

The Council is asked for its comments at this early stage, before the scheme is revised and brought back to its meeting in December. In particular, the statements of policy appended to the scheme may need some minor amendments in light of recent legislative change.

**Demographic data**

The scheme sets out the approach we intend to take regarding demographic data.

The scheme proposes that an incremental approach should be taken. The Executive believes that this is a sensible, pragmatic approach which balances the need to collect demographic data in order to monitor the impact of the Council's processes, against the need to ensure that the council complies with the principles of the Data Protection Act. This is in line with legal advice received by the Executive.

In short the approach involves taking a phased approach. Phase one is ongoing collection of demographic data from complainants and registrants involved in the fitness to practise process. A decision will be then taken as to whether the collection of further data is necessary. A next step could include adding a monitoring form to the registrant application forms and, following an analysis of the outcomes of this data, this might lead to steps to collect such demographic information from existing registrants. A brief outline of our possible approach is found at appendix one.

**Decision**

The Council is invited to discuss and comment on the attached scheme.

**Background information**

At its meeting on 29th March 2007, the Council approved a paper which outlined the Executive's approach in producing an equality and diversity scheme.

**Resource implications**

A number of the action points will or may have resource consequences. However, these are or will be included in normal departmental planning.

**Financial implications**

A number of the action points will or may have financial consequences. However, these are or will be included in normal departmental planning and budgeting.

**Appendices**

Appendix one: Collecting demographic data from registrants

**Date of paper**

29th August 2007

## **Equality and Diversity Scheme [Draft]**

### **Introduction**

1. The Health Professions Council (HPC) is the statutory regulator of thirteen health professions. Its primary function is to protect the public and it does so by:

- setting standards;
- approving programmes of education and training;
- registering health professionals; and
- investigating and adjudicating allegations about their fitness to practise.

2. In the course of doing so we interact with a diverse range of people, including:

- the public, especially complainants or witnesses in fitness to practise proceedings;
- registrants and potential registrants;
- education and training providers;
- health care providers, professional bodies, consumer groups and other partner organisations; and
- its employees and the “partners” who carry out tasks on its behalf.

### **Legislation**

3. In recent years, UK government policy has moved from legislating to ensure that public bodies treat all people they impact equally, to legislation to ensure that public bodies positively promote a diverse and inclusive society.

4. We are required to meet the general duties under relevant equality legislation, including:

- Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995

5. Codes of practice produced under specific pieces of legislation place a responsibility on certain named public bodies to meet ‘specific duties’. We are not a named public body in these codes of practice and therefore we are not required to publish a scheme.

6. We decided that, as part of good practice, we would go beyond existing legislative requirements and publish an equality and diversity scheme. This scheme describes the steps we have taken and will take in order to ensure that we do not discriminate against people on the basis of:

- Disability
- Age
- Gender
- Sexual orientation
- Race
- Religion

7. We decided to produce a single, joint equality scheme, rather than individual schemes for each of the groups listed above, as many of the steps we might take to avoid or mitigate any adverse impact are relevant to all the groups identified above.

8. Please see Annex A for statements of our policy in each of these areas.

### **Developing a scheme**

9. Our work in producing a scheme was led by a project team with participation drawn from our executive management team and managers across the organisation. The work was led by a project lead and managed by a project manager.

10. Our first step in producing a scheme was a screening process carried out by the project team.

11. We asked the head of each directorate or department to detail their processes.

12. This was screened by the project team in partnership with the directorate/ department head. The project team:

- identified which functions were more relevant than others to meeting the general duties and to eliminating discrimination generally;
- prioritised those functions;
- identified those areas of work already undertaken and in the workplans of directorates and departments in the coming financial year which support the aims of the equality and diversity scheme;
- identified initial action points; and

- identified where further consultation – both internal and external – might be desirable.

### **Arrangements for training of employees, council members and partners**

13. Early on in the development of the scheme, the members of the project team, and our Executive Management Team (EMT), received training in equality and diversity issues.

14. We have also held training in equality and diversity issues for council members and for some of the 'partners' who carry out work on our behalf.

15. We have started a rolling programme of training in equality and diversity issues for existing and new employees.

### **Collection of demographic data**

16. An important ongoing action point identified in the scheme is the collection of demographic data.

17. In April 2007, we began collecting demographic data from witnesses and registrants involved in our fitness to practise process. This involved sending an equality monitoring form to complainants and registrants at an early stage in the course of dealing with a complaint.

18. We already collect demographic information from applicants for employment and new employees and will continue to do so. We currently collect the following information:

- Gender
- Age
- Disability
- Race/ Ethnicity

We currently collect the following demographic information about registrants:

- Gender
- Age
- Nationality

19. In order to be sure that it is necessary to collect additional information, we plan to take a pragmatic approach, before deciding whether it is necessary to collect further data.

20. As detailed in the action points, we will first ask our Finance and Resources Committee to consider an analysis of the demographic data we hold for applicants and employees.

21. We will then ask our fitness to practise committees to consider an analysis of the data collected in the first year from registrants and complainants involved in our fitness to practise process.

22. Analysing this data will help us understand how our processes are working and potentially reveal further steps we could take to mitigate or eliminate any adverse impact.

23. Following this we will decide whether we need to consider extending our data collection to the general registrant population. This could include adding a monitoring form to all new application forms and, potentially, considering whether we should begin to collect data from existing registrants.

### **Consultation and involvement**

24. We have used the following methods to contact and involve organisations and individuals in the development of the scheme.

#### *Employee involvement*

25. Heads of directorates and departments were involved in putting together the scheme, in addition to other members of employees from across the organisation who formed part of the project team.

26. We also established an internal working group of ten employees. This comprised of nine volunteers drawn from across the organisation, and a member of the project team. The composition of the internal working group broadly represents the diversity of employees.

27. The internal working group were asked to look at an early draft of the action points and quick wins identified in the scheme. They were involving in discussing whether these points were appropriate and in generating more action points.

28. The internal working group will also perform an important role in helping to fulfil the action points in the scheme. For example, they will be involved in reviewing Human Resources policies prior to consultation with employees.

29. Early drafts of the scheme were also considered by the middle management group (comprising of representatives drawn from each department) and the Executive Management Team.

30. We will also consult with the wider employee population where appropriate. We routinely consult with employees when we make amendments to human resources policies.

### *External consultation and involvement*

31. We intend to take a pragmatic and targeted approach to external consultation and involvement. We will identify where further consultation or involvement is necessary. In doing so we will consider whether consultation would be proportionate to the importance of the process and the extent of the possible or perceived adverse impact identified.

32. In the scheme, there are a number of action points which involve seeking external input on specific tasks. For example, we say that we will continue to involve outside individuals and organisations in reviewing our publications and in reviewing the accessibility of our offices.

33. At the end of the currency of the scheme, we will review the effectiveness of this approach. This might include considering whether a different approach to achieving external involvement is necessary.

### **Ongoing monitoring of action points and equality duties**

34. Each individual department will be responsible for meeting the action points detailed in the scheme. Monitoring of the action plan will be undertaken by the project lead and project manager, with the project team.

35. As detailed in the action points, departmental work plans will now include an equality impact assessment to ensure that the equality implications of ongoing work are considered. These assessments will be considered by the project team on a periodic basis to ensure that all implications are considered and accounted for.

36. Our ongoing monitoring will consider not only whether any new or existing policies and processes have a negative impact on any group, but also whether there are opportunities for achieving a more positive impact.

36. Other ways of monitoring our progress are detailed in the action points, including regular scrutiny of information by our Council and Committees. For example, we say that our Finance and Resources Committee should consider demographic information collected from employees and applicants each year and further actions may arise from this consideration.

37. This scheme will run for three years. We will publish progress reports each year. These will be scrutinised by our Council prior to publication.

## **Further information**

38. We would welcome any questions or feedback about our scheme.

39. If you have any questions or comments please contact us:

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Department/ Directorate	Completion date
<p><b>Human Resources (HR) / Partners</b></p> <p><b>Functions:</b></p> <p>Our Human Resources department is responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruitment</li> <li>• Training</li> <li>• Implementing or updating HR policies</li> <li>• Absence Management</li> <li>• Employee relations</li> <li>• Advising the Remuneration Committee</li> </ul> <p><b>Recent, existing and ongoing practice</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We have taken steps to ensure that our selection process is fair and free from discrimination by ensuring that interview panels do not have access to personal information when short listing.</li> <li>• We have completed a review of our employee handbook to ensure that equality and diversity legislation is accounted for prior to publication of the scheme.</li> </ul> <p><b>Action points</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will implement a rolling programme of reviewing HR policies on a regular basis, in consultation with the equality and diversity internal working group, middle management team and employees.</li> <li>• We will review our practices around employment of disabled employees, particularly around adjustments following a recruitment decision, in consultation with employees.</li> <li>• As part of the information and consulting regulations, we will recruit HR representatives drawn from the diversity of the employee population. They will act as a link between HR and employees.</li> </ul>	<p>Ongoing.</p> <p>Part of the above</p> <p>July 2008</p>

Department/ Directorate	Completion date
<p><b>Action points (continued):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will conduct an employee attitude survey to find out what our employees like and dislike about HR practices in the organisation.</li> <li>• We will work with the Quality Assurance Manager to explore the feasibility of working towards obtaining the 'two ticks' symbol which denotes organisations that are positive about disability.</li> <li>• We will review the complaints and appeals processes for partners, including updating the guidance for appeals panel members to include guidance on equality and diversity issues relevant to their role.</li> <li>• We will analyse and monitor the data we collect for human resources purposes and produce a report each year for our finance and resources committee.</li> </ul>	<p>April 2008</p> <p>To end of 2010</p> <p>April 2008</p> <p>November 2007 and ongoing</p>

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Department/ Directorate	Completion Date
<p><b>Facilities</b></p> <p><b>Functions:</b></p> <p>The Facilities department is responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Buildings and facilities</li> <li>• Incoming mail</li> <li>• Reception</li> <li>• Catering</li> <li>• Security</li> </ul> <p><b>Existing, Recent and ongoing practice:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We commissioned an accessibility audit in 2006. We have made the following changes in line with the audit: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ we have improved the signage at our offices</li> <li>○ we have changed the handrails to the entrance of our offices</li> <li>○ we have added high visibility nosings and contoured floor coverings at the top and bottom of the steps leading to the entrance of our offices</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Action points:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will explore making the following improvements to our facilities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ induction loops in the council chamber and reception area</li> <li>○ audio description in the lifts</li> </ul> </li> <li>• We will review our progress against the accessibility audit conducted in 2006 and present the findings, and our recommendations for future plans, to our Finance and Resources Committee</li> </ul>	<p>Installation is planned by end of 2008</p> <p>Viability of proposal explored by end of 2009, with present aim for completion by end of 2011.</p> <p>By end of 2008</p>

Department/ Directorate	Completion Date
<p><b>Action points (continued):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• We will ensure that employees working on reception receive training on our arrangements for assisting people with disabilities who are visiting our offices.</li></ul>	

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Department/ Directorate	Completion date
<p><b>Communications</b></p> <p><b>Functions:</b></p> <p>The functions of the Communications department are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Media and campaigns</li> <li>• Events</li> <li>• Public Affairs</li> <li>• Publications</li> <li>• Internal communications</li> <li>• The internet</li> </ul> <p><b>Recent, existing and ongoing practice:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We worked with the Fitness to Practise department to review two brochures – ‘How to make a complaint about a health professional’ and ‘What happens if a complaint is made about me?’ The publications benefited from the input of people with communication disabilities and we used this feedback to improve the accessibility of the style and content.</li> <li>• We recently produced a ‘house style’ guide which will guide employees in producing publications. This will ensure that the language and layout of publications is accessible and consistent.</li> <li>• We revised our visual identity and this was essentially aimed at making our publications more accessible. In carrying out this work, we benefited from the input of disability organisations.</li> </ul> <p><b>Action points:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will continue to seek the input of groups representing disabled and other groups when reviewing the style, text and accessibility of our publications.</li> <li>• We will seek the input of our stakeholders on equality and diversity issues in our opinion polling to be commissioned in Autumn 2007.</li> </ul>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>November 2007</p>

Department/ Directorate	Completion date
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will add to all our publications so that it is clear that all our publications are available in alternative formats (e.g. Braille).</li> </ul>	Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will review the layout and content of our website to ensure that it is as accessible as possible. This will include publishing key publications on our website in a range of different languages.</li> </ul>	March 2008
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will continue to participate in the Joint Regulators Public Patient Involvement (PPI) group which aims to develop consistent ways in which regulators can ensure the wider involvement of patients and the public in their work.</li> </ul>	Ongoing

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Directorate/ Department	Action points
<p><b>Policy and Standards</b></p> <p><b>Functions:</b></p> <p>The Policy and Standards department is responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• assisting the Council in developing strategy and policy;</li> <li>• assisting the Council in setting and reviewing standards;</li> <li>• assisting the Council in drafting guidance;</li> <li>• supporting Professional Liaison Groups (PLGs);</li> <li>• managing consultations;</li> <li>• managing the new professions, or ‘aspirant groups’ process;</li> <li>• liaising with the Council for Healthcare Regulatory Excellence (CHRE) on their annual performance review; and</li> <li>• ensuring consistency of approach across all HPC departments.</li> </ul> <p><b>Existing, recent and ongoing practice</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We sought the input of patient groups in our recent review of our standards of conduct, performance and ethics.</li> <li>• When we reviewed our standards of proficiency we considered the code of practice produced by the Disability Rights Commission for qualifications bodies.</li> <li>• We have recently published guidance for education providers and for applicants and potential applicants to approved courses about health, disability and registration.</li> </ul> <p><b>Action points</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will review our consultation process to ensure that ways in which we consult are appropriate, accessible and reach a broad audience. The outcomes of our review will be considered by our Council.</li> </ul>	<p>April 2008</p>

Directorate/ Department	Action points
<p><b>Action points (continued):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will undertake a piece of work, seeking the input of disabled people and of education providers, to assess the impact and effectiveness of our guidance for disabled people, education providers and doctors – ‘A disabled person’s guide to becoming a health professional’ and ‘Information about the health reference’.</li> <li>• As part of our work in implementing the ‘Health professionals crossing borders’ agreement, we will examine using translation services to improve our accessibility for members of the public who do not speak English.</li> <li>• We will work with our Education department to produce a position statement / guidance in light of recent age discrimination legislation. This will describe how this affects education providers and our role in approving courses.</li> <li>• We will consider equality and diversity implications when we review our returners to practice requirements.</li> </ul>	<p>2009/10 financial year</p> <p>January 2008</p> <p>January 2008</p> <p>Review begun 2010/11 financial year.</p>



Department/ Directorate	Completion date
<p><b>Fitness to Practise</b></p> <p><b>Functions:</b></p> <p>The main functions of the Fitness to Practise department are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigation of complaints about registrants</li> <li>• Adjudication of cases</li> <li>• Case management</li> <li>• Registration appeals</li> <li>• Setting hearings</li> <li>• Protection of title and health and character cases</li> </ul> <p><b>Existing, recent and ongoing practice:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We have changed the standard of acceptance for allegations so that we can, in some circumstances, take complaints by telephone. This will assist complainants who are less able to make a complaint in writing.</li> <li>• We have reviewed our complaints leaflets, in conjunction with the communications department.</li> </ul> <p><b>Action points:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will review our practice notes (which provide guidance to panel members) in light of the changes to equality legislation. In particular, we will revise the practice note on equal treatment.</li> <li>• We will produce a new practice note on disability to ensure that panels are informed about the law and requirements about reasonable adjustments.</li> <li>• We will continue to train our fitness to practise partners in issues pertinent to ensuring a fair hearing, including equality and diversity issues and we will evaluate the effectiveness of this.</li> <li>• We will collect demographic data from registrants involved in fitness to practise proceedings and from complainants. We will analyse this data and present the findings to our three fitness to practise committees.</li> </ul>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>March 2008</p> <p>Legal Assessors will be trained in equality and diversity issues in January 2008</p> <p>April 2008</p>

Department/ Directorate	Completion date
<p><b>Action points (continued):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will review the way in which we schedule hearings to ensure that we identify and accommodate any additional needs at an early stage.</li> <li>• We will establish a policy around the handling and purchasing of religious books .</li> </ul>	<p>February 2008 and ongoing</p> <p>January 2007</p>

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Department/Directorate	Completion date
<p data-bbox="245 243 781 279"><b>Education: Approvals and Monitoring</b></p> <p data-bbox="245 312 399 348"><b>Functions:</b></p> <p data-bbox="245 382 932 453">The main functions of the Education: Approvals and Monitoring department are:</p> <ul data-bbox="290 487 971 663" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="290 487 971 590">• Visiting education providers to assess their programmes against the standards of education and training and training.</li> <li data-bbox="290 594 824 663">• Managing the annual monitoring and major/minor changes processes.</li> </ul> <p data-bbox="245 697 789 732"><b>Existing, recent and ongoing practice:</b></p> <ul data-bbox="290 766 932 1184" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="290 766 932 1045">• Awareness of equality and diversity issues is imbedded throughout our standards of education and training. In particular, we have specific requirements for education providers and placement providers to have equal opportunities and anti-discrimination policies and to offer sufficient pastoral support to students.</li> <li data-bbox="290 1079 919 1184">• We routinely take into account the needs of visitors, education providers and employees when we arrange approvals visits.</li> </ul> <p data-bbox="245 1218 440 1253"><b>Action points</b></p> <ul data-bbox="290 1287 948 1808" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="290 1287 948 1463">• We will work with the Communications department to formally review our publications against the house style as part of our rolling programme of reviewing our processes and publications.</li> <li data-bbox="290 1497 943 1568">• We will work with the partner manager to train visitors on equality and diversity issues.</li> <li data-bbox="290 1602 938 1808">• We will work with the policy and standards department to produce a position statement / guidance in light of recent age discrimination legislation. This will describe how this affects education providers and our role in approving courses.</li> </ul>	<p data-bbox="997 1255 1268 1463">Ongoing - Annual monitoring and approvals publications reviewed in 2008/09 financial year</p> <p data-bbox="997 1497 1219 1568">From December 2008</p> <p data-bbox="997 1602 1182 1638">January 2008</p>

Department/Directorate	Completion date
<p><b>Secretariat</b></p> <p><b>Functions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the Council and committees, ensuring that these have the governance structures, the administrative support, and resources needed to deliver the HPC strategy.</li> <li>• Organisational lead on matters relating to implementation of the Freedom of Information and the Data Protection Acts.</li> </ul> <p><b>Existing, recent and ongoing practice</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruitment campaigns for new Council members aim to target a diverse range of candidates.</li> <li>• Council and committee papers provided in different formats if requested.</li> <li>• Consideration given to accessibility of external venues.</li> <li>• Feedback forms provided for council members to assist the Secretariat in providing for their needs.</li> </ul> <p><b>Action points</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuing consideration will be given to methods of ensuring that Council members are recruited from a diverse range of backgrounds.</li> <li>• The Secretariat will work with the Communications Department to further develop the format of Council papers to ensure that these are accessible to all groups.</li> <li>• Equality and Diversity training will be offered to all new members.</li> </ul>	<p></p> <p></p> <p></p> <p></p> <p></p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Date TBC</p> <p>Ongoing</p>

Department/Directorate	Completion date
<p data-bbox="228 241 592 281"><b>Information Technology</b></p> <p data-bbox="228 310 391 350"><b>Functions</b></p> <ul data-bbox="289 384 737 527" style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Back Office systems</li> <li>• Network and security systems</li> <li>• IT projects</li> <li>• Information services</li> </ul> <p data-bbox="228 562 784 602"><b>Existing, recent and ongoing practice</b></p> <ul data-bbox="289 632 854 737" style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adjustments researched and offered to employees with particular needs on an individual basis.</li> </ul> <p data-bbox="228 770 440 810"><b>Action points</b></p> <p data-bbox="228 840 959 1018">There are no specific action points for the Information Technology department. However, the department is likely to play an important role in the delivery of action points in other areas (e.g. in collection, storage and analysis of demographic data).</p>	

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Department/Directorate	Completion date
<p data-bbox="228 241 630 281"><b>International Registrations</b></p> <p data-bbox="228 310 402 350"><b>Functions:</b></p> <p data-bbox="228 380 834 453">The international registrations department is responsible for:</p> <ul data-bbox="289 485 894 596" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="289 485 894 558">• Processing applications from international applicants.</li> <li data-bbox="289 558 894 596">• Answering queries from applicants.</li> </ul> <p data-bbox="228 625 792 665"><b>Existing, recent and ongoing practice:</b></p> <p data-bbox="228 695 472 735">To be completed</p> <p data-bbox="228 764 451 804"><b>Action points:</b></p> <p data-bbox="228 833 472 873">To be completed</p>	

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Department/Directorate	Completion date
<p><b>UK Registrations</b></p> <p><b>Functions:</b></p> <p>The UK registrations department is responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Processing applications for registration from applicants who have followed UK approved courses.</li> <li>• Processing applications for readmission to the register and for renewal.</li> <li>• Changes of address and other registration administration.</li> <li>• Answering queries from registrants.</li> </ul> <p><b>Existing, recent and ongoing practice:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We revised our application forms and guidance notes to make sure that they were accurate, easy to follow and written in easy to understand English.</li> <li>• To be completed</li> </ul> <p><b>Action points:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To be completed</li> </ul>	

Department/Directorate	Completion date
<p><b>Finance</b></p> <p>The main functions of the finance department are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management and financial accounting</li> <li>• Accounts payable</li> <li>• Banking</li> <li>• Suppliers</li> </ul> <p><b>Existing, recent and ongoing practice</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To be completed</li> </ul> <p><b>Action points</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We review our fees every two years. When we review our fees, we will consider the equality and diversity implications of our existing fees, and any proposed new fees, drawing on the existing data we hold. For example, we might consider whether our readmission fee has a disproportionate impact on certain groups rather than others.</li> <li>• We will explore the possibility of making equality and diversity requirements of suppliers during our tender process. This will include considering practices in other organisations.</li> </ul>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>2008/09 financial year</p>



Department/Directorate	Completion date
<p><b>All</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will analyse the demographic data we hold and consider whether we need to collect further data. In particular we will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- present an analysis of the demographic data collected as part of human resources practice to our finances and resources committee.</li> <li>- present an analysis of the demographic data collected as part of our fitness to practise process.</li> <li>- make further decisions about whether to collect further data, and, if so, what that data should be.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Each directorate/ department will include an equality impact assessment in their yearly workplans. The workplans set out the planned work for that department in the coming financial year. These will be periodically reviewed by the project team.</li> <li>• We will begin a rolling programme of training for all employees, partners and council members on equality and diversity issues.</li> </ul>	<p>November 2007</p> <p>April 2008</p> <p>Ongoing – from April 2008</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>

## **RACE EQUALITY POLICY**

This policy is specific to issues relating to race and ethnicity.

The Race Relations Act 1976 makes it unlawful, without justification, to discriminate on grounds of race and, as amended by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 places a duty on public authorities to promote race equality.

HPC is committed to providing equal access to employment and the services it provides and will not discriminate on the grounds of race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, cultural background or religion (where the religion is defined as a racial group).

HPC will:

- work with representatives of ethnic and racial groups to ensure that HPC's services meet their needs and to improve access to those services;
- promote access to information, services and decision-making through, the use of translation and interpretation services;
- welcome and encourage job applications from people from ethnic minority backgrounds;
- ensure that allegations of racial discrimination and harassment are investigated thoroughly, speedily and with sensitivity.

## **DISABILITY EQUALITY POLICY**

This policy is specific to issues relating to disability.

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 applies to HPC in its capacity as an employer, service provider and the “qualifying body” for those it regulates. The Act makes it unlawful, without justification, to disabled people less favourably or to subject them to discrimination or harassment.

The Act defines disability as a physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect upon a person’s ability to carry out normal day to day activities but HPC also recognises that society’s attitudes towards disabled people are one of the main barriers to ensuring that disabled people have equal rights of access to services and employment.

HPC is committed to providing equal access to employment and the services it provides and will not discriminate on the grounds of disability.

The HPC will:

- work with representatives of disabled people to ensure that HPC’s services meet their needs and to improve access to those services;
- promote access to information, services and decision-making through, for example, the use of interpretation for the hearing impaired, the use of Braille etc;
- ensure that, so far as possible, HPC events are held in premises which have appropriate facilities for disabled people;
- welcome and encourage job applications from disabled people;
- undertake wherever possible, to retain employees who experience disability, by making reasonable changes to their duties or working environment;

- ensure that allegations of discrimination and harassment on the grounds of disability are investigated thoroughly, speedily and with sensitivity.

## **GENDER AND SEXUAL EQUALITY POLICY**

This policy is specific to the concerns of men, women, bi-sexual people, gay men, lesbian women, transgender people and those who are undergoing or who have undergone gender re-assignment.

The Sex Discrimination Act 1975 makes it unlawful to discriminate without justification on grounds of gender and the Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations 1999 extend the protection provided by that Act to those undergoing or who have undergone gender reassignment.

HPC is committed to providing equal access to employment and the services it provides and will not discriminate on the grounds of gender, gender reassignment or sexual orientation.

HPC will:

- work with representatives of gay, lesbian, bi-sexual and transgender people to ensure that HPC's services meet their needs and to improve access to those services;
- confront homophobic attitudes, behaviour and language and encourage understanding of individual rights and attributes;
- encourage a culture of openness about sexual orientation and gender whilst maintaining the right to privacy;
- ensure men and women are paid the same for doing work of equal value and that flexible working policies apply equally to men and women, enabling them to make personal choices about their parenting, caring and work roles;
- ensure that allegations of discrimination and harassment on the grounds of gender, gender reassignment or sexual orientation are investigated thoroughly, speedily and with sensitivity.

## **RELIGION AND BELIEF EQUALITY POLICY**

This policy is specific to the concerns of people from different faith groups.

The Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003 make it unlawful to discriminate without justification, on grounds of religion or belief by treating a person less favourably or subjecting them to victimisation or harassment.

HPC is committed to providing equal access to employment and the services it provides and will not discriminate on the grounds of religion or belief.

HPC will:

- ensure cultural and religious festivals, holidays and rights of worship are acknowledged and recognised across the organisation;
- where reasonably practical, ensure events and hearings are not scheduled on cultural or religious festivals so as to prevent people from attending;
- ensure leave is not unreasonably withheld from employees who may wish to celebrate cultural and religious festivals;
- not impose dress restrictions on employees which may be discriminatory, unless such restrictions can be objectively justified in terms of meeting a legitimate health and safety or business aim;
- ensure that allegations of discrimination and harassment on the grounds of religion or belief are investigated thoroughly, speedily and with sensitivity.

## **AGE EQUALITY POLICY**

This policy is specific to the concerns of people of all ages and in particular younger and older people.

Age discrimination occurs because assumptions are made about older and younger people that are based on inaccurate, outdated and inappropriate stereotypes.

HPC is committed to providing equal access to employment and the services it provides and will not discriminate on the grounds of age.

HPC will:

- encourage and support activity to which is aimed at eliminating ageist attitudes and practices;
- ensure that, in providing its services, it identifies and addresses the specific needs of different age groups, particularly older people and children;
- seek to employ a mixed-age workforce that includes older and younger people;
- where circumstances permit, support members employees who wish to work beyond the mandatory retirement age of 65, in order to retain their knowledge, skills and experience in a manner which benefits both parties;
- ensure that allegations of discrimination and harassment on the grounds of age are investigated thoroughly, speedily and with sensitivity.

# Collecting demographic data from registrants: outline approach

## *The Equality and Diversity Scheme*

As part of the Equality and Diversity Scheme, we are looking at the data we collect from registrants, and the information that we hold relating to certain groups. This includes information relating to the six areas of our scheme:

- disability;
- age;
- gender;
- sexual orientation;
- race; and
- religion.

In order to ensure that we are not indirectly discriminating against any of these groups, we will need to capture demographic data.

## *A phased approach*

What we suggest is a phased approach to collecting data from registrants, with regular analysis and review. Depending on the information collected, and any trends that were found, we would then move on if necessary to collecting additional information.

### **Phase 1 - Collecting data from FTP**

We have started collecting data from registrants and complainants who are the subject of a fitness to practise case. An analysis of the data collected will be presented to the fitness to practise committees in April 2008.

Any breakdown of data can be compared against demographic data for the UK as a whole. But we can't compare it against information about the people on the Register.

If analysis shows that such a comparison would be useful, then we can continue to Phase 2 of the data collection.

### **Phase 2 - Collecting data from applicants**

The second phase could be to add a demographic data sheet to the application form, and ask applicants to complete it. We would stress to applicants that this data does not form part of our decision-making process, and is collected by us for anonymous analysis. Applicants would be accustomed to this kind of data collection from other similar processes such as job applications, and would have the option not to complete the details.

Information analysed from applicants would be helpful to give us an idea of the profile of new registrants. This information could be contrasted against the



FTP information, and any discrepancies could be investigated further. The information could also be analysed, presented as a paper for Council, and further distributed to other organisations with an interest in the demographic make-up of health professionals, including, say, the professional bodies, and the Departments of Health.

Depending on the results of this analysis, it may be that we decide that information on applicants is useful, but does not show us how the demographic of the Register is changing over time. At this point, it might be helpful to consider whether moving to Phase 3 of the data collection could be useful.

### **Phase 3 - Collecting data from existing registrants**

This would involve adding a demographic data capture sheet to the renewal forms, and sending it out as each profession enters renewal (with assurances as above that the data is used for monitoring, not to make decisions).

### ***Linking information to the registration database***

#### **Maintaining confidentiality**

This demographic data could all be linked to registrants' registration records, but stored so that it was only visible to a small number of people, and password protected (and not visible, for example, to Registration Officers, or Fitness to Practise team members).

Another alternative would be to store the information separately from LISA, but to store it with registration numbers. The purpose of doing this would be to provide information for anonymous reports on the demographic make-up of particular groups of registrants so that this could then be compared to the Register as a whole (see examples of use, below). Part of our commitment to registrants and to professional bodies would be that the storage would be completely separate from our decision-making processes.

#### **Possible low response rates**

Linking the data with registration numbers in this way would mean that we could store the information cumulatively, and if we had a low response rate, we could then write out again *only* to those registrants who had not responded the first time.

Registrants who have supplied personal information once would be frustrated to be asked again for this information. They may fear it had been lost, and may well be less likely to supply it again, particularly since some of this kind of demographic data is unlikely to change over time.

By linking the information to LISA, even a low response rate could form the beginning of a cumulative collection of information that gives an increasingly accurate idea of what the Register looks like.

## Using the data

If the information we collected was linked to the registration record, this would mean that the information would be useable in the long-term. In effect, any of our processes where we interact with registrants could be analysed against the make-up of the Register to see whether the people we interact with under or over represent certain groups. It may, of course, be the case that trends identified are outside of HPC's control. However, it would nonetheless be useful to identify such trends and make this conclusion.

On a very straightforward level, we could look at, say, how the number of people with disabilities on the Register varies over time.

However, the information would be even more useful in order to draw comparisons between groups of people and the Register as a whole. Comparing against a cumulative picture of the Register is likely to give more useful information than comparing against statistics for the UK.

For example, by recording the registration numbers of registrants who respond to our consultations, we could then run a report to see their demographic data, and compare it against the Register as a whole. We might find that certain groups are much more or less likely to respond to consultations, and we could then look into altering our consultation process to encourage under-represented groups to participate.

If we had the registration numbers of people whose registration lapsed, we could compare this against the data for the Register to determine whether particular groups are more likely not to renew their registration. We could then re-consider our communications, re-write our registration guidance, or look at our processes as appropriate.

Similarly, we could analyse data for people who are struck off the Register, those who come back onto the Register via the 'returners to practice' requirements, registrants who attend Listening Events or conference stands, people who request publications, those who pass or fail international assessments... all of this could be done by pulling a report on a sub-section of the Register, and then comparing this against an analysis of the Register as a whole.

It would effectively future-proof our data collection, ensuring that we don't just take a 'snapshot' of a small percentage of respondents which we can't then do anything with other than break down and publish a superficial analysis, and would mean instead that we create a source of data that changes over time, so that as the Register changes we can look at how the demographic data has changed, and plan appropriate reactions.