

Equality Impact Assessment Summary

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Policy/Service: Complaints Procedure

Background

- Description of the aims of the policy
- Context in which the policy operates
- Who was involved in the Equality Impact Assessment

The Trust's Complaints Procedure reflects the Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints Regulations (England) Regulations: Statutory Instrument No 309 which came into force on 1st April 2009.

The policy is primarily aimed at those staff directly involved in investigating and responding to formal complaints. However it is intended to be fully utilized as a reference for all Trust staff and also acts as a reference point for patients/complainants and will be available on the Trust's website.

The policy sets out the process for handling formal complaints, the standards of investigation and response required and clearly defines how action and learning from patient feedback must be captured and monitored.

The Complaints Manager, Head of Customer Affairs, PALS Manager, Patient Representative, Complaints Monitoring Group Members, ICAS (Independent Complaints Advocacy Service) Representative were involved in the Equality Impact Assessment.

Methodology

- A brief account of how the likely effects of the policy was assessed (to include race and ethnic origin, disability, gender, culture, religion or belief, sexual orientation, age)
- The data sources and any other information used
- The consultation that was carried out (who, why and how?)

In reviewing the policy full attention has been paid to the need to ensure the process fully supports all potential users of the complaints process and wherever possible seeks to address all potential adverse impacts for equality groups.

In particular, language, communication and special needs are specifically addressed ensuring ease of access to the process for all potential users.

The consultation has involved circulation of the document for comment to internal staff as well as patient representatives, Social Services and involvement of the Independent Complaints Advocacy Service team.

Key Findings

- Describe the results of the assessment
- Identify if there is adverse or a potentially adverse impacts for any equalities groups

There are potentially adverse impacts for those groups based on ethnic origin and social class – in

terms of ease of use/accessibility. In response to this, the policy seeks to set out clear and robust guidance upon how to mitigate this risk in order to ensure the process is open to and accessible to all potential users.

Conclusion

- Provide a summary of the overall conclusions

Potentially adverse impacts on equalities groups are addressed as far as possible by the current updated policy.

Recommendations

- State recommended changes to the proposed policy as a result of the impact assessment
- Where it has not been possible to amend the policy, provide the detail of any actions that have been identified
- Describe the plans for reviewing the assessment

Currently, the ethnicity, gender and age of users of the complaints process is monitored. This has informed the current impact assessment. It is recommended that this monitoring continues in order to inform future impact assessments and policy revisions, and that going forward disability also forms part of this monitoring.

Guidance on Equalities Groups

<p>Race and Ethnic origin (includes gypsies and travellers) (consider communication, access to information on services and employment, and ease of access to services and employment)</p>	<p>Religion or belief (include dress, individual care needs, family relationships, dietary requirements and spiritual needs for consideration)</p>
<p>Disability (consider communication issues, access to employment and services, whether individual care needs are being met and whether the policy promotes the involvement of disabled people)</p>	<p>Sexual orientation including lesbian, gay and bisexual people (consider whether the policy/service promotes a culture of openness and takes account of individual needs)</p>
<p>Gender (consider care needs and employment issues, identify and remove or justify terms which are gender specific)</p>	<p>Age (consider any barriers to accessing services or employment, identify and remove or justify terms which could be ageist, for example, using titles of senior or junior)</p>
<p>Culture (consider dietary requirements, family relationships and individual care needs)</p>	<p>Social class (consider ability to access services and information, for example, is information provided in plain English?)</p>