



Southern Health
and Social Care Trust
Quality Care - for you, with you

Equality Scheme

**Section 75, Schedule 9 of the
Northern Ireland Act 1998**

***What it means for our
service users***

Updated January 2019

What is an Equality Scheme?

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 came into effect on 1 January 2000 and required most public authorities operating in Northern Ireland to submit an Equality Scheme to the Equality Commission for NI. This is a statement of the Trust's commitment to fulfilling its Section 75 statutory duties, setting out how it is going to ensure that equality and good relations are promoted in everything the Trust does.

This places duties on the Trust to promote *equality of opportunity* between:



- persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation
- men and women generally
- persons with a disability and persons without
- persons with dependants and persons without.

These are commonly referred to as the nine equality categories.

The Trust is also required to promote *good relations* between persons of different religious beliefs, political opinion and racial groups, including Irish Travellers.

The Trust's Equality Scheme has been approved by the Equality Commission.

What does this mean for the Trust?

The Trust must consider the nine equality categories when making decisions and formulating policies. This includes decisions about the services we provide, the procurement of goods and services and the employment of staff.

The Trust must:

- produce an Equality Scheme
- submit Annual Reports to the Equality Commission detailing how the Scheme is being implemented
- review its Scheme regularly
- assess all policies to find out how they will impact on the nine equality categories.



See also the Trust's leaflet on 'Screening and Equality Impact Assessment: How we assess the impact of our policies' – available on the Trust's website under Publications.



The Trust must also carry out an Audit of Inequalities and develop a detailed Action Plan to address the inequalities identified.

What does this mean for our service users?

The Trust believes that we can only deliver the best services to our users by involving people when we plan and develop services. You can be involved as much or as little as you want. Involvement can mean:

- being informed about a service
- being consulted about a major plan
- being involved in negotiating a plan of care
- being consulted about how to develop a service.

People can be involved as:

- individuals in decisions about their own care
- groups of service users or carers
- local communities



- representatives of organisations which have specialist interests
- individuals who may use our services now or in the future.

It is important that equality and good relations continue to be mainstreamed in every aspect of the delivery of our functions, so that services are provided on a person-centred, person-led basis. Therefore the Trust actively encourages your involvement.

How can you get involved?

For a copy of our Equality Scheme and Action Plan or for further information on how to get involved, please contact:



Mrs Lynda Gordon
Head of Equality Assurance Unit
First Floor, Hill Building, St. Luke's Hospital Site,
Loughgall Road, Armagh, BT61 7NQ



028 375 64151 / 64152 / 64247



lynda.gordon@southerntrust.hscni.net



www.southerntrust.hscni.net

This document can be made available on request in alternative formats, e.g. plain English, easy read, Braille, audio formats, large print and in other languages to meet the needs of those who are not fluent in English.