Agenda item: 111/08

West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS
NHS Trust

EQUALITY & DIVERSITY - PROGRESS REPORT

JUNE 2008

1. Introduction

This paper outlines a number of the equality and diversity initiatives implemented within the Trust in relation to the Core Standard for Better Health – C7e.

As a large provider of acute care, employing over 4000 staff, the Trust is committed not only to ensuring that all of its services are accessible, appropriate and fair, but also to recruiting a diverse workforce, matching the diversity of the local population and being capable of understanding the needs and culture of patients within the communities it serves.

In 'A Guide for NHS Boards' – Equality and Human Rights in the NHS, December 2006 the specific obligations placed upon public bodies by Equality and human rights legislation are listed. Equality and human rights runs through all of the Integrated Governance Handbook 'inputs' and consideration is needed as to how the legal obligations are incorporated into the Trust's governance arrangements.

The NHS Plan *(DH 2000)* set out a modernisation agenda to take health services forward over the next ten years that embraces equality and diversity. The focus of the plan is the patient and a patient-centred approach to delivering care. Ensuring that the needs of all patients are addressed is an integral part of this patient-centred approach and it requires us to gain a better understanding about the needs of our patients, which are often needs that stem from the patient's personal circumstances and their cultural background.

There are three publication duties set out in the Race Relations Act 1976 (Statutory Duties) Order 2001. These have duties have been met by publication in the Trust internet and intranet sites of:

- An Equalities Framework
- Employment monitoring statistics by reference to ethnic group
- The results of race equality impact assessments

2. Initiatives

2.1 Equality Framework

The Trust's Equality Framework is available on the intranet and sets out how the Trust is progressing with it's Equality and diversity Agenda. It has been subject to Internal Audit in May 2008 and is described as very comprehensive and fit for purpose. However there is a need for updating and that will be taken forward through the Equality & Diversity Group

2.2 Employment Monitoring Statistics

Ethnicity data on Staff in Post and Applicants for posts in WHHT is published on the Trust's website. Trends will be monitored by the Equality & Diversity Group

2.3 Equality Impact Assessment

A Scrutiny Group to monitor Impact Assessments has been established. An Impact Assessment tool has been developed. It is designed to bring together patient and staff equality agendas. Managers are required to assess equality impact when writing a policy/protocol. Impact Assessments are published on the Internet.

2.4 Diversity Funding and Training

Diversity Training has been sourced and the Trust will roll out a 'Train the Trainers' course from July 2008. Half-day sessions on aspects of Equality & Diversity for AfC Bands 1-4 are to be planned.

2.5 Well Being at Work

A job role outline has been agreed and is to be advertised to recruit support for staff with a disability. This links with the 2 Ticks symbol commitment that the Trust makes –

- To interview all applicants with a disability who meet the minimum criteria for a job vacancy and consider each applicant on their abilities
- To ensure there is a mechanism in place to discuss at any time, but at least once a year, with disabled employees what can be done to make sure they can develop and use their abilities

2.6 Black & Minority Ethnic (BME) Network

The Trust BME network continues to meet regularly and regional conferences and points of interest are continuously shared between the Equality & Diversity Group and the BME.

June 2008