



Belfast Health and
Social Care Trust

New/Revised Equality Scheme approved!

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

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

October 2011

Introduction

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 came into effect on 1 January 2000. This placed 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.

What this means for the Trust?

The Trust must consider the nine equality categories when making decisions and must consult with all those affected. This includes decisions about the services we provide, the procurement of services and the employment of staff. This means that the Trust must make sure that service users and staff receive fair treatment and services are accessible to everyone.

The Trust must:

- Produce a revised Equality Scheme
- Submit Annual Reports to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (ECNI) detailing the Scheme is being implemented
- Review its Scheme regularly
- Assess all policies to find out how they will impact on the nine equality categories.



What is an Equality Scheme?

An Equality Scheme sets out how the Trust will fulfil its duties. It is available, on request, in accessible formats, including Easy Read, Braille, audio formats (CD, mp3 or DAISY), large print or minority languages. The Trust's new/revised Equality Scheme has been approved by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland.



The Trust also carried out an audit of inequalities and developed a detailed Action Plan to address the inequalities identified. The Equality Scheme and Action Plan were widely consulted on.

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 Plan or for further information on how to get involved, please contact:



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