



Equality & Diversity Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 All references in this policy to the 'Company' mean the Humberside Group of Local Medical Committees Ltd.
- 1.2 The Company is committed to equality for all staff and is committed to employment practices, policies and procedures which ensure that no employee, potential employee, LMC member, LMC observer, course participant or contractor receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of gender, race, colour, ethnic or national origin, sexual orientation, marital status, religion or belief, age, trade union membership, disability, offending background, domestic circumstances, social and employment status, HIV status, gender reassignment, political affiliation or any other protected characteristic as described in the 2010 Equality Act.
- 1.3 Diversity will be viewed positively and, in recognising that everyone is different, the unique contribution that each individual's experience, knowledge and skills can make is valued equally. We aim to enable our staff to make a full contribution to meeting the organisation's objectives and to fulfil their own potential.
- 1.4 We will not tolerate any form of exclusion, harassment, victimisation, bullying or other unfair discrimination on any grounds including protected characteristics as described in the 2010 Equality Act. Every employee (including wider groups of individuals connected to the organisation) is expected to value and respect each other.

2. Scope of the Policy

- 2.1 Equality is everyone's business and everyone who comes into contact with the Company's activities has rights and obligations under this policy.
- 2.2 The scope of this policy extends to both Local Medical Committees within the Humberside Group of LMCs and should be used in conjunction with each LMC's Constitution. It includes events run within the Company, contractors providing services to the Company and delegates and tutors on seminars/training offered by the Company.
- 2.3 The policy covers actions, intent, written and verbal communication including online and IT/electronic activity.

- 2.4 This policy sets out an overarching position as a reference point for all Company policies and activities. The promotion of equality will be actively pursued through policies and actions to ensure that all employees and others in contact with Company activity receive fair, equitable and consistent treatment. Also, to ensure that employees and potential employees are not subject to direct or indirect discrimination.
- 2.5 Employees who breach the policy will be subject to the Company's Disciplinary Procedure. Employees who believe that they have suffered detriment are entitled to use the Company's Grievance Procedure unless their concerns can be resolved more directly through informal action.
- 2.6 The behaviour of non-employed associates of the Company will be addressed where they are in breach of this policy and may be subject to the following actions:
- LMC Committee members will be reminded of their "Good Medical Practice" responsibilities, or they may be subject to a complaint to the GMC.
 - Contractors may have their contract terminated.
 - Course delegates may be removed from their programme.

3. Equality Impact Assessment

- 3.1 The language and intent of the policy have been reviewed carefully to ensure that in supporting the policy's principles, there is no detriment to any group or individuals for any reason including anyone with a protected characteristic as described in the 2010 Equality Act. The Company welcomes feedback on its policies as it seeks to continuously improve. Please notify the CEO MD if you have any suggestions on how to improve the inclusivity of this policy or if you believe there are any areas of detriment that can be redressed.
- 3.2 All Company policies and procedures will be checked before implementation for language, intent and procedure to ensure that the policy's aims are met within a framework of equality.

4. Single Equality Duty and Types of Discrimination

- 4.1 The 2010 Equality Act replaces and updates a wide range of earlier legislation drawing all responsibilities for employers into a single duty to ensure equality and address discrimination. The act highlights the following "protected characteristics":
- Age
 - Disability
 - Gender re-assignment
 - Marriage or civil partnership
 - Pregnancy or maternity
 - Race
 - Religion or belief
 - Sex

- Sexual orientation

- 4.2 Although the list above is fairly comprehensive, each individual should be viewed as unique and treated with equality whatever their circumstances.
- 4.3 Direct discrimination occurs when an individual is treated less favourably because of a personal characteristic e.g., their gender, race, colour, ethnic or national origin, sexual orientation, marital status, religion or belief, age, trade union membership, disability, offending background or any other personal characteristic. An example of direct discrimination would be dismissing a female employee because she is pregnant.
- 4.4 Indirect discrimination is when there's a practice, policy or rule which applies to everyone in the same way, but it has a worse effect on some people than others. The Equality Act says it puts you at a particular disadvantage. Examples of indirect discrimination might include physical or age restrictions or constraints around the working day.
- 4.5 Institutional discrimination occurs where an organisation's systems or culture create inequitable constraints for certain individuals or groups. The Company is committed to creating an inclusive culture supported by fair procedures to ensure that the business can operate effectively without detriment to employees, members, observers, contractors, and others who interact with us.

5. Areas for Action

- 5.1 This policy will apply to all aspects of the Company's work. However, it is important to make specific reference to some specific areas for action:

5.1.1 Employees

For employees we will:

- Make sure that every employee receives fair and equal treatment.
- Ensure that the workplace is free from discrimination, sexual harassment and any other form of harassment, bullying and victimisation and act promptly and appropriately on any complaints.
- Value and respect the identities, cultures and diversity of our employees.
- Ensure that all our employees have fair and equal access to appraisals, training and development, jobs, transfer and promotion.
- Provide, wherever is reasonably possible, a workplace which is accessible to people with disabilities.
- Encourage and help our employees to reach their full potential.
- Treat employees fairly and consistently when agreeing objectives and assessing performance.
- Retain in suitable employment, wherever is reasonably possible, employees who become disabled.
- Treat our employees fairly in the operation of our redundancy, grievance and disciplinary procedures.

- Monitor and review our Equality & Diversity Policy regularly.

5.1.2 Job applicants

For job applicants we will:

- Advertise jobs internally, where practical to do so, and create opportunities for internal development.
- Ensure that everyone involved in applicant selection is trained in non-discriminatory assessment practice.
- Use objective assessment measures based on skills, experience and potential.
- Monitor job applicant data to check for recruitment trends that could improve our processes.
- When seeking candidates, we will use networks and search agencies appropriately to avoid detriment to potential candidates. When advertising roles, we will use accessible media and give candidates opportunities to apply and appropriate timescales to respond.
- Ensure that applicants are supported to attend interviews and adjustments are made to improve access.
- Provide developmental feedback on interview performance when requested.

5.1.3 Electronic and online media including e-mail

The Company will monitor the use of electronic and online media and will:

- Remove inappropriate content/postings where it is able to do so.
- Address the behaviour of employees and other associates of the organisation where postings can be attributed to them.
- Take action to separate the Company equality stance from the personal actions of individuals.
- Support employees or those associated with the Company where they have been subjected to online media abuse where that is associated with their role with the Company.

5.1.4 Delegates/seminar participants

The Company will ensure that participants of Company learning and development activities can learn in a safe and inclusive environment. Behaviour that is contrary to the aims of this policy will be challenged and, where appropriate, offenders removed from our events.

5.1.5 LMC members

The Company will address the inappropriate behaviour of members in meetings, reminding them of standards of Good Medical Practice, the role and responsibilities of Committee members and the Code of Conduct and Accountability for Committee members. Persistent inappropriate behaviour or extreme cases may lead to a complaint being made to the GMC. LMC Chairs have additional responsibilities (see 6.6 below).

6. Responsibilities

6.1 Senior Management Team

The Senior Management Team, on behalf of the Board of Directors, has ultimate responsibility for equality within the Company. Implementation and monitoring the operation of the Equality and Diversity Policy is delegated to the Senior Management Team. The organisation's senior staff will model behaviour that sets the foundations for a culture of equality within the Company. The Senior Management Team will ensure that the policy is clearly communicated to employees along with sources of available support.

6.2 Board Directors

Board Directors will adopt appropriate strategies to support and value equality and diversity within the organisation. Equality will be discussed at Board Meetings as required.

6.3 Managers

All managers are required to demonstrate leadership in this field by discouraging prejudice and by modelling appropriate behaviour. They will take speedy and appropriate action to deal with any breaches of the policy or behaviour that could lead to a breach of the policy.

Any identified breaches of the Equality & Diversity Policy should be dealt with using the Disciplinary or Grievance policies as appropriate.

Managers are responsible for applying employment practices, policies and procedures fairly and consistently and for highlighting and addressing any practices which could lead to discrimination.

6.4 Employees

All employees are responsible for familiarising themselves with the Equality & Diversity Policy and for complying with it. Employees have a responsibility to either:

- Inform their line manager or the CEO MD if they know or suspect that discrimination/harassment is occurring.
- Highlight at the time, where they feel safe to do so, where the behaviour or comments of others make them feel uncomfortable.

Employees must participate in any equality training provided or identified for them.

Employees (at all levels) must make sure they do not:

- Discriminate against anyone
- Incite, encourage or persuade another employee to discriminate
- Harass, abuse, victimise or bully another employee
- Treat any individual less favourably than others on any grounds including protected characteristics as described within the 2010 Equality Act

- Do anything which has the effect of disadvantaging one employee or job applicant against another.

6.5 LMC members

Members have a responsibility to ensure that the conduct of meetings and other LMC dealings uphold the principles outlined in this policy. Discriminatory behaviour or language will not be tolerated. All members have responsibility to uphold good practice and challenge inappropriate behaviour.

6.6 LMC Chairs

The elected LMC Chair has additional responsibility to act as a custodian of equality within the Committee and all LMC activity. The responsibility for equality should be read in conjunction with the roles and responsibilities for Chairs.

6.7 Contractors

Contractors working for the Company are expected to uphold the principles of equality highlighted in this policy. Breaches are not acceptable and may lead to the termination of the contract. Contractors can also expect to be treated according to the Company's equality principles.

6.8 Delegates/seminar participants

Event delegates are expected to behave in accordance with the principles set out in this policy. Unacceptable behaviour will be challenged, and excessive or cumulative incidents may lead to their removal from the programme. No refund of fees will be paid in such circumstances. Delegates who experience or witness discriminatory behaviour should highlight this to the LMC event host or course leader in the first instance. If this does not lead to rectifying action or if the issues relate to the course leader/host, the issues should be reported to the CEO MD.

7. Implementation

7.1 The Company will promote, through the provision of training and guidance, the impartial application of all employment policies and procedures and will take action to deal with all inappropriate behaviour.

7.2 Specific training needs in relation to equality and diversity will be identified through line management and appraisal and appropriate training events will be sourced and provided as necessary.

7.3 The responsibilities of the employer and employee for equality will be actively addressed through the induction of all staff members, regardless of role or seniority.

7.4 LMC members will be provided with the Company's Equality and Diversity Policy on their election.

- 7.5 The Company's Directors will be provided with the Company's Equality and Diversity Policy on their appointment as part of their induction.

8. Procedure for Dealing with Complaints of Discrimination

- 8.1 Any individual who feels that they have been discriminated against or has witnessed discrimination on any grounds set out in this policy should initially raise their concerns with their line manager. Where an employee's concerns relate to their line manager, the employee should raise their concerns with the CEO MD or if he/she is their line manager, another member of the Senior Management Team.
- 8.2 Where resolution cannot be achieved through informal discussion, any employee may put forward a grievance in line with the guidelines set down in the Grievance Procedure.
- 8.3 Where an individual is suspected of a breach of the principles of this policy, they will be investigated under the Disciplinary Procedure. If proven, breaches may be viewed as gross misconduct which could result in dismissal.
- 8.4 Any LMC member who feels that they have been discriminated against or has witnessed discrimination on any grounds set out in this policy should raise their concerns with their LMC Chair or the CEO MD. Where their concerns relate to their LMC Chair or the CEO MD, the member should raise their concerns with another member of the Senior Management Team.
- 8.5 Line managers or individuals who need advice or support about how to address an equality issue can approach the CEO MD for an initial discussion.
- 8.6 Any job applicant wishing to bring a complaint under the Equality and Diversity Policy should contact the CEO MD and, if unresolved, state their complaint in writing to the Chair of the Board.

9. Monitoring

- 9.1 Implementation of the policy and any breaches will be monitored and reported to the Board.

10. Updating and Review

Implementation Date:	January 2015
Review Cycle:	Every 2 years
Last Review Date:	July 2023
Next Review Date:	July 2025