

Healthwatch North Tyneside policies and procedures

Equalities, Diversity and Impact Assessments Policy

1. Policy

Healthwatch North Tyneside strive to ensure that we apply best practice in providing equal opportunities in meeting diverse needs and in complying with relevant legislation in order to ensure that no one is disadvantaged by the way we work. Our mission and values are designed to create an environment in which our staff, volunteers and trustees feel a strong sense of purpose, feel valued and are supported to involve and respect others.

Our view is that HWNT is not subject to the specific duties set out in the Equality Act (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011. However, we are subject to the general equality duty that requires us to have due regard to relevant statutory needs in our work.

Having due regard means that we are required to—

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010 (the Act)
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share relevant protected characteristics and persons who do not share them
- foster respectful relations between persons who share relevant protected characteristics and persons who do not share them.

Having due regard involves implementing the following —

- remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share relevant protected characteristics
- take steps to meet the needs of persons who share relevant protected characteristics
- encourage persons who share relevant protected characteristics to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

- the need to tackle prejudice, stereotyping, and promote understanding.

Compliance with the duties in the Act may involve treating some persons more favourably than others; but this is not to be understood as permitting conduct that would otherwise be prohibited under this Act.

Relevant protected characteristics are—

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation
- marriage and civil partnership

2. Procedure

Our charity commits to:

- ensure that all North Tyneside children, young people and adults are given diverse opportunities to contribute and participate;
- ensure that the voices of people are heard, including the people whose voices are sometimes not heard or listened to;
- identify and highlight good (or poor) equality and diversity practice in health and social care;
- challenge examples of discrimination and disadvantage when they arise; value peoples' individuality and respect differences.
- be an excellent employer and seek to recruit, develop and support a diverse workforce that can effectively work with and for the people of the borough
- ensure that its trustees, staff and volunteers are aware of and apply this policy
- safeguard its employees, volunteers and visitors.

We aim to facilitate a meaningful contribution of residents to its work and its achievements in improving health and social care services across the borough. In doing so we will endeavour to meet the diverse needs and aspirations of individuals within the community.

This will include the following and other work, as is needed:

- publicising the work of the charity

- having their say about the services they receive
- having their voices heard and acted upon
- receiving feedback about the work that has been done
- volunteering with the charity
- working for the charity
- being a member of Board of Trustees

Our communications will:

- Avoid jargon or acronyms (without defining them first) and use 'plain English' in all documents and electronic communications
- Avoid sexist, racist, ableist or ageist language or any other offensive language
- Use images that show a diverse range of people and situations
- Consider the needs of residents whose first language is not English or who have difficulty in reading written material in English
- Proactively distribute information about the charity to groups and locations who may not otherwise receive it
- Encourage people to sign up to receive regular information from the charity
- Support community and concern groups to pass on information about our work to their members

We will engage with diverse groups and individuals by:

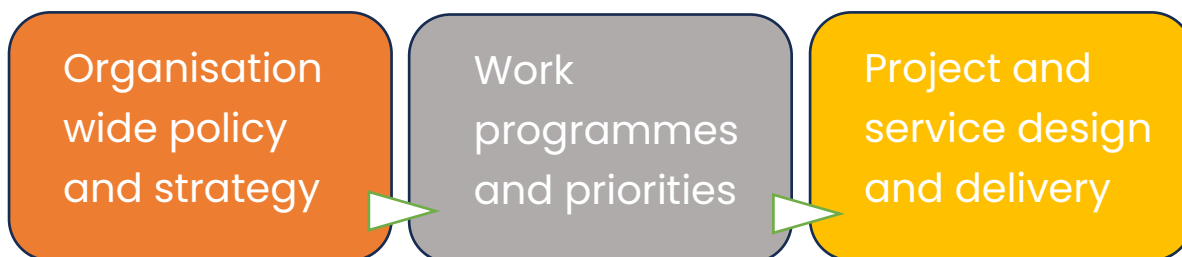
- Visiting community and concern groups
- Providing information about our work in venues used by different and diverse groups
- Recruiting volunteers from diverse groups and communities to publicise and engage with communities
- Ensuring that, where possible, events we organise are fully accessible
- Providing interpreters and BSL sign communicators where needed
- Providing visual, hearing and mobility aids as needed
- Offering a freepost service
- Offering a 'phone-back' facility
- Monitoring data about who returns information, and where from, in order to inform future communication and engagement

We will consider the impact of our decisions on those with protected characteristics in accordance with its established procedures. This will include consideration of impact at each Board meeting.

People interacting with our charity will be invited to volunteer demographic information and we will use this information to help monitor the effectiveness of this policy.

3. Equalities Impact Assessments

The board, assisted by the Director, must be aware of the general equality duty placed on them in all decision making, recruitment and communication. Anyone who feels that our actions or policy impact would be disadvantageous to any persons should report this to the Board.



When taking decisions about organisational priorities, work programmes and projects the Board will consider the impact its decisions may have on all persons, and ensure that they do not result in inadvertent disadvantage. Similarly, the Board and/or staff will review all proposed communications to ensure that those who have protected characteristics under the Equality Act are not disadvantaged.

The following tests should be used as a guide:

Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation	Is the policy or communication likely to treat anyone less favourably or disadvantage anyone because of a protected characteristic? Could it lead to different outcomes for different groups?
Advancing equality of opportunity	Will the needs of people with varied protected characteristics be met? Could the policy lead to increased take-up or participation by any groups? Are there any opportunities to proactively advance equality?

Promoting good relations	Have steps been taken to tackle prejudice and promote understanding? How have relevant individuals or groups been involved and consulted in developing and assessing this policy
--------------------------	--

Document classification	Public	Document reference	
Document category	Organisational	Policy introduced	April 2015
Reviewer	Bea Groves-McDaniel & Paul Jones	Date updated	November 2025
		Board Approval	December 2025
		Next review due	December 2028