

FRIMLEY ICB

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy Statement

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion underpins all our work and is at the heart of what we are and what we do. Our commitment goes beyond the legal requirements of legislation such as the Equality Act 2010 and the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

The Policy Statement gives a clear direction to all and will help us to continue to value all members of our community, be they staff, patients, carers, relatives and visitors, as well as the wider diverse community. This will be achieved by providing a fair, supportive and inclusive culture that advances equality of opportunity, fosters good relations and values diversity.

We believe this can be done through building mutual understanding and a learning environment based on respect and celebrating differences between individuals, as well as utilising their talent and experiences. Allowing our people – be they staff or communities - to achieve, thrive and be involved will help us towards meeting their different needs and aspirations.

Opportunities and challenges

Frimley ICB (Clinical Commissioning Group) recognises our place is an increasingly diverse and vibrant part of the local region. We are committed to supporting this richness and complexity while creating an environment and culture where people can work, access health services and live with mutual respect and dignity.

We recognise that this wealth of diversity brings both opportunities and challenges for all. This has been particularly amplified by the pandemic. In our work to create world-class health and social care services, we aim to focus our resources and effort to best meet the needs of all members of our community. We will do this by achieving the highest standards in service commissioning and delivery, employment practices and decision-making. It is our aspiration to be an employer of choice and ensure that no job applicants or employees are unfairly disadvantaged due to any of the protected characteristics or for any other reason.

As an influential health and care service commissioner and employer, we must contribute to an inclusive and integrated place and ensure that we create strong and sustainable alliances and partnerships at all levels. We will promote equality, diversity and inclusion whenever possible, and ensure all our staff and communities can realise their full potential. To achieve

this, we seek to work with all sectors, be they voluntary, public and private. The ICB is committed to working in an inclusive way with all the communities in which we are geographically located, and to develop a workforce that reflects our rich and fluid demographic diversity and vibrancy.

Defining Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

These terms are often used interchangeably but they have different meanings.

Equality is about fairness. It underpins and is at the heart of all that we are and all that we do. Equality goes well beyond just equal opportunities. To tackle historic disadvantage and exclusion we aim to embed equality across all aspects of our work. This includes a commitment to developing and commissioning services that are of equal value to everyone, and recognise that this might mean different services to suit diverse needs.

Diversity means a range of difference. We want to acknowledge and value the benefit of having a range of perspectives and experiences, whether in individuals, groups or in communities.

Inclusion is one of the NHS's core values and builds on this. It is about creating an environment and culture where everyone has equality of opportunity to be involved, contribute be welcomed and valued. An inclusive environment can only be created once we are aware of our biases or prejudices, and have learned how to manage them.

As an employer, we aim to recruit, develop and support staff fairly. We want to have a strong culture of learning and of sharing good practice. We seek to reflect our community's diversity, and welcome different perspectives, skills and backgrounds.

We recognise that equality issues are complex and straddle more than just those protected characteristic groups in equalities legislation: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race and ethnicity, religion or belief, sex (gender) and sexual orientation. Life circumstances and opportunities also affect us and we need to take account of issues such as cultural and economic background, access to education, physical and social environment, and health.

A Leader on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The ICB believes it has a community leadership role and duty in promoting excellence in equality, diversity and inclusion practice. This goes beyond compliance with the equality legislation and regulatory requirements to use innovation and creativity to nurture the development of best practice.

The ICB provides a special opportunity because of its diversity mix, and its leading role as an employer and health and care service commissioner and provider.

We intend to advance equality, diversity and inclusion and prevent discrimination or disadvantage through our roles as:

- A health and social care service commissioner and provider;
- Employer; and
- Community leader.

We will follow best practice in all equality areas and work to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination including bullying, harassment and victimisation;
- Advance equality of opportunity;
- Foster good relations between different groups at work and in the community;
- Recognise and take account of people's differences; and
- Celebrate what we have in common and capitalise on our diversity.

Meeting our commitment

We know that words are not enough. We need to put our commitment into action. The ICB will:

- Lead from the top. The Board and Senior Management Team will take an active role in mainstreaming equality, diversity and inclusion in all areas of work. The ICB has an Executive Director with responsibility for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, who is part of the Senior Management Team.
- Comply with the spirit and the letter of equalities legislation and the NHS Constitution.
- Equality Impact Assess all new and changes to strategies, policies, practices, procedures, programmes, projects, services and decisions, etc.
- Monitor and review our work in order to be alerted to any unfairness.
- Learn from complaints or concerns at the earliest opportunity.
- Encourage and support the development of innovative projects that promote equality of opportunity.
- Work with our diverse communities to ensure they are involved so that their needs are taken into account in the design and proposal of services, or any changes to.
- Build robust and sustainable partnerships and alliances across the place and beyond to ensure that all sectors benefit from the ICB's activities and initiatives in the community.
- Share good practice and joined-up thinking with our partners and stakeholders.
- Foster greater understanding and trust with the different equality groups and communities.
- Treat everyone fairly and with respect and dignity.

Valuing our workforce

The ICB wants to deliver an innovative, effective and value-for-money service which has been

amplified by recent events such as COVID-19 and Black Lives Matter. This is not possible without investment in our employees. To recruit and retain a motivated, talented and professional workforce which reflects the local diversity and beyond, we will:

- Ensure our human resources and organisational development policies, procedures and learning/training are fit-for-purpose and review them regularly.
- Use lawful means, such as Positive Action and other tools, to ensure a fair and inclusive recruitment, retention and progression process.
- Act robustly to challenge and eliminate prejudice, bullying or harassment and any other forms of prohibited conduct.
- Support and grow recognised staff equality networks.
- Regularly review our workforce monitoring figures and take action where appropriate.
- Access the widest labour market and secure the best employees for its needs.
- Use a variety of different methods to attract, retain and progress an agile and ability based workforce which reflects the diverse community we serve.
- Comply with all equalities-related employment legislation.
- Provide assistive technology and other services for staff with particular needs.
- Develop staff in equality, diversity and inclusion issues to enable them to carry out their jobs in a way that reflects the ethos and culture of the organisation.
- Encourage open, honest discussion about issues which support personal development and a learning culture.
- Continue to develop a workforce that is reflective of the diversity mix of the place.

Valuing our communities

The ICB wants to commission an effective and world-class health and care services which meet the needs of all our patients, whatever their backgrounds. In order to do this we will:

- Ensure our policies and procedures are fit-for-purpose and review them regularly.
- Actively listen to and involve our communities to help shape and influence service design, delivery and review.
- Act robustly to challenge and eliminate any barriers or prejudices which negatively impact patient and communities' contributions to our work and activities.
- Support community groups and representative forums.
- Use a variety of different methods to enable engagement from all equality backgrounds, especially from seldom heard groups.
- Comply with all equalities-related legislation.
- Continue to develop engagement that is reflective of the diversity mix of the area and beyond, including a charter on involvement.

Contacting us

If you are interested in finding out more about the work of equality, diversity and inclusion at the ICB or would like to look up job opportunities, please look on our website:

<https://www.frimley.ICB.nhs.uk/about-us>

If you have a comment about this statement or general equality, diversity and inclusion issues, please contact: hiten.shah2@nhs.net

This statement is a living document and will be reviewed as and when needed.