

Issue 7

August 2020



Northern Health
and Social Care Trust

Equality News



Staff and Service Users enjoying some laughter yoga

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Welcome



Welcome to the seventh edition of our annual Equality Newsletter. It has been another busy year for us within the Equality Unit - we launched the Northern Trust Carer Hub, took part in 'Involve Fest' and hosted the Supporting Workers Carers event. In March, Covid-19 changed all of our lives both personally and professionally and we have been working hard together to overcome the challenges it has brought.

We have been working from home, using secure technology to keep in touch with each other and our service users and carers.

The positivity of staff and service users, pulling together to overcome the challenges, has been overwhelming. I would like to thank everyone who has worked in partnership with us this year and I am very grateful for your continued contribution.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alison Irwin".

**Alison Irwin,
Head of Equality**



Meet the Team



Irene Heath, Equality Manager

I work in the team as an Equality Manager with focus on legislative requirements such as Section 75 and Rural Needs screening of policies, proposals and service changes and developments.

Claire Campbell, Carer's Co-ordinator

I work to support carers by keeping them up to date with "what's on" via the carers register, developing a support programme and information to help in the caring role, help carers to think about and improve their own health and wellbeing and connect carers with each other. I also work to highlight carer needs with our staff and raise awareness of young carers aged 8 to 18.



Lynda Elliott, PPI Co-ordinator



I provide advice and support to Trust staff and service users to mainstream PPI throughout the Trust. People have a right to be involved and I believe that lives can be transformed when people are listened to and consulted on when decisions are made in shaping the service that is important to them.

If you would like more information or to become involved then please contact me at ppi.coordinator@northerntrust.hscni.net or Tel: 028 2766 1453.

Meet the Team



Gillian Bradley, Carer Support Worker

I work within the Carer Hub alongside the Carers Co-ordinator offering support and signposting for carers and staff. Support comes in many different forms and is individual for each carer depending on their unique circumstances and we do our best to link each individual to the support they require whether that be information, connecting with other carers or linking them with a community and voluntary organisation.

Jan Taylor, Clerical Officer

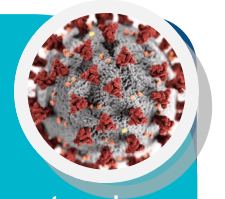
I am the first point of contact in the Equality Unit. I am responsible for the interpreting and translation service within the Trust thus ensuring service users have access to their healthcare appointments and can access information in their required format such as minority language, braille, audio, CD.



Jillian Smyth, Administrative Assistant

I provide support and assistance to the Equality Team with project planning and supporting the main functions of the Equality Unit which include equality, carer support, engagement, consultation and training. I ensure the efficient running of the office and the needs of the department are met.

Working during COVID-19



In March, when the Covid-19 pandemic struck we were challenged in ways we never could have imagined and we have been working hard to overcome the difficulties that Covid-19 brought to our working life. We have been working from home using secure software to enable us to hold weekly virtual team meetings and keep in touch with each other, which has proved beneficial for team morale as well as our mental wellbeing.

We pride ourselves on working together with our staff, our services users, our carers and our partner organisations and we have embraced the changes, using technology to allow us to maintain existing connections and provide us with the opportunity to make new connections.

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Our Carer Hub reacted promptly by adapting the carer support programme, developing day/evening online support classes and catch ups as well as offering advice and signposting carers to ensure they have continued to be supported. We have been working in partnership with other Trust services to ensure that carers receive up to date information via our newsletter as well as coordinating PPE requests and Carer ID Card requests. Our designated carer's website provides our carers with all information on one platform.

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We have continued to provide accessibility to sign language and interpreting services during the pandemic. A new temporary remote sign language interpreting service was launched to enable BSL/ISL users to access NHS11 and HSC services during the Covid-19 pandemic, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week via the Interpreter Now App and Video Relay Service. We have also provided information on Covid-19 in accessible alternative formats including translations.



AccessAble Regional Pilot Project

The Northern Trust, in partnership with the Trust’s Disability Consultation Panel, has commenced as a pilot project for the region to invest in the creation of access guides for Antrim Area Hospital and Causeway Hospital. The guides will describe each patient journey and give disabled people, carers and those with long term health conditions the information required to plan their visit. AccessAble was appointed in March 2020 to survey and document all aspects of accessibility at the two hospital sites. The detailed guides will be available to access by website and as a mobile application.

Accessible Communication



Northern Trust made a total of 18,125 requests for interpreters through the Northern Ireland Regional Health and Social Care Interpreting Service, increase of over 230 requests this year.

The top three languages requested during 2019/20 were Polish, Romanian and Arabic. A total of 1153 appointments were supported with sign language interpreters and 174 documents were translated into minority languages.

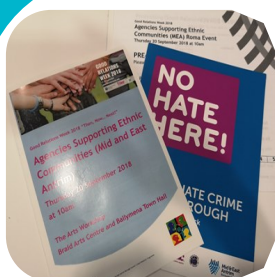
Language	Numbers
Polish	5548
Romanian	3571
Arabic	3341

Promoting Equality, Good Relations and Human Rights in Health and Social Care

In response to the ECNI report ‘Section 75 statutory Equality and Good Relations Duties: Acting on the evidence of public authority practices’ June 2018 and in recognition that effective leadership is critical to the successful implementation of our Equality Scheme, new guidance for Board Members was drafted in March 2020. With an emphasis on mainstreaming equality the guide aims to support HSC Board Members to understand the statutory Board responsibilities as they relate to matters of equality, good relations and human rights.



Agencies Supporting Ethnic Communities (ASEC)



Agencies Supporting Ethnic Minorities (ASEC), chaired by the Trust, brings together 35 representatives from local public sector agencies including housing, education, police and health, the local council, MLAs, community and voluntary groups, local churches, local employers, recruitment agencies and Trade Unions to explore ways of sharing best practice and identify new approaches to support ethnic minority communities within the Mid and East Antrim area. The Group also works in partnership with the Inter-Ethnic Forum (Mid and East Antrim). During 2019-2020, ASEC has had a continued focus on their multi-agency approach to supporting the Roma community in the Trust area. This work was shortlisted for the 'Best Race Initiative' in the Legal Island regional awards .

Learning disability service users to play key part in staff recruitment

A group of service users who use learning disability services recently completed a bespoke training course so they can take part in the recruitment and selection process for the service. A pilot of the training recently took place with eleven service users and feedback was very positive. As part of their role, the service user will meet with each candidate immediately before their interview to have 'a chat' about specific topics and then give a score using a feedback sheet, looking mainly at communication skills. Members of staff will remain with the service user throughout to provide support as required. Their mark will then contribute to the overall interview score. Those who have been trained will take part in recruitment for identified roles.



Respect.... No excuses

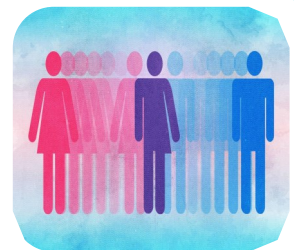


The Trust has established a Steering Group to work in partnership with Trade Union colleagues to address issues of bullying and harassment. We have implemented the new Regional Conflict, Bullying and Harassment Policy and Procedure. Awareness sessions, incorporating new guidance on investigations were delivered to 1281 staff and managers during 2019-20. In line with the new regional policy the Group has worked together to develop a range of targeted actions and interventions under the overall strapline 'Respect ... no excuses!'

Staff are provided with advice and support and access to resources and 'Respect ... no excuses' pull-up displays are displayed in hospitals and other high-footfall areas throughout the Trust.

Regional Gender Identity and Expression

In collaboration with other Trusts and representative organisations a Regional Gender Identity and Expression Policy has been developed. This Policy ensures that our workplace is accessible and welcoming to all people regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity.



Mental Health Charter



During Mental Health Awareness Week the Trust sent a clear signal to all Trust staff that their mental health matters. We have signed up to the Equality Commission's Mental Health Charter demonstrating a commitment to improving the working lives of staff experiencing mental ill-health. We are committed to promoting a healthy workplace for all our employees and to fostering a culture where all staff feel valued, supported and listened to. A range of information and support is available for staff and a detailed action plan has been developed to take this work forward.

Launch of our Carer Hub



On Carers Rights day, 21 November 2019, we launched our Carer Hub, a central point of contact for carers and staff for signposting and support. In order to signpost we have been networking with community and voluntary organisations to ensure that the information held is up-to-date and accurate.

We were joined by the Chief Executive, Chairman, Non-Executive Director, local MLA, staff and colleagues in community and voluntary organisations and last but not least some VIPs - our amazing carers.



Northern Trust 'Committed to carer support' wins regional award



The Patient and Client Council (PCC) Excellence in Co-Production award recognises and celebrates the best examples of health and social care staff and the public working together to design and deliver services. Entries were received from all six Trusts across Northern Ireland and we won the award

for our '**Committed to Carer support**' project. The project involved carers in the development and delivery of a programme of support for carers.

Supporting Working Carers

We are a member of 'Employers for Carers' which is a designated website designed to help our staff who are also looking after or supporting a loved one with long term illness or disability. In February 2020 the Northern Trust hosted a regional workshop to highlight the issues faced by carers working in health and social care. The workshop had a varied programme with input from Human Resources staff, Dietetics, Carers NI and an activity on relaxation techniques.



Laughter Yoga



Information Fair



We held an information fair alongside our Carers Support Team and colleagues from the Community Care Division. We had an excellent turn out of exhibitors who work within Northern Trust and from the community and voluntary sector. This was a great networking event which received positive feedback from everyone involved. The fair was well attended by carers who had the opportunity to get information from each of the exhibitors.



Let's Get Involved



Our Involvement Network of over 250 service users and carers are a passionate group of individuals who enjoy working with us to develop our services. Whether this is co-designing a new service, co-producing training or having input into the information we provide, they are a key resource for the Trust. Many members provide comments on our plans by email. We are so grateful for their generosity with their time.

Involvement Network

The first edition of our Involvement Network came out in May 2020, it was designed to be a way of connecting with our service users and carers during the uncertain time surrounding COVID-19 and to focus on the support and resources available to help them through the pandemic. A copy of the newsletter can be found [here](#).



Let's Celebrate Involvement

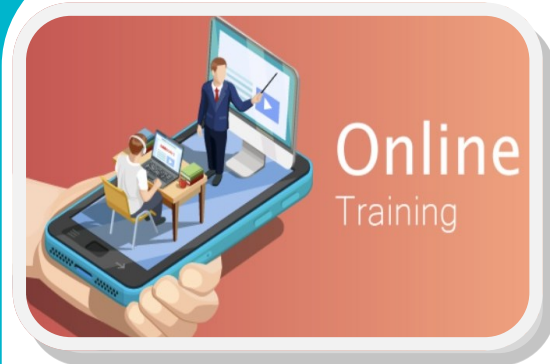


84 Service Users, Carers and Staff attended our 'Let's Celebrate Involvement' event highlighting the benefits of involvement for services users, carers and staff - it really does make a difference to the services provided when they are designed by those who use the services.



If you would like more information or to become a member of our Involvement Network, please contact Lynda on: ppi.coordinator@northerntrust.hscni.net or phone (028) 2766 1453

Training



During 2019/2020 in partnership with members of the Trust Disability Consultation Panel, we co-delivered Disability Equality training to 70 of our staff. The course provided staff with general awareness of disability equality issues, the different types of disability, disability etiquette, legislative framework and promoting positive attitudes. Due to Covid-19 we have had to postpone our face to face but we are now looking forward and developing new ways to deliver our training online.

Diary Dates

Good Relations Week — 14-21 September 2020

International Day for Older Persons — 1 October 2020

Carers Rights Day — 26 November 2020

International Women's Day — 8 March 2021

Deaf Awareness Week — 3-9 May 2021

Carers' Week — 7-13 June 2021



Please contact the Equality Unit on the details below if you have any queries, suggestions/issues related to this newsletter or the work that we do.

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