

Equality, Dignity and Human Rights Policy.

Practice commitment

This practice aims to be a supportive, caring and inclusive environment for patients to receive treatment and for staff to reach their full potential. We are committed to working towards equality and to creating a culture where the diversity and dignity of patients and staff are respected and valued by all.

This practice will ensure that all patients and staff, both actual and potential, are treated fairly and respectfully and not discriminated against regardless of age, colour, disability, ethnic or national origin, gender, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, or sexual orientation. These are known as 'protected characteristics' under the Equality Act 2010.

Legal responsibilities

The rights of our patients and our staff with regards to discrimination are protected by a range of legislation including:

- Human Rights Act 1998
- Equality Act 2010
- Part-time Workers (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2000
- Fixed Term Workers (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2001
- Data Protection Act 1988
- Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998
- Anti-discrimination Acts and Orders in NI

This practice also aims to meet the current General Dental Council, General Medical Council, Nursing and Midwifery Council, NHS Equality Delivery System 2 and Care Quality Commission standards by positively promoting equality, dignity and human rights for patients and staff.

For patients

This practice and its staff aim to:

- Treat patients with dignity, respect and fairly, without discrimination, at all times
- Give all patients the information they need, in a way they can understand, so they can make informed decisions about their care
- Be clear on the procedures for providing additional support for patients with disabilities e.g. Does the practice have a hearing loop and do staff know how to operate it?
- Provide services that are accessible to patients with disabilities and make reasonable adjustments in order to provide care which meets their needs
- Provide information to patients with disabilities in a range of formats, such as Easy Read or large-print
- Support patients by providing information in other languages and translators, where appropriate
- Join up with other services involved with the care of patients who have medical and social care needs
- Keep patient information confidential
- Tackle health inequalities through positive promotion and care
- Involve individual patients and patient groups in decisions about the design and delivery of the service

For team members

This practice will:

- Promote equality in the workplace as good management practice
- Create an environment in which individual differences and the contributions of staff are recognised, respected and valued
- Actively demonstrate its commitment to supporting and managing disability issues, for patients and staff in an effective, sensitive and respectful manner

- Ensure that every staff member has a working environment that promotes dignity and respect and is not discriminatory
- Ensure that no form of bullying, harassment or unlawful discrimination by staff or patients is tolerated
- Ensure reasonable adjustments are made, as appropriate, for staff with a disability
- Encourage, support and facilitate the continuing professional development of all staff through a range of training, development and progression opportunities
- Ensure all staff receive relevant equality, and human rights training and updates
- Provide regular, effective and appropriate supervision to all staff
- Provide regular and appropriate opportunities for all staff to give feedback and, where necessary, raise concerns
- Regularly review all employment practices and procedures to ensure fairness
- Regard breaches of the equality and diversity policy as misconduct, which could lead to disciplinary proceedings

Feedback and complaints

This practice welcomes and values any feedback. The practice views feedback and complaints as potential opportunities to learn lessons and improve the service. Any patient, patient's advocate or member of staff has the right to complain if they feel they have been:

- Treated unfairly, or without dignity or respect
- Discriminated against
- Unhappy with any care or treatment they have received
- Refused treatment

For staff – the matter may be dealt with using the appropriate grievance procedure.

For patients – the complaint will be investigated, promptly and efficiently, in a full and fair way, and a full, constructive and prompt reply will be given.

Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed annually. The annual review will consider and incorporate, where appropriate:

- Changes in legislation
- Good practice models
- Feedback from patients and staff
- Concerns and complaints raised by patients and staff

A plan for implementing any changes will be developed in consultation with staff. The practice manager has the overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy, the responsibility for communicating this policy to the team and for investigating any concerns or complaints under this policy.

Related practice information and policies

This policy should be read with the following:

- The Human Rights Act and the Equality Act (M 236) - for a full description of forms of discrimination
- Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy (M 233-ABH)
- Disability Rights under the Equality Act (M 285)
- Disability Access Policy (M 233-DIB)