



London Ambulance Service **NHS**  
NHS Trust

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# Making Race Equality a Reality

Overview

**Race Equality Scheme and Action Plan**  
May 2002

We have carried out extensive work in recent years to try to ensure that we do not discriminate against either our patients, or our own staff, on the grounds of their ethnicity.

This work has been given a new focus by the 2000 amendment to the Race Relations Act 1976, which introduced a statutory duty for all public bodies to promote race equality, and in particular:

- A general duty to promote race equality and good race relations
- A specific duty to monitor their workforces and take action to ensure that they represent the diversity of the population, and that minority groups in the workforce are not disadvantaged in any way
- A specific duty to prepare and publish a Race Equality Scheme, setting out how they intend to meet the general duty.

The Race Equality Scheme identifies six 'core elements' to be addressed. These are some of our plans for the first year:

### **Patient care and health inequalities**

We are committed to the highest standards of clinical governance and providing the best possible patient care, and we will take steps to reflect the needs and concerns of ethnic minority service users, and potential users, when setting up development projects and evaluating them.

### **Consultation and involvement**

We will use public consultation to identify the key issues that need to be addressed by the Race Equality Scheme and will also develop new strategies to help consult with as wide a range of groups in the community as possible.

A new Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) is to be set up during the year, a key role of which will be to act as a visible point of contact for all patients.

We will also ensure that our own staff are kept informed of progress with the Race Equality Scheme and that they are involved at appropriate stages of its development and implementation.

### **Access**

#### **a) To services**

We already have a number of systems in place to improve accessibility to our services, including the use of professional interpretation and translation services in Central Ambulance Control (CAC), a multi-lingual emergency phrasebook used by crews and cultural awareness training for frontline staff.

However, we recognise that more needs to be done and so we will be carrying out research and data-gathering exercises to learn more about how and why people do - and in other cases do not - use our services.

#### **b) To employment**

Our workforce should reflect the diversity of the capital, but this is not currently the case.

We will be reviewing our recruitment and selection process, including internal promotion arrangements, and build on the community relations work carried out to encourage applications from members of ethnic minorities.

In December 2001 the Commission for Racial Equality published a draft code of practice setting out how these duties should be fulfilled.

Work on the LAS Race Equality Scheme began in January and was approved by the Trust Board at the end of July.

We intend to use the legislation as an opportunity to incorporate the Race Equality Scheme into a wider diversity strategy - to be developed over the first year - addressing how we deliver services to the public and also employment issues.

One of the first actions will be the creation of a new diversity team, to take a lead on the development, implementation and management of all equality and diversity issues.

We recognise, however, that the success of this work will depend on the support of staff in all areas, and at all levels, of the organisation.

### **Policy and procedure development and review**

We plan to review our functions, policies and procedures in line with the Commission for Racial Equality's code of practice to assess how they might affect race equality. A process to identify initiatives in the Improvement Programme which may have implications for race equality will also be developed.

### **Education and training**

Those staff responsible for managing the implementation of the Race Equality Scheme will receive training to ensure that they have the necessary skills and understanding to undertake their roles effectively. Our internal training courses on equal opportunities and cultural awareness will be reviewed.

We will also ensure that Service publications and campaigns materials feature the positive contributions of ethnic minority staff and meet our wider race equality aims.

### **Monitoring and review**

The Race Equality Scheme working group will monitor the scheme's progress and feed back to the diversity team and other groups such as the London Ambulance Black and Ethnic Minority Liaison (LABEL). Specific attention will be paid to any area of service delivery or policy that may have an adverse impact on the promotion of race equality, and where this is found it will be investigated and action taken. Ultimately, the Trust Board is responsible for monitoring progress of the Scheme, and progress will be reported to the Board at regular intervals.

We will also further develop our ethnic monitoring arrangements in employment and introduce new systems to ensure that the specific duties are met in relation to service delivery.

A full version of the Race Equality Scheme and the accompanying action plan is available on our website - [www.londonambulance.nhs.uk](http://www.londonambulance.nhs.uk). Copies can also be obtained by phoning 020 7463 2608 or writing to the Chief Executive at the address at the back of this document.