

PATIENTS' FORUM

FOR THE LONDON AMBULANCE SERVICE

Equality and Inclusion–Statement by the Patients' Forum

The Patient's forum fully supports the direction of the London Ambulance Service as an essential for the people of London committed to providing the very highest quality service to people needing urgent and emergency care.

The LAS is currently dealing with an assessment by the Care Quality Commission which has found some of its services inadequate. We support the leadership of the LAS and recognise the need for a combination of more resources, improved management of resources, and significantly improved staff/management relations and support.

We note the findings of the CQC relating to the need to:

"Review trust equality and diversity and equality of opportunity policies and practice to address perception of discrimination and lack of advancement made by trust ethnic minority staff and staff or on family friendly rotas." CQC Nov. 2015

The LAS has an Equalities and Inclusion Committee which has made good progress regarding the inclusion and supporting LGBT staff, but has failed to show due regard to the needs of many of the equalities and protected categories designated in the Equalities Act. Consequently, staff, potential staff and patients with some of the other protected characteristics are left on the sidelines - and hence the poor CQC assessment.

The Forum believes it is essential is to have a 'whole systems approach' to each protected characteristic (equality group), including regular feedback from 'equalities champions', staff and patients and integration of staff support and opportunity issues across LAS.

As an example of the way forward, in the area of disability, a significant number of staff experience disabilities and therefore have the experience to become more supportive to patients with the same disabilities. This is currently the case with hearing disabilities, but is the exception for the LAS.

The Forum values the significant progress made via LGBT focused assessments, it is essential that the LAS makes rapid and significance progress towards ensuring that patients are staff with all protected

characteristics are valued, supported, actively involved, included, and that the entire equality approach is treated as a whole system.

Kathy West and Malcolm Alexander
December 16th 2015

Age

Where this is referred to, it refers to a person belonging to a particular age (e.g. 32 year olds) or range of ages (e.g. 18 - 30 year olds).

Disability

A person has a disability if s/he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Gender reassignment

The process of transitioning from one gender to another.

Marriage and civil partnership

In England and Wales marriage is no longer restricted to a union between a man and a woman but now includes a marriage between a same-sex couple. [1] This will also be true in Scotland when the relevant legislation is brought into force. [2] Same-sex couples can also have their relationships legally recognised as 'civil partnerships'. Civil partners must not be treated less favourably than married couples (except where permitted by the Equality Act).

Pregnancy and maternity

Pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth, and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, and this includes treating a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding.

Race

Refers to the protected characteristic of Race. It refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins.

Religion and belief

Religion has the meaning usually given to it but belief includes religious and philosophical beliefs including lack of belief (e.g. Atheism). Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition.

Sex

A man or a woman.

Sexual orientation

Whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.