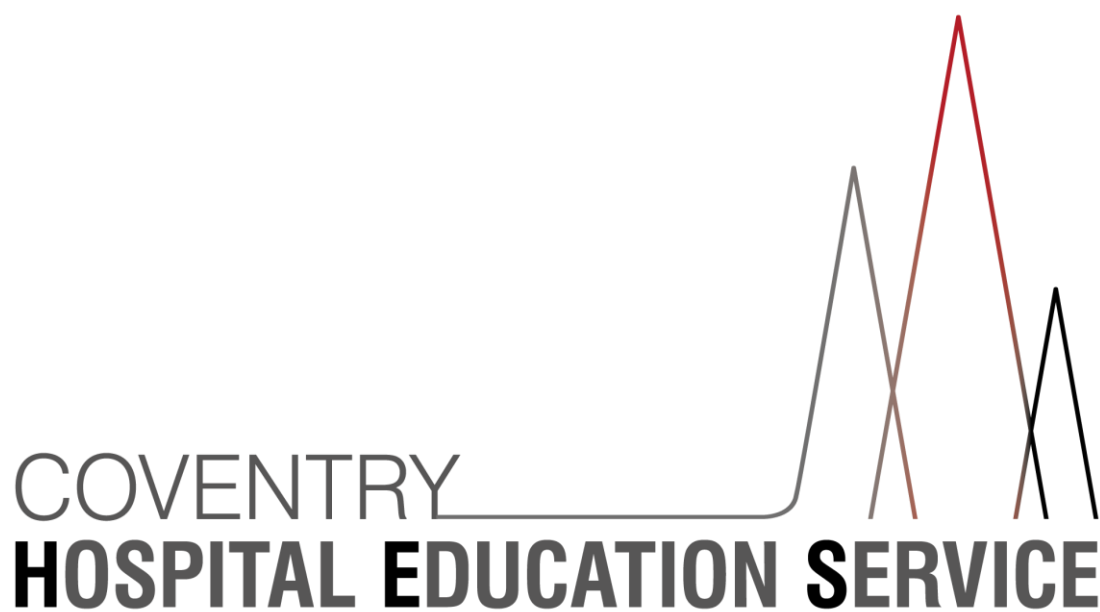


Equality and Objectives Statement

Hospital Education Service



‘BUILDING BRIDGES TO BRIGHTER FUTURES’

Approved by:	Sharon Cutler	Date: September 2023
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Last reviewed on:	18 th September 2023
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The Hospital Education Service is part of Coventry City Council (CCC) and, "Equality information and objectives apply to the local authority on behalf of PRUs" (Statutory policies for schools DfE January 2014) Coventry City Council has published Equality Objectives for 2022-25. These objectives are reviewed and the council publishes equality reports. The aim of this policy and objectives is to sit alongside the overarching council policy and objectives which are very broad.

Our purpose in creating a local equality policy and objectives are to keep the issue of equality as a priority and as relevant as possible to our particular setting. Our aim will be to support the overarching aims and objectives of the rest of the Local Authority.

Our Equality Policy is inclusive of our whole school community – pupils/students, staff, parents/carers, visitors and partner agencies. The purpose of this Policy is to set out how our practice and policies have due regard to the statutory duty to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; and
- Foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it.

The legal and local framework for this policy is:

- Race Relations Act 1976 (Amended 2000)
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (2005)
- Children Act 2004
- Equality Act 2010
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Duty to promote Community Cohesion, Education and Inspections Act 2006

This policy explains how we aim to listen to and involve pupils, staff, parents and the community in achieving better outcomes for our children and young people.

Aims and Values

The Hospital Education Service seeks to foster warm, welcoming and respectful environments, which allow us to question and challenge discrimination and inequality, resolve conflicts peacefully and work and learn free from harassment and violence.

We recognise that there are similarities and differences between individuals and groups but we will strive to ensure that our differences do not become barriers to participation, access and learning and to create inclusive processes and practices, where the varying needs of individuals and groups are identified and met. We therefore cannot achieve equality for all by treating everyone the same. We will build on our similarities and seek enrichment from our differences and so promote understanding and learning between and towards others to create cohesive communities.

Our aim is to:

- To eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
- To promote equality of access and opportunity within our school and within our wider community.
- To promote positive attitudes to difference and good relationships between people with different backgrounds, genders, sexual orientation, cultures, faiths, abilities and ethnic origins.

To ensure that equality and inclusive practice are embedded across all aspects of school life the Equality Policy refers to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which includes recognition of a range of educational, wellbeing, and material outcomes¹. Issues relating to adults within the PRU community can be embraced under these themes and reflected in the action plan.

Our Approach

We seek to embed equality of access, opportunity and outcome for all members of HES, within all aspects of school life.

We actively seek out opportunities to embrace the following key concepts:

- Shared Humanity. Identifying commonality and shared values, aspirations and needs underpins our approach to equality. We value our fundamental similarities and universality
- Valuing difference and diversity. We appreciate the richness within our differences and look for ways of celebrating and understanding them better
- Interdependence, interaction and influence. We recognise that, as they evolve, distinct cultures, beliefs and lifestyles will impact on and inform each other
- Social cohesion within HES and within our local community
- Excellence. We aim to inspire and recognise high personal and collective achievement throughout our community, the UK and the wider world. Excellence is to be found everywhere
- Personal and cultural identity. We will provide opportunities to explore and value the complexity of our personal and cultural identities
- Fairness and social justice. We will develop our understanding of the inequality that exists in society and explore ways of individually and collectively promoting a more equitable society

¹ <http://www.unicef.org/crc/>

Disability and the Equality Act 2010

The disability provisions in the Equality Act mainly replicate those in the former Disability Discrimination Act (DDA). There are some minor differences as follows:

- Unlike the DDA the Equality Act does not list the types of day to day activities which a disabled person must demonstrate that they cannot carry out, thus making the definition of disability less restrictive for disabled people to meet.
- Failure to make a reasonable adjustment can no longer be defended as justified. The fact that it must be reasonable provides the necessary test.
- Direct discrimination against a disabled person can no longer be defended as justified – bringing it into line with the definition of direct discrimination generally.
- From September 2012 schools and local authorities have a duty to supply auxiliary aids and services as reasonable adjustments where these are not being supplied through Special Educational Needs (SEN) statements or from other sources. HES will consider whether to provide auxiliary aids that are directly related to disabled children's educational needs as a reasonable adjustment, particularly where the child is not provided for under an SEN statement, or where the statement does not provide the auxiliary aid or service.

Definition of disability

- The Act defines disability as when a person 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.**' Some specified medical conditions, HIV, multiple sclerosis and cancer are all considered as disabilities, regardless of their effect.
- The Act sets out details of matters that may be relevant when determining whether a person meets the definition of disability. Long term is defined as lasting, or likely to last, for at least 12 months.

Special provisions for disability

The law on disability discrimination is different from the rest of the Act in a number of ways. In particular, it works in only one direction – that is to say, it protects disabled people but not people who are not disabled. This means that schools *are* allowed to treat disabled pupils more favourably than non-disabled pupils, and in some cases are required to do so, by making reasonable adjustments to put them on a more level footing with pupils without disabilities. The definition of what constitutes discrimination is more complex. Provision for disabled pupils is closely connected with the regime for children with special educational needs.

Positive Action

Positive Action provisions allow schools to target measures that are designed to alleviate disadvantages experienced by, or to meet the particular needs of, pupils with particular protected characteristics. Such measures will need to be a proportionate way of achieving the relevant aim. Previously a school providing – for example - special catch-up classes for Roma children or a project to engage specifically with alienated Asian boys might have been discriminating unlawfully by excluding children who didn't belong to these groups. The overriding principle of equality legislation is generally one of equal treatment - i.e. that you must treat a black person no less well than a white person, or a man as favourably as a woman. However, the provisions relating to disability discrimination are different in that you may, and often must, treat a disabled person more favourably than a person who is not disabled and may have to make changes to your practices to ensure, as far as is reasonably possible, that a disabled person can benefit from what you offer to the same extent that a person without that disability can. So in a school/PRU setting the general principle is that you have to treat male and female, black and white, gay and straight pupils equally - but you may be required to treat disabled pupils differently. Discrimination is also defined rather differently in relation to disability

Our Duties

We recognise and accept our equality duties as set out in the Equality Act 2010 and have sought to involve the whole school community in the process in order to ensure better outcomes for all (with and without protected characteristics). We have due regard to the need to ensure that persons with a protected characteristic are not disproportionately, negatively impacted as a result of our decision or policy making. We positively foster good relations between different groups of pupils and the wider school community. We are also guided by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child².

We will ensure we identify opportunities for promoting our vision, the key concepts and our duties on equality legislation across all aspects of HES. These opportunities are likely to include all or some of the following, (dependent on our current priorities).

- learning and teaching across the curriculum
- the engagement, participation and involvement of a broad and diverse range of children, young people, their parents and partner agencies
- school policies
- Student council and management committee meetings
- opportunities for assessment and accreditation
- exam arrangements
- behaviour management approach – sanctions and rewards
- enrichment activities
- The HES PSHE curriculum (amalgamation of SMSC, PSCE and RSE)
- the school's arrangements for working with other agencies
- preparation of pupils for the next phase of education
- staff and pupil welfare

The roles and responsibilities within our school community

Our Head of Service will:

- ensure that staff, parents/carers, pupils/students and visitors are engaged in the ongoing development of and informed about the Equality Policy
- oversee the effective implementation of the policy
- ensure staff have access to training which helps to implement the policy
- monitor the policy and report to the Management Committee at least annually on the effectiveness of the policy
- ensure that the Senior Leadership team is kept up to date with any development affecting the policy or actions arising from it

Our Management Committee will:

- ensure that the objectives arising from the policy are adhered to and supported
- support the head of service in implementing any actions necessary
- engage with parents and partner agencies about the policy
- evaluate and review the policy annually and the objectives

Our Senior Leadership Team/Managers will:

- have responsibility for supporting other staff in implementing this Policy
- provide a lead in the dissemination of information relating to the Policy
- with the head of service, provide advice/support in dealing with any incidents/issues

² <http://www.unicef.org.uk/Education/Rights-Respecting-Schools-Award/Childrens-rights/>

- assist in implementing reviews of this policy as detailed in the SIP.

Our pupils/students will:

- be involved in the development of the Policy and will understand how it relates to them, appropriate to age and ability
- be expected to act in accordance with the Policy
- be encouraged to actively support the Policy

Our parents/carers will:

- be given opportunities to become involved in the ongoing development of the Policy
- have access to the Policy through a range of different media appropriate to their requirements
- be encouraged to actively support the Policy
- be informed of any incident related to this Policy which could directly affect their child.

Our staff will:

- be fully aware of the Equality Policy and how it relates to them
- understand that this is a whole school issue and support the Equality Policy
- make known any queries or training requirements.

Relevant voluntary or community groups and partner agencies will:

- Be involved in the development of the Policy
- Be encouraged to support the Policy
- Be encouraged to attend any relevant meetings and activities related to the Policy.

Our Staff

We comply fully with legislation which protects our staff from discrimination based on the protected characteristics. With regard to disability, we make such reasonable adjustments as are necessary to prevent a disabled person being at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with people who are not disabled.

This includes discrimination in relation to recruitment, terms and conditions, promotions, transfers, dismissals, training and employment practices (such as dress codes) and disciplinary procedures. We make efforts to work towards our workforce reflecting that of our local community and wider society. In accordance with the Equality Act we do not enquire about the health of an applicant until a job offer has been made³ or require job applicants to complete a generic 'all encompassing' health questionnaire as part of the application procedure. We will ensure the safety and well-being of our staff and take seriously and act on incidents of harassment and discrimination recognising that our staff may be either victims or perpetrators.

We interpret our duties positively; take the necessary actions to remove barriers to inclusion and work hard to ensure a safe, positive and inclusive environment:

Our staff team have undertaken training to help them understand their equality duties/and or the differing needs of protected groups within our school community. We have mechanisms in place to identify areas for development.

³ Unless the questions are specifically related to an intrinsic function of the work - for example ensuring that applicants for a PE teaching post have the physical capability to carry out the duties.

Responding to hate or prejudice-based incidents and bullying

We recognise that hate incidents or prejudice –based bullying behaviour is driven by negative assumptions, stereotypes or misinformation. These are then directed against an individual or group, based on difference (real or perceived), and linked to, for example, racism, homophobia, negative views of disabled people or sexism. We will take action to prevent, challenge and eliminate any such behaviour. We recognise that we as individuals and society often struggle with difference of any kind (perceived or actual), which can result in seizing upon the most visible sign of difference e.g. skin colour or disability.

Through the HES ethos and curriculum we want our pupils/students to understand better the diversity that exists in society. We want to provide opportunities for them to explore the subtleties and complexities in order to prevent and respond to incidents and situations. We will address the experience, understanding and needs of the victim, the perpetrator, bystanders and the wider school community through our actions and responses.

Implementation, monitoring and reviewing

The policy will be available on the HES section of the CCC website, newsletters will be sent to parents and all stakeholders to update them. The policy will be discussed and shared through the wellbeing curriculum with pupils.

Implementation, monitoring and review are the responsibility of our Senior Leadership Team and our management committee who have agreed and published this policy which sets out our priorities and supports these with specific and measurable objectives. We will report annually on the policy and analyse whether our policy and related objectives have furthered the aims of the general equality duty and in particular educational outcomes for all within our school community with reference to the protected groups.

CCC EQUALITY OBJECTIVES: 2022-2025

Coventry City Council is committed to fulfilling its duties as a public authority under the Public Sector Equality Duty. As part of this general duty, we are required to comply with a specific duty to publish a set of equality objectives every four years.

In 2022 the Cabinet Member (Policing & Equalities) approved a new set of equality objectives that will run for three years until 2025. The equality objectives are listed below:

Equality Objective 1: Create a foundation to drive improved access to services through better use of equalities data.

Equality Objective 2: Develop better understanding of our diverse communities in order to shape and deliver the Council's Integration policy and practice for the City and its residents.

Equality Objective 3: To Increase year on year the percentage of applications for employment received and appointments made to candidates who are either LGBT+, declare a Disability or are from Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic backgrounds.

Equality Objective 4: Increase the effective delivery of Council services in key areas.

Equality Objective 5: Increase participation from residents and visitors with disabilities in sporting and cultural activities including events in the city.

Progress against these objectives is reported annually to both Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities and the Council's Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee.