

Council, 20 May 2009

Equality and Diversity Scheme – progress report

Executive summary and recommendations

**Introduction**

The attached paper briefly outlines progress against meeting the aims outlined in the equality and diversity scheme. A full report looking at progress against meeting the action points outlined in the scheme is being put together by the Executive and will be submitted for discussion at a future Council meeting.

**Decision**

This paper is to note; no decision is required.

**Background information**

HPC Equality and Diversity Scheme  
[www.hpc-uk.org/aboutus/aimsandvision/equality/](http://www.hpc-uk.org/aboutus/aimsandvision/equality/)

**Resource implications**

None

**Financial implications**

None

**Appendices**

None

**Date of paper**

8 May 2009

## **Equality and Diversity scheme – Interim report**

### **1. Introduction**

1.1 In December 2007, the Council agreed a joint equality and diversity scheme. The scheme became effective on 1 January 2008. The scheme describes the steps we have taken and will take in order to ensure that we do not discriminate against people on the basis of:

- Disability
- Age
- Gender
- Sexual Orientation
- Race
- Religion

The scheme will run for three years with progress reports published in each year.

1.2 The HPC is required to meet the general duties under relevant equality legislation including the Race Relations Act 1976 and Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

1.3 The legislation also requires some public bodies to meet certain ‘specific duties’ such as publishing a scheme. We are not one of those bodies but decided that, as part of good practice, we would go beyond what the law requires and publish an equality and diversity scheme.

1.4 We decided to publish a single equality scheme rather than a series of schemes for each of the groups identified in 1.1 above as many of the steps we might take to avoid or mitigate any adverse impact are relevant to all of them.

1.5 This short paper outlines some key areas outlined in the scheme and the HPC’s progress in achieving its aims in those areas. A full report will be subsequently provided to the Council.

## **2. Specific areas**

2.1 In the scheme we explained in more detail our arrangements in three specific areas and progress in these areas is briefly described below:

### **2.2 Arrangements for training of employees, council members and partners**

2.2.1 The training of employees, council members and partners has continued to be an important part of our ongoing work. Since the publication of the scheme, we have continued to hold equality and diversity training for new and existing employers and for council members.

2.2.2 In the last year, panel members, registration assessors and visitors received refresher training which including training in equality and diversity. We also began training new practitioner psychologists recruited in advance of the opening of the Register and the Council received further training on equality and diversity at its yearly away day.

### **2.3 Collection of demographic data**

2.3.1 In the scheme we outlined a pragmatic approach to collecting demographic data, outlining the existing data we collect and explaining that we needed to consider whether it is necessary to collect further data.

2.3.2 In the last year, the Finance and Resources Committee considered a paper from the Executive analysing the demographic data we hold for applicants and employees. As a result the Human Resources Department revised the monitoring form it uses to collect information about religion/belief and further information about disability.

2.3.4 The Fitness to Practise Forum also considered an analysis of the data collecting in the first year from registrants and complainants involved in the fitness to practise process. As data had only been collected for a year, the Committee noted that there were few conclusions which could be drawn and recommended a further year of data collection before further analysis takes place. The Committee further noted that the analysis of fitness to practise data might have greater value in the future if it could be compared against demographic data for the Register as a whole.

2.3.5 The Council considered a paper on this matter in July 2008 and decided to move to collecting data from applicants for registration.

2.3.6 As the HPC is not included in the specific duties under the relevant equalities legislation, legal advice has confirmed that it would be possible to collect and store data in a way that could be identifiable. As such, anonymous data collection from applicants commenced in 2008. Applicants for admission are asked to fill in a monitoring form and return this with their application or separately.

2.3.7 The Health Care and Associated Professions (Miscellaneous Amendments and Practitioner Psychologists) Order 2009 amends the Health Professions Order 2001 to add reporting requirements relating to equality and diversity. If passed, each year the HPC will be required to provide 'report on the exercise of

its functions which includes a description of the arrangements that the Council has put in place to ensure that it adheres to good practice in relation to equality and diversity'. The equality and diversity scheme and analysis of the data the HPC holds will therefore be helpful to this task.

2.3.8 A report on the data collected from applicants for admission to the Register will be provided to the Council after a full year's data has been collected.

## **2.4 Consultation and involvement**

- Employee involvement

2.4.1 In the past year, the internal employee equality and diversity working group has been relaunched and a clear work programme established.

2.4.2 The Group consists of individuals across the Directorates and Departments of the HPC and its role is to help fulfil the scheme action points and further scrutinise the processes of the HPC for equality and diversity impact.

2.4.3 The Group has made good progress and is currently reviewing the HPC's processes for the induction of new employees and working towards achieving the 'two ticks' award which denotes employers who are positive about disability.

2.4.4 Further information will be provided in the substantive paper to be produced at a subsequent Council meeting.

## **2.5 Ongoing monitoring of action points and equality duties**

2.5.1 In the scheme we described that each individual department would be responsible for meeting the action points in the scheme.

2.5.2 We also explained that each departmental workplan would include an equality and diversity impact assessment which might then be reviewed by the project lead and/or project team on a regulator basis.

2.5.3 In the coming year, the Executive plans work to develop further its approach to impact assessment more generally, and equality and diversity impact assessment. A balance needs to be struck between ensuring that impact is assessed and taken account of in the decision making of the Executive, the Council and its Committees, avoiding a 'tick box' approach which would not be proportionate to the purpose and would add to administrative burden.

### **3. Action points**

3.1 The Executive has made good progress towards meeting the action points outlined in the scheme. The Executive is currently gathering information from each department about the fulfilment of the action points and these will be presented to the Council as part of a full report at a future meeting.