



The Royal College of
Midwives

Strategy

Equality and Diversity Strategy

March 2013 – December 2015

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Introduction

The RCM's Equality and Diversity Strategy was launched in September 2010 to be reviewed in January 2013.

A key outcome of the last Equality and Diversity Strategy was the development of an Equality Impact Assessment Tool and training of RCM staff in the use of the tool. The training was completed in early 2013 and allows the RCM to assess all activities and policies going forward to ensure they do not discriminate against any group of people.

Outcomes such as the Equality Impact Assessment Tool clearly demonstrate how the RCM is committed to playing a leading role in the elimination of discrimination and the promotion of equality of opportunity and diversity in all its activities as a trade union, professional organisation and employer.

Other successes from the Equality and Diversity Strategy were to carry out research of BME midwives' opinions about the RCM as part of the London Project and to carry out a Freedom of Information request to trusts in London to investigate the proportions of BME midwives who face disciplinary proceedings.

Looking forward, the Equality and Diversity Strategy for 2013-2015 seeks to build upon the strong foundations developed in the last strategy and embed equality and diversity as a cultural and organisational norm. The strategy will do this by achieving the following aims:

- continue developing and training our staff, the Board, Workplace Representatives and maternity leaders about equality issues;
- ensure that our data collection and monitoring is robust and covers all RCM activities, policies and events;
- continue to play a leading role in the development of equalities policies on the Equality and Diversity Sub-Group of the NHS Staff Council and responding to changes in Government equalities legislation;
- promote all the equality and diversity work the RCM does and ensure it enjoys a high profile and appeals to all members; and
- ensure that all RCM internal policies promote good employment practice and reflect the most up to date case law and legislation.

The RCM is in a unique position to be able to influence equality and diversity issues in the NHS as a trade union and professional body. In the report '[The NHS Staff Management and Health Service Quality](#)' by the Lancaster University Management School, the Work

Foundation and Aston Business School found that developing climates and cultures that nurture strong staff engagement brings a range of positive outcomes and is achieved by promoting a healthy, safe work environment, ensuring every role counts, delivering supportive management and leadership, enabling the growth and development of staff and ensuring their involvement in decision making. The report found that when staff felt they were able to contribute to improvements at work; when they recommend the trust as a place to work or receive treatment; and when they feel motivated and engaged with their work, patient satisfaction, patient mortality and trust financial performance were better.

Since the RCM can influence staff engagement by ensuring a more equality focused working environment through both Workplace Representatives and leaders of maternity services the RCM can help to improve outcomes in maternity services.

Moreover, the RCM will need to lead by example as an employer and as a member organisation to ensure an engaged workforce and engaged membership that leads to satisfied members and more successful outcomes for the RCM.

Aim One: To continue developing and training our staff, Workplace Representatives and maternity leaders about equality issues		
Action	Responsibility	Time Frame
Action One: Ensure all relevant RCM staff have been trained in the equality impact assessment tool	HR Advisor	End of Quarter Two 2013
Action Two: Assess the requirements for equality and diversity awareness training for RCM staff and the RCM Board	Officer Led Training Group	End of Quarter Two 2013
Action Three: Develop a training session for Workplace Reps about equality and diversity as part of the regional study days and residential courses	Head of Organising and Engagement	Implemented by Quarter One 2014

The 2010-2013 strategy identified that an important factor in the success of the equality and diversity strategy would be to effectively train RCM staff, Board, Workplace Representatives and the leaders of maternity services about equality and diversity. By effectively training all these groups of people it will ensure that we are meeting our obligations as a trade union, professional organisation and employer.

Action One: Ensure all relevant RCM staff have been trained in the equality impact assessment tool

Towards the end of 2012 and the beginning of 2013 some RCM staff were trained in using the RCM's newly developed equality impact assessment tool. Approximately twenty staff were trained in the initial training it would be beneficial for more staff to undertake the training.

Action Two: Assess the requirements for equality and diversity awareness training for RCM staff and the RCM Board.

There is currently work being undertaken around the training needs of RCM staff, as part of that on-going work the requirements for equality and diversity awareness training for RCM staff and the RCM Board should be assessed.

Action Three: Develop a training session for Workplace Reps about equality and diversity as part of the regional study days and residential courses.

Currently there is no standard equality and diversity training for Workplace Reps, however, training in this area is essential for RCM reps in many facets of their role e.g. representing members who face discrimination; assessing equality impact assessments at local level; challenging changes in services etc. A training session designed specifically for Workplace Representative with accompanying resources should be designed and rolled out to all Workplace Reps as part of the regional study days and residential courses.

Aim Two: To ensure that our data collection and monitoring is robust and covers all RCM activities, policies and events		
Action	Responsibility	Time Frame
Action Four: The monitoring form should be updated	Employment Relations Advisor	End of Quarter Two 2013
Action Five: The monitoring forms should be used for all RCM activities and events	SLT	On-going
Action Six: The RCM member survey to be conducted in 2013 will include equality monitoring and equality analysis	Director of PERC	End of Quarter Three 2013
Action Seven: There will be continued work to update the RCM database with equality and diversity information	All Staff and RCM Connect	On-going

Currently one of the only areas that equality monitoring forms are completed is when a member requires representation from a Regional Officer. The forms are collated and compared to the statistics held in the membership database. An Equality and Diversity report is then presented to the Executive Management Team every six months with the analysis of the data highlighting any areas that are disproportionate.

Some of our member benefits, events and activities may be accessed by a disproportionate number of midwives who share a certain characteristic; the RCM should be aware of when this arises and investigate the reasons for this and the impact this has.

Action Four: The monitoring form should be updated to include a brief introduction that explains why the monitoring information is being collected and to include the other protected characteristics including sexual orientation, religion/belief, gender reassignment and pregnancy/maternity.

Currently it is unclear as to why the RCM is collecting the equality and diversity information and there can be a suspicion surrounding the collection of data. It is proposed that at the beginning of the form it states:

“The RCM is committed to equal opportunities and strives to ensure that all members are treated in a fair and equal manner regardless of their gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, age, being pregnant or having a child, and religion or belief. To ensure the effective implementation of our diversity policy it is necessary to collect information on a number of key characteristics relating to equality and diversity through the use of diversity monitoring. We would therefore ask that you complete our diversity monitoring form.”

The monitoring forms that are being used for the members who require representation only include information about gender, age, ethnicity and disability. It is proposed to extend the monitoring form to include all the protected characteristics and an additional multiple choice question to describe their disability.

Action Five: The monitoring forms should be used for all RCM activities and events.

Currently, members are asked to complete an equality and diversity monitoring form if members are seeking representation or if prospective employees are applying for a job. It is proposed that the monitoring form is standardised and used for all RCM activities and events.

The monitoring forms should then be analysed by the 'owner' of the event or activity using the equality impact assessment tool and sent to the Employment Relations Advisor to be collated as part of the Equality and Diversity report that is presented to the Executive Management Team every six months.

Action Six: Action Six: The RCM member survey to be conducted in 2013 will include equality monitoring and equality analysis

The RCM should conduct a survey of members in 2013 and there should be equality information collected and the results of the survey analysed by equality information.

Action Seven: There will be continued work to update the RCM database with equality and diversity information.

As part of the continuing work into improving the accuracy of the data held on the RCM database there should be continued work into updating the equality and diversity information and communicating to members why we are collecting their information.

Aim Three: To continue to play a leading role in the development of equalities policies on the Equality and Diversity Sub-Group of the NHS Staff Council and responding to changes in Government equalities legislation		
Action	Responsibility	Time Frame
Action Eight: The RCM continue to play a leading role in the development of equalities policies on the Equality and Diversity Sub-Group of the NHS Staff Council	Employment Relations Advisor	On-going
Action Nine: The RCM will continue to respond to changes in Government equalities legislation campaigning against repeals of the Equality Act	Employment Relations Advisor	On-going

Action Eight: The RCM continue to play a leading role in the development of equalities policies on the Equality and Diversity Sub-Group of the NHS Staff Council

The RCM is a member of the Equality and Diversity Group which was set up in 2005 by the NHS Staff Council. Its membership includes representatives of NHS employing organisations in England, the health departments in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and staff side representatives on the NHS Staff Council. It also includes representatives from the Job Evaluation Group and the Knowledge and Skills Framework Group. In 2008 the EDG commissioned the NHS Information Centre to undertake a study to assess the effect of the implementation of Agenda for Change on relative pay positions of English NHS employees in respect of gender and ethnicity. Membership of this group offers the RCM valuable awareness and greater understanding of key current issues around Equality and Diversity. The Equality and Diversity Group is responsible for ensuring that the AfC Handbook is kept up to date in respect of equality, case law and good practice.

Action Nine: The RCM will continue to respond to changes in Government equalities legislation campaigning against repeals of the Equality Act.

The Equality Act 2010 was introduced to harmonise and simplify existing equality legislation in order to provide individuals, employers, service providers and public bodies with a more straightforward legal approach to addressing equality. The Bill consolidated 116 pieces of equality legislation in force, including 35 acts, 52 statutory instruments, 13 codes of practice and 16 European Commission directives including the following:

- Equal Pay Act (1970)
- Sex Discrimination Act (1975 and 1986)
- Race Relations Act (1976)
- Race Relations Amendment Act (2000)
- Disability Discrimination Act (1995), DDA (Amendment 2003), DDA (Amendment 2005)
- Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) and (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003
- Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006

As well as harmonising existing equality legislation the Equality Act also changes, extends or introduces for the first time rights and responsibilities for employers and individuals.

Most provisions of the Equality Act were brought into force in October 2010 and April 2011. The Coalition Government is considering if and when the remaining provisions should be brought into force.

However, since the Coalition Government came to power they have consulted on repealing three provisions in the Equality Act (the employer liability for harassment of employees by third parties; employment tribunals power to make wider recommendations; and the procedure for obtaining more information). There is currently a review into the public sector equality duty due to be completed by April 2013.

Currently, the RCM responds to any consultations on the Equality Act vigorously objecting to repealing provisions in the Act. The RCM will continue to do this but once established (see below) will also use the RCM Equality networks, under the Equality logo to campaign for the Equality Act.

Aim Four: To promote all the equality and diversity work the RCM does and ensure it enjoys a high profile and appeals to all members		
Action	Responsibility	Time Frame
Action Ten: Develop an Equality Logo	Employment Relations Advisor	2014 Onwards
Action Eleven: Develop Equality Champion Groups	Head of Organising and Engagement	2014 Onwards
Action Twelve: Develop publications under the RCM Equality logo	Employment Relations Advisor	2014 Onwards
Action Thirteen: Investigate the possibility of introducing an RCM Equality Champion award at the RCM Annual Awards	Employment Relations Advisor	2014 Onwards

Action Ten: Develop an Equality Logo

To clearly demonstrate what the RCM is doing on equalities the RCM will develop an equality logo to badge all equalities activities, publications and networks materials.

This will have the benefit of grouping together all equality activities so that members should not identify equality issues as something that is for 'other members' but rather there is something that would appeal to all members.

Moreover, by badging all equalities work under a logo it has the benefit of promoting equality work and making it high profile within the organisation.

Action Eleven: Develop Equality Champion Groups

The RCM will develop high profile equality networks to champion equality across the maternity services workforce and the service users of maternity services.

The aim of the equality groups is to:

- Develop a culture of inclusion in maternity services and the RCM
- Celebrate diversity in maternity services and the RCM
- Influence positive change in both maternity services and the RCM
- Protect members in the workplace and the users of maternity services
- Recognise and encourage leadership potential in maternity services and the RCM

The first group will be a BME group followed in the future by other equality groups around the other protected characteristics including age, disability and LGBT.

The groups could be given publicity and promotion through the website, magazine, RCM Communities, Facebook and Twitter.

Members of the group would be expected to ask others to join at a local level but the members would not be similar to Workplace Representatives but rather similar to members

of a Branch. Members would be expected to be active in organising themselves, similar to a workplace branch.

It would be expected that Workplace Representatives, Regional Officers and Organisers would assist with organising the groups as needed.

Action Twelve: Develop publications under the RCM Equality logo

The RCM will develop a series of publications under the Equality Logo on a range of equality and diversity issues. The publications could relate to the RCM's work as a trade union with the aim to improve our members working conditions; or they could relate to the RCM's work in career development and learning; or they can relate to the RCM's work as a professional body to ensure that there is equal access to maternity services; and there are some publications which would relate to multiple aspects of our work.

It is important to develop tangible products that RCM members and staff are able to access to clearly answer the question 'what is the RCM doing about this?' Moreover, the publications will demonstrate how much comes under the umbrella of equality and diversity so that members can identify with the issues rather than thinking 'it is for other members'.

All publications should be automatically sent to our Workplace Representatives and our Heads of Midwifery.

Therefore, initially, it would be beneficial to produce publications on a wide variety of issues covering different aspects of equality and diversity. The early ideas for publications include:

- **BME Midwives and Leadership**

There is a disproportionately low number of BME Midwives who have gained leadership positions in maternity and in the NHS. This guide would not only be available to all Workplace Reps and Heads of Midwifery but also all members of the BME Network.

- **Challenging Discrimination in Maternity**

This publication would be aimed at Workplace Reps to help support and protect out members and prevent discrimination and assess and challenge equality impact assessments. It should also address the equal provision of maternity care to women to help Heads of Midwifery in delivering maternity services and Workplace Reps assess and challenge reconfigurations of service.

- **Pregnancy and Maternity Rights at Work**

This publication would be aimed at our Workplace Reps to help support and protect our members and also working midwives in providing care to women who may be discriminated against due to their pregnancy.

- **Midwives and the Menopause**

There have been studies on the effect of the menopause on work which show that this is a significant issue especially in a career as demanding as midwifery. In September 2011 nearly a third of midwives working in the NHS were over 50 therefore many RCM members may be experiencing problems at work so we should address the issue.

- **LGBT Midwives in the NHS**

The RCM has been largely silent on LGBT issues for both our members and LGBT parents. This publication would be aimed at Workplace Reps to challenge discrimination and support LGBT members; for Heads of Midwifery to raise awareness of LGBT issues; and for LGBT members to help them with workplace issues.

Action Thirteen: Investigate the possibility of introducing an RCM Equality Champion award at the RCM Annual Awards

The RCM Awards help us each year promote and celebrate the best in midwifery; we have used the awards to highlight outstanding achievements, ground breaking research and innovative projects entered by midwives from all countries of the UK. Winning or being shortlisted showcases midwives' work to colleagues throughout the RCM, management and local communities. Therefore, the Annual Awards offers the opportunity to have an 'Equality Champion' award which could be awarded to an individual or employer who has shown an exemplary commitment to equality and diversity.

There is also the opportunity to cement relationships with equality campaigners e.g. the Fawcett Society, Stonewall, Disability Rights UK, Stephen Lawrence Charitable Trust, the Voice etc. to explore the possibility of sponsorship or joint sponsorship of the award.

Aim Five: To ensure that all RCM internal policies promote good employment practice and reflect the most up to date case law and legislation		
Action	Responsibility	Time Frame
Action Fourteen: Ensure that new and existing internal HR policies are equality impact assessed	HR Advisor	On-going
Action Fifteen: Put in place measures with Jobcentre Plus to enable the RCM to display the two ticks symbol	HR Advisor	End of Quarter Four 2013
Action Sixteen: Investigate the benefits of joining Stonewall's 'Diversity Champion' Programme	HR Advisor and Employment Relations Advisor	End of Quarter Four 2013
Action Seventeen: Sign up to become a 'Living Wage Employer' as a recognised sign of good practice in employment	HR Advisor	End of Quarter Two 2013
Action Eighteen: Update the jobs page on the RCM website to include information about our equal opportunities policies	Employment Relations Advisor	End of Quarter Two 2013

Action Fourteen: Ensure that all new and existing internal HR policies are equality impact assessed

The RCM should equality impact all internal HR policies and ensure that not only do the policies treat staff fairly and equally but they also demonstrate good practice with our trade union and professional ideals for example maternity leave, flexible working etc.

Particular attention should be paid to the wording used e.g. in job descriptions and person specifications for positions at the RCM to ensure that they do not discriminate.

Action Fifteen: Put in place measures with Jobcentre Plus to enable the RCM to display the two ticks symbol.

The RCM should put in place measures to enable us to display the two ticks symbol. Workplaces must be given permission by Job Centre Plus to use the two ticks symbol; to use the symbol employers must make five commitments:

- to interview all disabled applicants who meet the minimum criteria for a job vacancy and to consider them on their abilities
- to discuss with disabled employees at any time but at least once a year, what can be done to make sure they can develop and use their abilities
- to make every effort when employees become disabled to make sure they stay in employment
- to take appropriate action to ensure that all employees develop the appropriate level of disability awareness needed to make these commitments work

- to review these commitments every year and assess what has been achieved, plan ways to improve on them and let employees and Job Centre Plus know about progress and future plans

Action Sixteen: Investigate the benefits of joining Stonewall’s ‘Diversity Champion’ Programme

The RCM should investigate the benefits of joining Stonewall’s Diversity Champion Programme which would include allowing the RCM to display their logo; join their Workplace Equality Index which allows members to measure their efforts to tackle workplace discrimination and create inclusive workplaces for LGBT employees; and allows all employees to attend seminars which are held across the UK covering a range of diversity topics to share ideas and keep up to date with innovation in diversity practice.

Action Seventeen: Sign up to become a ‘Living Wage Employer’ as a recognised sign of good practice in employment

The Living Wage Foundation supports, recognises and celebrates the leadership shown by the living wage employers in the UK. Currently, the living wage is £7.45 per hour or £8.55 per hour in London. The Living Wage Employer mark is a recognised sign of good practice in employment. 70% of employers felt that the Living Wage had increased consumer awareness of their organisation’s commitment to be an ethical employer. This is an equalities issue as women tend to be more lower paid than men.

The accreditation process is simple and is open to employers already paying the living wage, or those committed to an agreed timetable of implementation. Employers need to show that they pay the living wage not only to permanent staff but also to contracted staff e.g. cleaners.

Accredited employers are entitled to a licence to use the living wage employer mark, which could then be displayed on our website on the jobs page.

Action Eighteen: Update the jobs page on the RCM website to include information about our equal opportunities policies

Currently on the jobs page of the RCM website at the bottom of the page it states:

“The RCM is committed to equal opportunities in employment and welcomes applications from suitably qualified people from all sections of the community.”

At the bottom of the page there is a link to the equal opportunities monitoring form without any explanation as to why the information is being collected.

It is proposed that the equality and diversity message is moved to the ‘further information’ box at the side of the page to display it more prominently and to change the wording to:

“The RCM is committed to equal opportunities in employment and welcomes applications from all sections of the community. The RCM strives to ensure that all new, existing or prospective members of staff are treated in a fair and equal manner regardless of the

employees gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, age, being pregnant or having a child, and religion or belief.

Our selection criteria and procedures are kept under constant review to ensure that individuals are selected, promoted and treated on the basis of their relevant merits, experience and abilities. To ensure the effective implementation of our diversity policy it is necessary to collect information from all employees and job applicants on a number of key characteristics relating to equality and diversity in the workplace through the use of diversity monitoring. We would therefore ask that all job applicants complete our diversity monitoring form along with their application form which will be separated on receipt. The diversity form can be found here.” (Then a link to the form).

This would ensure that there is a clear explanation of our equal opportunities policies and would demonstrate a clear commitment to equality and diversity issues.

Aim Six: To monitor the implementation of the Equality and Diversity Strategy 2013-2015		
Action	Responsibility	Time Frame
Action Nineteen: To set up an Equality and Diversity Working Group	Employment Relations Advisor	End of Quarter Two 2013
Action Twenty: To ensure the strategy is accessible to staff and updates to be communicated to all staff regularly	Employment Relations Advisor	On-going

The final aim of the strategy is to put in place arrangements to ensure that it is effectively implemented.

Action Nineteen: To set up an Equality and Diversity Working Group

To ensure the strategy is implemented across departments and to keep track of progress an Equality and Diversity Working Group will be set up with key staff who will take the lead in implementing the aims of the strategy.

Action Twenty: To ensure the strategy is accessible to staff and updates to be communicated to all staff regularly

The strategy will be saved in the shared computer files and placed on the RCM to be viewed by members. In the internal staff folders there will be a spread sheet monitoring progress of the strategy and a regular update will be provided to staff on internal briefings.

Summary and Conclusions

It is hoped that the Equality and Diversity Strategy for 2013-2015 will build upon the strong foundations developed in the last strategy and promote all the equality and diversity work the RCM does and ensure it enjoys a high profile.

The RCM is in a unique position to be able to influence equality and diversity issues in the NHS as a trade union and professional body. By ensuring that our members have a more equality focused working environment and engaged workforce the RCM can help to improve outcomes in maternity services. Moreover, the RCM can lead by example as an employer and as a member organisation to ensure an engaged workforce and engaged membership that leads to satisfied members and more successful outcomes for the RCM.

Summary of Aims and Actions

Aim One: To continue developing and training our staff, Workplace Representatives and maternity leaders about equality issues		
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Aim Two: To ensure that our data collection and monitoring is robust and covers all RCM activities, policies and events		
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