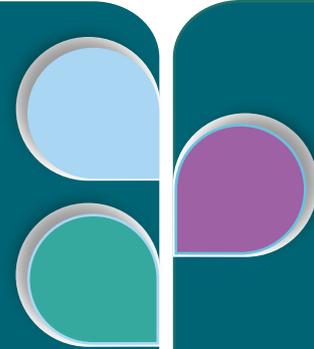


Equality Bites

Edition 8: March 2021



Hello and welcome to the eighth edition of our Equality Bites Newsletter.

In this edition we are celebrating various projects and initiatives to show how individually and together we can all 'Make a Difference' in achieving our Equality, Human Rights and Good Relations duties which ultimately affects service user / patient and carer experiences and health outcomes.

Partnership working maximises the impact we can make on improving people's health social well being and quality of life. In this edition we are delighted to highlight some of the outcomes of some joint working – from the colourful co-designed HSC Good Relations statement, the new GP & Trust Partnership Forum to the successful Phlebotomy Centre at Musgrave.



As we begin to emerge from our 3rd surge of Covid 19, it would be remiss not to reference Covid in this edition. Like everyone within the Trust and beyond we have felt the impacts and it is all the more important that we as an organisation continue to keep Equality, Human Rights and Good Relations central to all that we do. Can I take the opportunity to remind everyone of the value of conducting equality screenings and eqias on policies, proposals or plans – not only in accordance with our statutory obligations but also because it makes good business and financial sense to consider people's needs at the earliest juncture to ensure these are appropriately met?

For our staff, I would remind you that in the absence of the opportunity to avail of face-to-face training, we have our easily accessible online mandatory equality training or if you'd prefer, you can book onto a facilitated online version.



There is some great advice in this edition about wearing masks and how to be mindful of how a mask can be a barrier to communication and that little things can make a big difference. I am delighted that we are still working on the Every Customer Campaign to make services accessible for disabled people and look forward to the learning from the pilot and look forward to the new guidance for staff around LGBT+ issues later this year.

Charlene Stoops
Director of Planning, Performance and Informatics

Positive Action Employability Scheme: BHSCT Jobs for people with a learning disability

Let's hear how the BHSCT award winning programme made a difference for one of our new employees. Interview with Matthew Feenan



Tell me a bit about yourself

I am 27, from a family of 6 living in North Belfast and have been working for BHSCT for two years. I am now working part time as a domestic based in McKinney House in Musgrave Park Hospital. I am waiting to hear about moving to the Royal as I got a new full time job there as a domestic. I enjoy travelling and recently bought my first car after getting my driving licence last year.

Do you like your job in Belfast Trust?

Yes, I love working for Belfast Trust. People are so friendly and I feel very settled. In my job I clean to the standards of the Trust, I report any faults, empty bins and have an area - two floors in McKinney House I am responsible for. I enjoy hoovering the most – don't know why because I don't do it at home! I have been on a lot of courses like fire safety and PPE which I enjoyed. I now want to work full time to stand on my own two feet.

What other jobs have you had before working for BHSCT?

This is my first ever paid job since I left St Gerard's school in Belfast at the age of 16. I have worked in a lot of places like Queens and Stormont but I was never paid. The jobs gave me good work experience for my CV.

Tell me a bit how you got a job with BHSCT?

I got a job through the Postiive Action Scheme. Mencap phoned me one day to say there was a place for me on the scheme and I was over the moon as I only got the place because someone dropped out.

What is the Positive Action Scheme?

It's like a three month interview. You are guaranteed paid work at the end of it if you have done everything right. Half the time you do some paperwork and computer work about the rules you need to know when you work for Belfast Trust. The rest of the time you work to show that you can do the job. I had to show through my actions and attitude that I was the right person for the job. I worked in Estates doing cleaning, catering and portering. It was a bit overwhelming at first but after the first month I was ok. I would tell anyone to go for it, the scheme is worthwhile as there is a big reward.

What has changed for you because you have a paid job in BHSCT?

The job has changed my life. I got the job to prove to everyone who said I could not work wrong. I am very stubborn – I get that from my mum. The job means I do not have to worry about paying bills and that I can try and get my own flat (especially away from my two sisters who are very annoying!). I am more confident now – I went for my first interview a few months ago for a full time job and did it without any support as I wanted to stand on my own two feet. I now have a car and learnt to drive a year ago which is good because I don't have to take buses during Covid. The job gets me out and about and if I did not have it especially during Covid I would be sitting at home on my own and probably would have lost my mind.

What is your goal in life?

I just want to have a 'normal' life – a life with a job, house and family and don't want to be weighed down by my restrictions. I want to be treated the same as other people.

What's your message to anyone recruiting new staff?

Treat people well and judge people for their abilities not their disability. Don't make assumptions about what a person can and cannot do. Give people with a learning disability a chance in a job so that they can live a 'normal' life.

For more information about Positive Action contact:

- Aisling Curran
Service Manager
Community Learning Disability Services
aisling.curran@belfasttrust.hscni.net

Did you know?

Just 10% of adults with a learning disability in NI are in paid employment.

Every Customer Counts: Small changes can make a huge difference



As a Trust committed to providing accessible care that all service users (patients/visitors and carers) can use and benefit from – where reasonable adjustments will be made to remove any physical, sensory and intellectual barriers disabled people might face when accessing our services, our care, our facilities - we signed up to the Every Customer Counts initiative. This has been developed by the Equality Commission (NI), with the aim of increasing access to services for people with a disability.

Through our Disability Steering Group, a Working Group, comprised of a range of staff and service users, was established and the Eye Outpatient Diagnostic Unit (EODU) in the Royal Victoria Hospital was selected as the location for a pilot to be carried out.

An Access Audit was carried out by using a number of 'mystery patient' type exercises, undertaken by a number of volunteers who have a disability. The participants then answered a series of questions regarding how easy or difficult it was to find EODU. This feedback proved invaluable in terms of revealing barriers to access from a patient perspective and benchmarking for future changes.

A list of actions was agreed including:

- The creation of a walk-through video
- A map with printed directions
- A dedicated EODU section on the Trust website
- The training of volunteers and others as 'Sighted Guides' to assist patients/visitors with a visual impairment
- A signage review
- Enhanced accessible toilet facilities at EODU.

It is intended that the learning and outcomes from this exciting project will be shared across the organisation so that other service areas may also use the Every Customer Counts model to improve access for disabled people.

Did you know?

Equality, Good Relations & Human Rights staff mandatory training can be completed online via Equality, Good Relations & Human Rights staff mandatory training or facilitated via MS Teams by contacting Lesley.Jamieson@belfasttrst.hscni.net

Two Organisations Making A Difference to Young People

Action For Children: Supporting Young Carers

When we think of carers we don't always think about young carers. Well, in NI there are approx. 6700 young carers providing 1-19 hours of care every week and 960 providing 20-49 hours.

A Young Carer is 'a child aged between 8 and 18 years who has a substantial caring role for a member of their family and whose health or development is affected due to their caring responsibilities'.

A young carer might:

- Provide emotional support
- Encourage a cared-for person when they are having a bad day
- Supervise siblings
- Do housework
- Help with medication
- Take younger siblings to a place of safety
- Have to phone for help and deal with emergencies
- Manage bills
- Go to the shops.

Action For Children (Email niyoungcarers@actionforchildren.org.uk) is one of the many organisations who support young carers by organising group and individual activities, family fund days and advocate on behalf of the young person.

Throughout the pandemic support has continued with Action for Children organising Bingo, Quizzes, The Bake off, Scavenger Hunts and the Great Sunflower growing competition to help young carers manage at home. When lockdown was eased other activities such as Snow Tubing and Crazy Golf was arranged.



Did you know?

A new Belfast Trust and GP Partnership Forum has been set up. The Trust collaborates with GPs, meeting fortnightly, to work more closely and effectively across key service initiatives.

Did you know?

BHSCT are running a pilot carers bereavement service? Contact Carers Co-Ordinator Margaret McDonald for more information.

SÓLÁS: Supporting young people with moderate/severe learning disability including autism

SÓLÁS is a charity based on the Ormeau Road, South Belfast for over 12 years. It has 35 staff and operates 6/ 7 days per week from 6 sites including Parkmore, DPCC, Apsley, WWC, Rosario, Annadale Community Centre. Support is extensive as shown below. For more information contact Tel: 028 9024 7600/ joan@solasbt7.com



SÓLÁS area of Service Provision



How opinions can make a difference

Belfast Trust, through Care Opinion, is encouraging anyone who has had an experience of health and social care in the last three years to tell their stories and to let us know:



- What we are doing right
- How to make things better
- What the patient experience is.

Did you know?
You can improve care by telling your story? Go to www.careopinion.org.uk

Service users, families and carers have the opportunity to share their experience of Belfast Trust through the online user feedback platform Care Opinion.

Using Care Opinion is not about making a formal complaint but is about telling staff about one instance or a whole journey of care, even if that includes multiple providers/services/ departments.

All stories are anonymous, the story author chooses a username. The only other information Care Opinion asks for is an email address and a postcode but these details remain separated.

Máire Alexander is the Trust Care Opinion Facilitator and can be contacted at 028 9504 3228 or Maire.alexander@belfasttrust.hscni.net. Marie is asking staff to encourage people who are being discharged or are being reviewed to tell their stories.

Domestic & Sexual Abuse Support Service makes a difference

Rates of domestic abuse are at an all-time high in Northern Ireland. This has been further compounded by Covid 19 with people being told to stay at home – which unfortunately for too many people is the most dangerous place. Levels of sexual abuse are also on the increase for adults often related to domestic abuse and for children as they are at home more and have less supervision online.

Recent statistics reveal

32,000+

crimes of this nature in the past twelve months



Police respond to a domestic abuse incident every

17 minutes



561 women and 316 children stayed in Women's Aid refuges

Domestic abuse incidents now account for

19.1% of all police recorded crime, up from 16.5% on the previous year



Domestic abuse constitutes

5% of all crimes in NI



5 women have been murdered by a male partner or relative in NI since lockdown began in March 2020



11 babies were born in Women's Aid refuges

The PSNI recorded

31,817 domestic abuse incidents and

18,640

domestic abuse crimes – the highest statistics since records began in 2004/05



5,536 women and **5,143** children accessed outreach support through Women's Aid



The largest volume increase in domestic abuse crimes was seen in offences of harassment (including malicious communications) which increased by

1,270 (49.8%)

The new domestic abuse and family proceedings bill is so important and we wholeheartedly welcome it.

Orla Barron, Equality Lead and Corporate Planner for BHSCT has worked with Samantha Whann (HR) in partnership with Trade Union colleagues since 2008 to co-ordinate a completely free and confidential service that provides practical and emotional support for all staff around the issues of domestic and sexual abuse.



Tell us about the BHSCT domestic and sexual support service for staff?

The service is provided by a diverse range of staff members who have been trained – staff who volunteer from different locations, different professions and levels within the organisation, people who are female or male and with different sexual orientations.

We have had a range of staff using the service, because domestic abuse can happen to anyone – it's an important realisation that domestic abuse happens to 'regular' people. We have definitely seen an increase over the last year with referrals coming from managers or staff fearful for a colleague's safety or from the individual themselves.

To be honest, more women have tended to avail of the service and if I could get any message out there, it would be that domestic and sexual abuse happens to men as well as women and **our service is available to all**.

What can staff expect when they contact the service?

Our team of support officers offer a listening, compassionate and sensitive service. We do not judge, direct or advise someone what to do. Support Officers can facilitate practical arrangements in the workplace to make work somewhat of a haven for staff and to help keep them safe from the perpetrator.

A support officer may meet the person for a coffee and a chat or can link in via phone. Staff are offered a choice as to who they would prefer to talk to.

Support officers can also provide details of external specialist organisations and signpost to innovative partnership working like the One Stop Shop provided in Women's Aid.

Can you give some examples of how the service has Made A Difference?

Yes . . . examples include:

- **Simply listening:** Someone experiencing abuse can often be stripped of their self-esteem and self-worth, believing that the abuse is their fault. Having someone to talk to, in a non-judgemental confidential and compassionate forum can help to undo some of the relentless negativity and help the person believe that they do deserve better and that there are options for them – only if they chose to avail of them
- **Helping to access a clinical psychologist in Occupational Health:** this has often been instrumental in helping people to deal with their feelings and fears

Equality Bites

- **Talking to a manager with permission:** Abuse at home can obviously impact on absenteeism, timekeeping, concentration and performance. If a line manager is made aware that someone is trying to deal with this at home, they can be more understanding and exercise discretion, without taking someone down a disciplinary or capability line
- **Arranging salary advances:** These have been invaluable to people experiencing financial control if they want to leave the abusive relationship but don't routinely have access to their own salary. Working with HR and Payroll a salary can be paid into a different account to enable, for example, the person to move to a different accommodation without the perpetrator's knowledge. Financial support can also be accessed via Trade Unions
- **Organising safety measures:** These are key to ensuring people are not only safe in the workplace but also arriving at or leaving work. There is a wide range and can include provision of a car park space or a personal safety alarm
- **Facilitating redeployment:** Staff members have been able to be redeployed across the Trust or even between Trusts in NI to ensure that the perpetrator does not know where they work. A lot of abuse and control continues to take place when the person is at work and the abuser wants to stay in control.

What do you say to staff who are facing abuse or violence at home?

Domestic and sexual abuse are the most appalling human rights violations. Support is available within the Trust so people don't have to deal with this alone. A support officer will not try to make you leave, they will listen, offer emotional support and will be guided by your wishes. We need to take care of each other – staff are the Trust's most valuable resource. If you are worried about a colleague, you can speak in confidence one of our support officers who can be accessed through phoning 028 9504 8667 or by email on domesticandsexualabusesupport@belfasttrust.hscni.net

What is the biggest challenge facing the service?

I would say there are two main challenges:

One is awareness and ensuring that all staff and managers know about the service – hence the 15,000 calendars, the posters, leaflets and awareness training – but in an organisation our size, promotion needs to be ongoing!

The bigger problem – that doesn't present with quick or automatic resolution – are the issues of stigma, shame and secrecy. For so many years, there has been a shroud of silence around domestic and/or sexual abuse

with the abused person being manipulated into thinking they are to blame. There is also the stigma and fear that if you disclose it, people will judge you or you will have to disclose difficult information.

Did you know?

Did you know that if you “Ask for Ani” at pharmacies (including Boots) that you will be led into a private consulting room where you will be asked if you need help to contact the police, relevant support services or the 24 hour Domestic and Sexual Abuse Helpline?

These are societal issues that need to be addressed but as the largest HSC Trust,

it is important that Belfast Trust continues to provide and promote this support service, to encourage those courageous conversations to take place and to allow colleagues to feel supported and cared for in the workplace and at home.

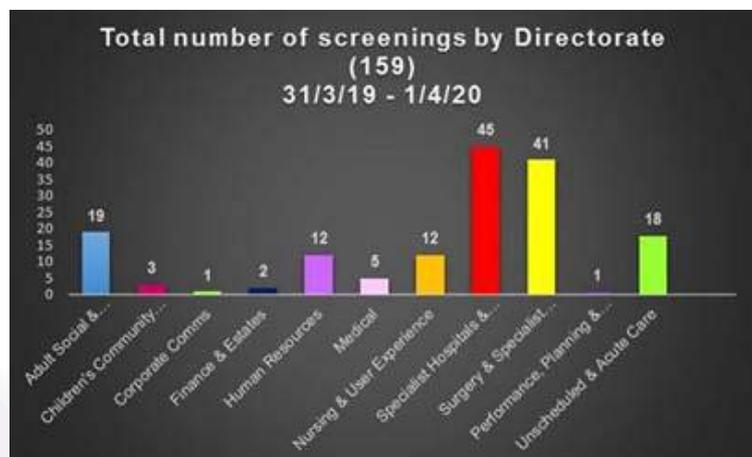
If a member of staff is experiencing abuse at home they can contact 028 9504 8667 or domesticandsexualabusesupport@belfasttrust.hscni.net

Covid 19: Equality Statutory Duties still apply

In these unprecedented times, it is recognised that policymakers may need to make quick and often challenging policy decisions. Yet, even if justified by the needs of the moment, it is important to appreciate that such decisions may have different impacts on different groups of people.

The Equality Commission NI have advised that the legal duties set out in Section 75 of the NI Act 1998 continue to apply during the pandemic.

The duties provide a mechanism to identify and mitigate any adverse impacts of policies. The duties have not been revoked or suspended which means that when developing Covid-19 related policies, Build Back Better initiatives, an **equality screening** must be completed, in accordance with the Trust’s equality scheme commitments. If not it may be subject to challenge for alleged breaches of the duties by way of a judicial review, complaint or an investigation by the Equality Commission.



Trust staff from the Planning and Equality Team have undertaken a number of significant equality screenings both in terms of Covid-19 surge plans, rebuild plans, Visitor Guidance and new innovative ways of working such as the Phlebotomy Centre and Virtual Consultations. Click to view [Belfast Trust Equality Screenings](#)

For more information about screenings contact Lesley.jamieson@belfasttrust.hscni.net

Making a difference together: New co-produced 'Good Relations' Statement

During 'Good Relations' week 2020, the six Health and Social Care Trusts engaged with key partners to co-produce a consistent, clear and unequivocal 'Good Relations' statement for the Health and Social Care Sector.

Those that attended the online event included colleagues from the Community Relations Council, the Equality Commission NI, Service Users and Carers, Health and Social Care staff and Trade Unions, local Council representatives, the Patient and Client Council, the Business Services Organisation, the Public Health Agency and representative organisations.

After a lively debate, consensus was reached, approved by our respective Executive Teams and the agreed 'Good Relations' statement noted below was launched online during International Human Rights Day in December 2020.

Did you know?

The Equality Team is working with Trade Unions and the LGBT+ community to produce guidance for staff?



Working together we will promote good relations between people of different race, religion or political opinion

This means that we:

- Will actively address and challenge racism and sectarianism in all its forms
- Will treat each other fairly, with respect and dignity
- Will make sure our spaces are shared, welcoming and safe.



Belfast Trust is committed to having regard to 'Good Relations' in all that we do and to promoting 'Good Relations' amongst everyone – our patients, service users, carers, visitors and staff – regardless of different religious belief, face or political opinion.

You will soon see the statement prominently displayed throughout Health and Social Care facilities in Northern

Ireland to remind everyone of all of our duty as we work, deliver services and care for patients, carers and visitors.

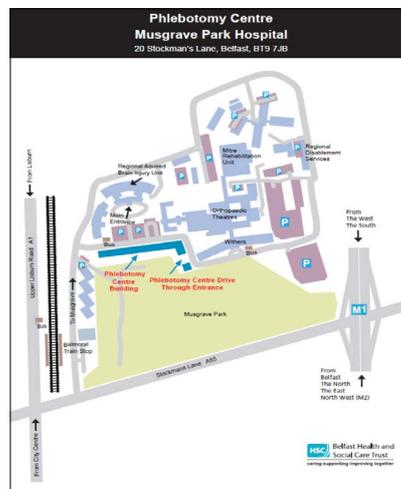
Did you know?

There is a new Belfast Trust Ethnic Minority Staff Network? To join or find out more contact: AskEMNetwork@belfasttrust.hscni.net

Covid innovations stepped up: Phlebotomy Centre at Musgrave

Over 9,000 people have now attended the new Phlebotomy Centre at Musgrave Park Hospital. The Centre includes a drive through and was initially piloted in Rheumatology, Hepatology, Gastro and Endocrine Outpatient clinics in response to the need to take bloods in a safe space, which did not enhance hospital footfall, respected social distancing and suited the service user. Since then up to 30 clinics are using the Centre and it has proved to be a great success with service users. Ongoing feedback from staff, GPs and service users is sought to ensure the service is accessible and inclusive however to date the feedback is very positive.

Did you know?
92% of Phlebotomy Centre patients love the idea of a drive through?



Comments:

“much quicker and like the idea of not being cramped in one room with lots of people”

“quick and easy”

“good not to have to find parking”

“handy and comfortable”

“very fast”

“very helpful and accommodating with excellent customer service”

“very good, now Consultant has blood results before consultation”

“superb idea”

“excellent service”

“(As staff)... we think the service is excellent, it has really benefited all our services ...pre-assessment clinics, specialist nurse clinics and supporting red flag cancer patients...”

“very efficient”

Equality & Covid 19 Issues: Wearing of Masks

We are all now wearing face coverings in Trust premises and while they help us to stay safe, they can create a **communication barrier** for people who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have other communication support needs. Many people rely on being able to see someone's lips and whole face to communicate.



Below are a **few tips** to help you think about communicating well with our service users, while also keeping them and yourself safe from COVID-19:

- Be alert for signs and behaviour that indicate the face mask is a barrier and a problem
- Ask yourself – or ask your infection control colleagues: is it possible for someone to safely accompany the service user to support your communication with them?
- Check if they use sign language. If they do, it's vital you book an interpreter
- Ask yourself – is it possible for you to wear a clear visor rather than a face covering?
- Try writing things down – this might help, but should only be used as a very short term solution
- Raise awareness in your team that some people will find face masks to be a barrier to effective communication.

Additional resources:

Making Communication Accessible for All: A Guide for Health and Social Care Staff (Available at: <https://belfasttrust.hscni.net/about/publications/making-communication-accessible/>)

InterpreterNow: Temporary remote sign language interpreting service that is currently used to improve access to Health and Social Care services (<https://interpreternow.co.uk/hscni>)

A ClearMask™ product has been approved by the PHA/HSCB Infection Prevention and Control team for use in HSC organisations in line with certain protocols. A small stock of the ClearMask™ is available from the central PPE store in each Trust. It is important to note to highlight that the ClearMask™ is not a substitute for a fluid resistant surgical mask and so whilst it does enable more effective communication in certain scenarios there will be some health and care situations where a clear mask cannot be used. because of this it's vital that there is a shared understanding that no clear mask will overcome all of the barriers associated with a face covering.

While clear masks may offer an opportunity to enable more effective communication in certain scenarios, it is very important that service users and their carers and families are made aware that, inevitably, there will be health and social care situations where a clear mask cannot be utilised.

Disability Discrimination: has a law made a difference 25 years on?

November 2020 marked the 25th anniversary of the introduction of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA).



Continuing to advocate the ethos of 'Nothing About Us Without Us', many disability rights speakers acknowledge that whilst the introduction of the DDA was a milestone, it was fundamentally flawed eg enforcement relies on disabled people to take a legal case which can often be costly, cumbersome and complex and the existence of the word reasonable when removing barriers to disabled people in work and accessing goods, facilities and services.

Legislation is an effective tool and gives us the ability to change things. The criticism generally comes down to an individual being brave enough to take on the fight.

Chris Fry, DDA Lawyer

DDA was never going to be a magic answer to all our problems but it did one important thing – it paved the way for radical change in the social concept of disabled people's lives. Instead of disabled people being tragic victims, it was accepted that we were unable to thrive due to disabling environment & social attitudes which kept us excluded and powerless.

Baroness Jane Campbell: House of Lords

Locally, you can listen to Monica Wilson (former CEO of Disability Action) reflect on the DDA anniversary by going to: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XqN4ExhvAgw>

Vaccination information translated for HSC workers

As Belfast Trust celebrates the fact that over 17,000 staff (including Bank and Agency workers) have received their first COVID 19 vaccine it is great to learn that information about the vaccine for HSC workers has been translated. Go to <https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/publications/covid-19-vaccination-protection-health-and-social-care-workers-and-translations>

A Year with Covid: Staff Thank You video

In February 2020 Belfast Trust admitted our first patient with Covid-19. Since then every staff member, from every service has played their part in providing safe, compassionate and effective care for hundreds of patients with Covid-19. A video has been produced to thank staff and while the video features a small number of staff, they represent over 22,000 staff who collectively met the challenges of Covid-19. To view the video go to: <https://youtu.be/MAK4AhUeYvM> A year with Covid.



Working together



Excellence



Openness & Honesty



Compassion

HSC Values

If you have any comments, or require this newsletter in alternative formats/languages, please contact Lesley Jamieson on 028 950 48734 or Lesley.jamieson@belfasttrust.hscni.net