

CNWL Equalities and Diversity Factsheet 3

The Equality Act 2006

The Equality Act's main provisions are to:

- establish the Commission for Equality and Human Rights and define its purpose and functions;
- make unlawful discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief in the provision of goods, facilities and services, education, the use and disposal of premises, and the exercise of public functions;
- enable provision to be made for discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation in the provision of goods, facilities and services, education, the use and disposal of premises and the exercise of public functions;
- create a duty on public authorities to promote equality of opportunity between women and men ('the gender duty'), and prohibit sex discrimination and harassment in the exercise of public functions

The Commission for Equality and Human Rights will take on the work of the existing equality Commissions (the Equal Opportunities Commission, the Commission for Racial Equality, and the Disability Rights Commission) and will additionally assume responsibility for promoting equality and combating unlawful discrimination in three new strands, namely sexual orientation, religion or belief, and age. The Commission for Equality and Human Rights will also have responsibility for the promotion of human rights.

The Equality Act provides a framework for public authorities to carry out their functions more effectively and to tackle discrimination and its causes in a pro-active way. This 'pro-active' emphasis is key, ensuring that the Trust mainstreams gender equality into all its functions.

Gender Equality Scheme

Under the Act, public authorities are required to:

- publish a Gender Equality Scheme demonstrating how it intends to fulfil its general and specific duties
- involve people of all genders in the development of the Scheme

The Scheme should include a statement of the way in which people representing gender perspectives have been involved in the development of the Scheme; the authority's methods for undertaking and monitoring gender equality impact assessment; steps which the authority will take towards fulfilling its general duty (the "action plan"); the authority's arrangements for gathering information in relation to employment; the authority's arrangements for putting the information gathered to use, in particular in reviewing the effectiveness of its action plan and in preparing subsequent Gender Equality Schemes.

CNWL Mental Health NHS Trust will publish its Gender Equality Scheme 2007/10 in April 2007, and it will be available on Trustnet, or from the Equalities and Diversity Department: 020 7612 1655