



Equality Bites

Edition 12: July 2023

Hello and welcome to the latest edition of Equality Bites, which is a snapshot of some of the proactive work that is going on in Belfast Trust to promote equality of opportunity and good relations.

The edition features a range of different celebrations that the Trust has undertaken to celebrate the rich diversity of our patients and service users and carers and also of our staff. To quote the former US president Jimmy Carter, “We have become not a melting pot but a beautiful mosaic. Different people, different beliefs, different yearnings, different hopes, different dreams.”



The success of the ongoing work to promote equality of opportunity and good relations would not be achievable without the significant involvement of our service users, patients, carers and our staff. Their input and dedication to working with us helps to ensure that the initiatives undertaken really make a difference and are meaningful. As an inclusive and responsive service provider and an employer of choice, it is important that we celebrate and maximise the many, many opportunities that diversity brings. Please do take the time to look at and provide

feedback on our consultation on our 5 year draft Disability and Equality Action Plans – they are also available in easyread and British and Irish Sign Language.



We hope that this newsletter helps to raise awareness and share best practice on some of the initiatives that we undertake to facilitate access to safe, effective, responsive and compassionate services. If you would like further information or the content in a different format or have suggestions for other stories or topics featured, please contact equality.team@belfasttrust.hscni.net.

Alastair Campbell
Director of Planning, Performance and Informatics

Learning Disability week 2023

Monday 19th June marks the start of Learning Disability week. The aim of Learning Disability Week 2023 is to show the world the incredible things that people with a learning disability achieve, smashing misconceptions about what people can do and shining a light on the stigma many still face every day. We only have to think of our local actor and Oscar winner James Martin to adeptly demonstrate the amazing success of a wonderful young man with a learning disability.

Another outstanding young man with a learning disability is Paul Magowan, Mencap Equality Officer. We are very fortunate to have Paul as a long standing member of our Trust Disability Steering Group. Paul has also made a very valuable contribution and played a leading role in the disability equality learning resource. It is a useful resource which could be used by other organisations and sectors.



TILII Translates deserve such recognition for their great work!

Health and Social Care Trusts are hugely grateful to the work conducted by TILII Translates, who have produced sterling work by making information more accessible in easyread format. TILII Translates is a social enterprise comprising adults with a learning disability, who are supported by Speech and Language Therapists and Association for Real Change. Equality Leads wrote recently to the guys in TILII Translates to acknowledge the great service that they provide and the very high calibre of easyread information that they transcribe. The most recently easyreads produced were of the regional HSC Trusts' Disability Action Plan and Equality Action Plan.



TILII (Tell It Like It Is) designed this film [LD Week 2023 | Association for Real Change \(arcuk.org.uk\)](#) for Learning Disability Week 2023 and are proud to show what people with a learning disability can do. Make sure to look out for TILII friend and award-winning actor James Martin and Belfast Giant Josh Roach!

Did you know?

TILII Translates produced 47 Easy Reads and 13 TILII TV films.

Our Disability Steering Group is 15 years old – and puts the “CO” in Coproduction

At our June meeting of the Trust’s Disability Steering group, we were delighted to host the launch of a pagetiger resource for our staff on how to produce easyread information. This has been produced by Angela Crocker, who is a Speech and Language Therapist who has advocated to ensure that there is more inclusive communication and to reduce health inequalities.

Angela works with TILII Translates members to produce easyread information and recognises the expertise through experience that they bring. Everyone has a fundamental right to understand and be understood – by producing information in Easy Read, we can ensure that the information is accessible by people with a learning disability, for those with lower literacy skills or those not proficient in English.

The right to inclusive communication is established in law in terms of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), Section 75 of the NI Act 1998 and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended).

It’s not just about the legal framework – morally and ethically, inclusive and accessible communication is key to informed consent, improving health outcomes and independence and is therefore critical in our aspiration to deliver safe, compassionate and quality care.”

Please find attached the link to the very worthwhile resource. [How to make information in easyread.](#)



Much has been achieved by working collaboratively with and involving service users, patients, carers and family members in developing inclusive and accessible services. The Trust took the opportunity to celebrate this wonderful work by having an Involvement Celebration on Friday 9th June 2023. The Planning and Equality Team were delighted that a long standing members of the Disability Steering Group could join them for the event at Belfast City Hall. Disability Steering Group members Alan Owens and Alice Johnston helped celebrate the involvement work of service users, carers and the wider public in shaping and improving Trust services. There was delicious food, music, a few speeches and an art event where everyone got the opportunity to create a mosaic art piece. A big

thank you to all of our Disability Steering Group Partners for your ongoing support for involvement. We really couldn't do it without you!



Regional Communication Support Service information for staff

Another service featured at the Disability Steering Group meeting was Sign Language Interactions, who have been selected as the provider for communication support for all the Trusts and Primary Care in Northern Ireland. The range of services they offer includes:

- Face to Face sign language interpreting
- Remote Sign Language Interpreting
- Relay Interpreters
- Interpreters for d/Deafblind people
- Lipspeakers
- Electronic Notetakers
- Speech to Text Reporting.

Please remember it is a legal requirement to provide a British or Irish Sign Language Interpreter when communicating with someone who is deaf/Deaf or hard of hearing. Failure to do so could constitute disability discrimination and poses clinical safety risks.

HSC Northern Ireland Health and Social Care

Booking a sign language interpreter



How to book

Bookings can be made online at: <https://signlanguageinteractions.com/hscni/>

Or you can email: bookingsni@signlanguageinteractions.com

Or telephone: 0333 344 7712

Marking Pride week 2023

As with previous years, we will be making arrangements to mark Pride week in Belfast in 2023. As an inclusive employer and service provider, it is important that we observe and celebrate diverse events for our staff and the people we serve. Belfast Pride Festival is one of the biggest festivals in Belfast and runs over 150 events across 10 days. The festival runs from Friday 21st July to Sunday, July 30th with Pride Day and the centrepiece Pride Parade on Saturday 29th July.



The Trust is running a range of events including promotion of the Rainbow Badge, which was launched in 2022 and staff will also be invited to enter an art competition to depict what “united in pride” means to them. Ciaran Mulgrew, the Trust’s new chair and Fidelma Carolan, of the Health and Social Care Leadership will judge the artwork and make the unenviable decision as to who wins! There will be an online gallery of submissions and the winner’s artwork will be made into a poster to be displayed in Trust facilities. The Trust launched the hugely successful Rainbow Badge initiative for staff last year as part of our PRIDE celebrations. Staff have the opportunity to receive a rainbow badge, which can be proudly worn in support of diversity, equality and inclusion relating to LGBTQ+ awareness.

The Trust offers open, non-judgemental and inclusive care for colleagues, patients, service users and their families, who identify as LGBTQ+. The badge is an outward sign that wearers are open to listening and can signpost to resources appropriately.

Staff who are interested can get involved by reading our materials, completing some self-led learning, and pledging to be a friendly listening-ear. To join our Rainbow Badge initiative and receive your badge before Belfast Pride (21 – 30 July) [sign our online pledge](#).

If you have any questions, please contact the Employment Equality Team at HREquality@belfasttrust.hscni.net

We will also encourage our staff to take a selfie on a walk at lunchtime in a “Take a Stride” for Pride initiative and have a mosaic of different photos.

The Trust is also planning to partake in the Pride parade along with other HSC Trusts and the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service. If you want more details or want to be involved in Belfast Trust events, please contact PRIDE@belfasttrust.hscni.net. For further details on Pride Festival events across the city, please see: [Belfast Pride | Diverse, Equal, Proud](#).

Trust’s new Chair attends Joint Forum meeting

Belfast Trust hosted the most recent meeting of the joint Equality, Human Rights and Good Relations forum in May. The forum comprises Equality leads from each of the Health and Social Care Trusts and the Department of Health and colleagues from the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission, the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland and the Community Relations Council and was established to



improve collaborative working and share best practice between health and social and the respective Commissions and the Council. The chair for the forum is rotated amongst each of the organisations and whomever is hosting the event invites a senior representative from their organisation to endorse the work of the forum and listen to current issues or priorities. Forum members were pleased to welcome the new chair of Belfast Trust, Mr Ciaran Mulgrew, who provided assurances that equality, human rights and good relations were at the core of the Belfast Trust agenda and would continue to be mainstreamed in all that we do.

Draft five year Disability Action Plan and Equality Action Plan – your chance to have your say!

Regional Health and Social Care Trusts are currently consulting on their collective draft Disability Action Plan and Equality Action Plan. These plans set out proactive measures over the next 5 years to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and to encourage their full participation in public life and to tackle inequalities experienced by people from the protected Section 75 categories (namely age, those with and without a disability, those with and without caring responsibilities, men and women generally, marital status, those of different race, religious belief, political opinion, sexual orientation).

The plans are available on each Trust’s respective website and have been produced in British and Irish Sign Language and in easyread. You can access the documents here – these have been informed by specific engagement and listening events and our audit of inequalities. Consultations | Belfast Health & Social Care Trust (hscni.net). We would encourage as many people as possible to respond to this consultation to ensure the proposed measures are the right ones and will make a difference to the lives of patients, service users, carers and staff. We are consulting for 16 weeks beginning 5 June 2023, all comments should be returned to the Equality Unit by 25 September 2023.

Did you realise just how diverse our patients and service users are?

As is the case with sign language interpreting, the Trust is legally required to provide communication support for people who are not proficient in English as a first or second competent language. Provision of a qualified, objective and professional interpreter is key



in facilitating mutual communication and interpretation and to avoid misunderstanding and potentially misdiagnosis.

Interpreters can be provided on a face to face basis through the Northern Ireland HSC Interpreting Service or remotely/via telephone through the Big Word. These services are free of charge to the patient and to the Trust. Having reviewed the most recent report from the Big Word, the linguistic and cultural diversity of the population we serve is most evident. During the last month, telephone interpreters have been actively involved in Belfast Trust appointments in the following 35 different ethnic languages:

International Nursing

Belfast Trust has been recruiting International Nurses for many years. Over the last two years, international nurses have made up over 40% of new graduates. During these times of nurse shortages, we have been fortunate in being able to recruit international nurses, who bring a vast amount of expertise and skills. To mark International Nursing day, a photographic exhibition was convened in the foyer of the Royal Victoria Hospital.

On 16 June, we held an event to celebrate the achievements of our new Nursing colleagues, recruited via an International Recruitment campaign. To date, the Trust has recruited over 800 nurses via bespoke and regional recruitment initiatives. We are exceptionally proud to have been chosen as the employer of choice by these staff who have travelled from a diverse range of countries including Jamaica, India, Botswana, USA, Philippines, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Saudi Arabia, Malta, Qatar, The Maldives, Nigeria, and Guyana.

Our new nurses have been deployed into a wide selection of specialities across the entire Trust including Care of the Elderly, Theatres, Emergency Department, Intensive Care Unit and Medical & Surgical wards.

We are continuing with our recruitment and focusing on addressing vacancies within Mental Health Services. We hope you will join us in wishing our newest arrivals all the very best in their nursing roles, developing their professional careers within BHSCT and their new lives in Northern Ireland.



Launch of theme for Good Relations Week 2023

Trust representatives have formed part of the co-design steering group for Good Relations Week 2023, as convened by Community Relations Council. Good Relations Week 2023 is in preparation mode with a mission to embody the spirit of togetherness as it celebrates peace-building and cultural diversity in its annual contribution to eradicating sectarianism, racism, and inequality across Northern Ireland.

Good Relations Week 2023, coordinated by the Community Relations Council, is scheduled to run from Monday 18th September to Sunday 24th September 2023. The theme for this year's celebration is 'Together' with events over the week focusing on cooperation, inclusivity, and progress.

This year's theme will shine a light on individuals and organisations working together and sharing ideas and experiences in tackling everything from sectarianism and racism to gender inequality, shared spaces, peace-building, and cultural diversity. For more information on Good Relations Week 2023 and to register an event, please visit: www.goodrelationsweek.com.



Men's Health week – the Picture of Health?

12th June marked the start of International Men's Health Week 2023. This annual event aims to raise awareness of preventable health problems that disproportionately affect men and encourage them to gain the courage to tackle their issues.

The overall aims of Men's Health Week are to:

1. Heighten awareness of preventable health problems for males of all ages.
2. Support men and boys to engage in healthier lifestyle choices / activities.
3. Encourage the early detection and treatment of health difficulties in males.



But why is there a need to hold a Men's Health Week?

Research shows that men can experience a disproportionate burden of ill-health and die too young.

- Life expectancy for males is lower
- Males have higher death rates than females for almost all of the leading causes of death and at all ages
- Men's lifestyles may contribute to a high proportion experiencing chronic diseases
- Late presentation to health services can lead to problems becoming untreatable

Men and mental health

According to the Mental Health Foundation, approximately 1-in-8 men have a common mental health problem such as anxiety, stress, or depression. In this video, Clare Flynn outlines 5 simple steps to help with your mental health. <https://youtu.be/4v7axplBvaw>

During 2023, the Men's Health Week theme for Ireland will be 'The Picture of Health' and the call to men (and those who support the health of men) will be what does that look like to you? This year, everyone is being asked to set themselves a simple goal(s) to improve the health of men, and to go for it!

For tips and ideas check out the new manual '[Action Man - ten top tips for men's health](#)'

Launch of Carers Week 2023 and of consultation on new draft Carers' Strategy

Belfast Trust was also delighted to participate in Carers Week 2023, focusing on this year's theme of 'recognising and supporting carers in the community'. Carers Week is an annual campaign to raise awareness of caring, highlight the challenges unpaid carers face and recognise the contribution they make to families and communities. It also helps people who don't think of themselves as having caring responsibilities to identify as carers and access much-needed support.



Across Belfast, there are over 40,000 people providing unpaid and family care to loved ones and Belfast Trust recognises the invaluable support that carers play in our local communities. The Trust is committed to ensuring that carers are at the heart of everything that we do. A carer network has been developed by the Trust. There has also been engagement with carers from across Belfast to hear what the key priorities are for carers. A new draft strategy has been informed by all of this engagement and feedback. The Trust is seeking views on our draft Caring Together in Belfast 2023 Onwards and welcome your feedback of our proposed actions or how they could be improved. ['Caring Together in Belfast 2023 Onwards'](#) focuses on four key areas. These are to:

- 1) Reach all carers
- 2) Navigate carer support
- 3) Support carer health and wellbeing and 4) connect with and involve carers.

Consultation will close on 8th September 2023.

Want to find out more about the carers service? [Visit our carers service section on our website here.](#)

Ethnic Minority Staff Network

The population and diverse cultural landscape of our HSC workforce is ever changing. The Trust recognises, from current data that staff from ethnic minority groups could benefit from a much better experience and outcomes and the Trust is taking robust steps to proactively address this.

One means to do this has been through the development of an Ethnic Minority Staff Network (EMSN) to support, enable and maintain a safe, inclusive and diverse working environment for staff and eliminate racial discrimination. Our network aims to provide advice and ensure that the opinions, concerns and needs of our staff from ethnic minority backgrounds are understood and recognized by the Trust and beyond. The network is our first step towards implementing meaningful change, addressing under-representation and challenging racism in all its forms.

Please get in touch if you would like more information – we would love you to join and get involved- AskEMNetwork@belfasttrust.hscni.net



We welcome any feedback on this newsletter.

Please email orla.barron@belfasttrust.hscni.net or telephone 028 9504 6519