

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Guidelines

Overview

RDS West Midlands (RDS WM) is committed to offering a service which promotes equality and diversity for both staff, its clients seeking support and its public and patient contributors and encourages inclusivity and respect in all areas of its operation.

RDS WM operates from 3 Universities – University of Birmingham, Keele University and University of Warwick who are all committed to equality, diversity and inclusion and who have a variety of policies and strategies in place to promote greater understanding and awareness in their environment. RDS WM is funded by the NIHR who also have policies and guidelines in place for the research that they fund. Links to the Universities policies are shown below:

<https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/Documents/university/equality-scheme.pdf>

<https://www.keele.ac.uk/equalitydiversity/>

<https://bit.ly/338s2xU>

What is Equality, Diversity and Inclusion?

The principles of equality, diversity and inclusion are that all staff and clients of the service are offered an opportunity to work or participate in developing research regardless of:

- Age and sex
- Gender including gender reassignment
- Ethnicity and nationality
- Marital status
- Physical or mental disability
- Religious and other beliefs
- Sexual orientation
- Having caring responsibilities for others

Equality, diversity and inclusion in practice

To ensure that we are doing everything we can to operate in an environment that encourages equality, diversity and inclusion, RDS WM will undertake the following:

- Encourage all RDS staff to work flexible hours to suit their individual needs whilst ensuring that our service is accessible to all clients and patient and public contributors
- Organise our team meetings to enable all staff to attend – Hub directors will review their timings of regular meetings to ensure that staff with carer responsibilities can fully participate
- Early or late meetings will be discouraged unless they can be arranged in advance to enable staff to organise their own support networks in relation to carer responsibilities
- To create an environment that encourages involvement from as broad a range of people as possible and will ensure that all clients and contributors are treated with respect and valued for their individual contributions

- Undertake reviews of access to meetings for all public and patient contributors – ensure the building is located close to public transport links; ensure the building has dedicated disabled parking close by; that meetings are arranged outside of commuter hours to encourage attendance
- Ensure that any expenses offered to attend meetings consider the true cost to the participant – it may be necessary to fund another person too to travel with the participant or provide carer costs
- Review our ‘accessing the service’ policy for clients. We will continuously look at whether the way clients contact RDS WM is inclusive. We will always ensure that contact can be made via telephone as well as being web based and that flexible meeting arrangements are available, either face to face or via telephone
- If an RDS advisor is required to attend an individual’s home, lone worker arrangements must be made in advance or if preferred 2 advisors should attend the meeting
- We will engage with community and support groups to review our access policies to ensure that we are meeting the needs of all of our client groups
- Each person contacting RDS WM will be treated as an individual and that their needs are unique, a ‘one size fits all’ approach will be discouraged unless there is an over-riding need to operate in a group manner
- When recruiting new staff to RDS WM we will encourage participation from all areas of the community to create a more balanced and representative workforce
- Communication skills training will be mandatory for all RDS staff
- All staff will undergo equality and diversity training provided by their local institutions and attendance will be monitored
- Equality, diversity and inclusion will be a standing agenda item on for the quarterly RDS WM Management and Operations Group meetings and Regional CPD meetings.
- We will continue to analyse the needs of all clients and participants to ensure that we remain accessible to all