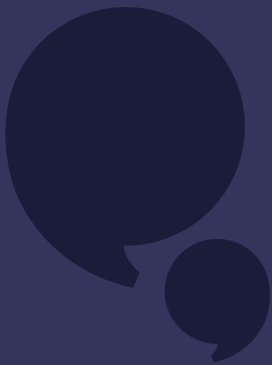


Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2020-2024



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Overview

The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman's purpose is to make final decisions on complaints that have not been resolved by the NHS in England, UK government departments and other public organisations.

We do this fairly and without taking sides. Creating and maintaining an equal, diverse and inclusive Ombudsman service is vital for individuals who work for us. It is also important for people who bring their complaints to us and those we investigate as we carry out our work.

All staff are encouraged and supported to play an active role in the delivery of this strategy, but a number of groups such as the Diversity Working Steering Groups, Break the Stigma, Dignity at Work Network, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Forum and Pride in PHSO will help us to drive forward our ambitions through a range of their activities.

When we design and deliver services or create and review policies, we will continue to fulfil our duties under the Equality Act 2010 and the need to:

- advance equality and diversity
- eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- promote authentic and respectful relations.

Carrying out Equality Impact Assessments informs decision making, but we also recognise that measuring the impact of our work is equally important. As we move forward in our development, monitoring will play a fundamental role in understanding outcomes and the direction of future work.

Over the last year we have made substantial progress in promoting greater equality, diversity and inclusion in our workplace. Some key changes have included:

- changing our recruitment process to make sure we have the most opportunities to recruit talented individuals and meet our target of 30% BAME candidates throughout the process
- redeveloping our exit process to understand the experiences of working for us and reasons for leaving, to take account and act on any detrimental equality, diversity and inclusion issues
- delivering a year-round calendar of awareness-raising events through the Inclusion Calendar.

We recognise that there is still much more for us to do. In the next four years we plan to be even more ambitious. This strategy document sets out three pillars of activity, the outcomes we want to achieve and the specific actions we will take to deliver them.



Pillar one: Culture

Our workforce is made up of individuals with their own unique identities. They represent a variety of ages, ethnicities, abilities, faiths and beliefs, sexual orientations, gender identities, parental and caring responsibilities, socio-economic and educational backgrounds.

It is important that our organisation promotes an open, respectful and transparent culture, where difference is encouraged and everyone can be authentic at work. An inclusive culture leads to better engagement, well-being and reduced sickness, and an improved service for people who bring complaints to us.

Outcomes

There will be a focus on improvement through coaching and learning from others. Tailored support will enable individuals to be open about their abilities, experiences and ambitions for the future.

All staff will demonstrate and live the values of the organisation. Managers will also demonstrate the 'leadership promise' they have made, equipped with the appropriate tools and skills to perform at their best, while supporting others to do the same.

Actions

No.	Activity	Year
1.	Enhance coaching skills for managers to support management of difference through the Exemplary Manager Programme.	2020
2.	Train a pool of up to 30 in-house coaches to be available to all staff as requested in order to provide support in development.	2020-2024
3.	Review and develop the process for carrying out Equality Impact Assessments to make sure we have ample opportunity to understand the impact groups may experience. Share all assessments with staff on our intranet to ensure transparency and opportunity to engage.	2020
4.	All staff to participate in up to one full day of equality, diversity and inclusion activities per year. For example, training (face-to-face or e-learning) and/or participation in a forum/network through membership or attendance.	2020-2024
5.	Active monitoring of staff participation in equality, diversity and inclusion activities by the Diversity Steering Group.	2020-2024
6.	Develop existing and create new equality, diversity and inclusion learning to allow opportunities to engage in development of knowledge and awareness raising.	2020-2024
7.	Benchmark performance against peer organisations and other relevant sectors to identify best practice for inclusion in our action plan.	2020-2024
8.	360-degree feedback for all people managers, with identified areas for development included in the professional development plan.	2022-2024
9.	Bi-monthly manager circles to develop leadership skills, using the 'Centered Leadership' model, taking account of managing a diverse team.	2020-2024

Pillar two: Representation

A diverse and inclusive workforce is essential. More diverse teams make better decisions, deliver better results and are better engaged. A diverse workforce reflects the communities that we serve. It allows us to better understand the experiences of individuals who bring complaints to us and provide them with a service that better meets their requirements.

Diverse role models at senior levels in organisations show those aspiring to leadership roles that opportunities exist to progress. While we have a gender diverse leadership in PHSO, there is much more for us to do to ensure wider diversity at senior levels.

Outcomes

We will improve diversity in management and leadership roles by changing the way we recruit and making sure development opportunities encourage diverse progression.

Actions

No.	Activity	Year
1.	Collect regular data to understand the demographic of our workforce at all levels in order to drive change.	2020-2024
2.	Conduct cultural audits of each area/team to understand the experience of culture in the organisation as a whole and area/team to drive change where needed.	2020-2021
3.	Improve structured support for those taking extended leave away from their roles including delivery of maternity/shared parental leave coaching.	2020
4.	Monitor and report by diversity characteristics to the Diversity Steering Group on a bi-yearly basis of participation in all learning and development programmes and project team members as approved by managers. To ensure consistency in decision-making and fair opportunity to develop skills and competencies.	2020-2024
5.	Implement a recruitment system that allows anonymisation of personal characteristics including name.	2020-2021
6.	Ensure that the external presentation of the organisation represents diversity.	2020-2024

Pillar three: Access to our service

We know that large sections of our communities do not bring complaints to us, despite suffering failings and injustices when using public services. We need to develop our knowledge and understanding of why there are individuals who are unable to or reluctant to bring a complaint to us.

Where people do bring complaints, we must ensure that our service is adaptable to meet their needs so that they can fully engage with us.

Outcomes

We will better understand the requirements of complainants from diverse communities. Our service will identify those with specific requirements at the outset, so that these can be properly accommodated. The data we collect will give us a deeper insight into who brings complaints to us, so we can understand and respond to any barriers to using our service.

Actions

No.	Activity	Year
1.	Consider how we develop management information capability to allow the collection of demographic data for those bringing complaints to us.	2020
2.	Analyse demographic data of current complainants to understand barriers to engagement through different aspects of our service. For example, complaint form, guidance, website, communication (letters/phone/email/reports).	2020
3.	In conjunction with the end-to-end service review, engage with external audiences to understand their views on barriers to access and understand who might not bring complaints to us and why. For example, complainants, charities and advocacy services.	2021
4.	Following data collection and in conjunction with the Corporate Strategy 2021–2024, review findings and develop an action plan.	2020-2024
5.	Review data on all declared disabilities and reasonable adjustments captured through our casework management system. This will help us understand the barriers complainants experience and inform any changes we might make in line with our Public Sector Equality Duty. Report to Diversity Steering Group on a biannual basis.	2020-2024
6.	Share insight through regular casework communications and through our website to keep complainants updated on how we have adjusted our service to remove barriers.	2020-2024

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