

## **NHS Education for Scotland**

### **Inclusive Education and Learning Policy**

#### **1. Introduction**

NHS Education for Scotland (NES) is a national health board working in partnership with stakeholders to provide education, training and workforce development for those who work in and with health and social care. Our purpose is to enable better quality care and outcomes for every citizen in Scotland by strengthening the health and social care workforce. It is recognised that some of our education and learning resources are promoted and made available to the wider Scottish workforce.

Our organisational strategy and equality outcomes include a strong commitment to making education more accessible and equitable for health and social care staff<sup>1</sup>. A workforce that has appropriate knowledge about equality and the diverse needs of Scotland's population is important for high quality care and service provision and for contributing to an inclusive and fair workplace. The purpose of this policy is to set out our vision for delivering education and learning that is inclusive of the diversity of our learners. It is also intended to set out how we can reflect diversity and issues of inequality in the content of our learning and education. It will be supported by further guidance to guide NES staff and contractors in the design, development and delivery of different forms of education.

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<sup>1</sup> The Inclusive Education and Learning Policy signals our intention to make all our education and training products and programmes fully inclusive of anyone that uses them. While we use the term 'health and social care staff' in the policy to describe the target audience, it is understood that this will include anyone involved in contributing to the health and care of the Scottish population. In this respect the term refers to staff employed by the NHS, local authorities, community healthcare providers, healthcare contractor organisations, third-sector organisations, private employers and others.

## **Our vision is**

- Health and social care colleagues will have equity in opportunity in their access and experience of education and learning.
- The content of our education and learning will reflect and be inclusive of diversity. It will support progress in addressing societal inequalities by promoting greater understanding of them.

## **2. Aims**

The aims of the policy are to:

- promote equity in access to learning and development opportunities for the health and social care workforce;
- support positive learning experiences and outcomes for all our learners;
- contribute to a workforce that is skilled to deliver person-centred health and care to Scotland's diverse population;
- contribute to equipping the workforce with the knowledge and skills to tackle health inequalities as part of a wider system approach; and
- work towards creating an inclusive and equitable workplace culture.

The policy supports these aims by setting out principles to inform our work as an education and training provider. It also sets out what we mean by inclusive education and learning.

## **3. What do we mean by inclusive education and learning?**

An inclusive approach to education means that:

- each individual learner is valued, and they are treated with dignity and respect.
- diverse learning needs and preferences are identified and addressed in a proactive and anticipatory way.

- the content of our education and learning should reflect population diversity and current inequalities to increase awareness and knowledge of equality, diversity and disadvantage.

In the context of education, inclusion is relevant to:

- **Participation:** including identifying learning needs, admission or selection for learning, communication of learning opportunities, access to facilities and learning materials.
- **Learning:** ensuring that the content, language, structure, delivery methods and formats of instruction and learning materials do not exclude groups of learners and are responsive to their individual needs. The content of our education and training will reflect population diversity and social and health inequalities, ensuring groups who can be marginalised are represented in our materials.
- **Attainment:** so that all have equal opportunities to succeed, especially where there is formal assessment.
- **Enjoyment:** promoting positive learning experiences that encourage further and ongoing engagement with learning.

We recognise the impact of existing inequalities, which may result in some people being at risk of marginalisation or exclusion. These inequalities extend beyond groups sharing protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 to a range of other individuals including those in low-income households, people with caring responsibilities, workers in remote and rural locations, care experienced children and young people and many others. We will actively identify and, where possible, remove barriers to learning for all health and social care workers. NES's Widening Access Framework recognises the importance of supporting and nurturing career development by providing ongoing support and equity in access to career progression<sup>2</sup>. Our approach to inclusive education will be learner-centred,

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<sup>2</sup> Widening access to careers in health and social care so that, whatever a person's life experience, they have better access to job opportunities and learning and development at all levels.

proportionate and flexible, and will be suited to the context in which education is being developed.

As we continue to embrace and use technology to support how we deliver education and training, we must consider the impact of digital solutions on our learners. This has the potential to remove barriers to learning but we must also be aware that it may affect people differently. For example, those who do not have access to IT.

#### **4. Principles**

This policy is underpinned by the following principles:

- Inclusive educational practice is an important component of quality and a rights-based and trauma-informed approach to education which enhances the learning environment.
- We recognise the value and potential of a diverse group of learners.
- We will take an inclusive approach to the design of our education and training resources. We will work to highlight population groups who experience poorer outcomes (for example, in health and well-being, education, employment), discrimination and disadvantage through our materials to support the workforce in progressing equality and tackling discrimination.
- We will take an inclusive and anti-racist approach in the design and delivery of our education, recognising the impact of racism in the workplace, and racialised health inequalities.
- When developing and delivering education and learning we will identify and address barriers to learning.
- Inclusive approaches are learner-centred and contribute to improved learner outcomes. We focus on collaborative learning and building on partnerships.
- Education and learning are important for the development of all members of the workforce to support the delivery of effective health and social care services to the entire population
- Some specific learner needs can be anticipated (for example, accessible learning materials), and we will take a proactive and flexible approach to meeting those needs.
- Inclusive education means that the reasonable adjustments which will enable learners to reach required standards are identified and provided.

- Inclusive education should be delivered in a manner which is proportionate to the risk, extent of disadvantage, efficacy and impact of adjustments, consistent with the legal definition of reasonable adjustment.
- Evaluation of our education and training will help us to understand the extent to which it is inclusive of the needs and preferences of diverse learners.

## **5. How we will apply this policy**

We will apply the principles in this policy in the range of educational functions and activities undertaken by NES. These will include:

- Commissioning training, education or educational resources.
- Quality assurance, quality management and performance management of education.
- Development of educational infrastructure.
- Assessment of educational outcomes by learner diversity data wherever possible.
- Strategic development and provision of e-learning.
- Provision of resources and support to promote best practice in educational development.
- Support for post and pre-registration training schemes.
- Identifying training needs.
- Delivery of training.

## **6. How we will promote inclusive learning and education to our learners**

We will actively promote the inclusion of all learners, recognising their diverse needs and experiences, in learning and education developed or provided by NES by:

- Developing educational products and resources inclusively, in response to learners' needs and in accordance with best practice.
- Engaging with our educational service users on an ongoing basis to gain their feedback on existing educational resources, understand their diverse needs, and using this knowledge to inform the way we carry out our work.
- Promoting equality of opportunity in access to the education which is being offered.

- Providing accessible learning, learning support and reasonable adjustments to support access to education and enhancement of outcomes from education.
- Delivering education, training and learning inclusively where NES is the direct provider of training.
- Developing the knowledge and skills of our staff to support inclusive education by ensuring the curriculum reflects diversity and the experiences of marginalised groups and inequalities appropriately.
- Developing staff understanding and skills in anti-discriminatory and inclusive practices.
- Integrating the review of inclusive education into educational governance arrangements in an effective, proportionate manner.

## **7. How we will promote an inclusive approach to education and learning with our partners**

- Supporting implementation across NES Directorates and through our networks and role as a national body.
- Developing resources and expertise which can be used throughout health and social care services in Scotland, building capacity for inclusive education and learning.
- Influencing and providing challenge to our partners to support our vision for inclusive education and learning through robust quality assurance, quality management, commissioning and procurement roles.

## **8. Accountability, Governance and Review**

The Education and Quality Committee (EQC) of the NES Board has primary responsibility for the strategic oversight of the development, implementation and review of educational standards and quality enhancement mechanisms, and for NES's compliance with equality and diversity requirements in the exercise of its educational functions. As part of this remit, the EQC will have responsibility for strategic oversight of the Inclusive Education and Learning policy.

The EQC delegates responsibility for monitoring educational equality and performance to the Education & Quality Executive Group (EQEG). The EQEG and EHRSO will monitor the effectiveness of arrangements for inclusive education. The Group will support the implementation of the policy by promoting it across Directorates and in reviewing the findings of how the policy is implemented. At the officer level, the Chief Executive has overall accountability for the development and monitoring of policy and strategy determined by the NES Board. Responsibility for the implementation of the Inclusive Education and Learning policy is delegated to the Executive Lead for Education and Quality.

The Equality, Diversity and Human Rights team works with NES's Internal Learning and Development Team to develop and oversee a programme of learning and development for NES staff on equality and diversity issues. The team will support staff to implement the policy by sharing examples of practice and responding to learning needs.

The Technology Enhanced Learning team provide training, support and guidance around technology-enhanced education, and supports educators to provide inclusive education and training. The team will support staff to implement the policy by providing resources and examples of good practice in response to learning needs.

NES staff have a responsibility to adhere to the commitments in this policy and to apply it to their educational work. NES will maintain a suite of guidance to support implementation of this policy; staff will be expected to follow the requirements set out in the guidance. Directorates and programme teams will be accountable to the Educational and Quality Executive Group and the Educational and Quality Committee for the inclusivity of their educational activities.

NES

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