Equality Impact Assessment Report

Title: Line Managers Handbook

NES directorate or department: Organisational Development, Leadership and Learning

Date Report Completed: November 2024

Introduction

Equality Impact Assessment is a process that helps us to consider how our work will meet the 3 parts of the Public Sector Equality Duty. It is an important way to mainstream equality into our work at NES and to help us:

- Take effective action on equality

- Develop better policy, technology, education and learning and workforce planning solutions for health, social care and a wide range of our partners, stakeholders and employees

- Demonstrate how we have considered equality in making our decisions.

The Line Managers Handbook is a learning and education resource for NES managers. It is hosted on Turas Learn, with an accompanying downloadable version. It was modelled on an existing NHS England resource, which the project team substantially adapted to fit NES's needs. It consists of twelve chapters, which are based on topics covered in the NHS England resource:

NES Our Way	Managing attendance
Recruiting, onboarding, movers and leavers	Having difficult conversations
Hybrid flexible working	Equality, diversity and inclusion
Wellbeing matters	Helping people to perform well
Managing change	Staff experience and engagement
Health and safety	Developing yourself as a manager

The primary sponsor of the Handbook is the Director of Workforce, with the support of the Heads of Service for HR and Organisational Development, Leadership and Learning (ODLL).

Ambition

The ambition for the Handbook is that it is a practical, go-to source of knowledge and skills and the resource of choice that NES managers reach for when they need line management help or advice.

Aims

The aim of the Handbook is to help managers in these ways:

1. Clearly set out what NES's expectations of line managers are around areas such as values and behaviours, staff engagement and development, managing performance, and having difficult conversations

2. Develop managers' skills and knowledge in those areas by signposting them to research, advice and guidance from experts, industry bodies and other managers

3. Use aims 1 and 2 as a means of helping managers feel more confident that they are effective, competent and capable

Strategic fit

The Handbook also fits with the following NES strategic goals for management development:

- The Ways of Working & Property [workstream](#) includes greater support for line managers.

- The NES Organisational Development [Plan](#), Theme 2 is about cultivating our capabilities. "We will achieve this by developing a range of leadership and management development tools, support and learning through our first line manager's network".

Further support

Simply handing managers a resource and expecting them to use it is unrealistic and unhelpful. So, one-hour support sessions will be provided for each chapter. The intention is to use these sessions to help managers feel encouraged and supported, and address questions, issues and feedback they might have. We will use that to adjust and refine the Handbook content, so that the resource feels more comprehensive. The sessions will be facilitated by a member of the Internal Learning and Development Team, along with colleagues who are experts in the topic area that the chapter covers, such as HR, Staff Side and E&D.

How does the Handbook support mainstreaming of the Public Sector Equality Duty?

The Handbook is intended to provide a comprehensive education and learning resource for managers, which includes consideration around how NES can eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equity of opportunity and promote good relations.

The chapter 'Equality, diversity and inclusion' was designed in partnership with the NES Equality, Diversity and Inclusion team and promotes key messages from NES about equality, diversity, and inclusion as a whole; the expectations of managers, employees, HR, Internal Learning & Development; signposting and resources to support learning.

The chapter 'NES Our Way' promotes the values and behaviours that NES wants to see from its managers and staff, including encouraging good practice in equality, diversity and inclusion.

Other chapters promote the NES staff equality networks, best practice standards in NES recruitment, and the NES corporate objectives around anti-racism and completion of essential learning (which includes an equality and diversity e-module).

How does the Handbook support the NES Equality Outcomes?

We believe the Handbook supports Equality Outcomes 4a) and 8 a) and c).

Equality Outcome 4a)

Outcome 4: We will continue to enhance the inclusivity of education and training programmes for disabled learners in NHS Scotland through:

a. Expanding the availability of technology enhanced learning which reflects best practice in accessibility and increases flexibility in learning opportunities.

How the Handbook supports Equality Outcome 4a):

To ensure greater reach and accessibility to the Handbook, the content is online on Turas, and support sessions for each chapter will be delivered online via Teams. The support sessions will also be recorded and added to the Handbook support pages on Turas. In-house content such as slides are compliant with accessibility guidelines, and an accessible PDF version of the Handbook is available and downloadable.

Having the Handbook on Turas will ensure it is available to all staff, not just managers. We feel this is important because it has information, guidance and resources which will be relevant and useful to everyone. For example, the 'Hybrid flexible working' chapter talks about the expectations of both line managers and staff and gives suggestions about how both sides can have a positive and productive conversation about hybrid flexible working.

Equality Outcome 8 a) and c)

Equality Outcome 8: NES is an inclusive employer, with:

a. Effective employee voice, including staff networks with effective influence on policy.

c. An adaptable and flexible workforce with positive support for staff wellbeing.

How the Handbook supports Equality Outcomes 8 a) and c)

- The 'Staff experience and engagement' chapter emphasizes the importance of positive staff engagement. It promotes the national staff experience 'iMatter' questionnaire. It also promotes the varying means of staff support available, including staff networks such as the parents and carers network, and the various staff equality networks.
- The 'Wellbeing matters' chapter highlights the variety of ways in which staff can develop their resilience and wellbeing, and the fact that different methods will suit different people.
- The 'Hybrid flexible working' chapter promotes best practice in implementing hybrid working. Results from the NES staff survey in June 2022 (see the NES Board papers for March 2023, page 179, bullet 4) show that a hybrid flexible working model is having a positive impact on staff experience. The majority of staff feel it is beneficial but most improvement is found by employees with disabilities, those in the youngest age-group and teams that work across numerous office locations. NES' approach to flexible working is also encouraging those from further afield in the UK to apply and be recruited.

Evidence
What was the driver behind the Handbook?

NES has not had anything equivalent to this resource before. It was put together by a project team made up seven Internal Learning and Development colleagues, three HR colleagues, and one E&D colleague.

The primary sponsor of the Handbook is the Director of Workforce, with the support of the Heads of Service for HR and Organisational Development, Leadership and Learning (ODLL). The experience of these colleagues was that NES managers, especially new ones, were lacking sufficient guidance and support in best management practice. This was having a negative impact

on staff being managed, and on colleagues (HR in particular) who were having to spend more time and resources than expected in providing guidance and support.

Who was consulted?

The chapters in the Handbook are the same or similar to those in the NHS England resource. This seemed sensible, given that NHS England's greater resources allowed it to consult more extensively than NES could have done. NHS England had the support and engagement of:

- Expert reference groups
- 370 line managers and HR & OD colleagues across NHS England
- The NHS Leadership Academy
- CIPD and Staff Partnership Forums

In terms of NES, the Handbook project team included representation from Internal Learning and Development, HR, and the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion team.

The project team needed other managers to feedback on the content, so a 'Critical Friends' group of eighteen current and former managers was established. The managers approached to form this group:

- Included Staff Side representation
- Were a mixture of new and experienced managers
- Had been willing previously to provide feedback about Internal L&D initiatives
- Represented most NES Directorates (we were able to find representatives for every Directorate except Psychology, and Planning and Performance)

A lead author / coordinator from the project team was identified for each chapter. They liaised with content experts (such as HR, E&D, Health and Safety) to design content. They then liaised with the Critical Friends group to get feedback on that content, and made amendments where needed.

A full review of the Handbook was carried out by three Critical Friends and two senior members of the project team. Their feedback was reviewed and incorporated into the final product.

Gaps

The Critical Friends group did include some members of the NES staff equality networks, but more active consultation would have been beneficial.

Assessment

A Fairer Scotland Assessment requires public authorities to actively consider how they can reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage when making strategic decisions. The project team felt this aspect was not applicable to the Handbook, so a Fairer Scotland Assessment has not been carried out.

We have considered how this work will impact on the Public Sector Equality Duty. This includes how it might affect people differently, taking account of protected characteristics and how these intersect, including with poverty and low income. This is important as a national NHS Board in our work to address health inequalities. We have also considered children's rights where appropriate and our role as a corporate parent.

Protected Characteristic / Population Group	Positive / Negative / Neutral Impact	Rational
Age • *Children/Young People – including consideration of children's rights.* • *Adults* • *Older age groups*	Positive	We recognise that age may impact experience of resources and learning. We have provided a range of resources and formats for the Handbook to mitigate this. The content is online on Turas. Support sessions for each chapter will be delivered online via Teams and will be recorded and added to the Handbook support pages for self-access. In-house content such as slides are compliant with accessibility guidelines, and a PDF version of the Handbook is available and downloadable. Where case studies are included, we've provided examples that try to represent a range of age groups and situations. We will seek feedback about the Handbook through the chapter support sessions and will make amendments to support learners in response to that. No impact on children's rights is anticipated.
Disability (*incl. physical/ sensory/ learning disabilities, neurodiversity, communication needs, mental health)*	Positive	We recognise that disability may impact experience, impact and preferred formats for resources and learning. We will continue to review the Handbook resources against accessibility guidelines and provide a range of formats to accommodate different needs and preferences. To ensure greater reach and accessibility, the Handbook content is online on Turas. Support sessions for each chapter will be delivered online via Teams and will be recorded and added to the Handbook support pages. In-house content such as slides are compliant with accessibility guidelines, and an accessible PDF version of the Handbook is available and downloadable. The chapter 'Equality, diversity and inclusion' was designed by the NES Equality, Diversity and Inclusion team, and promotes key messages from NES about the expectations of manager around equality, diversity, and inclusion in general. This includes disability. We will seek feedback about the Handbook through the chapter support sessions and through other feedback mechanisms and will make amendments to support learners in response to that.

Pregnancy and Maternity	Positive	The chapter 'Recruiting, onboarding, movers and leavers' promotes best practice in recruitment. It emphasises the Values Based Recruitment (VBR) approach that NES takes to recruitment, and the importance of inclusive behaviour from recruiting managers. For example, there is guidance on which interview question topics are unacceptable in regard to age; disability; race; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; religion and belief; sex; and sexual orientation.
		The chapter 'Managing attendance' was designed in partnership with HR, and highlights key policy areas such as maternity, shared parental leave, and return-to-work plans, highlighting best practices and legal requirements.
		The chapter 'NES Our Way' promotes the values and behaviours that NES wants to see from its managers and staff, including encouraging good practice in equality, diversity and inclusion in general. This includes pregnancy and maternity.
		No additional impact is anticipated for this protected characteristic.
Marriage/civil partnership (Protected characteristic in relation to employment)	Positive	The chapter 'Recruiting, onboarding, movers and leavers' promotes best practice in recruitment. It emphasises the Values Based Recruitment (VBR) approach that NES takes to recruitment, and the importance of inclusive behaviour from recruiting managers. For example, there is guidance on which interview question topics are unacceptable in regard to age; disability; race; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; religion and belief; sex; and sexual orientation.
		The chapter 'Promoting equality, diversity and inclusion' was designed by the NES Equality, Diversity and Inclusion team, and promotes key messages from NES about the expectations of manager around equality, diversity, and inclusion in general. This includes marriage / civil partnership.
		No additional impact is anticipated for this protected characteristic.
Gender Reassignment	Neutral	The chapter 'Recruiting, onboarding, movers and leavers' promotes best practice in recruitment. It emphasises the Values Based Recruitment (VBR)

		approach that NES takes to recruitment, and the importance of inclusive behaviour from recruiting managers. For example, there is guidance on which interview question topics are unacceptable in regard to age; disability; race; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; religion and belief; sex; and sexual orientation.
		The chapter 'Promoting equality, diversity and inclusion' was designed by the NES Equality, Diversity and Inclusion team, and promotes key messages from NES about the expectations of manager around equality, diversity, and inclusion in general.
		No additional impact is anticipated for this protected characteristic but given sensitivity and media discourse, communication and stakeholder feedback will be key to make sure the programme does not cause harm by perpetuating any stereotypes or prejudices.
Race/Ethnicity	Positive	The chapter 'Recruiting, onboarding, movers and leavers' promotes best practice in recruitment. It emphasises the Values Based Recruitment (VBR) approach that NES takes to recruitment, and the importance of inclusive behaviour from recruiting managers. For example, there is guidance on which interview question topics are unacceptable in regard to age; disability; race; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; religion and belief; sex; and sexual orientation.
		The chapter 'Promoting equality, diversity and inclusion' was designed by the NES Equality, Diversity and Inclusion team, and promotes key messages from NES about the expectations of manager around equality, diversity, and inclusion in general. This includes race / ethnicity.
		No additional impact is anticipated for this protected characteristic but given sensitivity and media discourse, communication and stakeholder feedback will be key to make sure the Handbook does not cause harm by perpetuating any stereotypes or prejudices.
Religion/Faith (including none)	Neutral	The chapter 'Recruiting, onboarding, movers and leavers' promotes best practice in recruitment. It emphasises the Values Based Recruitment (VBR) approach that NES takes to recruitment, and the

		importance of inclusive behaviour from recruiting managers. For example, there is guidance on which interview question topics are unacceptable in regard to age; disability; race; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; religion and belief; sex; and sexual orientation.
		The chapter 'Promoting positive staff experience and engagement' emphasizes the importance of positive staff engagement.
		No additional impact is anticipated for this protected characteristic.
Sex	Neutral	The chapter 'Recruiting, onboarding, movers and leavers' promotes best practice in recruitment. It emphasises the Values Based Recruitment (VBR) approach that NES takes to recruitment, and the importance of inclusive behaviour from recruiting managers. For example, there is guidance on which interview question topics are unacceptable in regard to age; disability; race; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; religion and belief; sex; and sexual orientation.
		The chapter 'Promoting positive staff experience and engagement' emphasizes the importance of positive staff engagement.
		No additional impact is anticipated for this protected characteristic.
Sexual Orientation	Neutral	The chapter 'Recruiting, onboarding, movers and leavers' promotes best practice in recruitment. It emphasises the Values Based Recruitment (VBR) approach that NES takes to recruitment, and the importance of inclusive behaviour from recruiting managers. For example, there is guidance on which interview question topics are unacceptable in regard to age; disability; race; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; religion and belief; sex; and sexual orientation.
		The chapter 'Promoting positive staff experience and engagement' emphasizes the importance of positive staff engagement, and promotes the varying means of support available, such as the various staff equality networks.

		'NES Our Way' promotes the values and behaviours that NES wants to see from its managers and staff, including encouraging good practice in equality, diversity and inclusion in general. No additional impact is anticipated for this protected characteristic.
Socio-economic status	Neutral	None of the identified resources focus on socio-economic status, although this could be an area for future research.
Different sectors	Neutral	The Handbook is for the health and social care workforce in NES. It is primarily for NES managers, but also accessible by all NES staff via Turas. The intention in the future is to widen access to the Handbook to staff from other Boards and potentially HSCPs.

Next Steps

The Equality Impact Assessment has informed the following actions:

- For future development of the Handbook, focussed consultation is needed with representatives of the NES staff equality networks
- Continued consultation with stakeholders, including HR, Staff Side and E&D, to include diverse perspectives throughout the delivery of the Handbook
- The commitment to review all signposted and developed Handbook resources for accessibility, inclusion best practices and links to relevant support where needed
- Evaluation will be key to measure impact. We will gather feedback and run evaluation throughout the implementation of the Handbook and will provide reporting at six months and one-year intervals. We will review the impact assessment alongside this reporting

Sign-off

Director: Janice Gibson

Date: 13th November 2024