



London Ambulance Service **NHS**
NHS Trust

Equality & Inclusion Strategy 2010-13

DOCUMENT PROFILE and CONTROL.

Purpose of the document: To ensure compliance by the Trust with current and forthcoming equalities legislation and to provide a framework for the Trust's work on equality & inclusion from 2010 to 2013, following extensive consultation since 2009.

Sponsor Department: HR Department

Author/Reviewer: Director of HR. To be reviewed by April 2014.

Document Status: Final

Amendment History			
Date	*Version	Author/Contributor	Amendment Details
5 th May 2010	1	Equality & Inclusion Manager	New generic equality & inclusion strategy
5 th October 2011	2	Equality & Inclusion Manager	Updated strategy in line with Equality Act 2010

***Version Control Note:** All documents in development are indicated by minor versions i.e. 0.1; 0.2 etc. The first version of a document to be approved for release is given major version 1.0. Upon review the first version of a revised document is given the designation 1.1, the second 1.2 etc. until the revised version is approved, whereupon it becomes version 2.0. The system continues in numerical order each time a document is reviewed and approved.

For Approval By:	Date Approved	Version
Equality & Inclusion Steering Group	30 th April 2010	1.0
SMG	12 th May 2010	1.0
SMG	12 th October 2011	2.0.

Agreed by Trust Board (If appropriate):		
	25 th May 2010	

Published on:	Date	By	Dept
The Pulse	Version 1 - June 2010 Version 2 – January 2012	Equality & Inclusion Manager	HR
LAS Website	Version 1 - June 2010 Version 2 – January 2012	Equality & Inclusion Manager	HR
Announced on:	Date	By	Dept
EqiA completed on		By	
27th April 2010		Equality & Inclusion Manager & project team, including critical friend	
Staffside reviewed on		By	
6 th May 2010		Eric Roberts/Peter Hannell	

LINKs to Related documents or references providing additional information		
Ref. No.	Title	Version

Document Status: This is a controlled record as are the document(s) to which it relates. Whilst all or any part of it may be printed, the electronic version maintained in P&P-File

remains the controlled master copy. Any printed copies are neither controlled nor substantive.

1. Introduction – the introduction is at page 12.

2. Scope - the strategy is aimed at all staff and for the attention of our patients, service users, stakeholders and staff side partners. It covers the aims and activities the Trust has to take forward in its equality & inclusion work from 2010 – 2013.

3. Objectives

1. Ensure Trust compliance with current and forthcoming equalities legislation
2. address multiple discrimination & health inequalities
3. promote equality of opportunity and access to services for traditionally disadvantaged communities
4. adopt a holistic approach to developing and providing services to a diverse community
5. embed an understanding of and adherence to Human Rights
6. continue to improve the representation of the Trust workforce to reflect the diversity of London
7. develop Trust staff so they can deliver high quality service
8. involve our patients, service users, stakeholders and partners in the ongoing activity and review of the strategy

4. Responsibilities

London Ambulance Service Trust Board

London Ambulance Service NHS Trust is managed by our Trust Board, which comprises a non-executive chairperson, five executive directors (including our Chief Executive) and six non-executive directors, including representation from our LINKs. Our Trust Board ensures that the Trust's direction and vision enables it to carry out its statutory equality & inclusion responsibilities. The Trust receives an Annual Equality Report, detailing progress across all the functions of the Trust.

Senior Management Team

Our Senior Management Team ensures that the appropriate organisational frameworks are in place for staff to carry out their responsibilities under equalities legislation, with all necessary resources available for implementing action plans. The Annual Equality Report goes to Senior Management Team for comment, prior to submission to the Trust Board.

Equality & Inclusion Steering Group

This new Equality & Inclusion Steering Group, comprising the heads of all the key functions and services in the Trust, representatives from the Trade Unions and existing Patients' Forum/LINKs representatives and Foundation Trust members and governors when in place, has been established to oversee the Trust's work on Equality & Inclusion. The Steering Group is chaired by the Assistant Director, Equality & Organisation Development, who is the Trust's Senior Champion for equality & inclusion.

All Trust staff

It is the responsibility of all Trust staff to ensure that they actively contribute to the equality & inclusion goals of the Trust

Governance

The Trust's Quality Committee, which is a sub-committee of the Trust Board, receives regular Equality & Inclusion reports from the Equality & Inclusion Manager. Annual reports on the progress of the new Equality & Inclusion Strategy are also submitted to the Quality Committee.

The Assistant Director, Equality & Organisation Development, acts as the Senior Management Champion for all equality & inclusion initiatives within the Trust, and chairs the Equality & Inclusion Steering Group, which is made up of all the Directors and Heads of Service in the Trust. The Equality & Inclusion Team, comprising the Equality & Inclusion Manager and one Equality & Inclusion Officer, are responsible for providing the specialist resource on all equality & inclusion matters, providing guidance to Directors and managers on best practice and legal compliance. The Equality & Inclusion Manager is a member of the Trust's new Equality & Inclusion Steering Group, Strategic Steering Group and the Patient Public Involvement Committee.

The Quality Committee provides the scrutiny and focus for equality & inclusion issues, with the Director of Human Resources, Caron Hitchen, providing the executive lead within the Trust for this function.

5. Definitions

The glossary at Appendix 4 of the Strategy sets out the meaning of terms used in the context of the document where required for clarity.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Intended audience	All LAS staff, patients, service users, staffside and other partners
Dissemination	Available to all staff on the Pulse and to the public on the LAS website as well as in alternative formats and community languages, as required.
Communications	New generic Equality & Inclusion Strategy to be announced in the RIB and a link provided to the document.
Training	Training to be provided as indicated in Appendix 1 – Equality & Inclusion Strategy Action Plan.
Monitoring	To be monitored annually through the Equality & Inclusion Steering Group and reviewed formally by April 2013.



London Ambulance Service 
NHS Trust

EQUALITY & INCLUSION STRATEGY 2010-2013

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FOREWORD BY CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND CHAIRMAN

The London Ambulance Service NHS Trust is committed to promoting equality, inclusion and human rights, tackling discrimination and promoting the rights of the many and diverse communities we serve. The new Equality Act 2010 places a duty on the Trust, in common with all public bodies, to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, and foster good relations between people of different protected characteristic groups and none. It places a responsibility on the Trust to deliver and promote services which are accessible and appropriate for all. We are committed to providing the best healthcare, equal at the point of access, and excellent opportunities for our staff.

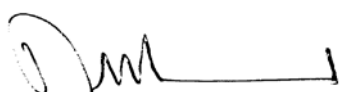
In order to ensure that we are doing just this, we have created and published a new Equality & Inclusion Strategy, covering the years from 2010 to 2013. This strategy, building on the work of our previous Race, Disability and Gender Equality Schemes, shows how we will promote inclusive services, make our decision making accessible to and inclusive of all and engage proactively with our diverse communities and eliminate unlawful discrimination in regard to age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation, as well as multiple discrimination. Our strategy contains an integrated and comprehensive action plan, created by service users, staff and members of the community, endorsed and supported by our Trust Board.

The London Ambulance Service NHS Trust also takes seriously its responsibility to work with other statutory sector partners, including other NHS Trusts and local authorities, to ensure a seamless approach to promoting equality, fairness and respect for all.

We will monitor and review our new Equality & Inclusion Strategy in partnership with our many stakeholders, other service providers, staff side partners, patients and service users from our diverse communities.

The Equality & Inclusion Strategy is a major element of our commitment to equality and inclusion. Our strategy and action plans are continually under review and the views of our individual staff, patients, service users and partners are always welcome to ensure our ongoing development and progress.

I am fully supportive of this Equality & Inclusion Strategy as a means of ensuring our services and policies meet the needs of all our diverse patients and service users, staff and other stakeholders.



CHAIR



CHIEF EXECUTIVE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Like every other public body in the United Kingdom, London Ambulance Service NHS Trust has a duty under the Equality Act 2010 to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, and to foster good relations between people of different protected characteristic groups and none. Our new Equality & Inclusion Strategy covers three years – from 2010 to 2013. It takes forward the progress made through our Race, Disability and Gender Equality Schemes and extends our actions to cover the other protected characteristic groups.

This is our first Equality & Inclusion Strategy and this document describes how we will fulfil our moral, social and legal obligations in regard to employment and training, service delivery, engagement and decision making.

We value and celebrate diversity but aim to do this in an inclusive and holistic way, in which all our staff have the responsibility of participating in our goals and improving our services to our patients and stakeholders.

The key aims of our strategy are to:

- provide first-class health care to all our diverse patients and service users
- become an employer of choice, attracting the best and talented people from all backgrounds
- ensure our procurement practices enable us to use our buying power as a driver for promoting equality

We have set up a new Director-level Equality & Inclusion Steering Group, whose membership includes the Head of Governance, to oversee the progress on our new strategy; this steering group also includes staff side and patient representation.

We have a rigorous equality analysis procedure (Appendix 6) and have highlighted the policies, procedures and functions to be equality analysed over the next three years (Appendix 5).

The Trust has recently joined all seven of the leading employer equality forums, underscoring our commitment to equality of opportunity for all our staff, patients, service users and stakeholders.

We will actively involve all our stakeholders in the ongoing development, monitoring and review of our new strategy. Annual reports on the progress of this strategy will go to Senior Management Team and the Trust Board.

We have consulted with our patients groups, service users, staff and other stakeholders through a wide range of ways over a fourteen-week consultation period, including at our Patient Care Conference 2010.

We welcome feedback on our new strategy and particularly the priorities for action expressed by our stakeholders, which we will aim to address through our new Equality & Inclusion Strategy Action Plan.

INTRODUCTION

London Ambulance Services NHS Trust

Who we are

We are the busiest ambulance service in the UK, providing free healthcare to patients at the time they receive it. We provide this care to the over seven and a half million people living in the capital, as well as visitors and commuters. Our workforce has grown to just over 5,000 staff, drawn from the richly diverse communities of our capital city.

The area we cover is roughly 620 square miles, from Heathrow in the west to Upminster in the east, from Enfield in the north to Purley in the southwest. In all our work we work closely with other London healthcare professional and with London hospitals, as well as with the other emergency services. London Ambulance Service plays a central/vital role in the emergency response to major or large-scale incidents in the capital.

What we do

Emergencies - Getting to patients faster

We respond to emergency 999 calls, providing prompt medical help to patients with serious or life-threatening injuries or illnesses. In 2009 we handled 1,348,698 emergency 999 calls from across London and attended almost one million patients.

On average we receive 865 life-threatening calls every day, and these patients need help as quickly as possible. Since the beginning of 2008 we have been training volunteers in local

communities in basic life-saving skills so they are able to attend incidents and provide initial treatment to patients while an ambulance is on its way.

We have invested in a wide range of resources to help us respond more quickly, e.g. fast response cars motorcycles and bicycles, which means we can navigate London's busy roads, narrow streets and pedestrian areas much quicker than in an ambulance.

We continue to improve the care we provide to our patients with life-threatening injuries or illnesses. One area we are particularly proud of is our care for patients who have suffered a cardiac arrest (when a major blood vessel supporting the heart muscle is broken) or heart attack (when the heart stops). London Ambulance Service was the first ambulance service in the country to bypass local hospitals to convey heart attack patients to specialist centres. This has now been adopted nationally, wherever appropriate. To improve cardiac arrest survival, we have led a programme in conjunction with the British Heart Foundation to place defibrillators in public places and provided the training required, as evidence suggests that good quality CPR and prompt defibrillation saves lives; this have been reflected in our improved cardiac arrest survival figures.

Stroke is the second highest cause of death and the most common cause of adult disability in London.

On care for stroke patients, we are working closely with other healthcare agencies to help us to improve the care of patients suffering a stroke in the capital. We will soon be able to take patients directly to special centres known as a hyper-acute stroke unit where the correct life-saving treatment can be given immediately. In February 09 we were involved in a Department of Health campaign to highlight the FAST (Face, Arm, Speech, Time to call 999) test, which allows people to recognize the symptoms of stroke, meaning they can react immediately and dial 999, leading to a likely better outcome.

We are constantly developing our services to provide more targeted care to the many different needs of our patients, whether they have life-threatening illnesses, less serious but complex conditions or minor medical conditions for which they still need advice or treatment. Our aim is to build on our existing strengths of being a healthcare organisation which is mobile and operating across the whole of London non-stop 24 hours a day. Details of how we are aiming to achieve this are set out in our Strategic Plan (2006/7-2012/13), which shows where we want to be in 2013. We aim to move away from the "one size fits all" service to one where all our patients receive excellent care tailored to their diverse needs.

But we also provide a wide range of care to patients with long-term medical conditions or complex health problems and need a different type of care from in a hospital.

Providing advice over the telephone and urgent care

When patients who have less serious injuries or conditions first make a 999 call to our control room, our call-takers assess their needs by asking a sequence of key questions. Those calls which do not need an immediate ambulance response are passed on to our clinical telephone advice team, who determine what the best course of treatment is for the patient. This could be being cared for at home or being referred to the local pharmacy, GP or walk-in centre.

Providing patient care at home

We have a dedicated team of emergency care practitioners, paramedics with advanced training to assess and provide treatment if patients do not need or want to go to hospital. The calls these staff respond to are specially selected and are generally less urgent 999 calls which may be complex enough to need a face-to-face assessment rather than telephone advice but not to require a trip to hospital. The emergency care practitioners can provide medication plans, make referrals or if necessary transport patients to a GP surgery or a minor injury unit.

Clinical support desk

We have a newly established clinical support desk, staffed by experienced paramedics, who provide advice and guidance to frontline staff with patient-related clinical problems. Some of the most frequent reasons for these calls include issues linked to whether a patient is able to consent to treatment, specialised medicines and the care of dying patients.

Providing pre-arranged patient transport

As well as our 999 service, we offer pre-arranged transport, taking our patients to and from their hospital appointments. In comparison to our 999 service, which is available to all Londoners, our Patient Transport Service operates on a contract basis with individual London hospitals. During the year we won eight new hospital contracts and our total number of contracts now stands at 28. To ensure that we can offer an increasingly improved service, we have helped our staff in this service attain further qualifications in road passenger transport.

Emergency Planning

As London's Ambulance Service, we need to be prepared to deal with all kinds of large-scale incidents and have dealt with many major ones over recent years. One of the most difficult challenges we have ever faced was the London bombings of July 2005.

During such a large-scale incident we work very closely with the other emergency services to save lives. When a major incident occurs, we ensure that:

- London hospitals are on high-alert to receive incoming patients
- An efficient on-site system is established to treat and prioritise patients according to their medical needs
- People who are injured are treated, stabilised and cared for
- Patients requiring further treatment are taken to hospital

To ensure our constant preparedness, we regularly review and test our Major Incident Plan (you can read about our plan on our website).

Our bed-finding service

During the last year we began to record information on where there were available hospital beds ready on arrival for our patients, thus minimising the time and any discomfort involved

in their transportation. This initiative builds on our national intensive care bed register for critical care beds in three quarters of England. We also help with neonatal transfers and act as a coordinator for the Neo-natal Transfer Service in London, Kent, Surrey and Sussex, which transports sick babies between hospitals. We manage around 10,000 referrals a year for NHS professionals, helping them to find beds and arrange transport for their acutely ill patients.

Providing a wide range of customised services

We contractually review the care we give to our patient groups. For example, we have over 100 frequent callers London-wide who make repeated 999 emergency calls. These callers have a significant impact on our service, but often genuinely need help in accessing alternative care, so we work with these patients in conjunction with relevant health and social care professionals to find more appropriate help for them.

Assisting patients with alcohol-related illnesses and injuries

We deal with over 60,000 calls a year for patients who are ill or injured because of alcohol. Handling these calls (now over 6% of our workload) puts a strain on our service and potentially diverts our resources away from people with life-threatening conditions. Knowing that Fridays and Saturdays are the busiest for alcohol-related calls, we run an alternative response vehicle, the “Booze Bus,” to attend specifically to patients who are drunk, saving our other ambulances for more serious calls.

Vulnerable children and adults

We have undertaken considerable work to enhance the reporting of any incidents involving children and vulnerable adults as well as improving communications with other relevant agencies. At a local level, we have safeguarding lead officers, responsible for liaising with the local authority, Primary Care Trust and Safeguarding Board. Our responsibility is to ensure that any concerns we have are passed on to the relevant agency so they can take appropriate action.

We are also about to develop a Learning Disability & Mental Health Strategy for the Trust, linking in with key London-wide and national stakeholders.

Specialised individual treatment protocols for patients

Since 2000 patients or their supervising clinician have been able to contact us to request a specific treatment or drug that we don't normally use to be carried out, or for them to be taken to a preferred place of care. This benefits patients such as those awaiting organ transplants where they have special machines to assist organ functions that need to be handled in a specific way and children who have complex seizure patterns and require drugs which are not in normal ambulance practice.

The Trust has been specifically recognised by the Department of Health for our system for recording clinical care plans for patients who are at the end of their lives. More detail on the wide range of services the Trust offers can be found in our Annual Report .

AIMS OF OUR NEW EQUALITY & INCLUSION POLICY

We have an ambitious aim to address all the needs of our communities who have been traditionally disadvantaged or treated less favourably on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

Our new Equality & Inclusion Policy below sets out our commitment to ensure:

- Our services are targeted to the needs of all our patients and service users and of a world-class standard
- Our policies and procedures have no adverse impact and actively promote equality of opportunity and access
- Our decision making processes are accessible and welcoming of all
- Our workforce is representative at all levels of our diverse community and in all occupations and tenures

Our new Equality & Inclusion Policy, together with our new Equality & Inclusion Strategy, sets out clearly what our service users can expect from the Trust as a health service provider, employer, procurer of goods and services and decision making body.

LONDON AMBULANCE SERVICE NHS TRUST EQUALITY & INCLUSION POLICY

London Ambulance Service NHS Trust wholeheartedly welcomes its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. Our aim in this Trust is to ensure that equality & inclusion is embedded and absolutely integral to everything we do. To this end we have also adopted the Social Model of Disability.

We welcome people to the Trust from any background, who are committed to providing an excellent service to the richly diverse communities we serve. As the ambulance service for London, we have a very diverse community of patients, service users and staff. Our aim is to become a world-class ambulance service for London, providing innovative and responsive healthcare which meets the needs of all our diverse community, providing better healthcare for all.

It is the Trust policy that everyone should be treated fairly and without discrimination. Specifically, we aim to ensure that:

- patients and service users receive fair and equal access to our healthcare service
- everyone is treated with dignity and respect
- staff experience fairness and equality of opportunity and treatment in their workplace.

All Trust staff are expected to promote these values at all times and behaviour that does not meet this exacting standard is dealt with promptly and rigorously.

As a provider of healthcare to the people living, working in and visiting our capital city, London Ambulance Service seeks to provide state of the art care, which addresses the individual needs of our diverse patients and service users. We aim to ensure that:

- our patients and service users are aware of our services and that those services are accessible to all
- our governance arrangements are welcoming and inclusive of all
- our public buildings and information are accessible to all
- we enable all our diverse communities in London to be involved in the development and monitoring of our policies and services

As an employer, we aim to become an employer of choice for those who want to make London a safer and healthier place for all, attracting the best and talented people from all walks of lives to rewarding and challenging career opportunities, where they can develop their potential to the benefit of their fellow staff, patients and service users. Our aim is to:

- celebrate and encourage the diversity of our workforce and to create a working environment where everyone feels included and appreciated for their work
- promote and provide our training and employment opportunities without regard to the protected characteristic background or any other aspect of an individual person's background
- foster creativeness and innovation in our working environment, to ensure that each member of staff can give of their best and move the Trust forward in its equality & inclusion goals

As a procurer of goods and services, we are committed to:

- ensuring that contractors from whom we procure goods and services are aligned with our equality & inclusion values
- actively considering supplier diversity as a key aspect in our contract management

OUR VISION AND VALUES - AT THE HEART OF EVERYTHING WE DO

We have a set of values, which demonstrate our commitment to our patients, service users, staff and stakeholders.

- Our vision is to meet the needs of the public and our patients, with staff who are well trained, caring, enthusiastic and proud of the job that they do
- Our values underpin everything we do – how we deliver our services and how we work with each other
- We believe in treating people with respect and courtesy and in valuing diversity
- We encourage communication and teamwork and expect our staff to act with integrity
- We welcome innovation and new ideas and want all our staff to provide the highest levels of care
- It is important that each and everyone of us accepts responsibility for our actions and provides leadership and direction, always leading by example

The full set of London Ambulance Service NHS Trust's Critical Values can be found at Appendix 2.

OUR NEW EQUALITY & INCLUSION STRATEGY 2010-13

London Ambulance Service NHS Trust welcomes its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 (Information about the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Duty can be found at Appendix 3)."

The Trust is committed to ensuring a level playing field for all its patients, service users and staff in regard to the exercise of all its functions. By adopting proactively a strategy which equally combats discrimination on all protected characteristic grounds and promotes equality of opportunity for all, the Trust is determined to show its leadership and corporate commitment.

By encompassing all protected characteristic groups, our new strategy is also in the best position to address multiple discrimination, which is so clearly evident in the links between economic deprivation and health inequalities our staff see on a daily basis. London is one of the most diverse cities in the world. It is also one of the most economically polarised with some of the most deprived but also some of the richest boroughs in the country. Tackling a huge range of related health inequalities is at the heart of what London Ambulance Service does. Developing an equality & inclusion strategy which aims to address directly and intelligently multiple discrimination is a key means of our promoting equality of opportunity and access to services for traditionally disadvantaged communities.

We want to adopt a holistic approach to developing and providing our services to a diverse community, whose needs differ so greatly. Respecting the dignity of all our patients and service users, staff and stakeholders is a priority for us. Within all the work of the Trust we aim to embed an understanding of and adherence to Human Rights.

We value our staff and aim to continue to improve the representation of our workforce to reflect the diversity of London and to develop all of them so that they can deliver the highest quality services.

We value the involvement of our stakeholders and partners, including our staff side partners and staff diversity forums, and are working in partnership with them to improve our policy & decision making and service delivery through a wide range of different ways, which are outlined in our Equality & Inclusion Action Plan (attached at Appendix 1).

This strategy is a living document, which we will monitor annually and invite feedback from our stakeholders on, in order to make it a strategic route map which can be owned by and is meaningful to all.

The NHS Constitution establishes the principles and values of the NHS in England. It sets out the rights to which patients, public and staff are entitled and pledges which the NHS is committed to achieving, together with any responsibilities which the public, patients and staff owe to one another to ensure that the NHS operates fairly and effectively. All NHS bodies, including London Ambulance Service NHS Trust, are required by law to take account of the NHS Constitution in their decisions and actions.

The NHS Operating Framework 2007-8 makes reducing health inequalities and establishing performance systems with an evidence-based approach, targeted action and a cycle of evaluation a key part of NHS Trust business planning. Equality & Human Rights concerns are integral to the Standards for Better Health. C7e stipulates that Trusts must “enable all members of the population to access services equally”; C6, that they should “ensure that patients’ individual needs are properly managed;” C13 that they “have systems in place to ensure that staff treat patients and relatives and carers with dignity and respect”; C17, that “the views of patients, their carers and others are sought and taken into account in designing, planning, delivering and improving healthcare services.” They are also integral to the Commissioning Framework, since appropriately designed and implemented commissioning can both reduce health inequalities and act to promote equality of access and health outcomes, and are a key intrinsic part of the National Service Frameworks, which set national standards and identify key interventions for a defined health service or care group, with frequent reference to the need to tackle health inequalities.

In 2009 our Trust Board made the decision to extend the scope of our statutory General Duties to include other protected characteristic groups in our new three-year equality & inclusion strategy. This was in keeping with the establishment of the Equality & Human Rights Commission in 2007, bringing together the previous commissions separately covering disability, gender and race. It was also in anticipation of the General Duty to be placed on public sector bodies by the forthcoming Equality Act 2010. The new Equality Act 2010 places a general duty on all public bodies to have due regard to eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimization and any other conduct prohibited by the Act; advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

As a service provider, the Trust has a duty to ensure that wherever possible everyone can use or receive its services regardless of background and that our services are appropriate to the needs of all our diverse patients and service users. As an employer, we have a legal duty to ensure that everyone has equality of opportunity in terms of employment, training and promotion. As a public body, the Trust has a duty to ensure that we engage in an open and accessible way with our diverse communities, encouraging people from protected characteristic groups to become members and Governors of our new Foundation Trust.

The Trust Board has proactively made the decision to adopt a new generic strategy. The strategy will build on past work taken forward in the separate Race Equality, Disability and Gender Equality Schemes. The Trust’s generic Equality and Inclusion Strategy, covering all the protected characteristic groups, provides a strategic framework for taking forward work across all its functions, with the aim of ensuring that the services we provide are high-quality and meet the needs of our diverse communities; our decision making is accessible and welcoming of all; and we become a workforce truly representative of the rich diversity of the people of London we serve.

IDENTIFYING RELEVANT POLICIES AND FUNCTIONS

We have assessed our policies and functions for their relevance to combating discrimination against all protected characteristic groups, promoting and delivering equality of opportunity and fostering good relations between people of protected characteristic groups and of none. We have updated our Equality Impact Assessment Procedure, now entitled Equality Analysis, to take account of the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 Public Duty. Over the next three years the identified relevant policies, procedures, functions etc. (Appendix 5) will be reviewed using our new Equality Analysis Procedure (at Appendix 6). All staff will be briefed prior to undertaking any assessment. As a key part of that procedure we are inviting our stakeholders, including representatives from our LINks and Foundation Trust members, to act as critical friends on relevant assessments. In the course of these three years any policies, procedures, functions etc. previously equality analysed but undergoing significant change will also be revisited in order to ensure that we can identify any potential adverse or positive impact on the promotion of equality and identifying unmet need and extend this approach to cover issues relating to health, sustainability and social cohesion.

Our equality analysis schedule and equality analyses will be published on the LAS website and made widely available to all our service users and stakeholders.

At the instigation of the Trust's Medical Director, Dr. Fionna Moore, and the Equality & Inclusion Manager, a new working party is being set up to provide for the first time a national approach to equality impact assessment of the JRCALC (Joint Royal Colleges Ambulance Liaison Committee) guidelines. The working party will comprise the Secretary of the JRCALC Guidelines Committee Dr. Joanna Fisher and members of the National Ambulance Diversity Forum including the Trust's Equality & Inclusion Manager. National equality impact assessment of this priority clinical guidance will for the first time lay the basis for a consistent approach by all Ambulance Services in the United Kingdom to providing high-quality, inclusive and appropriate healthcare.

COLLECTING AND EVALUATING EQUALITIES INFORMATION

The Trust will shortly be introducing a new equalities monitoring procedure, to collect valuable equalities information across all protected characteristic groups, as required by the Equality Act 2010 Public Sector Duty. The data collected will enable the Trust to identify health inequality issues more effectively and thereby improve its service delivery, policy and decision making and engagement processes. To avoid our service users and staff being asked more than once for this information, we will integrate this directly into all the functions of the Trust, as part of initial sign-up or experience of any of our services. We will explore a partnership approach to data collection with local PCTs and hospitals, building in any necessary and robust protocol for information sharing. We will share when it is appropriate this information with our partners to enable a more holistic and effective approach to healthcare provision for our patients and service users.

Through our networking with key partners and stakeholders and membership of leading employer equality forums, we will continue to build on our knowledge base of equality & inclusion issues, particularly in relation to health inequality, so that this research can actively inform all the future working of the Trust.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR DELIVERING OUR NEW EQUALITY & INCLUSION STRATEGY

The Trust has a robust management structure which is best placed to actively drive forward our ambitious equality & inclusion aspirations.

London Ambulance Service Trust Board

London Ambulance Service NHS Trust is managed by our Trust Board, which comprises a non-executive chairperson, five executive directors (including our Chief Executive) and six non-executive directors, including representation from our LINKs. Our Trust Board ensures that the Trust's direction and vision enables it to carry out its statutory equality & inclusion responsibilities. The Trust receives an Annual Equality Report, detailing progress across all the functions of the Trust.

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Our Senior Management Team ensures that the appropriate organisational frameworks are in place for staff to carry out their responsibilities under equalities legislation, with all necessary resources available for implementing action plans. The Annual Equality Report goes to Senior Management Team for comment, prior to submission to the Trust Board.

Equality & Inclusion Steering Group

This new Equality & Inclusion Steering Group, comprising the heads of all the key functions and services in the Trust, representatives from the Trade Unions and existing Patients' Forum and Foundation Trust members and governors when in place, has been established to oversee the Trust's work on Equality & Inclusion. The Steering Group is chaired by the Assistant Director, Equality & Organisation Development, who is the Trust's Senior Champion for equality & inclusion.

All Trust staff

It is the responsibility of all Trust staff to ensure that they actively contribute to the equality & inclusion goals of the Trust

Governance

The Trust's Quality Committee, which is a sub-committee of the Trust Board, receives regular Equality & Inclusion reports from the Equality & Inclusion Manager. Annual reports on the progress of the new Equality & Inclusion Strategy are also submitted to the Quality Committee.

The Assistant Director, Equality & Organisation Development, acts as the Senior Management Champion for all equality & inclusion initiatives within the Trust, and chairs the Equality & Inclusion Steering Group, which is made up of all the Directors and Heads of Service in the Trust. The Equality & Inclusion Team, comprising the Equality & Inclusion Manager and one Equality & Inclusion Officer, are responsible for providing the specialist resource on all equality & inclusion matters, providing guidance to Directors and managers on best practice and legal compliance. The Equality & Inclusion Manager is a member of the Trust's new Equality & Inclusion Steering Group, Strategic Steering Group and the Patient Public Involvement Committee.

The Quality Committee provides the scrutiny and focus for equality & inclusion issues, with the Director of Human Resources, Caron Hitchen, providing the executive lead within the Trust for this function.

The Governance Team ensures that all Trust policies and procedures are assessed for their equality impacts and these documents published on the Trust's website.

Last year in the Care Quality Commission assessment of our performance the Trust met in full all of the assessments relating to dignity and respect, which included:

- treating people with dignity and respect
- gaining consent for treatment
- correct use of information about patients
- information about how to make complaints and give feedback
- people are not discriminated against after making a complaint
- concerns are acted on appropriately and improvements are made
- information on care, treatment and local services is made available

We will not be complacent but will use this affirmative assessment as a basis to be even more proactive and holistic in our approach to equality & inclusion both within and outside the Trust.

BECOMING A FOUNDATION TRUST

The Trust has consulted our patients and community on our plans to become a Foundation Trust.

NHS Foundation trusts are a new type of NHS organisation which are run locally, and are accountable to local people and staff.

The first foundation trusts were authorised in 2004, although ambulance services were only able to apply from April this 2009.

People within the local community, staff and partner organisations can become members of the trust, and also have a greater say in how services are delivered and developed to meet the needs of local people. Members can be elected to a Council of Governors, where they will represent the interests of local communities, patients, staff and partner organisations (the Trust's Foundation Trust Membership Strategy provides the details on this).

All foundation trusts are still part of the NHS and continue to provide free care to everyone. They also have to meet national standards and targets, and are regularly inspected.

An independent regulator, [Monitor](#), oversees all foundation trusts and checks that they remain compliant with the terms under which they are authorised to operate.

We believe that becoming a foundation trust will provide real benefits for our patients, our service, our staff and organisations we work with. We want to take advantage of the benefits of being free from central government control which means that:

- patients, local people and our own staff will have a greater say and more involvement in how we are run and how we deliver care
- we will have more freedom and flexibility to develop and improve our services more quickly in partnership across the healthcare system
- we will be able to invest and innovate in services for the benefit of our patients and staff to maintain the highest standards of modern and forward-thinking healthcare and
- patients, the public, our staff and partner organisations will have more involvement in the development of our business plans.

PROVIDING HIGH-QUALITY HEALTH CARE

How we improve the services we offer

Providing a world-class ambulance service to our capital city requires from us that we go beyond the minimum to promote best practice wherever possible, while ensuring that our strict performance targets are met and wherever possible exceeded.

To ensure that the right healthcare is given and best practice followed, our Clinical Audit and Research Team examines a random sample of five percent of patient records. This enables us to give constructive feedback to staff as well as enhancing our medical practice for the future. As a matter of routine, we audit a wide range of cases including cardiac arrests, acute coronary syndrome or where there was difficulty in breathing. We have also participated in a national audit benchmarking the Trust against other ambulance services in England for the care we provide to patients with asthma, or those who have had cardiac arrest or a stroke. In 2008 we undertook a clinical audit of the care provided to obstetric patients transported to St George's, the Royal London and Homerton hospitals. This audit examined the quality of care provided to routine and emergency obstetric patients right from the initial 999 call to hospital admission. The audit findings will be used to enhance future care of such patients.

The Trust is at the forefront of developing best practice in dealing with specific injuries and illnesses. This year we obtained funding from the Stroke Association for a 2-year project, which will enable us to evaluate the best way to assess patients suspected of having a stroke. We are also nearing completion of the "Smart CPR Project", focusing on new ways to help patients whose hearts have stopped beating. As part of this project, we are collaborating with New York's Emergency Medical Service to find out whether there can be an improved rate of survival.

The Trust has been introducing new ways of working so that our patients and service users can access us as quickly and easily as possible. In 2008/9 we:

- Worked to provide a new system for answering 999 calls and sending resources to patients
- Improved our current call-handling telephone system and increased the number of call-taking positions
- Upgraded our Patient Transport Service technology systems

- Progressed plans to introduce a text-based system enabling patients and service users with speech or hearing impairments to contact us more easily
- Experienced high usage of our translation service for callers whose first language is not English. In order to ensure that the Trust has the optimum standards in its interpreting and translation services, a new policy is being drawn up, which will entail a comprehensive review of the current contract monitoring procedure and include feedback from our Patients' Forum, Local Involvement Network (LINK) and Foundation Trust members.

Continually improving our Clinical Leadership

We are transforming the local delivery of ambulance services by introducing a major change programme across our 26 ambulance station complexes by 2013. The key objective of the programme is to create on each ambulance station the perfect environment for clinical leadership to grow and flourish, improving not only the patient's experience but also the job satisfaction of all staff.

Elements of this programme include:

- The provision of local delivery of clinical development, avoiding the need for staff to travel away from their normal base
- A Community Involvement Officer with the remit to create and manage a range of alternative care pathways, providing staff with the opportunity to take their patients to the most suitable health care provision
- Enhancement of the working environment for complex staff
- Development of the leadership style employed by the local management team, leading to authentic staff engagement and satisfaction

Continually improving our response to patients & service users

We are enhancing the care we provide, reaching more patients more quickly than ever before and developing the resources, skills and equipment to allow us to do this and have:

- Introduced six more ambulance community responder volunteer schemes. Our volunteers are trained in cardio-pulmonary resuscitation and the use of defibrillators (the machine used to re-start a person's heart when it has stopped beating) so they can treat patients locally before an ambulance crew arrives
- Added 12 more vehicles to our motorcycle response scheme so we can reach patients and service users in built-up areas more quickly
- Started positioning vehicles at standby locations where our data tells us the next 999 call is likely to come from, rather than basing our crews at an ambulance station
- Recruited 618 new frontline staff in 2009-10

Preparing for the London 2012 Games

The London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games will be the biggest planned event we have ever dealt with and we need to ensure we are able to maintain our normal standards of service during this period. To make sure our planning for this major event is optimal, in 2008-9 we:

- Undertook study tours to Beijing for the 2008 summer Olympic Games and Vancouver for the test events leading up to the 2010 Winter Games
- Attended the annual British Paralympic Conference to gain a better understanding of the requirements of Paralympians
- Started work to find a suitable location for an additional ambulance station for the Games, and to identify extra control room capacity for handling 999 calls
- Determined what our required information technology needs would be and how to meet them
- Conducted further modelling work to identify and understand what the expected demand during the Games would be as well as the areas in which our staff will need to learn extra skills
- Developed operational and contingency plans for the construction phase of the Olympic Park
- Continued working closely with our partners involved in the Olympic preparations
- Acted as the UK coordinator for all ambulance services involved in the 2012 Games

As part of our preparation for the 2012 Games, new training on Serving Disabled Service users is being drawn up, which can act as a blueprint for staff training across the Trust.

ACHIEVING A WORKFORCE TO REFLECT THE COMMUNITY & BECOMING AN EMPLOYER OF CHOICE

We are committed to promoting equality and valuing diversity in everything we do as an employer. Our aspiration is that we become an employer of choice in London and nationally.

We are carrying out a range of initiatives, outlined in our Annual Equality Report, to make sure our staff better reflect our communities and that the services we provide more effectively meet the diverse needs of all our patients and stakeholders. We carry out annual reporting on employment and training, service delivery and how we engage with our workforce and our patients, service users, partners and stakeholders.

London Ambulance Service Workforce Profile

We positively welcome diversity and want to be a truly inclusive place to work. We are looking for self-motivated, enthusiastic people from all backgrounds who care about making a difference.

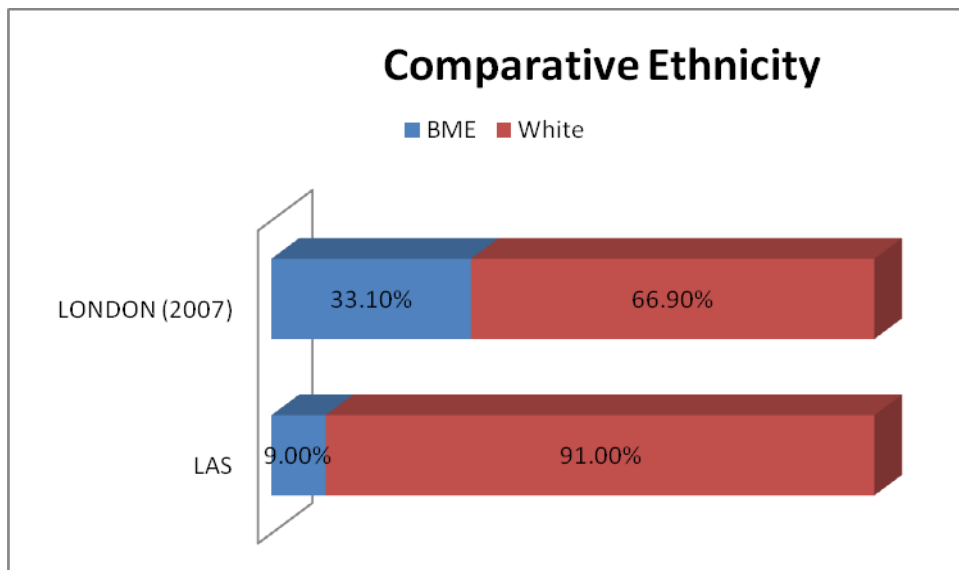
Our last Annual Equality Report (2009-10) showed that the Trust employed in excess of 5,000 staff: 9% BME staff and 41% female, the same figure as in 08-09 due to the increase

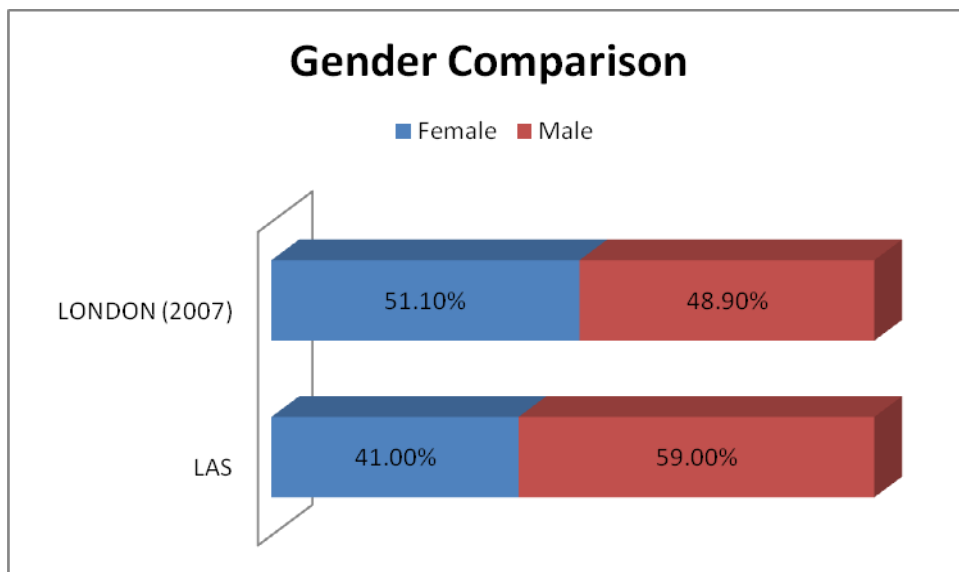
in the Trust's workforce being fairly uniform across gender/ethnicity groups. However, both percentages are still far from equal to the representation of these groups in London.

The Healthcare Commission's "Tackling the Challenge – Promoting race equality in the NHS in England" report (March 2009) estimated that BME staff represented 16% of the total workforce, with fewer than 10% of senior managers being from the black and ethnic communities. The 2009-10 report showed that 14% of our BME staff were at Senior Management Grade, almost on a par with the NHS-wide representation. This is an encouraging statistic in terms of our endeavours to promote career progression for our black and ethnic minority staff, but there is much more work to be done.

In the last year of 840 new starters to the Trust there were 8.3% black and minority ethnic staff and 46% women, which is a positive move. In the last quarter of 09-10 a third of new applicants were from the black and minority ethnic communities, so the Trust is continuing to attract applicants from a wide variety of ethnic backgrounds. The overwhelming majority of women in the service are on Band 5 level (50.6%) with only 9.4% being paid at senior grade level, which is less than the senior grade representation of black and minority ethnic staff. Specific initiatives are being planned to address this and ensure greater representation.

The charts below show for illustration the comparison in terms of ethnicity and gender of our staff vis-à-vis the most recent London population estimate (Mayor of London – The State of Equality in London Report 2008 – July 2009):



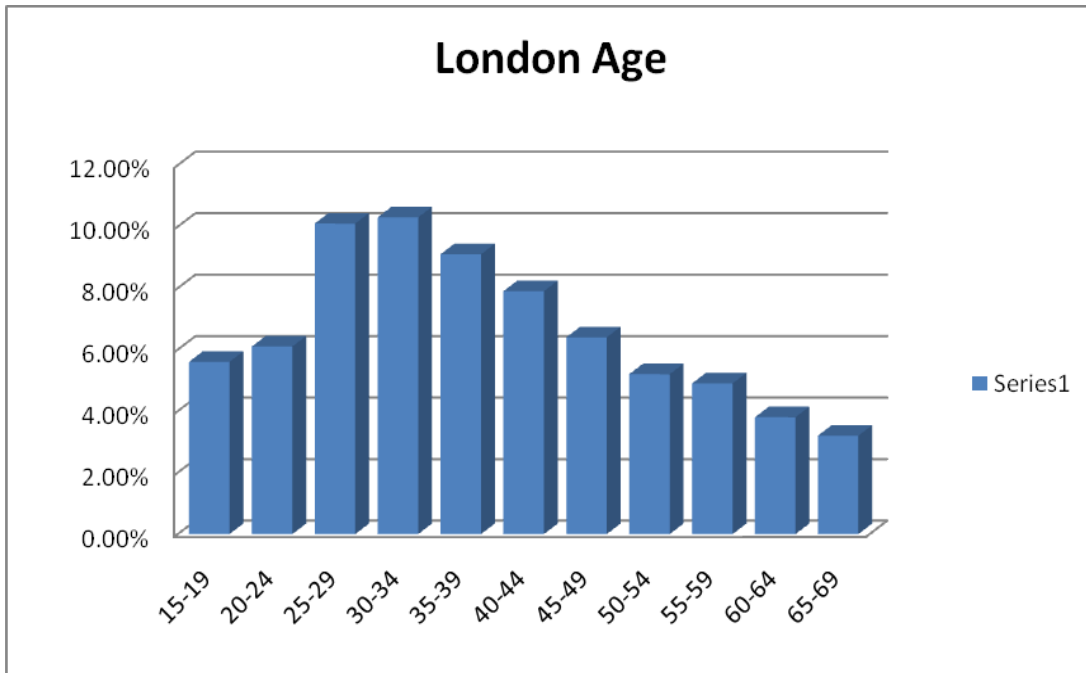


The Mayor's report gave an estimate of 14.9% disabled people of working age in London, so a large pool of potential recruits from which we can draw future staff.

The Trust is broadening its data collection systems to enable reporting across all protected characteristic groups. The Mayor's report showed that only 16% of Londoners responding did not have a religion. Sexual orientation is the only equality strand omitted from official statistics; however, recent estimates indicate that 6% of the nation is likely to be bisexual, lesbian or gay (Amendment to Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003; Full Regulatory Impact Assessment, Department of Trade and Industry, 2003) , while in London, given the preponderance of more gay couples than in the rest of the country, 10% is more likely to be an accurate estimate (Reza Arabsheibani, Alan Marin and Jonathan Wadsworth, Gay Pay in the UK, Centrepiece, Summer 2006).

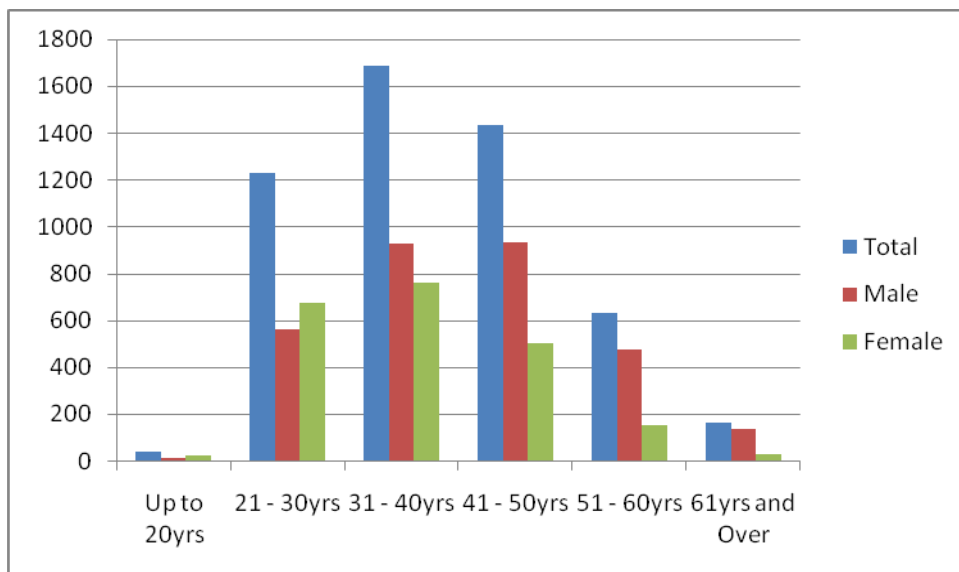
No reliable figures currently exist for the size of London's Trans community.

More work needs to be done to improve the reporting on disability status of our staff and the Trust will reinforce its positive recruitment messages with encouraging self-declaration by staff.



In London 15.4 % of people were estimated as being over 60, some of whom will be wanting to extend their working lives beyond normal retirement. The Trust employment of people over 60 following a review of the default retirement age may need to rise to reflect this. The most recent age profile of the Trust shows that on the whole our workforce is older than the population London-wide. We will look to increase our intake from younger age groups and also to the ways in which we market our career opportunities to the diverse communities within London.

LONDON AMBULANCE SERVICE STAFF BY AGE 09-10



More work also needs to be undertaken to ensure that exit interviews fully capture the reasons for anyone from an under-represented group leaving the Trust.

A major staff data cleanse exercise will also take place in the coming year to ensure that staff equalities information is up-to-date and complete and that more rigorous and comprehensive monitoring can take place throughout all employment and training. Future Annual Equality Reports will provide more rigorous and comprehensive equalities monitoring across all protected characteristic groups and over all the employment and training functions of the Trust.

Training and development

We value and celebrate the diversity of our workforce and are committed to ensuring that our workplace is inclusive and welcoming to people from all backgrounds and free from discrimination. Our belief is that if we can enable all our staff to develop their potential and to value the different perspectives of other staff, we can achieve a more creative and productive workplace, which in turn will result in improved services to all our community.

We recognize the importance for our staff to have a sound and consistent grounding of equalities legislation, so that they can not just carry out their duties in accordance with the requirements of equalities legislation, but so that they are able to perform in their roles to the best of their abilities and provide a sensitive and appropriate service to all our community (“One size does not fit all”).

We have reviewed all the equality & inclusion training in the Trust and are developing a revised training programme, which will better instil in our staff the confidence and ability to work to the highest standard with patients and service users across the diverse communities in London. Mandatory equality & inclusion training will be further embedded in all the training delivered throughout the Trust, including Induction Training, Recruitment & Selection and Managers’ Training for staff in all managerial roles throughout the Trust. A new e-learning module has been produced, to ensure that all staff have the same consistent level of awareness of their duties under equalities legislation and best practice and we will build on this through providing scenario-based training, directly addressing the types of situations our staff are likely to encounter on a day-to-day basis.

A new Recruitment Strategy is being drawn up, to ensure that people from disadvantaged groups can be identified and encouraged to apply for employment with the Trust. This will build on work already done through agencies such as Job Centres and Cite. The newly-established Joint Initiatives Group, bringing together the key consultation and involvement functions within the Trust, is pursuing a number of outreach initiatives, to promote the Trust as an employer of choice to people from the different communities in our capital; this work will be forward through our new emerging Staff Diversity Forums.

To ensure that staff in the Trust are able to provide a high-quality service to the many disabled patients and service users we have, as well as the disabled visitors to London we are expecting for the London 2012 Olympics and Paralympics, we are devising specific, targeted disability awareness training for our staff, to be co-delivered with disabled people from the leading disability organizations in the UK, the experts in the field.

In 2009 three of our staff gained places on the prestigious national programme aimed at promoting opportunities for staff from disadvantaged groups – “Breaking Through”. We are currently looking at innovative types of training to develop our staff from under-represented groups, including staff in lower grades than those currently accepted onto the national programme. A new mentoring scheme has been set up to enable people from under-represented groups to be supported in their career development. Another programme, Talent Management, has been established to ensure the potential of staff from under-represented groups can be developed to enable them to progress in their careers in the Trust.

In 2009 for the first time the Trust actively encouraged bisexual, gay and lesbian staff to put themselves forward for the Stonewall leadership programme, with possible sponsorship for study resources for any successful candidates.

Workforce support

The Trust is committed to providing a working environment free from discrimination, harassment and victimisation, whether on an individual or institutional basis on any grounds, including protected characteristic grounds. Our HR procedures are robust, reviewed regularly and key personnel trained thoroughly in the implementation of these procedures. In addition the Trust also has a LINC (Listening, Informal, Non-judgmental, Confidential) peer support scheme, which this year celebrated its fifth anniversary and was commended by the Health Professions Council. It now has 80 members of staff, who have been trained to provide support to colleagues across a wide range of issues.

Positive about Disabled People – Maintaining our Two Ticks Accreditation

The Trust has successfully maintained its Two Ticks accreditation.

The Two Ticks symbol is used by employers to show a positive commitment both to disabled staff and service users. Any organisation using the symbol needs to meet all five of the following requirements:

- To interview all applicants with a disability who meet the minimum criteria for a job vacancy and consider them on their abilities;

- To ask disabled employees at least once a year what can be done to make sure that they can develop and use their abilities at work;
- To make every effort when employees become disabled to ensure that they stay in employment;
- To take action to ensure that key employees are aware of the needs of disabled people;
- Each year to ensure they review achievements towards making the workplace welcoming and accessible for disabled people; to plan ways to improve and let all employees and service users know about this progress and future plans.

We are keen to ensure that disabled people are aware of the wide range of career opportunities available for them in the Trust. To this end, we will actively seek out the most effective media to promote ourselves as a Positive about Disabled People employer and through the Joint Initiatives group will undertake any necessary outreach work to do this.

MEMBERSHIP OF LEADING EQUALITY & INCLUSION EMPLOYERS' FORUMS & BENCHMARKING

The Trust has become a member of all seven of the leading Employers' Organizations, which demonstrates the Trust's commitment to promoting equality of opportunity and respect for diversity, as well as ensuring that the development of policy making and services across the Trust will be enhanced by best practice guidance.

The Trust is an active member of the National Ambulance Association's Diversity Network and BME Network. In 2009, for the first time, LAS submitted an application to be assessed by Stonewall against the top UK employers' organizations on its Workplace Equality Index. In its second submission to the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index the Trust increased its ranking by 130 places and will continue to benchmark itself against the leading equality and inclusion organizations in the country.

ENGAGING AND INVOLVING OUR PATIENTS & SERVICE USERS, STAFF & STAKEHOLDERS

Involving our stakeholders in producing our new strategy

We have a statutory duty to engage and involve people (including in particular disabled people) in developing our new equality & inclusion strategy. In the production of this new document we have engaged and involved a wide range of patients, service users, staff and stakeholders from different protected characteristic groups to ensure that the priorities for the Trust and the actions emanating from these are relevant and will address the concerns and needs of all the diverse communities of London.

How we will communicate with and involve our patients, service users, staff and stakeholders

LAS recently invited the Employers' Forum on Disability to provide us with a health check on the accessibility of our website. The feedback we received was that it was basically good,

but we will look at any further enhancements we can make in order to make it as optimal as possible.

A new translation & interpreting policy is being drawn up, to ensure that the highest standards are maintained in the provision of our services to service users, whose first language is not English. We will continue to ensure that all our documentation is provided on request in a variety of community languages and alternative formats.

We will be providing training for our staff to ensure that everything we produce is accessible to all our diverse communities.

We will work in close involvement with our trade union and other partners, including our staff diversity forums, to drive forward our ambitious equality & inclusion agenda.

We will work with our commissioners to ensure that our commissioning processes promote equal access and equal employment in service delivery for all and with our NHS partners to provide the most innovative and responsive healthcare possible.

Working with our communities

Our staff regularly go out and about in London's communities to raise awareness about the work of the Trust. Twenty-two members of staff who are involved in public education have completed a development programme so far and this is planned to take place twice a year from now on. The kinds of activities our staff take part in are many and various and include gun and knife crime awareness events, talking to groups of older people and going on school visits, including one to a school for blind and partially-sighted children where the aim was to reduce their fear of ambulances and sirens. Dozens of our staff have also been involved in the Junior Citizens' Scheme, teaching thousands of primary school children about what to do in an emergency and how to make a 999 call. Some staff have also been seconded to work for the Prince's Trust, which as well as benefiting the young people involved has also provided our staff with an opportunity for their own development, enhancing their skills and experience for when they come back into their core roles at the Trust.

As part of New Ways of Working/Transforming Clinical Leadership Programme Community Involvement Officers have been appointed in Barnhurst and Chase Farm to work closely with community groups, partner organizations, patients and the public. These staff also look at how we manage frequent callers and our list of addresses where previous experience suggests our staff may be at risk of physical or verbal abuse. We will be looking at the demographic data and attending local groups to identify any areas specific to the population served by the complex where additional education may be required.

We have launched our new website (www.londonambulance.nhs.uk) to raise awareness among the public of what kind of services we provide and also to advise people on what they should do in a life-threatening emergency and encourage them to apply for career opportunities with us. Around two million commuters saw our "use us wisely" message displayed on Underground posters throughout London and in local and regional newspapers. The posters were aimed at reminding people of the other healthcare options available to them instead of calling 999.

Engaging with our Patients

The Trust has a strong record of involving our patients, patients' groups and key stakeholders in the development of our services.

We are developing good relationships with Local Involvement Networks (LINKs), which have been set up in each borough to replace Patients' Forums. Their role is to find out what people want, monitor health and social care services and use their power to hold local authorities and other service providers to account and, as such, they are a key stakeholder for the Trust. A number of LINKs representatives attend the LAS Patients' Forum meetings, which create an opportunity for them to learn about the Trust's developments and feed the information back to others in their local area and forums.

The LAS Patients' Forum, although no longer a statutory body, continues as an independent entity and we remain closely engaged with it. The Equality & Inclusion Manager has attended the Patients' Forum three times so far in 2009 to report back and seek involvement on the work she has been progressing within the Trust. Once we become a Foundation Trust, we will set up ways to engage formally with our current and developing membership.

Our Patient Care Conference in 2008 had as its focus healthcare in London. One of the workshop sessions was led by a group of Year 11 pupils from Barking and Dagenham schools who undertaken a work experience project for the Trust, focusing on young people's views of us.

The Patient Care Conference held in January 2010 focused specifically on engagement. At this conference we held workshops which enabled our patients, service users, staff and other stakeholders to directly input into our new three-year Equality & Inclusion Action Plan.

The Trust was chosen to be a pilot site for a new national survey, commissioned by the Department of Health and conducted by Picker Europe. This survey looked at the experiences of patients receiving a "Category C" response (i.e. when illness or injury is reported to be neither serious nor life-threatening) from the ambulance service. The full national survey was carried out late in 2008 with 97 percent of respondents declaring that they had received a good, very good, or excellent level of care from us. 97% of patients said they felt reassured by us and 99% had trust and confidence in the staff looking after them. 97% felt treated with dignity and respect and 98% felt that staff explained their care and treatment of them in a way which was clear and comprehensible.

Finding out what our staff think

The NHS survey 2009 rated us above average for ambulance trusts on our communication between managers and staff and the number of staff having yearly appraisals. However, some feedback indicated that there was a 10 percent rise in those not receiving the training identified in their personal development plan – up to 53 percent from 43 percent. To address this, a number of staff action groups will be set up for 2009/10.

A new Staff Engagement Strategy has been drawn up and new Staff Diversity Forums, reflecting the interests of the different equality strand groups, set up, to provide formal ways of consulting and engaging with our staff and to enable our staff to have a direct influence on the Trust's policy and decision making.

ENSURING ACCESS & MONITORING COMPLAINTS

Providing accessible information

The Trust has a duty to ensure that all our patients and service users are able to access the services we provide. This may involve making reasonable adjustments to address the needs of any disabled patients or service users, making our information available in different community languages and alternative formats when requested

Complaints are an important indicator of patient and customer satisfaction with the Trust's services and can help us to identify any possible unlawful discrimination arising as well as ensure that there is continuing improvement in how we deliver our services. Our aim is to respond to any complaints we receive promptly, effectively and as fairly as possible through either formal or informal processes, to a clearly defined timescale.

Any patient-related complaints, queries and concerns about our Trust are managed through the Patient Experiences Department. This is in line with Government calls for a new, simpler process for handling complaints. The Trust was chosen by the Department of Health to take part in an early adopter programme for the "Making Experiences Count" initiative. The Trust is keen to use the feedback gleaned from patients as a learning opportunity and any changes in service made as a result of user feedback are published on website.

The Trust aims to be as open and transparent as possible and documents, minutes from meetings and reports are all available on our website and of course by request in alternative formats.

HOW WE WILL MONITOR AND REPORT ON OUR PROGRESS ON OUR NEW STRATEGY

The requirement for equalities monitoring carries with it legislative and Care Quality Commission Inspection drivers. The aim of these drivers is to develop appropriate and equitable service delivery for patients and service users and career development opportunities for staff. Specifically, NHS Trusts must demonstrate their compliance with the Equality & Diversity Standards set out by the Healthcare Commission (now Care Quality Commission).

In order for us to determine whether our policies, functions and services are achieving the aims of our new equality & inclusion strategy, we need to ensure that we have access to up-to-date, comprehensive and quantitatively and qualitatively robust information systems. We already collect significant amounts of monitoring information in relation to:

- Patient experience
- Complaints monitoring
- Patients' Forum & annual Patient Care Conference feedback
- Random and targeted surveys

We recognize that we can always improve our collection and analysis of the equalities information we have so that we can use this valuable information to improve our policy making, service delivery, engagement and decision making. To this end, the Trust is carrying out a major data cleanse in order to ensure the information we collect is both up-to-date and accurate as well as covering all the protected characteristic groups. We will continue to work to ensure that information gathered from our monitoring directly informs the improvement of everything we do in the Trust.

The Trust regularly feeds back through the Patient Care Conference, LAS Patients' Forum, including LINKs representatives, the LAS website and other communications on its consultation and involvement events. We publish and make widely available the results of our equality analysis and any action plans developed as a result of our engagement with our stakeholders.

We will monitor our progress on our new equality & inclusion strategy annually, in conjunction with our stakeholders, reporting to the Equality & Inclusion Steering Group, which has representation from the LAS Patients' Forum including LINKs, Senior Managers Group and the Trust Board, as well as providing online updates in alternative formats as required, and regular updates at consultation and engagement events.

EQUALITIES IN PROCUREMENT

We have drawn up and implemented a new Procurement Strategy, incorporating a statement on Supplier Diversity. We will aim wherever possible to use our buying power as a driver for promoting equality. The new strategy will provide staff who are responsible for the procurement of goods and services with specific guidance and training on how to incorporate equalities into procurement and the main outcomes they should seek to achieve. The guidance will also inform our staff on what they should expect from our contractors in regard to promoting equality of opportunity in delivering services on our behalf and within their organisations in regard to their own staff.

HOW WE WILL KNOW WE ARE SUCCESSFUL

We will know our strategy is working when:

- Our patients and service users say they have even greater confidence in all our services
- We can monitor and evidence staff progress by all protected characteristic groups
- The level of complaints is low and there are no significant differences between different protected characteristic groups
- staff from all protected characteristic groups are represented throughout the organisation at appropriate grade levels, professions and types of employment
- we can reach people in the community, who have not used our services before and for whom our services would be appropriate
- we are regarded as an Employer of choice by people from all the diverse communities in London
- we have achieved a place amongst the leading UK employers on the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index

- our services are seen to have an active role in combating health inequalities across the protected characteristic groups

EQUALITY & INCLUSION ACTION PLAN

Accompanying this new strategy is an action plan, which addresses our duties under existing and forthcoming equalities legislation and incorporates the priorities for action, highlighted to us by our stakeholders, including staff and service users. This new action plan will include all the key activities the Trust plans to undertake over the next three years, in our aim to be an excellent service provider and employer of choice. Everyone in the Trust has a role to play in ensuring the actions set out in the action plan become a reality.

We will monitor our progress against this action plan annually in partnership with our stakeholders and report on our progress in the Annual Equality Report. Relevant actions will also be included in the respective service plans of Trust departments, delivered as part of our business as usual, and monitored locally as well.

We will report on our progress annually to the Equality & Inclusion Steering Group, Senior Managers' Group and the Trust Board and publish this document on the Trust website as well as making it widely available to our stakeholders.