EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT AND ADVICE

i) What provisions are in place to help people from ethnic minorities to access support and advice?

ii) What provisions are in place to recognise and address the lower employment rates among some ethnic minority groups compared to others?

iii) Are there any innovative approaches being taken to address the challenges some people from ethnic minorities may experience in trying to access employment advice and support?

The 2011 census shows that in the working age (16-69 age groups) population for the NHS Highland area 1.3% are from an ethnic background this equates to approximately 2894 people. NHS Highland employs approximately 13,833 members of staff of which 84 (0.61% of workforce) have stated that are from an ethnic background. From the workforce data held it is anticipated that this figure is understated in light of the fact that 40% of the workforce have declined to answer or have stated they do not know.

All employees are treated equitably throughout their employment with NHS Highland. Personnel policies utilised throughout the Service have been developed nationally via the Partnership Information Network (PIN) and such policies reflect best practice and comply with both employment and equalities legislation. The Planning for Fairness principles and processes are followed in the development/review of both PIN and local Personnel policies.

Hate Free Highland website (www.hatefreehighland.org) has been developed and is supported by the Highland Community Planning Partnership to allow individuals to report non-urgent hate incidents to the police. The availability of this website has been communicated to employees of NHS Highland as a means of support.

NHS Highland works closely with Job Centre Plus and other Partner agencies such as ASPIRE, Social Work etc to support meaningful employment for disadvantaged groups within the NHS Highland area. This support is not specifically targeted solely to ethnic minority groups but encompasses other groups such as disabled people, unemployed youths and/or looked after children.

NHS Highland has endeavoured to strengthen partnership and collective socially responsible recruitment between public and private sectors to improve recruitment from health deprived areas of the Highland Region.
RECRUITMENT, RETENTION AND PROMOTION

i) What evidence is there that discrimination in recruitment, retention and promotion is an issue in Scottish Workplaces?

ii) What are the barriers that lead to unequal outcomes (including lower rates of employment and employment segregation?)

Within NHS Highland there is no evidence to suggest that discrimination in recruitment, retention and promotion exists. Recruitment is carried out in accordance with the guidance of NHS Scotland’s Safer Pre and Post Employment Checks PIN Policy.

Vacancies approved for recruitment are advertised either internally with NHS Highland and are posted on the NHS Highland Intranet or externally on the Scotland’s Health on the Web (SHOW) internet job vacancy page.

Application for posts are open to all staff. Robust selection and recruitment procedures are followed and documented detailing the decision making rationale for selection or not. During 2014/15 of posts recruited to in North NHS Highland (does not include Argyll & Bute) 25 newly appointed members of staff were from an ethnic background.

Other policies utilised within NHS Highland to support the retention and the development of staff is detailed below. These policies are open to all staff and have been developed on a national basis.

Redeployment Policy;

Management of Fixed Term Contract Policy;

Secondment Policy;

Flexible Working Request Policy;

Preventing & Dealing with Bullying and Harassment.

With regard to barriers that lead to unequal outcomes (including lower rates of employment and employment segregation) NHS Highland has no information or evidence on which to base comment.

PROMOTING POSITIVE ACTION

i) What measures are being taken to tackle workplace discrimination and segregation?

ii) Is there a need for a scheme that recognises positive action taken by employers (a double tick scheme for example)?
iii) What are the examples of good practice that have improved outcomes, and if so what has been the key to their success?

Since 2013 a framework was developed to support Sociably Responsible Recruitment across NHS Highland. This framework demonstrates the Board’s overall approach and engagement with partner agencies to ensure that the workforce reflects the Highland population and that opportunities for education and employment for all groups in society are equitable and accessible.

Positive action taken by NHS Highland in relation to mainstreaming equalities not just in the employment setting but in its overall delivery of service is a continuous improvement process. The Highland Quality Approach (HQA) has equality at its core as it continues to transform the way it designs and delivers safe, effective and person centred services. It is recognised that this can only be delivered by recruiting and developing the best teams.

NHS Highland believes that through its HQA approach and the general duty to report progress on the mainstreaming of equalities is sufficient and there is no requirement for a further scheme to be developed.

NHS Highland has aimed to ensure that there is no barriers within its recruitment and retention procedures, which would disadvantage new or existing staff in applying for vacancies across the service.

Utilisation and raising awareness with Managers of nationally developed policies that allow staff to be treated fairly and consistently, with dignity and respect, in an environment where diversity is valued¹.

Cathie Walker
Personnel Manager
NHS Highland
30 June 2015

¹ NHS Scotland Staff Governance Standard (A Framework for NHS Scotland Organisations and Employees) www.staffgovernance.scot.nhs.uk