

**EQUALITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION POLICY**

BMC recognises that certain groups have historically been disadvantaged on the basis of their protected characteristic.

Therefore, this policy sets out Beccles Medical Centre’s commitment to tackle discrimination, promote human rights, equality and diversity for service users, patients, staff and carers in all areas of employment practice and service delivery.

It applies to all employees, students, volunteer staff (e.g. PPG), contractors, service users, patients, their families and their carers.

BMC’s aim is for our workforce to be truly representative of all sections of society and for each employee to feel respected and able to give their best.

BMC recognises the importance of promoting human rights, equality, inclusion and diversity whilst tackling inequality, discrimination and harassment. Going forward BMC believes that the relevance of these are central to the achievement of our vision and core values.

This policy aims to provide a suitable framework for all staff that is compliant with the Equality Act 2010 and Human Rights Act 1998 andoutlines the rights and responsibilities of BMC (as an employer and service provider), staff (as employees) and patients (as users of services).

We are committed to ensuring the development and enhancement of a culture of inclusion within the organisation, where dignity, respect, fairness and equality for all is the basis.

It is the aim of BMC to ensure that there is no unlawful discrimination (direct / indirect or by way of victimisation) against its service users, patients, carers, visitors, existing employees or those wishing to seek employment with us.

In 2019 the Board of Partners agreed that the default font for BMC would be Arial. This is in response to staff who struggle with reading documents under various fonts. Those with dyslexia can struggle with reading against different coloured paper, and certain cursory fonts.

It was therefore agreed that the BMC font will be Arial 12 and documents must be on white paper, although 11 is permissible if in an email. It was deemed appropriate that all documents would be updated in time to reflect this, as well as email, to demonstrate a clear corporate image.

[**The Equality Act 2010**](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance)

The Equality Act 2010 sets out our legal responsibilities in relation to discrimination law and in relation to the provision of services to service users and employment. It replaces previous discrimination law (e.g. Disability Discrimination Act 1995) and requires all public bodies to consider the need to have due regard to:

• Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation or any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010.

• Equality of opportunity

• Foster good relations between groups of people sharing a protected characteristic and those that do not.

• Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.

• Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people.

This policy seeks to ensure that in all of our actions at BMC that the following applies:

* To ensure that all decisions are fair and based on valid and relevant criteria and not based on prejudice or bias.
* That there are clear steps for individuals to raise concerns if they feel that they have not been treated fairly related to a protected characteristic.
* That the key aspects of human rights, equality and diversity are clearly aligned in our recruitment and employment, and within our working practices.
* That there is clear provision of equality, fairness and respect for all in our employment, whether temporary, part-time or full-time.
* We will not unlawfully discriminate and will respond to the following nine Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics;
* Age - including specific ages and age groups
* Disability - including cancer, HIV, multiple sclerosis, and physical or mental impairment where the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on the ability to carry out day-to-day activities.
* Race - including colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins.
* Religion or belief - including a lack of religion or belief, and where belief includes any religious or philosophical belief.
* Sex
* Sexual orientation - meaning a person’s sexual orientation towards persons of the same sex, persons of the opposite sex and persons of either sex.
* Gender re-assignment - where people are proposing to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process (or part of a process) for the purpose of reassigning the person’s sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex.
* Pregnancy and maternity
* Marriage and civil partnership Equality, Inclusion & Human Rights Policy
* We oppose and avoid all forms of unlawful discrimination. This includes in pay and benefits, terms and conditions of employment, dealing with grievances and discipline, dismissal, redundancy, leave for parents, requests for flexible working, and selection for employment, promotion, training or other developmental opportunities.

BMC will commit to:

* Encouraging equality, diversity, and inclusion in the workplace as they are good practice and make business sense.
* Create a working environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation, and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and the contributions of all staff are recognised and valued.
* Training managers and all other employees about their rights and responsibilities under the equality, diversity, and inclusion policy. Responsibilities include staff conducting themselves to help us provide equal opportunities in employment, and prevent bullying, harassment, victimisation, and unlawful discrimination.
* Ensuring that all staff should understand they, as well as the management team and partners at the practice, can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation, and unlawful discrimination, in the course of their employment, against fellow employees, customers, suppliers and the public.
* Taking seriously any complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by fellow employees, patients, suppliers, contractors, visitors, the public and any others in the course of the organisation’s work activities.
Such acts will be dealt with as misconduct under BMC’s grievance and/or disciplinary procedures, and appropriate action will be taken. Particularly serious complaints could amount to gross misconduct and lead to dismissal without notice.
Further, sexual harassment may amount to both an employment rights matter and a criminal matter, such as in sexual assault allegations. In addition, harassment under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 – which is not limited to circumstances where harassment relates to a protected characteristic – is a criminal offence.
* Make opportunities for training, development, and progress available to all staff, who will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential, so their talents and resources can be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the business.
* Decisions concerning staff being based on merit (apart from in any necessary and limited exemptions and exceptions allowed under the Equality Act).
* Review employment practices and procedures when necessary to ensure fairness, and also update them and the relevant policies to take account of changes in the law.
* Monitor the make-up of the workforce regarding information such as age, sex, ethnic background, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and disability in encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion, and in meeting the aims and commitments set out in the equality, diversity and inclusion policy.
Monitoring will also include assessing how the equality, diversity and inclusion policy, and any supporting action plan, are working in practice, reviewing them annually, and considering and taking action to address any issues.

The equality, diversity and inclusion policy is fully supported by senior management and Board of Partners.

Details of BMC’s grievance and disciplinary policies and procedures can be found on Agilio Teamnet. This includes with whom an employee should raise a grievance.

Use of the organisation’s grievance and/or disciplinary procedures does not affect an employee’s right to make a claim to an employment tribunal within three months of the alleged discrimination.