

Equality Reflection (Level 1)

For background information on how to complete this form, read **Appendix 1**. Delete **guidance text** as you complete the form. Guidance text is suggested (not required) content.

Section 1: Project overview

Project title: Updates to Guidance on Health and Character	
Version:	Previous approved versions:

What are the intended outcomes of this work?

Findings from the HCPC commissioned research 'People Like Us?', conducted by the University of Surrey, revealed a disproportionately high number of self-referrals by certain professions regulated by HCPC. This led to the Policy and Standards team developing online information on self-referrals in 2018.

During the development of online information on self-referrals, the team identified that the current Guidance on Health and Character was out of date. In particular, the Guidance refers to the previous version of the Standards of Education and Training (SETs) and no longer reflects the organisation's current operational approach to health and character declarations.

Our amendments to the Guidance aims to:

- make it consistent with the organisation's approach when dealing with health and character declarations from registrants and applicants;
- ensure it is consistent with and reflects other policies and Guidance the HCPC issue to its registrants, such as our online self-referrals information;
- better signpost to support for registrants during the process, to achieve our strategic priorities regarding registrant health and wellbeing;
- ensure we adequately take account of equality impacts; and
- take account of public and stakeholder opinion.

In amending the Guidance on Health and Character, we have worked closely with colleagues in Registration, Fitness to Practice and Education departments to ensure that the Guidance reflected the experiences of registrants and applicants who make health and character declarations.

Who will be affected?

- Registrants and new applicants, including students and new trainees

- Education and training providers
- Employers
- The public, including service user and colleagues in health and care.

Section 2: Key EDI information

The following are protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.

- **Age:** children, younger and older people
- **Disability:** physical and mental health conditions. Think: 'invisible disabilities'
- **Gender reassignment:** includes individuals at all stages of transition
- **Race:** includes nationality, citizenship, ethnic or national origins.
- **Religion or belief:** religious and philosophical beliefs, including lack of belief
- **Sex:** gender; men, women and non-binary identities
- **Sexual orientation:** heterosexual, lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and other orientations
- **Pregnancy and maternity:** people who are pregnant, expecting a baby, up to 26 weeks post-natal or breastfeeding
- **Marriage and civil partnerships:** all unions, including same-sex

Section 3: Reflective Summary

Describe any possible impacts to groups or individuals with the characteristics listed at section 2 that may arise from this work. You may also consider connected issues or characteristics such as socio-economic group, area inequality, income, resident status and other barriers to access.

What do you consider to be the possible EDI implications of this work?

Explain how you have come to these conclusions.

Age

We foresee limited impact on the basis on age from the updates to the guidance. While not strictly linked to age, we believe that the improved guidance on issues like degenerative illnesses (which often, but not exclusively are linked with age) will have a positive impact in providing certainty to registrants unsure about their continued fitness to practice.

Disability

We believe that changes to the guidance may have a medium impact on people living with physical and mental health conditions. As a group which experiences significant discrimination in workplace and education settings, we are aware that the updates to Guidance on Health and Character is likely to have an impact.

The underlying principles of the guidance have not changed (i.e., that a physical or mental health condition is only relevant to your fitness to practise if it impacts your ability to practise safely). However, we believe that new cases studies in the guidance documents will provide more clarity about when a disability would impact a registrant's ability to practise safely. We have also included new information focussing on mental health in addition to mental illness.

Disability may negatively impact upon ability to access and respond to the consultation, where they have difficulties using computers or the web pages. To make the website easy to view, we have designed it in accordance with guidelines laid down by the Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) and we strive, wherever possible, to conform to 'Double-A' standards. Should anyone require assistance in renewing online, reasonable adjustments will be made where appropriate, in line with the HCPC's reasonable adjustments policy.

Gender reassignment

We foresee limited impacts on the grounds of gender re-assignment. To extent that any stage of a person's transition has an impact on their mental or physical health, we believe that this should not impact more negatively because it stems from the transition process.

Race

We foresee limited impacts on the grounds of race. We believe that the changes to the guidance are likely to help applicants and registrants to better understand when they do not need to report a health or character issue. This may have a limited positive impact on the basis of race as people from BAME backgrounds are disproportionately likely to have been convicted of a crime and/or had a custodial sentence.¹

¹ Statistics on Race and the Criminal Justice System 2018, Ministry of Justice:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/849200/statistics-on-race-and-the-cjs-2018.pdf

Religion or belief

We do not foresee any differential impact on this characteristic.

Sex (gender)

We do not foresee any differential impact on this characteristic.

Sexual orientation

We do not foresee any differential impact on this characteristic.

Pregnancy or maternity

We foresee limited impacts on the basis of this characteristic. To the extent that pregnancy or maternity may have an impact on their mental or physical health, we believe that this should not impact more negatively because it stems from pregnancy or maternity.

Marriage and civil partnership

We do not foresee any differential impact on this characteristic.

Section 2: Welsh Language Scheme

How might this project engage our commitments under the Welsh Language Scheme?

We do not foresee this project impacting on our commitments under the Welsh language scheme. The consultation documents are available in Welsh upon request and we would welcome consultation responses in the Welsh language.

Section 4: Action plan

Summarise the key actions required to improve the project plan based on any gaps, challenges and opportunities you have identified through this reflection.

In developing your action plan, consider:

- **How will the project eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation?**
- **How will the project advance equality of opportunity?**
- **How will the project promote good relations between groups?**
- **How will you monitor equality impacts arising from this work going forwards?**

Summary of action plan

- Promote ability to request alternative formats of consultation and HCPC make reasonable adjustments
- EDI and proportionality questions in the consultation
- Review the EIA following consultation feedback
- EDI section on consultation analysis

Engagement with wide range of stakeholders (including service user groups) and on a range of formats (not just social media and the website). While it is uncertain what level of COVID-19 restrictions will be in place across the UK during the consultation period, we will be engaging stakeholders using tools such as Zoom as well as more traditional methods where possible.

You may choose to use the action plan template in the EDI Impact Assessment document (for new or major projects or policies) to develop specific action points.



EDI should be an ongoing consideration throughout any project.

Where EDI issues are raised after this reflection and action plan have been agreed, you should make a note and update this document if necessary.

Any project identified as unlawfully discriminatory must not be progressed.

Reflection completed by: Matthew Clayton

Date: 19.10.2020

Reflection approved by: Olivia Bird

Date: 19.10.2020

Appendix 1: How to complete this form

This form is intended for use in **minor or updating** projects. It is designed to consider the 9 protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010. It is therefore important that you complete every section of the form.

You should consider and document **positive and negative** impacts which might result from the proposed project. Impacts might be **indirect**. If you consider that there will be **no impact** to groups or individuals with a particular protected characteristic, this **should still be documented**.

The EDI reflection is not intended as a 'tick box' exercise. Instead, it offers a tool to help you embed equality, diversity and inclusion throughout your work planning and delivery. We encourage you to consult with colleagues, stakeholders and where possible, people with protected characteristics as part of this process.

For more guidance and information, please refer to the **Equality impact assessment guidance** document.

Should you have any queries or suggestions, please contact the Policy and Standards team on 0207 840 9815 or policy@hcpc-uk.org. Your EDI Manager is Katherine Timms.