

MHF On Gender Duty

MHF
MEN'S HEALTH
FORUM



Using the Equality Act
to improve male health

Put an end to 'One size fits all' healthcare

The Equality Act 2006 has created an important new duty for NHS organisations: the 'gender duty'. The Men's Health Forum, the leading voluntary organisation promoting a gender-sensitive approach to health, is uniquely placed to offer help and information to enable organisations to prepare for and comply with the duty.

What will the 'Gender Duty' mean?

From April 2007, the gender duty requires NHS organisations to:

- Actively promote equality between men and women. Since men do worse in many areas of health, specific actions are needed to improve male health.
- Understand the impact of their work on men and women as distinct groups.
- Consult and engage people from all groups of the community in making decisions and policies on issues that affect them as men and women.
- Produce and publish a gender equality scheme in consultation with stakeholder groups. The schemes must be reviewed every three years.
- Ensure that contractors carrying out public functions on behalf of the NHS also implement the new duties.

- Conduct and publish gender impact assessments covering all major proposed developments in policies and services.

- Consider gender equality issues at the beginning of policy making, assess the likely impact of policies on men and women, and ensure that policies promote gender equality.

- Take account of any evidence that men and women have different needs, experiences, concerns or priorities when developing policies and services.

- Collect data on service user needs, satisfaction and outcomes broken down by gender.

- Ensure that women and men make greater use of services that their sex had previously under-used.

- Ensure all relevant staff understand the new duties and their implications.

NHS organisations' compliance with the duty will be overseen by the new Commission for Equality and Human Rights and the Healthcare Commission.

What is 'Gender Mainstreaming'?

The new duties require a significant change in policy and practice and what has been described as 'gender

mainstreaming'. This means fully integrating an awareness of male and female health needs strategically and operationally throughout an organisation. It means moving beyond the assumption that 'gender' is limited to occasional awareness campaigns on sex-specific issues.

The Equality Act requires health organisations to develop and deliver effective work to improve men's health on a wide-ranging and systematic basis. While some organisations have a good track record in this area, for many it represents a new area of activity that will require significant support.

How can the Men's Health Forum help?

The Men's Health Forum has been working with the Department of Health, the Equal Opportunities Commission, the Women and Equality Unit and others on the development of the Equality Act and its duties. We have a considerable track-record of designing health policy and practical interventions which are effective in

communicating health messages to men and widening their participation in health services.

We can offer you help and support in the following areas:

- Resources designed to appeal to men (such as health information booklets) and signposting to other available resources.

- Details of evidence-based good practice about delivering services to men.

- Regular updates on men's health policy and practice.

- Advice about how to consult with men about service development.

- Training on gender and men's health.

- Tailored consultancy on implementing the gender duty.

More at www.mhfgenderduty.org.uk.



Gender Duty What you can do

■ Join the Men's Health Forum. For just £150 a year, you will receive regular information about our work, the gender duty and men's health.

■ Attend a MHF training event. We run events in England and Wales and can also organise specific training for your organisation. Our tailored consultancy and training can help you meet your requirements under the legislation.

■ Order male-specific resources, such as the established Haynes Mini-Manuals, tailored to meet your needs.

■ Order a set of MHF publications and reports for a unique evidence-based insight into developing gender-based policies and services.

■ For more information, visit www.mhfgenderduty.org.uk, email us at office@menshealthforum.org.uk or call 020 7388 4449.

The mission of the Men's Health Forum (MHF) is to provide an independent and authoritative voice for male health and to tackle the issues affecting the health and well-being of boys and men in England and Wales.

Our vision is a future in which all boys and men have an equal opportunity to attain the highest possible level of well-being.

We believe that men's health should be improved through 'gender-sensitive' policies and services that also benefit women. It does not believe men's health should be improved by transferring resources from women's health.

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Why 'One Size Fits All' health care must end

■ Men live 5 years fewer than women.
■ Men are almost twice as likely to develop a cancer that can affect both sexes and almost twice as likely to die.
■ Men are more likely to consume alcohol, illegal drugs or be overweight.
■ Men are more likely to develop or die from cardiovascular disease

■ Three times as many men commit suicide
■ Men are much less likely to visit their GP than women. Under the age of 45, men visit their GP only half as often as women.

Images courtesy of boys2MEN, Guzelian Ltd and MHF