

BME Network
Newsletter

July 2023



Welcome to our first BME Network newsletter

The BME network is a staff led group, committed to making NHS GGC a better place to work for everybody. The aims of the network are to:

- Provide a safe, supportive and confidential forum for sharing experiences.
- Identify issues that affect staff from BME groups through engagement with network members.
- Act as a platform for consultation and influence on issues impacting on the health, well-being, and work of BME staff.
- Facilitate opportunities for feedback on staff governance issues in relation to the experience of BME staff.

The network meets four times a year, and has a WhatsApp Group and Facebook page. We also host a range of social events, including celebrations of Black History Month and South Asian Heritage Month.

If you'd like to get involved, please contact us on ggc.bmestaffnetwork@nhs.scot.uk or find out more here: [BME Staff Network - NHS GGC](#)

Please find below some more information about our activity over our last few meetings and how we've been helping to make NHS GGC a better workplace for our BME colleagues.

Reporting Bullying and Harassment.

Feedback from network members was that they did not always know what support in place for individuals when they were seeking advice about potential bullying and harassment.

The network has received updates on the range of support staff can draw on. This includes:

- The Human Resources Support and Advice Unit (HRSAU)
- Peer Support
- Spiritual Care
- Occupational Health
- Partnership Representatives (Staff side)

There will also be a presentation at a future meeting about the new Bullying and Harassment Confidential Contacts services that was launched in May 2023.

You can find details in the appendix about how to access these services.

Human Resources Support and Advice Unit

Feedback from some network members has been that the HRSAU has sometimes been focused on providing process advice, whereas members would benefit from wider support, particularly when they are not comfortable speaking with their manager.

Based on this, staff from the BME Staff Network and Staff Disability Forum met with the HRSAU managers and fed back information on their experience and some of issues they faced with the support provided

Improvement: Based on this feedback, HR has agreed that where appropriate they will contact line managers directly (with staff members' permission). This would be to advise on policies and processes and to highlight the informal stages of processes which can be dealt with locally. A route of escalation will be put into place with a named person in HR to contact in the case of an unsatisfactory outcome being reached at a local level.

Improvement: Further, additional Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) training will be put in place for HRSAU staff and there will be a dedicated EDI champion identified who will receive further EDI training to enable them to deal with more complex cases.

The Network asked if the organisation could explore a dedicated phone line (in addition to the current HRSAU helpline) for BME staff to report bullying and harassment cases. However, the low number of reported bullying and harassment claims meant this could not be resourced. We'll continue to monitor the numbers and if these increase, the Network will ask for this to be revisited.

Interpretation Service

At one of our recent meetings, Steven Munce, (Head of Workforce Planning and Resources) provided an in-depth overview of the interpretation service. He did this following concern noted by network members that there was sometimes an expectation that they would interpret for patients and their families.

Steven gave an overview of the performance of the service:

- Last financial year from January–October there were 40,000 in person requests for interpreters (90% of these requests were filled; 95% for British Sign Language)
- During the pandemic there was a move to technology and the live link telephone service provided by Capita was launched.
- The National Interpreting Policy has been in place for some time and the NHSGGC policy had been refreshed recently and published to the GGC website.

You can find the policy and more about the service here: [Interpreting Services - NHSGGC](#)

Steven clarified that, as stated in the policy, family, friends, carers and general NHS staff are NOT to act as interpreters for patients. There is no expectation for staff to act as an interpreter. The service who arrange the appointment should at the same time request an interpreter (this could be face to face or via the phone line). The process is the same for primary care and third sector. There is some scope within the policy that in an emergency it may be suitable for a member of staff who speaks the language to interpret until the interpreter arrives.

We now have the capacity to offer **Attend Anywhere (Near Me) video interpreting appointments** in a variety of different languages in scenarios where telephone interpreting and face to face appointments are not appropriate.

If you would like to book an Attend Anywhere appointment email interpretingservices@ggc.scot.nhs.uk providing the following information:- Your name, department, contact details, Attend Anywhere waiting area link, time and date of appointment, expected duration of appointment and the name of the clinician and patient. Consideration should be given to booking a double slot for any appointment requiring an interpreter. On the day of the appointment the interpreter will be available in the waiting area and will identify themselves as “interpreter” and should be invited into the call prior to the patient.

For more information about Attend Anywhere appointments please contact the interpreting department on 0141 347 8811.

Workforce Equality Group

NHSGGCs's overall workforce equality plan is overseen by the Workforce Equality Group, chaired by the Director of HR and OD.

Dr Ali Ghanbari (BME Network Co-Chair) and Dr Sonya McKinlay (BME Network Steering Group) attend these meetings to ensure that the lived experience of BME staff informs the strategic activities to promote equality, diversity and inclusion.

At the most recent meeting, the Proposed Priorities for 2023/24 were discussed and agreed, with these now being developed into a full action plan for the year.

- Continuing to improve EDI training at every level, but with a particular focus on ensuring EDI training for recruiting managers
- Deliver a workforce EDI conference, ensuring a follow on programme that delivers real and sustainable change
- Campaign to promote membership of the Forums/Network with an aim of over 500 members across our three groups by 2024.
- Continue to improve data collection, with an aim to have collected over 70% of workforce data for all recorded protected characteristics.
- Progress actions to address pay gaps identified through our statutory pay gap reporting.

Dr McKinlay has also attended a Short Life Working Group on the Discretionary Points application process. A successful workshop, hosted by the British Medical Association, took place in July for medical staff to aid their application process.

Career progression and leadership opportunities for BME staff

Douglas Mann, Head of Organisational Development provided an update on leadership opportunities for staff. A guide to courses available can be found on the web pages below.

<https://www.nhsggc.scot/staff-recruitment/hrconnect/organisational-development-od-and-your-od-team/people-management-guide/>

<https://www.nhsggc.scot/staff-recruitment/hrconnect/learning-education-and-training/management-development/>

Staff wishing to pursue leadership and management training are encouraged to contact their OD Advisor below, or Lisa.Donnelly@ggc.scot.nhs.uk for advice.

Claire Robertson – North/ Women and Children's
Joyce Bowers – Diagnostics & Regional
Julie Pearson – Clyde, Nurse Directorate, Public Health
Paul Cogan – eHealth, Estates & Facilities
John Scrimgeour – South, Corp Comms & Finance

As part of his discussion, Doug also encouraged staff wanting to progress their career to identify a mentor. This can be a manager in any part of the organisation who would provide you with advice in reaching your ambitions. When reaching out for a mentor, it is good practice to discuss this with your line manager first. Your local OD Advisor can also provide advice and support.

The "Ready to Lead" leadership programme for BME staff completed in May 2023. Funding is being sought for the next cohort and, subject to that being successful, applications will be invited later in 2023.

One NHS Family – Upcoming events

NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde held its first dedicated Workforce Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Conference for people managers.

This Conference offered a chance to hear from engaging external and internal speakers, learn best practice approaches to managing a diverse workforce and provided opportunities to network with peers.

All of the breakout sessions from the conference will be held as a Webinar Series during the remainder of 2023. You can read more about this and find out how to register, by viewing our Conference and Webinar Series page here: <https://www.nhsggc.scot/staff-recruitment/hrconnect/growing-our-great-community-through-equality-diversity-and-inclusion/equality-diversity-and-inclusion-conference-2023/>

South Asian Heritage Month will be marked on 17 August 2023 with an evening event celebrating the history of South Asians in Scotland and highlighting the work done in NHSGGC to promote equality.

Communications Group Update

Members of the network have raised that staff who do not have regular access to IT equipment as part of their role are finding it difficult to find out information about HR support and the BME Network.

We would like to remind everyone that HR support is available on the NHSGGC website at www.nhsggc.scot/staff-recruitment/staff-support-and-wellbeing/. This can be accessed via work issue or personal digital devices, at any time. Likewise, the BME Forum pages is accessible from both work and personal devices and can be found at www.nhsggc.scot/staff-recruitment/hrconnect/growing-our-great-community-through-equality-diversity-and-inclusion/bme-staff-network/

This includes a link to the BME Network members' Facebook page and WhatsApp Group, where we discuss key issues and share details of events. This is a private group for BME network members only, so it is a safe space to get to know others.

Uniform and Dress Code Policy

At a recent meeting of the BME network a member of staff shared her experience of discrimination due to their hair. Another member of staff shared their experience of being asked to shave his beard for PPE mask-fitting.

As the NHSGGC uniform and dress code policy is currently under review, members of the BME network steering group have been invited to contribute to revision of the policy in line with equalities legislation as outlined in the Equality Act 2010 and with sensitivity towards cultural and religious beliefs.

If you are interested in joining the network contact
ggc.bmestaffnetwork@nhs.scot

Appendix: How To Access Support if you believe you have been bullied or harassed

HRSAU

If raising queries with HRSAU these can be raised through Service Now ([HR Portal - NHS GGC HR \(service-now.com\)](https://service-now.com)) or the HRSAU phone number - 0141-278-2700.

While a member of staff would be identifiable when using the online form, if they would like an anonymous discussion they can use the phone line.

More information about the HRSAU can be found here: [Contact HR Support & Advice Unit - NHSGGC](#)

Bullying and Harassment Confidential Contacts

The role of a Bullying and Harassment Confidential Contact is to provide informal signposting and support to employees who perceive that they are being bullied, harassed or victimised at work, or have been accused of demonstrating bullying and harassing behaviours. They provide a listening ear, information about the bullying and harassment policy and procedures, and signposting to other more formal sources of support such as the staff counselling service or trade unions.

Bullying and Harassment Confidential Contacts have been selected from areas and roles across NHSGGC and you can choose any of those listed. For further information please access [Bullying & Harassment Confidential Contacts](#).

Occupational Health

If staff are experiencing health and wellbeing issues, our Occupational Health team, including our clinical psychologists, are available to support staff when they need it most.

Mental health and wellbeing is just as important as physical health and many factors and life events can have an impact on how we feel.

There are a range of links to further information and services available that can help staff to improve their mental health and wellbeing on our [website](#),

Or staff can speak in confidence to one of the Occupational Health nurses or to arrange a counselling appointment, they simply need to phone 0141 201 0600. This line is available Monday to Friday, 8.00am – 5.00pm.

Peer Support Network

Peer Support is a way for us to support our colleagues by simply having the time and safe space to talk and be provided with a friendly ear to listen. It can help us make sense of recent experiences, gives us a sense of control and help us manage difficult situations. It is a supportive and flexible response that understands how stress is a normal part of life.

You can find out more about how to become a peer supporter or how to access the service here: [Peer Support Network - NHSGGC](#) or email peer.support@ggc.scot.nhs.uk

Spiritual Care

The NHSGGC [Spiritual Care & Chaplaincy service](#) is available from 9am to 10pm, seven days a week to help and support people. The chaplains are able to offer staff up to four sessions, providing confidential, person centred, compassionate and impartial listening. During each one hour listening session staff are free to talk about whatever is on their mind, including issues that might be causing raised levels of stress at work or at home all the way through to support following a personal bereavement.

Any member of staff can access the service by calling the main Switchboard on 0141 201 1100 and ask to be put through.

The chaplains are all trained in listening and some also have counselling training and we encourage staff to use the service if they need to.