



Gender Equality Duty

What does it all mean?

1. What is it?

The new Gender Equality Duty (GED) comes into force on April 6th 2007 and is likely to be the biggest change in sex equality legislation in 30 years. The Equality Act of 2006 amends the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 to place a legal duty on all public bodies like the Scottish Ambulance Service to have due regard to the need:

- ⇒ **To eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment**
- ⇒ **To promote equality of opportunity between men and women**

The Scottish Ambulance Service recognises the importance of shaping future health services to meet individual needs and move away from a "One size fits all" approach.

2. How Will This Be Done?

The Gender Equality Duty expects that health boards produce a Gender Equality Scheme, which is a 3-year action plan, that includes the Health Board's gender equality objectives which will help the Board meet the duty. The Gender Equality Scheme must identify:

- ⇒ **An Action Plan**
- ⇒ **The Health Boards gender equality objectives, and what evidence has been used to develop them**
- ⇒ **How staff and people using the service were consulted in the setting of the objectives**
- ⇒ **How information will be gathered to monitor change in terms of employment and service delivery**
- ⇒ **How the impact of the gender equality policies and practise will be assessed**

3. Who Will it Effect, Why Have a Gender Duty?

The Duty has the potential to affect everyone, those who work within the Scottish Ambulance Service and individuals who use the service. It aims to make gender equality central to the way the Service works in order to create:

- ⇒ **Better informed decision –making and policy development**
- ⇒ **A clearer understanding of the needs of people using the services**
- ⇒ **Better quality services which meet varied needs**
- ⇒ **More effective targeting of policy and resources**
- ⇒ **Better results and greater confidence in public services**
- ⇒ **A more effective use of talent and the workforce**

Men and women, boys and girls, staff and people who use the Service have different needs and uses of the health service, by taking into account the different needs of women and men, including transsexual people, the quality of health service will improve for everyone. Since the Service is a major employer the Gender Equality Duty should improve work practises also.

4. What Will It Do, What Will It Mean?

The Service will need to take steps to ensure that gender is at the centre of its thinking and processes, to embed the fact that the differences between women and men need to be understood and acknowledged in all areas of work.

- ⇒ **A Health Service where boys and girls, women and men including transsexual people, can access services that meet their individual needs.**
- ⇒ **That everyone whether staff, patients, carers, or members of the public experience a service which is free from all forms of unlawful discrimination, harassment or intimidation.**
- ⇒ **Where the barriers for women and men to accessing health services are recognised and removed.**
- ⇒ **To recognise and provide services that meet the needs of “hard to reach” groups of men and women in Scotland.**
- ⇒ **That the Service be an excellent employer, challenging negative behaviour, reinforcing positive attitudes to gender equality and staff to feel valued and respected for whom they are and for their skills**

5. Did You Know

Gender = Women and Men

A snapshot of gender specific health issues;

- ⇒ Women are less likely to realise they are having a heart attack than men.
- ⇒ [Men typically develop heart disease 10 years earlier than women.](#)
- ⇒ Life expectancy for women in Scotland is the lowest in the EU and for men the second lowest.
- ⇒ [Male to female infection with HIV is more than twice that of female to male.](#)
- ⇒ Women are more likely to suffer from anxiety and depression.
- ⇒ [Men are more likely than women to commit suicide.](#)
- ⇒ Men are more likely than women to die of injuries sustained in different circumstances, but women are more likely to die of injuries sustained at home.

Source: Rona Fitzgerald, Gender Equality and Work in Scotland.

6. Tell us what you think

If you would like to contribute to the first draft of the Gender Equality Scheme / Action Plan or would like to comment on any gender issues for the Scottish Ambulance Service then please contact us.

E-mail: ges@scotamb.co.uk

Telephone: Ann Tobin, Equality & Diversity Lead on 0131 446 7071

Should you wish to contact us in another language or format other than by telephone or e-mail, please contact us and we will make suitable arrangements.

Further details regarding the Gender Equality Duty can be found at www.eoc.org.uk/fairforallgender

Some questions you may wish to consider:

1. **What gender do you identify yourself as?**
2. **How do you think the Scottish Ambulance Service could improve to meet your needs as an individual?**
3. **Do you think the Service promotes equality of opportunities for women and men?**

Yes or No but please explain:

4. **The Scottish Ambulance Service aims to deliver its services in a fair way. As an organisation what could we do differently to improve gender equality for individuals and groups of service users?**

Thank you for your contribution.

