

Equality and Diversity Council Meeting Paper

6th May 2014

System Alignment Subgroup

Purpose and context

One of the priorities of the EDC is 'system alignment' – embedding the promotion of equality and tackling of health inequalities within the major policy levers that cover the majority of NHS business. Now that the NHS reforms have been implemented, some of the original policy levers have been replaced and the references to equality have been lost. New levers need to be identified and reporting on equality and tackling health inequalities embedded within them.

The work of this subgroup aims to embed equality and tackling of health inequalities within the minimum number of policy levers that cover the maximum number of NHS organisations.

Action taken to date

An initial scoping exercise was undertaken by the subgroup in order to consider the extent to which equality and health inequalities currently feature in the key policy levers, including *NHS England's Everyone Counts*; the *CCG Assurance Framework*, reporting against the *NHS Outcomes Framework and the NHS Constitution* commitments, the *TDA's Planning Guidance*, the *NHS Standard Contract*, *Quality Accounts*, *Care Quality Commission regulations*, the *Corporate Governance Statements*, and the publications of the *NHS Staff Council*.

Further discussions and an engagement exercise was carried out at the Health and Care Innovation Expo, leading to the identification of three levers that cover the majority of business for both commissioners and providers. These being: the CCG Assurance Framework, CQC/Monitor's licensing process, and the Corporate Governance Statement. Embedding these policies/levers with equality and tackling health inequalities lines, at their heart, will make a significant contribution towards this agenda.

It was also discussed to explore the possibility of reporting against the *NHS Outcomes Framework and the NHS Constitution* commitments – making disaggregations wherever there is a local need to do so in order to highlight variances between groups and communities, and so that programmes based on positive action and proportionate universalism can be progressed.

Current position

The policy leads for the CCG Assurance Framework and the CQC equality team, are currently being engaged with regarding the aims of this exercise. The policy leads for Monitor's licensing process, and for the Corporate Governance Statement, are also being engaged with.

The policy leads for the NHS Outcomes Framework and the NHS Constitution will be engaged with during May 2014.

Key risks

With an absence of this work:

- references to equality and tackling health inequalities within policy levers will be minimal;
- it will be left to individual champions in NHS organisations to remind their organisations to take heed of equality and health inequalities, and to be interested in how their performance supports different communities;
- local champions may feel unsupported, good practice may not be shared, and key lessons may remain unlearned.

Next steps

1. The Subgroup to continue liaising and engaging with the policy leads of the identified policies, so as to infuse those levers with key lines on promoting equality and tackling health inequalities.
2. To feedback on progress to the EDC going forward.

Recommendation and action requested

For the EDC to note the above cited next steps.

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On behalf of the System Alignment Subgroup of the EDC

23 April 2014