

Equality and Diversity Council Meeting Paper

30th October 2014

System Alignment Subgroup

Purpose and context

One of the priorities of the EDC is 'system alignment' – infusing the promotion of equality and tackling of health inequalities within the key policy levers that cover the majority of NHS business.

Following the implementation of the NHS reforms, some of the original policy levers have been replaced, and the references to equality have been lost. New levers, by and large, make little or no reference to equality or health inequalities.

The work of this subgroup aims to infuse the promotion of equality and the tackling of health inequalities within the minimum number of policy levers to achieve the optimum impact upon the maximum number of NHS organisations.

Action taken to date

An initial scoping exercise was undertaken by the subgroup in order to identify the policy levers that cover the majority of business for both NHS commissioners and providers. These were identified as: (i) the CCG Assurance Framework, (ii) CQC inspections/Monitor's licensing process, and (iii) the Corporate Governance Statement.

It was thought that infusing these policies/levers with equality and tackling health inequalities lines, at their heart, would make a significant contribution towards embedding the agenda within the day-to-day business of an NHS organisation.

- **CCG Assurance Framework** Lines on promoting equality and meeting the Public Sector Equality Duty using *EDS2*, and on reducing health inequalities, have been added into the CCG Assurance Framework Operational Guidance 2014/15.
- **CQC inspection regime** Narrative on promoting equality and the use of the Equality Delivery System – *EDS2* have been included into CQC's pre-inspection data packs for CQC inspectors, and within the CQC inspection handbooks for acute hospitals, mental health trusts, and community trusts. CQC has also matched the 18 *EDS2* outcomes to their five key questions: safe, effective, caring, responsive and well-led.

In addition,

- The **Trust Development Authority's Planning Guidance for NHS Trust Boards** 2014/15 to 2018/19 asks all organisations to use the Equality Delivery System – *EDS2* in order to provide assurance that it is proving assurance that the organization is working effectively on the equality agenda.

Current position

The policy leads for Monitor's licensing process, and for the Corporate Governance Statement, are currently being engaged with.

The policy leads for the NHS Outcomes Framework and the NHS Constitution will also be contacted to see if related indicators, when reported, may be broken down by protected characteristics where appropriate.

Key risks

- A systematic approach to ensuring that equality and health inequalities is embedded within key NHS policy levers is required in order to 'hardwire' the agenda into core NHS business, moving beyond the hard work undertaken by individual champions within their own organisations
- With little or no drive from the centre, local champions may feel unsupported, good practice may not be shared, and key lessons may remain unlearnt.

Next steps

1. The subgroup to continue liaising and engaging with the leads for the identified policies, so as to infuse those levers with key lines on promoting equality and tackling health inequalities, and to ensure continued reference to the agenda within future iterations of the identified policies.
2. To feedback on progress to the EDC going forward. The medium-term option is for the system alignment work to be embedded within the core work programmes of the system lead organisations as appropriate, including NHS England, Department of Health and other organisations.

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

October 2014