

Equality and Diversity Council Meeting Paper

30th January 2015

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.

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 inspection regime, and (iii) the Annual Corporate Governance Statement. Work on the latter remains outstanding.

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 2015/16.
- **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. Going forward, it would be essential for equality and *EDS2* to maintaining good profile within CQC inspection regimes.

In addition,

- The **NHS 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 working effectively on the equality agenda.

Current position

The work of this time-limited Subgroup of the EDC is near completion. NHS Confederation has expressed an enthusiasm to lead on the work to embed equality into the Annual Corporate Governance Statement. NHS England will work with NHS Confederation on the planning of this work going forward. It is therefore felt that this Subgroup is not required to continue.

Key risks

- A systematic approach to ensuring that equality and health inequalities is embedded within key NHS policy levers is required in order to embed the agenda into core NHS business, moving beyond the hard work undertaken by individual champions within their own organisations.
- Without a dedicated Subgroup on System Alignment for equality and health inequalities, we need to ensure that equality and health inequalities are constant features in key policy levers going forward, and that system lead organisations will pursue system alignment with vigour over time.

Next steps

1. NHS England to work with NHS Confederation on the planning of work on embedding equality in the Annual Corporate Governance Statement and to feedback on progress to the EDC.

Recommendation and action requested

For the EDC to note the above position, risks and next steps.

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On behalf of the System Alignment Subgroup of the EDC

January 2015