

Equality and Diversity Council Meeting Paper

30th October 2014

Communications Subgroup

Purpose and context

The EDC provides visible and robust leadership on equality and health inequalities issues across health and social care. It was agreed at the first meeting of the refreshed EDC, that an appropriate approach was needed to communicate the work of the EDC and its key messages to the wider health and care system, and beyond.

Action taken to date

Working with EDC members, the Communications team at NHS England has scoped the initial key EDC messages and EDC Communication Strategy. This has been circulated and engaged upon by EDC members.

Communications support has been provided for EDC activities including:

- Re-launch of the EDC
- Launch of EDS2 at the London NHS Values Summit
- EDC system alignment session at the 2014 Health and Social Care Expo
- System leaders signing the Statement of Declaration on promoting equality and tackling health inequalities
- Inclusion of the proposed Workforce Race Equality Standard and the Equality Delivery System for the NHS – *EDS2*, within the NHS contract 2015/16 consultation

Current position

Current communication mechanisms for the EDC include:

- An EDC webpage – providing background and information to the Council and where EDC material including minutes of meetings and membership details can be found
- An active EDC twitter account
- An email account for communicating to EDC members and beyond

The above are managed by the EDC secretariat.

A virtual communications group is being brought together. This group will be composed of communication experts from the major health and care organisations and will help in the dissemination of consistent and timely EDC messages across the sectors. The virtual communications group will be operational by November 2014.

This group will have a key role in communicating the work of the EDC subgroups, including the work being carried out by the EDC to improve BME workforce representation at senior levels within the NHS (response to the 'Snowy White Peaks of the NHS' report).

Key risks

The absence of an EDC-wide communications plan is likely to have a negative impact upon:

- Keeping equality and health inequalities high on the agenda.
- Positively positioning the EDC as a body of influence in promoting equality and tackling health inequalities within the NHS and beyond.
- Promoting the EDC and how everyone can work together to promote equality and tackle health inequalities.
- Improving understanding of how people's differences, cultural expectations and social status can affect their experiences, health outcomes and quality of care and how EDC can help shape that process.
- Promoting EDC products such as the proposed Workforce Race Equality Standard and the Equality Delivery System for the NHS – *EDS2*.

Next steps

- Engagement to be undertaken with EDC colleagues/organisations represented on the EDC and appropriate Branding Teams with regard to producing a proposal for refreshing the branding of the EDC, by December 2014.
- To convene a virtual EDC Communications Group by end November 2014.

Recommendation and action requested

For the EDC to note and agree the above cited next steps.

Ronan O'Conner and Henry Bonsu
On behalf of the Communications Subgroup of the EDC
October 2014