

Equality and Diversity Council Meeting Paper 20th October 2015

Communications Update Paper

Purpose and context

The Equality and Diversity Council provides visible and robust leadership on equality issues across the NHS. Establishing an effective communications approach is essential for the Council. It will provide the Council with a consistent and timely means of communicating its work to the system, reinforcing to the Council its own purpose and added value, and helping to maintain its credibility and momentum across the NHS whilst promoting equality issues and entering the debate where necessary.

The refresh of the work programme and membership of the Council highlighted key recommendations for its future communications element. This paper presents an update on the arrangements in place for the Council's communications workstream.

Actions taken to date

Following the 28th July meeting of the EDC, it was agreed that a definitive communications plan should be produced, working in collaboration with the key national organisations represented on the EDC.

NHS England has identified a nominated communications lead to take forward the communications element of the EDC. To date, the following national organisations have nominated specific communication experts to work on the EDC's communication element:

- NHS Employers
- NHS Providers
- NHS Leadership Academy
- Care Quality Commission
- Health Education England
- Health and Social Care Information Centre

This communications subgroup will help in the dissemination of proactive, consistent and timely EDC messages across the sectors. Other EDC member organisations, not cited on the above list, are encouraged to nominate communications leads from their respective organisations. The subgroup held its first full meeting on 16th October 2015.

Branding for the EDC has been produced – this will give the Council its own identity, whilst not deviating away from the core focus of the Council, which is upon the NHS.

Current position

Current communication mechanisms for the EDC include:

- An EDC webpage – provides background and information to the Council and its material including minutes and papers of meetings and membership biographies.
- An active EDC twitter account.
- An email account for communicating to EDC members and beyond.

The EDC communications plan is being refreshed and will be circulated amongst EDC members for input, contribution and clearance.

Potential copyright editors with equality and health inequalities expertise have been identified and work can be commissioned from this specialist pool, once the EDC members have agreed the detail of the budget proposal for EDC communications.

Key risks

The absence of an EDC communications element is likely to have a negative impact upon:

- Keeping equality high on the healthcare agenda.
- Positively positioning the EDC as a body of influence in promoting equality within the NHS and beyond.
- That EDC members are not actively promoting the equality agenda.
- Promoting the key work products of the EDC in a timely and consistent way.
- Improving understanding of how people's differences, cultural expectations and social status can affect their experiences and health outcomes.

Actions requested and recommendations

- EDC to note the above.
- EDC subgroups to engage with communications subgroup to develop subgroup specific communication forward planners, and to say how they want to be involved.
- A forward plan of communication opportunities to be produced.
- EDC members to agree to support a budget for the Communications Subgroup.

EDC Communications Subgroup October 2015

[Members of the Communications Group are: Stephen Lightbown (NHS England) (chair), Anna Jefferson (CQC), Jacqui Eden-James (NHS Confederation), Caroline Bernard (NHS Providers), Thomas Verity (HEE), Henry Bonsu (Broadcaster), Ruth Passman (NHS England), Habib Naqvi (NHS England), Ranjit Senghera (NHS England), Isabelle Hunt (HSCIC)]