

Equality and Diversity Council Meeting Paper

26th July 2016

Communications Subgroup Update

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.

EDC Theme and objective (s) the paper links to

Communications is a core overarching theme of the EDC and the EDC work plan.

A EDC work plan is a two-year plan to improve three themed areas of work;

- **Inclusive Workplaces**
- **Workforce Equality**
- **Inclusive Healthcare**

Each theme has 2-3 key goals forming key successes for the EDC to:

- Communicate to the NHS
- Monitor and communicate progress
- Engage EDC members in owning and assisting successful achievement of a goal

Key Summary Milestones

The EDC Communications Subgroup meeting on regular basis – move to monthly meetings

EDC Infographics is currently being planned

EDC communications support to the Launch of the EDS 2 Community & Voluntary sector (CVS) Guide on the 29th April 2016.

EDC communications support to the launch of the WRES report June 2016

Actions taken to date

The EDC now has a range of national organisations who have nominated a specific communications expert to work on the EDC's communications element.

- NHS England
- NHS Employers
- NHS Providers
- NHS Leadership Academy
- Care Quality Commission
- Health Education England
- Health and Social Care Information Centre
- Department of Health
- NHS Improvement – currently seeking nomination

The 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 is currently undertaking a review of the work to date. Stephen Lightbown has secured a new position as Head of Communications in Bristol, and has resigned from position of Chair of the sub group. Sarah Smith, Head of Strategic Communications is now chairing the EDC sub group. Sarah met with Joan Saddler, Co-chair to review the EDC communications role and function. The Group held a meeting in July 2016, to discuss the new approach to communications agenda, ensure greater ownership to the agenda by all council communications leads and develop a plan of action to review the EDC communications activity, and quick wins in line with the EDC Work Plan deliverables through joint effort, with contributions and leadership from all the member organisations.

Current position

The EDC sub group is currently reviewing the current mechanisms of communication, and the action plan, outlining a new and fresh approach to ensuring EDC communications is proactive rather than reactive; all council members begin to promote equality deliverables and quick wins as joint products with EDC. The action plan will map a 3-6 month delivery of communications and social media activity; and develop a 12 month view of activity, focusing on regular blogs post EDC meetings, articles on key areas of work, showcasing key activity of council members of equality and diversity issues.

A current review of all EDC communication mechanisms is under way, with updates to:

- EDC webpages – provides background and information to the Council and its material including minutes and papers of meetings and membership biographies.
- The EDC communications strategy and Action Plan; as above;
- An EDC Forward Plan of communications opportunities, produced on a quarterly basis with quick wins from the EDC sub groups and Work Plan; with regular Blogs on activity pre and post EDC on key decisions and outcomes;
- An EDC Infographics is currently under discussion.

Key risks

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

- Keeping equality high on the healthcare and wider NHS agenda.
- Positively positioning the EDC as a body of influence in promoting equality and diversity within the NHS and beyond.
- EDC members 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.

Next steps

- The review of the strategy and development of the action plan will support the implementation of the approach to EDC communications, with regular activity documented through the EDC Forward Plan on a quarterly basis.
- An EDC Infographics is currently being sourced for development by EDC members.
- Communications support to the EDC Work plan Performance Scorecard currently being developed.
- Post EDC Blogs on key decisions made by the EDC and articles on key areas of work will be disseminated through social media.

Recommendation and action requested

- EDC to note the above.
- EDC subgroups to ensure they feed any key communications messages into the EDC Forward Plan in preparation for each quarterly update to EDC.

Name of the chair of the sub group: Sarah Smith, Head of Strategic Communications, NHS England and Chair of the group.

Name of the sub group: EDC Communications Subgroup

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[Members of the Communications Group are: Sarah Smith (NHS England) (chair), Anna Jefferson (CQC), Caroline Bernard (NHS Providers), Verity Thomas (HEE), Henry Bonsu (Broadcaster), Ruth Passman (NHS England), Ranjit Senghera (NHS England), Isabelle Hunt & Amy McManus (HSCIC); Emily Brown, (Department of Health); Julie Johnson, (NHS Employers/ NHS Confederation); Helen Stevens, (NHS Leadership Academy), Stephen Lightbown, (NHS England)]