

EDC02 07/17

Equality and Diversity Council

Work programme themes: discussion paper

Purpose

This short paper is a reflective piece that aims to help stimulate thinking with regard to the work programme themes and direction of travel for the EDC, for the next two-year period. The initial thoughts and proposals presented in this paper stem from the 'EDC stakeholder event' held on 20 June.

Background

The NHS Equality and Diversity Council (EDC) has successfully delivered upon numerous workstreams to help support NHS organisations deliver on the equality, diversity and inclusion agenda. An overview of the achievements of the last year are summarised in the draft EDC Annual Report 2016/17.

On 19 April 2017 the EDC agreed to progress on the agreed recommendations stemming from its recent review, including the revision of form, function and impact. The recommendations are summarised below:

- I. The work programme of EDC should be explicitly focused on promoting equality and diversity in the NHS. EDC will deal with issues which can help address health inequalities, but this is not its core purpose.
- II. The EDC should develop a system-wide blueprint that facilitates continuous improvement on the agenda – reflecting the changing landscape of the NHS and wider healthcare system.
- III. Core EDC membership has been unwieldy; it should be reduced and reconfigured in a way that will help deliver upon the strategic direction.
- IV. EDC should produce an annual report / host annual event(s) that communicate progress, reinforce to the EDC its own purpose, and facilitate momentum.

Underpinned by the values and principles of the NHS Constitution, the EDC needs to focus upon collaborative working that will help contribute towards the delivery of the priorities set out in the Next Steps on the NHS Five Year Forward View.

Where have we come from: EDC work to date

The 2016/17 EDC work programme included a focus upon three core strategic priorities:

- (i) Inclusive workplaces (longstanding equality issues across NHS workplaces);
- (ii) Workforce equality (continuous equality improvements); and
- (iii) Inclusive healthcare spearheading best practice for disadvantaged groups).

These priorities led to key work streams, a number of which were supported by operational subgroups, and included:

- NHS Workforce Race Equality Standard ¹
- Equality Delivery System for the NHS – EDS2 ²
- NHS Learning Disability Employment Programme
- Supporting work on bullying and harassment
- Supporting LGBT staff
- NHS Workforce Disability Equality Standard
- Information standards for the collection of equality information
- GP registration leaflets

Refer to the *NHS EDC Annual Report 2016/17* for full details of the work carried out by the Council during the last period.

What we know: current challenges³

➤ Health status

Self-reported **physical and mental health variations** between groups/people given protection under Equality Act 2010.

➤ Premature death

Life expectancy has risen and the gender gap narrowed. People such as those with learning disabilities and serious mental illness, Gypsies and Travellers, and other minority ethnic groups have lower **life expectancy** than the general population.

Infant mortality particularly affects some ethnic minorities, mothers of different ages and socio-economic groups.

The gap in **suicide rates** between men and women has widened; people with mental health issues are at greater risk of suicide.

➤ Access to healthcare

Transgender people experience a range of barriers accessing NHS **gender reassignment** services.

Evidence of inequality in outcomes at the **end of life** for people sharing particular characteristics: gender, sexual orientation, and ethnicity.

Risk of poor **mental health** has risen with some ethnic minorities, LGB people, and disabled people particularly at risk.

➤ Leadership and workforce

The evidence of the link between the treatment of staff and patient care is well-evidenced, particularly so for ethnic minority staff in the NHS; it is an issue for patient

¹ Included in the NHS standard contract from April 2015

² Ibid

³ Challenges related to health status, premature death and access to healthcare have been taken from: [Is Britain Fairer? The state of equality and human rights 2015](#) (EHRC); WRES data for 2016 were taken from: [NHS WRES 2016 Data Analysis Report for NHS Trusts](#) (NHS EDC).

care as much as it is for staff. Equal gender representation on boards (50:50 by 2020) work is underway, and the Workforce Disability Equality Standard (WDES) is in its preparation phase.

The latest (2016) data from the NHS Workforce Race Equality Standard (WRES) continues to highlight the challenges for BME staff across the NHS:

- BME staff are significantly more likely to be **disciplined** than white staff members.
- **Representation** at board and VSM level remains significantly lower than in the overall BME NHS workforce and in the local communities served.
- BME staff remain significantly more likely to experience **discrimination** at work from colleagues and their managers.
- BME are more likely than white staff to experience **harassment, bullying or abuse** from other staff though this fell very slightly last year.
- BME staff remain less likely than white staff to believe that their trust provides equal opportunities for **career progression**.

Direction of travel: strategic levers

The NHS Five Year Forward View sets out the direction of travel for the NHS which depends on ensuring the NHS is responsive to the diverse needs of all patients and communities, is innovative, engages and respects staff, and draws on the immense talent of the workforce.

The core national service improvements for the NHS for the coming years are:

- Improving **A&E** performance
- Strengthening access to high quality **GP services**
- Improvements in **cancer services** and **mental health**

Local **service redesign** (STPs and ACSs) will help to deliver on the above strategic priorities, with the **NHS workforce** being one of the key enablers in making this happen.

The EDC will want to focus on maximising strategic influence and impact to drive and embed equality into the heart of the direction of travel.

Potential strategic EDC workplan themes

To help spark discussion, the following high-level themes for the EDC work programme are proposed. The work programme themes cover the next two-year period and emerge from the discussions held at the 20th June EDC stakeholder workshop.

It should be noted that these are broad themes and suggested areas of focus; they are not set in stone and are presented in a manner that will enable specific and discrete deliverables to sit below each theme.

1. *Enabling leadership capability and capacity* – externalising asset; growing new leaders; setting core local objectives and priorities aligned to the Next Steps

on the NHS Five Year Forward View. Focussing upon bold aspirations (e.g. of working towards securing 10 BME CEOs of NHS trusts by 2022)

2. *Embedding levers and accountability* – developing and embedding enablers to help facilitate continuous improvements on equality, linking with the overarching concept of ‘quality’ and including a focus upon:
 - i. Key drivers for NHS organisations (e.g. mental health / gender gap in suicide rates)
 - ii. Influencing metrics and links to Quality Accounts (e.g. making better use and influence of EDS2 and WRES)

3. *Supporting the system architecture* (cross-cutting theme) – mainstreaming equality and diversity into the new healthcare architecture (STPs, ACSs) – highlighting the ‘enablers’ for leadership and levers/accountability:
 - i. Better use of protected characteristic data and intelligence (EDS2)
 - ii. Role of Healthwatch – co-production and meaningful engagement

Key questions for discussion:

1. Are these broadly the right high-level themes for the EDC two-year work programme (intentions)?
2. What specific impacts do we want to make under each theme (ambitions)?
3. How will we make those impacts (deliverables)?
4. What structures / reporting mechanisms should be in place to aid delivery (operations)?

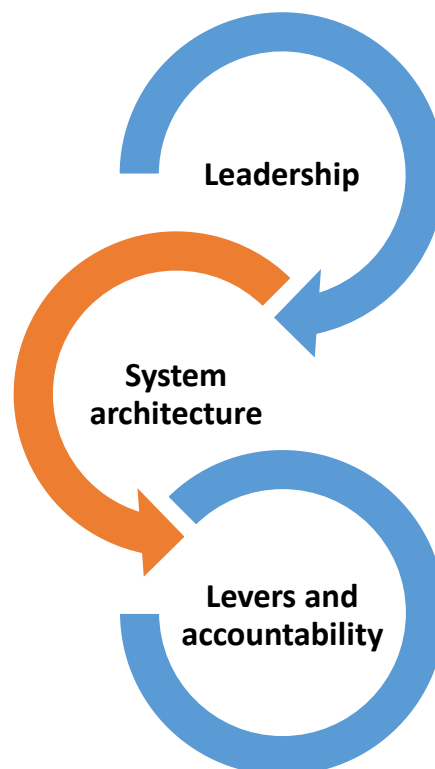


Figure: Proposed over-arching themes for the EDC work programme