

Equality and Diversity Council Meeting Paper

19th April 2017

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

- EDC Communications Sub group has met monthly in January, February and March and carried out a review of its membership.
- A new EDC 12-month planner has been completed which maps key moments on the health calendar where there is an opportunity to promote the EDC agenda as well as focusing on specific events featuring equality, diversity and human rights themes. This will now be developed further to identify 3-4 key communications opportunities across the year.
- Continued to promote the EDC Blog by Lucy Wilkinson (CQC) on equality being an essential strand of STPs – this has received over 1,900 unique views. NHS Employers also developed a new blog around its Diversity and Inclusion Team, with potential further blog content being developed by CQC and the Leadership Academy for April and May.
- Further work has been done around co-ordinating social media activity across the group's members through greater use of Twitter hashtag #inclusivenhs.

- Other communications activity involving EDC members during this period included:
 - NHS England working with Healthy London Partnership and Pathway homeless to promote the **5th International Symposium on Homelessness, Health and Inclusion 2017** on 1 March. The event, featuring National Director for Primary Care Dr Arvind Madan and Co-Chair of the NHS England National Asylum Health Pilot Iman Rafatmah, promoted the launch of three new leaflets which advise patient groups in making it easier for homeless people, asylum seekers and refugees, Gypsies and Travellers and Roma communities to **register with a GP**. This is being promoted on NHS Choices website and has received around 1,060 unique views since the event.
 - The launch of two new diversity and inclusion products from NHS Employers – the first a **leadership podcast featuring Joan Saddler and two other leading experts Dan Robertson and Michelle Tuckey** in January and the second, a new web section on the **NHS Employers website, LGBT equality in the workplace** in February which was a key deliverable of the EDC LGBT task and finish group and to celebrate **LGBT History Month 2017**.
 - Promotion of the nine **Workforce Race Equality Standard (WRES) regional seminars**.
 - BBC Bristol interview with WRES Director **Yvonne Coghill** following her attendance at **British Association of Physicians of Indian Origin (BAPIO)** annual conference '*Prudent Health Care – The Modern NHS*'. BAPIO is a national voluntary organisation.
 - A blog by former nurse/midwife Morvia Gooden, from the Leadership Academy, for **International Woman's Day** talking about her experiences as a black woman living and working in the UK.
 - Promoting the **Realising the potential of learning disability employment in the NHS Event** on 17 March 2017 run jointly by the Kings Fund and NHS England which brought together trusts, commissioners and contractors to learn more about how the NHS is committed to employing people with learning disabilities and receive some practical support and advice to implementing that vision.

Wherever possible, these have also been publicised across the membership and further promoted through their own communications channels.

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 work stream.

- NHS England
- NHS Employers / NHS Confederation
- NHS Leadership Academy
- Care Quality Commission
- Health Education England
- NHS Digital formerly known as Health and Social Care Information Centre (HSCIC)
- Department of Health
- NHS Improvement
- Unison

The Communications Sub Group has continued to identify and co-ordinate proactive communications activity which helps to positively raise the EDC agenda across various health sectors.

A 12-month planner of equality, diversity and human rights activity where the EDC's work can be promoted has been developed. This focuses on key announcements and activities alongside smaller events/workshops or training. It will now be further developed to highlight 3-4 key pieces of co-ordinated communications activity during the year which can be supported across EDC partners to amplify specific themes or messages.

Current position

Membership has just been reviewed to ensure key organisations all have the right representatives on the group and that they are empowered to deliver activity on behalf of other partners. It is essential that this work – although led and supported by NHS England communications and policy staff – should be collaborative and delivered across all partners.

A new Twitter hashtag #inclusivenhs has been agreed and all partners are being encouraged to use this to badge EDC activity and further raise awareness. A social media lead has since been helping to identify and co-ordinate positive PR opportunities across the group.

Key risks

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

- Keeping equality and diversity 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.
- 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.

Strategic communication leadership is being provided by NHS England's Iain Fletcher as chair of the group, but the absence of any dedicated operational support underneath is limiting activity and therefore positive impact on the system.

While a number of sub group representatives are actively engaged in the EDC communications agenda and support it through activity on a monthly basis, other organisations have proved to be less engaged with attendance at some meetings variable and little follow up communications support offered either.

Next steps

- To build on the newly-completed 12-month forward planner and identify 3-4 key activities during the year where a concerted and co-ordinated cross-organisational push can help raise EDC issues.
- To identify, develop and publish monthly blogs/articles by EDC members in April, May and June 2017.
- To co-ordinate and increase social media activity to further raise the profile of the EDC.

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: Iain Fletcher, Lead for Strategic Communications portfolio for EDC, NHS England and Chair of the group.

Name of the sub group: EDC Communications Subgroup

13th March 2017

Members of the Communications Group are: Iain Fletcher (NHS England) (chair), Anna Jefferson / James Hedges (CQC), Matthew Woolford and Lisa Buchanan (Health Education England); Ruth Passman (NHS England), Ranjit Senghera (NHS England), Isabelle Hunt & Amy McManus (NHS Digital); Emily Brown, (Department of Health); Julie Johnson, (NHS Employers/ NHS Confederation), Helen Dennis and Amraze Khan (NHS Leadership Academy), Reg Wilhelm (WRES, NHS England); Michelle Smith (NHS Improvement) and Carol Rawlings (Unison).