

Equality and Diversity Council Meeting Paper

24th January 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 its 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 effectively with 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 agreed key elements including Terms of Reference, developing Co-chair role and work plan to aid further communications activity. Also held a number of smaller sessions with specific group members to plan more collaborative working on events and social media activity.
- EDC Blog by Lucy Wilkinson (CQC) published on equality and health inequalities needing to be an essential strand of STPs. Further blog by NHS Employers around work of NHS Employers' Diversity and Inclusion Team currently underway.
- EDC Forward View for January – February 2017 featuring key work activity across partners has been developed and will be shared with the EDC.
- A new EDC 12-month planner has also been drafted, mapping key dates on health calendar where there is an opportunity to promote EDC agenda as well as focusing on specific events featuring equality, diversity and human rights themes.
- Majority of EDC communications leads now have links to the EDC webpages from their own websites (with remaining members due to complete shortly), and are also using the EDC logo on any forthcoming promotional events and publications.
- A group lead has been appointed to help increase and co-ordinate social media activity across the group members through greater use of Twitter hashtag #inclusivenhs. This will help reach wider audiences.
- Other communications activity involving EDC members during this period included:
 - launch of NHS Employers' Personal, Fair and Diverse (PFD) Facebook group;
 - NHS England WRES Director Yvonne Coghill appearing on BBC Four's 'Black Nurses: The Women Who Saved the NHS';
 - CQC issuing the State of Care report (featuring an equality chapter);
 - BMA and GLADD (The Association of LGBT Doctors and Dentists) issuing a report on attitudes towards discrimination and featuring range of case studies;
 - Association of Ambulance Chief Executives committing to NHS England's Workforce Race Equality Standard.

Wherever possible, these have been publicised across the members 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 Providers
- 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
- NHS Confederation

Membership is currently being sought from staff side representation – RCN, MIP and Unison as well as other national bodies including Healthwatch England and Public Health England.

The Communications Sub Group is identifying and co-ordinating proactive communications activity which helps to positively raise the EDC agenda across various health sectors.

The Group held meetings in November and December 2016, to discuss and take forward the communications agenda, ensuring greater ownership by all council communications leads.

A draft 3-month work planner was populated by group members to ensure all EDC communications activity is clearly aligned to the EDC Work Plan deliverables, and outlining quick wins activity for each member organisation. As part of this, a second blog was developed by CQC's Lucy Wilkinson and promoted in late December through the NHS England website and partner channels. A 12-month planner is also currently being developed requesting council members to outline all key events focusing on equality, diversity and human rights for 2017-2018, where the EDC's work can be promoted.

Current position

The EDC sub group has a new chair – Iain Fletcher - who has replaced Sarah Smith, who formally left the group after the last meeting to take up another role in NHS England.

It is proposed that its membership is reviewed in early January 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 important that this work – although led and supported by NHS England communications and policy staff – should be collaborative and delivered across all partners.

One aspect of this has been agreeing a new Twitter hashtag #inclusivenhs which all partners will be encouraged to use to badge EDC activity and further raise awareness. A social media lead has also been identified who will help co-ordinate this activity across the group.

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

- To agree and finalise the work plan for 2017/18.
- To continue to implement the programme of activities as outlined in the work plan and the 12-month planner of activity and opportunities to promote the role and work of the EDC.
- To continue to work with members to produce regular blogs and articles by EDC members
- To co-ordinate and increase social media activity to further raise profile of EDC
- To review membership to ensure all key EDC members have communications representation and that representative is empowered to deliver communications activity on behalf of the group.

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

19th December 2016

Members of the Communications Group are: Iain Fletcher (NHS England) (chair), Anna Jefferson (CQC), (NHS Providers), Matthew Woolford and Lisa Buchanan (Health Education England); Henry Bonsu (Broadcaster), 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).