

## Equality and Diversity Council

30 October 2017

### **Equally Outstanding: How can a focus on equality and human rights improve the quality of care in times of financial constraint?**

#### **1. Introduction/Purpose**

On September 13th 2017, CQC and 8 partner organisations published “*Equally Outstanding*” – a resource which considers how a focus on equality and human rights can improve care quality in times of financial constraint.

The purpose of this paper is to highlight to Equality and Diversity Council (EDC) members the key messages in “*Equally Outstanding*” and to stimulate discussion of the implications of these key messages for the work of the NHS Equality and Diversity Council and its members.

#### **2. Background**

In the 2017/ 2018 CQC Business Plan, CQC agreed to publish a “resource” about how a focus on equality and human rights can improve care quality in times of financial constraint. The purpose of the resource is to re-frame the debate around equality and human rights from being seen as a “problem” especially when finances are tight, to being seen as part of the solution to providing high quality care, in order to encourage improvement. This is in line with both what we find in outstanding providers and with national policy such as the NHS National Quality Board shared commitment to quality.

This resource builds on both learning from outstanding providers and from CQC working in close partnership with outstanding providers and a range of other national bodies since November 2016, including by developing key ideas through 2 roundtable events and several phone conferences and by sharing good practice and evidence. Eight organisations are formal partners with CQC in the project – Care England, Healthwatch, National Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans Partnership, NHS Confederation, NHS Improvement (NHSI), Race Equality Foundation, Social Care Institute for Excellence and Voluntary Organisations Disability Group.

This has helped:

- Gather a wider range of evidence from other organisations to supplement CQC regulatory evidence.
- Reach a potentially wider audience for the final product, by engaging with partners and drawing on their networks.

The published resource, available at [www.cqc.org.uk/equallyoutstanding](http://www.cqc.org.uk/equallyoutstanding)

- is web enabled so that people can use in a variety of different ways. We hope that this will increase the likelihood of the resource being used, as it invites readers to

construct their own path through this material.

- draws strongly from the experiences of outstanding providers who have focussed on equality and human rights to improve the quality of care they provide – supporting this with a range of other evidence and links to helpful resources
- is published as a ‘beta’ version which will allow us after 6 months to rework the web version, once we know how it has been used in practice and how we can improve it
- includes reflective practice questions to help people apply the learning in the resource to their own organisation

### 3. Key considerations

There are 5 key messages in the resource:

1. Equality and human rights is a **solution** to providing good care – not a problem in providing care. There are ethical, business, economic and legal “cases” for a focus on equality and human rights.
2. Providers could **learn from the best** in using equality and human rights to improve the quality of care. They have 9 common features (all of which are covered in CQC assessment frameworks and are also linked to the NHSI culture improvement tool):
  - **Leadership** enthusiastic and committed to equality and human rights.
  - **Equality and human rights principles into action:** a thread from organisational values, through leadership behaviours and actions to frontline staff and their work.
  - **Culture of staff equality:** Broad work to develop an open and inclusive culture and work to tackle specific workforce inequalities.
  - **Applying “equality and human rights thinking” to improvement issues**
  - **Staff as improvement partners:** in planning and delivery of the equality and human rights interventions to improve care quality.
  - **People who use services at the centre:** Listening carefully to people who used the service and viewing them as people with a life beyond their immediate need for a service – including their future aspirations.
  - **Using external help**
  - **Courage:** including positive risk-taking, being honest about issues and tackling difficult problems
  - **Continuous learning and curiosity**
3. Providers may still face **challenges** in times of constraint: but impact on people using services and staff can be **minimised** by mitigating any negative impacts on equality and human rights.
4. Providers cannot do this work alone. They must be supported in this work by commissioners, regulators and policy makers.
5. **Empowering people and communities** is essential to advance equality and human rights.

#### 4. Actions taken to date

- CQC published Equally Outstanding on 13<sup>th</sup> September 2017 following approval at CQC Board meeting the same day – supported by a news story and headline banner on CQC website for one week. At 26<sup>th</sup> September, there had been over 2,100 unique visitors to the main webpage.
- Workshop at VODG conference (Chief Executives and senior leaders in voluntary sector adult social care providers) on same day
- Social media work using #equallyoutstanding
- Partners promoting through their own communication channels
- Planning about to start for evaluation and the development of the revised product in 6 months
- CQC is using key findings internally to look at equality and inclusion in CQC

#### 5. Recommendations

That EDC considers the following questions and then takes appropriate actions:

1. How can EDC/ EDC members **support providers** to learn from the examples of the best in relation to equality and human rights?
2. How can EDC/ EDC members **influence the wider system** so the system **supports providers** to work in this way?
3. How can EDC/ EDC members **influence the wider system** so the system **empowers communities** in order to advance equality and human rights?

Lucy Wilkinson, Care Quality Commission, 26th September 2017