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30 October 2017

**Briefing on the Information Standard for
Sexual Orientation Monitoring (DCB2094)**

1. Introduction

The purpose of this briefing is to provide an update on the development and launch of the information standard for Sexual Orientation monitoring (SOM). It includes information about ongoing activity to support the implementation of the Standard. The development of the Information Standard is a significant milestone in promoting Lesbian Gay Bisexual (LGB) equality in England.

2. Background

The SOM information standard is a fundamental information standard that provides the mechanism for recording the sexual orientation of all patients/service users aged 16 years and over across all health services and Local Authorities with responsibilities for Adult social care in England in all service areas where it may be relevant to record this data. In settings and circumstances where dataset owners and health and social care organisations decide to record patient/service user sexual orientation, the data should be recorded as per this standard. This standard provides the categories for recording sexual orientation but does not mandate a collection.

The standard has been based on research conducted by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC), and on current practice by those organisations which monitor sexual orientation.

The information standard is published under section 250 of the Health and Social Care Act 2012. It enables compliance with obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The Equality Act 2010 and the corresponding Public Sector Equality Duty (section 149 of the Act) contain a legal obligation for all public sector bodies to pay due regard to the needs of lesbian, gay and bisexual people in the design and delivery of services and ensure (and be able to demonstrate) that people are not discriminated against based upon their sexual orientation. Sexual orientation is already collected in certain datasets but is not consistently collected across the health and social care system.

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3. Key considerations

In February 2015, NHS England commissioned the Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Foundation to develop the SOM Information Standard. The Standard was launched on 5th October 2017 following its approval by the Data Co-ordination Board on 14th September 2017.

LGBT Foundation has conducted research with Lesbian Gay and Bisexual (LGB) and heterosexual people to assess the acceptability of SOM. This indicates that 90-95% of people, both LGB and heterosexual, would be comfortable disclosing their sexual orientation as part of demographic monitoring if they understood why it was being collected.

Use of the standard by organisations will support the delivery of benefits across a number of areas:

• Support health organisations and local authorities with responsibility for Social Services to be compliant with the Equality Act 2010 with regard to sexual orientation.

• There is a strong evidence base that LGB people are disproportionately affected by a range of health inequalities, including poor mental health, higher risk of self-harm and suicide, increased prevalence of sexually transmitted infections (STI) including HIV, increased use of alcohol, drugs and tobacco with a higher likelihood of dependency; increased social isolation and vulnerability in old age. However, a lack of patient SOM means that these inequalities and related specific patient needs are often not acknowledged or addressed in mainstream service provision.

• Recording sexual orientation across health and social care would allow policy makers, service commissioners and providers to better identify health risks at a population level. This would support targeted preventative and early intervention work to address health inequalities, which is shown to reduce expenditure linked to treatment costs further down the line. For example, access to befriending services or talking therapies might reduce the need for using more complex mental health services.

• Health and social care organisations will be able to utilise the collected information to contribute to the improvement of healthcare providers' understanding of the impact of inequalities on health and care outcomes for different populations in England and thereby take steps to ensure the provision of equitable access for LGB individuals.

4. Actions taken to date

• The Information Standard was launched on 5th October 2017 when NHS Digital issued an Information Standard Notice - the NHS England web page dedicated to the Standard went live on the same day.

• The LGBT Foundation has launched its good practice to monitoring sexual orientation to support the implementation of the information standard. This includes four case studies from three NHS trusts who have been addressing the standards in

draft format as part of their involvement in the SOM task and finish group over last 12 months facilitated by NHS Employers (see Appendix 1)

- Work is currently underway to promote the uptake the standard with organisations and dataset owners. Sexual orientation is currently included on the following three data sets: Improving Access to Psychological Therapies Data Set - Version 1.5; Genito-urinary Medicine Clinic Activity Dataset (GUMCADv2) Standard Specification; Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS), under the Mental Capacity Act 2005, Data Collection. These three will be updated to the new standard at their next iterations. The SOM Standard is included on the Mental Health and Cancer Outcomes and Services Data versions that are about to be released.
- In addition, NHS Employers is facilitating a task and finish group involving 25 diverse NHS Trust sites who have expressed an interest in piloting the information standard (see Appendix 2). Contact has also been made with some local authorities to seek pilot sites in social care too.
- A national implementation task and finish group has been set up with representatives from the NHS, the Department of Health, NHS Employers, Public Health England, local government and NHS Digital to drive forward SOM in the health and social care system. This group has developed a communication and implementation plan to support the implementation of the information standard.
- Funding has been secured through the Health and Well-being Alliance additional work stream in order for the LGBT Foundation to hold 6 regional engagement events with the LGB community and key stakeholders. These events will take place between October 2017 and March 2018.
- To support the implementation of the standard, Health Education England is leading on the development of e-learning module for the information standard which is expected to be launched in Early 2018; LGBT Foundation is developing patient focused guidance.

5. Recommendations

The EDC is asked to:

i) Note the launch of the Standard and the actions currently in place to support implementation.

ii) Consider what the EDC partners can do to support implementation, thereby demonstrating leadership across the system. This could be in the form of:

- Acting as ambassadors for the SOM Information Standard, actively supporting its development and encouraging take up within and outside their own health community and organisation;
- Working with NHS Employers and the EDC secretariat to encourage take up for the pilot programme and be actively involved in any post-pilot activity

Appendix 1

Case study 1: Avon & Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust (AWP) – internal briefing for paper focused on getting buy-in from key colleagues to respond to piloting the Standard

AWP is a significant provider of high quality mental health services covering Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol, North Somerset, South Gloucestershire, Swindon and Wiltshire. At the start of the sexual orientation monitoring pilot project, nearly 95% of service users' sexual orientation data collected at AWP was categorised as 'Unknown', meaning data was often not being recorded. It's believed many staff were not confident in asking service users sexual orientation as a routine monitoring question, rather only if it was directly relevant to the service users' treatment or care.

An internal briefing paper was subsequently prepared in November 2016. This summarised the necessary, next steps in their commitment to implementing the sexual orientation monitoring Information Standard. The briefing was circulated to key colleagues, including the Director of Operations, Associate Director of Human Resources and Workforce, Head of Information and Performance Management, Patient Experience Manager and Clinical Systems Manager.

The briefing introduced the team to the key considerations for everybody throughout the implementation process, before bringing this group together to plan the approach to implementation. Considerations included needing to:

- ensure staff and service users understand the value of monitoring and its role in delivering person-centred care; and

- considering how the monitoring question can be asked in a sensitive way.

Case Study 2: Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust Pilot – how they've amended their IT system to reflect the need

Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust (NHCFT) covers one of the largest geographical areas of any NHS Trust in England. They joined the SOM pilot in order to continue their work in embracing equality and diversity and a desire to share their experiences both locally and nationally.

NHCFT identified early in the process that work needed to be done on patient record systems. Two of their patient record systems routinely collected sexual orientation data (IAPTUS and Blithe Lilie), and there was potential to collect data with another system (Swift). However, the main patient data systems did not have the facility to record the data.

NHCFT implemented a plan of action around implementation of monitoring more widely. Firstly, after discussions with the executive leads and the IT systems team, NHCFT committed to trialing sexual orientation in one of the systems that did not yet routinely incorporate sexual orientation monitoring. At the next IT system upgrade, the IT team will enquire about including sexual orientation monitoring data, including replacing the social care system (Swift) and endeavoring to incorporate routine sexual orientation monitoring in the new system. As part of their next steps, NHCFT are targeting training to those staff most likely to register patients. They are also committed to working with the training department more broadly to support this work, and ensure both staff and service users fully understand the reasons they are embarking on this initiative.

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Case Study 3 : University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay FT - 'How can I help lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) colleagues feel more comfortable and able to be themselves at work: Managers Guide'

University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay Foundation Trust (UHMBT) provide a comprehensive range of acute and support hospital services for a population of around 350,000 people. UHMBT hadn't previously engaged directly with their LGB workforce, and they recognised that developing relationships and trust with the group was key to starting to improve their work. One of the biggest challenges to overcome was low self-reporting of sexual orientation by staff, coupled with low response rates in national staff surveys, leaving them unable to analyse by sexual orientation.

As part of their Sexual Orientation Monitoring pilot UHMBT subsequently produced a guide intended for managers and supervisors on how to ensure LGB colleagues feel more comfortable at work. This included encouraging staff to self-certify their sexual orientation and to talk to people they line manage about completing the sexual orientation question in their Electronic Staff Record account. Their top tips for individual managers in creating an inclusive culture included:

- keeping gendered language neutral;
- not to assume anyone's sexual orientation; and
- to remember that patients can hear what staff say, which can affect their care too.

Case Study 4: Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust communication campaign

Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust provide health and social care services in South London and Kent, specialising in community health, mental health and learning disability services. Oxleas have been progressing their monitoring of sexual orientation in service users over the past few years, and have subsequently been encouraging people using their services to tell relevant staff about their sexual orientation.

Oxleas produced a leaflet available to all patients, aimed at people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or trans and their carers. The leaflet entitled 'LGBT in Oxleas' outlines what to expect when accessing Oxleas' services, including a discussion of 'why should I tell my health professional I'm gay?'.

'Just as you would tell your doctor about your age, occupation or ethnicity, it's a good idea to tell your health professional if you are gay, lesbian, or bisexual. If they know about your sexuality, it's easier to discuss your life, relationships and health concerns and make sure that care is tailored to the whole of you. For example, your partner can be included in discussions about care if you wish. Health professionals can also ensure that the services they provide are accessible to all groups. With your agreement, this information can be included in your care plan.'

The leaflet is available online at Oxleas' website at: http://oxleas.nhs.uk/news/2012/2/lgbt-in-oxleas/

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Appendix 2

List of Pilot Sites 2017-18

1. Avon & Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust
2. Norfolk and Suffolk Foundation NHS Trust
3. Countess of Chester Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
4. Lincolnshire Community Health Services
5. Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust
6. University Hospital Southampton NHS Foundation Trust
7. University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay NHS Foundation Trust
8. Western Sussex Hospitals
9. Mid Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust
10. Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
11. South Staffordshire and Shropshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust
12. Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust
13. Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership NHS Trust
14. Dudley & Walsall MHPT
15. Yorkshire Ambulance Service
16. Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust
17. City Healthcare Partnership CIC
18. East Cheshire NHS Trust
19. Norfolk Community Health and Care NHS Trust
20. Queen Elizabeth Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
21. Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust
22. United Lincolnshire Hospitals NHS Trust
23. Welsh Ambulance Service NHS Trust
24. Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust
25. Gateshead Health NHS Foundation Trust