

Capitalising on engagement with the VCSE and communities on diversity and inclusion

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October 2019

The Equality and Diversity Council includes representation from the Patients Association and the Health and Wellbeing Alliance. This paper focuses on how we can capitalise on the engagement with the VCSE and the communities they represent in relation to diversity and inclusion issues.

1. There has been a lack of clarity about the purpose of the VCSE contribution to the EDC. The representatives on the Council have the potential to engage with diverse communities, to understand their perspectives and the challenges for communities in accessing and receiving high quality care that meets their needs.
2. Engagement with diverse communities is vital. Equality issues have a significant impact on the ability of individuals to access healthcare and also impact on their experience of healthcare and outcomes leading to health inequalities for diverse groups of people. We have appreciated the opportunity to support an engagement event in 2019, however, engagement must be done properly listening to lived experience and then demonstrating how this is going to be acted on. The engagement process has not been transparent to date and we have not been able to feed back to those people who attended the inclusion event in January 2019.
3. Engagement with communities on equality and diversity and inclusion to hear how they are able to access and experience healthcare is different to the engagement that will take place through the NHS Assembly and the LTP workstreams. The NHS Assembly has a broad membership recruited for their individual skills and experiences. Whilst this is absolutely to be welcomed there will be a limit to the ability of the Assembly to deep dive into all equality issues. Many of the LTP workstreams focus on clinical care groups and will not necessarily pick up the cultural and diversity issues for BAME, LGBTQ, gender and disability communities particularly. Furthermore engagement focused on understanding cultural and diversity issues will enable leaders to address equality and diversity issues across the system and across care pathways through direct engagement with these communities.
4. The VCSE members of the NHS E Equality and Diversity Council welcome the opportunity to provide opportunities for the Council to engage with diverse communities and for the findings to be shared widely across the workstreams of the NHS Long Term Plan. We believe this approach would support improving health outcomes for all users of health services and contribute to reducing health inequalities.