

Briefing Note

Title: Embedding equalities monitoring within Adults Services – which has been considered as part of a much wider piece of work across the council

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Prepared by: Jin Takhar Job Title: Corporate Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Manager

Intended Audience: Internal Partner organisation Public Confidential

1. Purpose of the Report

To update Adult and Safer City Scrutiny Panel on the action being taken to embed equalities monitoring arrangements within Adults Services – as this is being considered as part of a much wider piece of work across the council.

2. Recommendations

Adult and Safer City Scrutiny Panel are invited to note:

- the new supporting guidance on equalities monitoring of public serves- now in place for managers. See appendix one attached.
- the progress made and findings to date as indicated within section four of this report
- the agreed plan of action moving forward as indicated within section five of this report

3. Background – providing context as to why equalities monitoring is important to public services.

Equality monitoring involves the routine collection of information about customers and staff on nine protected characteristics. Individuals and groups are at risk of discrimination and disproportionately poor outcomes based on these characteristics, unless services are designed to ensure this is not the case. Within this section of the report, the significant legal, moral and business benefits of doing this have been highlighted.

Equality monitoring is not simply about collecting this data but also involves storage, analysis, reporting and taking action based on findings.

The legal basis for equality was most recently laid out by the Equality Act 2010. As part of this, in the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), public bodies must consider and have due regard for the needs of diverse groups in a proportionate and relevant way, when designing, evaluating and delivering services. Compliance with this legal requirement aims

to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. Equality monitoring is vital in evidencing compliance with the PSED.

The “due regard” duty underpins a public authority’s need for equality monitoring of employees and services – without information indicating the usage, under-usage or non-usage of a service by people who share one or more protected characteristics it is not possible to know definitively whether a service is being offered in a way that meets the needs of all sections of the community it serves – and thus meets the Public Sector Equality Duty.

It is important to collect this information in a way that is proportionate and that does not cut-across other requirements, for example the General Data Protection Regulations.

‘The moral rationale for promoting equality is one of fairness. All service providers have a duty to provide accessible and relevant services taking into account diverse needs, in addition to adhering to legal requirements. Equality monitoring would enable evaluation of whether services that are provided by the Council are accessible and appropriate across different characteristics. Where gaps are identified between the expected and actual uptake of services for certain equality groups, this can be explored.

The business benefits of being an organisation that is serious about inclusion builds trust and social contracts with service users and other partners. Being able to design and deliver services that reduce rather than widen inequality for protected groups will support long term goals of improving wellbeing and raising the standard of living. Equality monitoring would underpin our ability to evidence that our policies and services respond to diverse needs and promote equality, for example by supporting an application for the ‘Excellence’ status of the Equality Framework for Local Government.

4. Progress made to date

- We have introduced the new corporate guidance for managers setting out the importance and the requirements for equalities monitoring across council services – launched in April this year. Please note: the new corporate guidance for managers can be found in appendix one attached.
- Prior to placing a blanket equality monitoring requirement across all services, it was agreed that we conduct a desk top assessment of all current practice in equalities monitoring across all Heads of Service. This desk top assessment involved conducting a survey asking all 52 heads of service what equalities data was collected and how this data was then being used. This enabled best practice and methodology to be identified, alongside areas in need of development. This piece of work was jointly led by the EDI team and the Insight & Performance team during the two-month period of June to July.

- Analysis of findings during July/August identified that EDI data is being collected in several systems (24 systems in place) and the quality of the data and how it's used to inform service delivery and monitor service equality outcomes is variable – however now improving. Directorates are becoming more aware of how much information there is and how this data can be used effectively.
- The 24 systems that we work with do have the capability to record data, which is a positive picture , we are now looking at their full functionality and amending systems so that data across all nine protected characteristics can be collected (Mitel, Agresso, CareFirst, Childview ,Citizen Space, IDOX, Northgate, EIS – to name a few) .
- We are also reviewing systems to find new solutions, for example the recording of equality data now built into the new CRM system – and will monitor this moving forward.
- Insight and Performance team maintain a continued focus on producing service level equalities monitoring reports where information is available and some excellent examples of this includes: workforce data, YOT disproportionality data and exclusions data,

5. Agreed plan of action moving forward

- As part of the current development of service equality plans – a key equality priority that has emerged for the Strategy Directorate is to work across the council to improve equalities data, systems and monitoring.
- As a result, an action plan is currently being developed and will shortly be in place to support each directorate in understanding what equalities data they do collect or are required to collect in their systems how they use this information to shape and inform their service priorities and agree service level reports to monitor equality outcomes.
- The action plan will continue to be developed based on feedback received from other directorates in terms of their needs and requirements, this to ensure we really triangulate and focus our energy in the right places and at the right time over the next 6 months.
- The first area of the council that will be given priority is **Adult Services**. The Insight and Performance team have already started to look at;
 - what data do ASC currently collect and record on our service users (domiciliary care, Professional support, supported living, direct payments, etc.)?
 - what does the data tell us / is this data being used to inform service planning & delivery
 - where are the gaps?
 - review systems (CareFirst) capacity & functionality to collect further data.
 - analysis of data by performance management teams – in collaboration with IP and EDI colleagues to better understand/ agree next steps.

