

EHRC monitoring of the Public Sector Equality Duty in Wales

Health organisations report

April 2014

Our intention is to monitor objectives that:

- impact directly on people
- were identified as priorities in the EHRC assessment of inequality in Wales
- linked with Welsh Ministerial priorities

Following consultation with the Health Minister we decided to monitor actions arising from PSED objectives to make health services more accessible. This has two aspects:

- improving access to health services in an appropriate and timely way to reduce unscheduled care and the number of people entering hospital through Accident and Emergency - especially older people
- improving access for people with sensory loss

Every health organisation set objectives relating to improving access to its services. We asked them to provide examples of work arising from their PSED objectives in this specific area.

Measuring progress

Every health organisation was able to report on steps designed to improve access to health services. It is evident from the individual reports that health organisations are undertaking a range of initiatives to improve access for all service users and specifically for people with protected characteristics.

There has been a good deal of work to improve access to services for people with sensory loss. It is clear that the PSED and guidance from the Welsh Health Minister have moved this issue up the agenda. Working towards the same goal, at the same time, is very helpful. As a result measuring exactly how the PSED has made a difference is difficult.

Work is underway to enable the right part of the service to be accessed at the right time and to improve access to GP and dental services as a means to reduce unscheduled care.

Identifying trends

From the reports of individual health organisations it is possible to identify some specific trends that contribute towards improved service delivery. These include:

- sharpening the way the organisation communicates with specific service users through text messages, phone apps, pictorial guides
- engagement with groups to gain a better understanding of their needs - for example transgender people
- tailoring services to the needs of different protected groups

Sharing effective practice

Health Boards told us they are piloting initiatives and, if these prove successful, they will roll them out across the Board. The evidence provided indicated more sharing of effective practice within Health Boards than between them. Examples provided include:

- recruitment of staff with personal experience of mental health conditions to give peer support to service users with similar experience
- schemes to improve access to GP surgeries
- schemes to reduce missed appointments at hospitals
- initiatives to reduce smoking amongst pregnant women

Ministerial reporting

Welsh Ministers have a specific duty to publish a report on how devolved public authorities in Wales are meeting their general duty. They are required to publish a report no later than 31 December 2014 and every four years following that, with an interim report every two years.

These reports must set out an overview of the progress made by public authorities in Wales towards complying with the general duty and proposals to coordinate action by public authorities in Wales to bring about further progress on the general duty.

One aim of EHRC monitoring is to assist Welsh Ministers to fulfil their statutory duty.

Individual reports

The reports from each health organisation about the steps they have taken to improve access are attached to this overview.

We have set out in detail, in the individual reports, Betsi Cadwaladr UHB's actions to address access for people with sensory loss. Below is

a brief description of other initiatives to make services more responsive to the needs of people with a sensory loss.

Sensory Loss

Abertawe Bro Morgannwg UHB is working to improve D/deaf people's access to the Education Programme for Patients health and wellbeing courses.

Cwm Taf HB strengthened links with Deaf Clubs to explore the D/deaf community's concerns regarding services they receive.

Hywel Dda HB put systems in place to enable people with sensory loss to feedback complaints and suggestions to improve services.

Powys Teaching Health Board is improving the accessibility of its publications to people with sensory loss community to see how they can be built into the Board's communication strategy.

The Welsh Ambulance Trust has made the 999 service more accessible to people with a sensory loss by launching an SMS text service, which enables registered users to contact emergency services by text.

Progress Report on Individual Health Organisations to Improve Access to Services

April 2014

Report on Individual Health Organisations

Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University Health Board told us that its work to improve access to health care services includes an initiative by the Health Board's-Community Dental Service to make dental treatment more accessible for vulnerable patients.

The Community Dental Service has established a conscious sedation service that not only works with the Hospital Dental Service but also extends the range of dental treatments available for vulnerable people including people with learning disability. A specialist is now able to provide conscious sedation for vulnerable people which in a significant number of cases has avoided the need to refer for treatment using general anaesthesia.

This service was previously only available in hospital. It enables patients to relax and co-operate for treatment, even though they remain awake. Patients can access clinics close to home which meet their needs, without requiring hospital admission. This is critical to improve access to specialist dental services and the dental health of the community. This project reduces the likelihood of these groups needing to access unscheduled, emergency dental services. The Community Dental Service is currently working to develop and extend this service.

Aneurin Bevan University Health Board told us its work to improve access to health care services has involved an initiative to remove barriers for patients with learning difficulties by appointing Liaison Nurses. These nurses provide specific assistance to improve patient experience and outcomes.

A further project aims to improve the accessibility of appointments at GP surgeries. The Health Board launched the first 'A is for Access ' Scheme of its kind in Wales. This involves a set of 5 locally agreed standards enabling access to appointments at services provided by surgeries in the Aneurin Bevan Health Board area. The scheme relates to early opening hours, access to the service during lunchtime, appointments available up to 5.50pm or later, telephone access directly to a member of staff between 8.00am and 6.30pm and patients being able to book an appointment at the same time as they call the surgery rather than having to call back or book online. These measures mean that more patients

have increased opportunities to access non urgent medical advice and treatment. This will prevent health conditions from deteriorating and should reduce the likelihood of the need to access emergency health care services.

When the scheme was launched in January 2012 there were 25 practices that achieved the 5 possible standards. Further work over the last 12 months has resulted in 49 practices achieving the 5 standards. This is a 49% increase.

Betsi Cadwaldr University Health Board told us that its work to improve access to health care services has involved driving forward a range of initiatives to ensure the communication and information needs of people with a sensory loss are met when accessing services.

One example is the Multi Disciplinary Steering Group established to oversee this work. Priority areas are informed by a Sensory Loss Advisory Group. A baseline assessment of compliance with meeting the All Wales Standards for Accessible Communication and Information for People with Sensory Loss has been undertaken. The Health Board told us that examples of good practice have been recognised including the North Wales Deafness and Mental Health Network.

This is the first development in Wales to address access to mental health care for D/deaf people. The Networks principal aim is to improve access to mental health care by providing an accessible single point of contact for users and providing culturally sensitive mental health services for the D/deaf community.

The Network works with individuals who experience various degrees of hearing loss but recognises that D/deaf people and BSL users encounter the greatest difficulty accessing services. Close working with the D/deaf community, Primary care, Specialist Deaf Mental Health Services in England, Local Authority Social Services Teams, Community Mental Health Teams and the Voluntary Sector is underway.

Since June 2011 there have been 20 cases where interventions have led to assessment and advice, counselling from the Network, signposting to other agencies (alcohol services, Sensory Impairment Teams) and referrals with funding to Sign Health.

Cardiff and the Vale University Health Board told us that its work to improve access to health care services for people with mental health conditions has included a project based on a model from an English Health Board. The basis of the initiative was the recruitment of peer

support workers. The Schizophrenia Commission recommends the employment of people with 'lived experience' of mental health conditions. The primary purpose of the role was to help others with mental health conditions to recover using their own experiences.

The Health Board used occupational requirements to specifically recruit the peer support workers. The Health Board told us that project feedback has been positive. Patients received tailored support which led to them being more at ease and more open with staff about their condition. They felt supported by the Health Board and had better treatment outcomes as a result.

Newly recruited peer support workers reported economic benefits around finding employment and improved self confidence, with more positive experiences at work. The project itself was relatively small with only 5 or 6 mentors but its success has led the Health Board to consider rolling it out to other service areas.

Cwm Taf Health Board told us that its work to improve access to health care services includes a research project to increase the number of pregnant smokers who access and use cessation services to stop smoking. This is particularly important in the area covered by the Health Board because deprivation and poverty are widespread.

The Models for Access to Maternal Smoking Cessation Services study (MAMSS) uses the skills of a maternity support worker who is trained in smoking cessation, and supervised by a midwife. The maternity support worker is integrated into the Rhondda locality team, to take referrals from midwives who register pregnant women with the midwifery services and to offer tailored support to these women. The outcomes of this project have been compared with the usual care group in the Merthyr Tydfil locality, who are referred to the Stop Smoking Wales Service.

Cwm Taf reported that the initial results from the Rhondda project are positive, with higher rates of referrals from midwives, uptake of the service from pregnant smokers and pregnant smokers who stop smoking, compared with the alternative intervention group. Discussions are underway to roll out this programme more widely across Rhondda Cynon Taff and Merthyr Tydfil. By reducing the numbers of pregnant smokers the Health Board are potentially lowering the likelihood of this group accessing emergency care.

Hywel Dda University Health Board's work to improve access to health care services includes; the introduction of an appointment reminder text service aimed at reducing missed out-patient

appointments and wasted resources. Feedback from the UHB's Sensory Loss Standards Implementation Group indicates this will particularly benefit people who use texting as a communication aid. A texting facility has also been introduced to assist service users to raise concerns, helping to improve patient experience and services.

Winner of the Citizens at the Centre of Service Re-Design and Delivery Award, a pioneering project at Withybush General Hospital, has improved signage, assisting service users and members of the public with low literacy skills and/or a range of disabilities to find their way around the hospital site. Working closely with service users (particularly adults with learning disabilities), staff and the local community health council, the UHB developed more accessible signage using easily recognised symbols and colour ranges. Positive feedback from patients and visitors has encouraged roll out of this initiative across main Health Board sites.

Several wards have undergone simple, cost-effective enhancements, improving orientation and visual cues for dementia patients, particularly, the new Renal Unit in Withybush and Mynydd Mawr Rehabilitation Unit in Prince Phillip Hospital. In line with research indicating the positive impact of good visual cues and colours on people with dementia, patient toilet doors were painted yellow and a symbol sign used to denote the room.

The UHB valued the experience of working with key stakeholders to initiate improvements.

Powys Teaching Local Health Board told us that its work to improve access to health care services has focused on engaging with the local community to understand the barriers faced by different protected groups in accessing its services.

The engagement process highlighted barriers to certain groups when trying to access the services of the Health Board. As a result the Board worked to develop the accessibility of its website and publications, to consider the needs of a bilingual community as well as ensuring easy read versions of documents are made available.

The Health Board has rolled out training to staff to help them understand the specific needs of different groups, with a particular emphasis on protected groups. Staff have had attitudes and awareness training as well as access to the NHS CEHR e-learning training package 'Treat me Fairly'. To ensure the importance of understanding difference is mainstreamed into the culture of the organisation, this staff training is being integrated into the essential staff training programme.

Public Health Wales told us that its work to improve access to health care services has focused on the trans community. Anecdotal evidence suggested that transgender people were not accessing screening services, which could have a detrimental effect on their health and well being.

To address this the screening engagement team discussed concerns and health care needs with this community. This led to a number of initiatives to encourage trans people to take up screening services. This work highlighted gaps in service provision. Despite the recommendation that female to trans men aged between 25-64 who still have a cervix have regular smear tests, these patients are registered as male and so are not automatically called for the test. If they do not personally request an appointment they will not be routinely called, which could have life threatening repercussions.

A further gap identified was the lack of appropriate information to address the specific needs of the trans community. Some people expressed being afraid or embarrassed about having a smear test whilst others had been put off by the attitude and behaviour of some healthcare staff.

This work has resulted in Public Health Wales and the trans community collaborating to produce a YouTube clip to increase awareness and confidence as well as the development by trans people of patient information leaflets on the range of screening services available, and a series of FAQ which have been developed for staff.

The Welsh Ambulance Services Trust told us that its work to improve access to health care services has been assisted by the data gathered from engagement exercises with service users. These have identified barriers for vulnerable and hard to reach groups in accessing its services. These groups included people who are D/deaf or have a hearing impairment, people with learning disabilities, communities where English is not the first language, older people and those with sensory loss.

Medical Information Cards were developed to improve the experience of patients who are faced with barriers to effective communication. The card holds personal information about the individual, including preferred method of communication and medical history. Around 1500 of these have been distributed across Wales to the D/deaf community. The

success of this card has led the Trust to begin work on developing apps such as a pre hospital communication guide and a digital version of the medical information card.

A pictorial pre hospital communication guide developed by the London Ambulance Trust for the London Olympics, has been adapted by the Trust. With interpreters impossible to access during an emergency, the guide helps patients to communicate. This enables more effective treatment to be delivered. The London Ambulance Trust pictorial guide was amended following consultation, to make it more relevant to Wales. Every paramedic now has a copy of the guide. It has been very well received, with requests for copies from Health Boards and GP surgeries.

Velindre NHS Trust told us that its work to improve access to healthcare services has included the development of information in an audio format. Initially the Trust considered the provision of information about its services in Braille, to be critical to enable blind service users to access information. However, further consultation and engagement led the Trust to realise that by providing information in an audio format, it would not only benefit blind service users. It would also help service users with learning difficulties and those people whose first language is not English.

The Trust has focused a lot of resources on improving patient experiences across the board. Monthly Patient Experience reports and equality objective updates are submitted to the Board on a quarterly basis. Within the Trust, the Patient and Carers Dignity Group responds to concerns raised by staff, patients, carers and visitors, regarding dignity. As a multidisciplinary team, it works together to identify solutions. This team was awarded the Nursing Times Award for Enhancing Patient Dignity in 2013. By acting upon concerns raised through this forum the Trust is working to improve the accessibility of its services.