

LAS Race Equality Scheme review – methodology and learning points

Introduction

The Race Relations (Amendment) Act requires all public sector organisations to review and update their Race Equality Schemes and Action Plans by the end of May 2005.

This report sets out how the Trust reviewed its Scheme and Action Plan and identifies the key learning points from the review.

Trust Board is asked to note this report and to agree the revised Race Equality Scheme.

Background

The Trust's original Race Equality Scheme (RES) was published in May 2002. This Scheme was developed in line with the legislative requirements of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000.

It is intended that such schemes, together with an effective action plan should be an effective management tool for an organisation to:

- Eliminate unlawful racial discrimination;
- Promote equality of opportunity; and
- Promote good relations between people of different racial groups.

In terms of the LAS responsibilities this means, aside from our duties as an employer, identifying and addressing any health inequalities in terms of the service that we provide.

It should be noted that the RES and action plan is a public document and will be published as such.

Progress against the RES has been monitored and reported on as necessary over the past three years.

The RES builds on previous work and is supported by a number of other strategies. Sir Nigel Crisp has highlighted the need to give greater prominence to race equality through a ten point plan. This plan includes ensuring that race equality is tackled in a systematic and professional way and that it is explicitly acknowledged and integral to all corporate NHS strategies.

The review of the RES

The LAS took part in a review carried out on behalf of the South West London Strategic Health Authority. This required us to provide a copy of our RES and action plan and to report on its implementation.

Further to this review two reports were produced; one relating to all the trusts covered by the SHA; and one specifically in regards to the LAS. The Trust

welcomed this review as an opportunity to experience an objective external evaluation of our work.

Learning points from the review

The SHA review

The review carried out on behalf of the SHA said that the LAS scheme was 'exemplary'. It praised a number of areas where there had been progress, but also highlighted areas for improvement such as the monitoring of employment data and the collection and analysis of the ethnicity data of patients.

The review of all of SW London sector included the following points:

- That the RES should have the same status as other management documents
- That the RES should be perceived and supported in the manner, identical to that of clinical governance, which is a responsibility for, and concerns all departments, policies, practices and staff.
- Strategic collection, analysis and use of ethnic monitoring data should be used to support and reinforce the link between ethnic group and specific health issues and existing inequalities.
- The fact that many organisations were unable to supply employment data that met the legislative requirements and though this they are putting themselves at substantial risk of enforcement action or of greater external audit and scrutiny.

The Trust's own learning

The Trust has also followed the guidance produced by the Commission for Racial Equality on evaluating Race Equality Schemes to ensure that our review is as robust as possible.

The Trust has adapted its means of delivering the outputs and outcomes of the RES and its action plan over time. The RES actions have been included in the Race Equality and Diversity Implementation Plan, this is aimed at ensuring that we have a cohesive approach to issues such as gender, disability and sexual orientation as well as to race. Similarly diversity has been included as one of the four strands of the Trust's strategic plan as a means of ensuring that the relevant parts of the organisation address equality and diversity issues as part of their ongoing work.

Race Equality Scheme – May 2005

The revised RES takes on the above learning, reflects some of the activity since the scheme was first published and sets out, in broad terms, the race equality agenda for the next three years.