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From: Tina Gull <Tina.Gull@surreypct.nhs.uk>

To: Emma Reed

Sent: Thu Apr 21 10:32:48 2011

Subject: feedback on consultation re equality duties

**\*\* Low Priority \*\***

Hi Emma it was good to meet you on Monday and to have the opportunity to talk about the equality act.

As promised I am sending you some comments for the consultation process.

I have some concerns that the positive aspect of the act in giving equal status to all of the protected characteristics may be weakened by the changes as historically some groups have had more of a voice than others such as race, disability etc and the rights of LGBT and others may not get the same recognition.

I fully support the statement that the purpose of the equality act is to promote equality for all and that it should achieve real changes in people's lives. I am concerned that the duty to publish equality information will become an industry in itself and once again it will be about the processes and not the outcomes. Data has been and continues to be an issue for NHS organisations partly due to the inflexibility of the systems that we have to use and the fact that we are unable to collect patient information on all the protected characteristics in a useful and effective way - perhaps the department should consider how they can influence the national data IT systems providers to ensure that we have systems that are fit for purpose in the future?

My feeling is that the setting of equality objectives that must show that they are making a real difference is the most important aspect and that we also show how we are using the data that we have rather than creating this industry on data collection and its gaps. Showing what our staff and patients have told us and what we are doing with this information, how it has contributed to the equality objectives, will be far more useful.

Regarding equality analysis - the duty to carry out EIAs has certainly focussed organisations and has allowed E & D leads like myself to challenge Boards about their decision making and to make sure that the decisions are made in an informed way and not based on financial or resource considerations alone. I welcome any opportunity to make this simpler but would be very concerned if this duty and our responsibility to involve staff and service users in the EIA process was removed. Engagement plays a vital part in our work to move the equalities agenda forward.

I hope this is helpful - have a good Easter break

regards

Tina

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Please note that I work Monday to Thursday