



Brighton and Hove

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Re: Equality Act 2010 Policy Review Paper

NHS Brighton and Hove, as commissioner of NHS services for a diverse City population of over 250,000, shares the concerns of public and voluntary sector partners that the proposal to remove key aspects of the Public Sector Specific Duties will have a damaging effect on patients and health outcomes for marginalised communities.

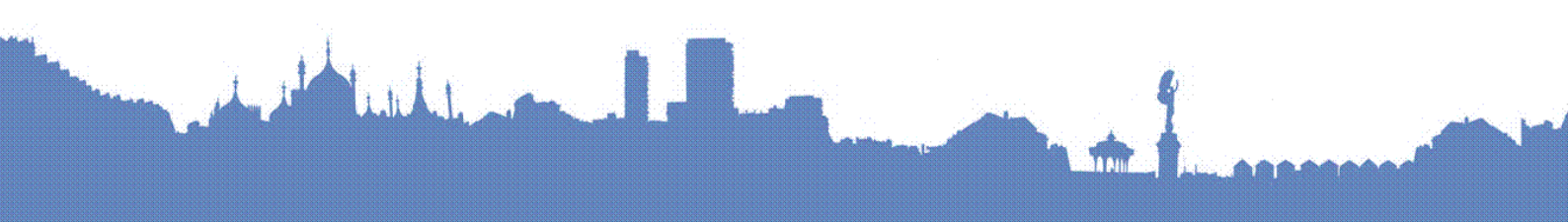
As a City we have created key mechanisms and partnerships to ensure that those traditionally without a voice have appropriate and accessible opportunities to influence the decisions made about services they need. The Community Engagement Framework, City Inclusion Partnership, Equality and Human Rights Charter, Equality Engagement Consortium and the Community and Voluntary Sector Forum are all example of these effective mechanisms.

Public sector resources and support combined with the expertise and experience of the voluntary sector and members of the public has enabled us as a Trust to not only meet our legal duties, but also to design services and strategies that recognise the needs of local populations.

It is a sad fact that without the legal responsibility to evidence engagement and involvement in this way it will become increasingly difficult to prioritise these activities – on a financial level if nothing else. The result is less thorough analysis of the impact of policies; services that are difficult to access for some; continuing health inequalities; and marginalised communities requiring more expensive services when opportunities for early interventions are lost.

Interim Chair: Denise Stokoe
Chief Executive, Sussex PCT Cluster: Amanda Fadero

NHS Brighton and Hove is the working name of
Brighton and Hove City Teaching Primary Care Trust.



Without clear process and evidence required by legislation it also becomes nigh on impossible for members of the public and external organisations to scrutinise and challenge the Trust's decision making. Without evidence of who has been involved; how this involvement has happened; and the outcomes, any discussion around the Trust having paid due regard to its duties becomes purely subjective.

As NHS (and other public) services diversify across providers, and geographical boundaries to services are removed, patients and the public need consistency in how Equality and Diversity duties are met in order to be able to judge if they are receiving the standard of treatment they deserve. The Specific duties as they stand provide that consistency, and support organisations such as ourselves to deliver improved health outcomes and greater engagement.

NHS Brighton and Hove would therefore urge that the Act and its Specific Duties are introduced as originally planned and given time to bed down into public sector delivery. Time is needed to deliver the positive benefits that this Duty aims for.

Protecting the rights of our citizens and providing appropriate, accessible services is not bureaucracy or red tape, but the fundamental purpose of the NHS, and NHS Brighton and Hove supports the Equality Act and the Specific Duties as effective mechanisms to enable this.

Yours truly,

Phil Seddon
Equality and Diversity Manager
NHS Brighton and Hove

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