

EQUALITY REPORT 2021/2022

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JUNE 2022

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the last Annual Equality Report of NHS Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group (the CCG) before we become an Integrated Care Board (ICB)

Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) requires all public sector bodies to publish an annual equality report (specific duties). This report aims to set out some of the activities undertaken by the CCG during 2021/2022.

At the CCG, we are committed to ensuring that our communities receive equitable access to the services we commission. We believe that this is best achieved through education and awareness, and you will hopefully see in this report some of the activities which are intended to achieve this aim.

As we continue to reinstate services that were paused or reduced over the last couple of years, we will use many of the activities in this report as a platform to ensure no groups or communities are left behind.

In addition, there were equality initiatives within Somerset that were put on hold during the pandemic which are set to come back in 2022. The Accessible Information Standard, LGBT Action Plan, Equality Delivery System, to name just a few. However, we plan to bring these back bigger and better than before and have already been in conversation with our Primary Care colleagues and community providers to ensure that our population receive, at all touch points with health, an equitable, accessible, and consistent approach to their needs, irrespective of their background, community, self-identity, and so on. We hope to report many positive outcomes of these initiatives as the ICB in next year's report.

We hope you enjoy reading this summary report and please get in touch if you have any questions, would like further information, or would like to get involved with any of our equality work. We can be reached:

By email:

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EQUALITY & DIVERSITY NETWORKS

Wednesday, 12 May 2021 was the National Day for Staff Networks. Somerset NHS Foundation Trust and Yeovil District Hospital NHS Foundation Trust joined forces to showcase their networks throughout the day. Invitations to join these staff networks were extended to colleagues at the CCG.

As a result of CCG colleagues attending these, several staff have taken up the offer to join the Trusts' networks and we now have representatives on:

- Women's Network (Somerset NHS Foundation Trust and Yeovil District Hospital NHS Foundation Trust)
- Multi-cultural Network (Yeovil District Hospital NHS Foundation Trust)
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Trans (LGBT) Network (Yeovil District Hospital NHS Foundation Trust and Somerset NHS Foundation Trust)

The CCG has been invited to co-chair Yeovil District Hospital's Diversity Network. The Diversity Network is tasked with looking at inequalities that can be faced due to different combinations of characteristics, often referred to as "intersectionality". This network brings together all staff networks at the Trusts.



AWARENESS MONTHS, WEEKS AND DAYS

Throughout the year, we have acknowledged and promoted many awareness events across the CCG. We shared various pieces of information with our colleagues to provide some awareness to people across the organisation.

The campaigns we linked with over the year were:

- LGBT Awareness Month – June 2021)
- Gypsy, Roma & Traveller (GRT) History Month – June 2021
- International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia (IDAHO) – 17 May 2021
- Anniversary of George Floyd’s Murder – 25 May 2021
- Deaf Awareness Week – 3-9 May 2021
- NHS Pride Week – 6-10 September 2021
- National Inclusion Week #UnitedForInclusion – 27 September 2021 – 3 October 2021
- Black History Month – 1-31 October 2021
- Transgender Day of Remembrance – 20 November 2021

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REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS

Somerset County Council formed a working group looking specifically at the needs of Somerset's Refugee and Asylum-Seeking Communities.

This focusses on various needs, such as housing, family, etc. This working group also looks at many aspects of health such as access to primary care, pharmacists, etc. We are a member of this group to represent health and have arranged for Healthwatch Somerset to attend this also.

The formation of Refugee and Asylum Seekers Working Group was particularly timely as the national government's Resettlement Scheme (which was implemented specifically to support Syrian migrants) has come to an end recently. It is being replaced by a new scheme which widens its scope to include other countries in addition to Syria.

We work closely with Somerset County Council through this group to ensure that anyone arriving in Somerset is supported in accessing the services to which they are entitled.

AFGHAN RESETTLEMENT

ARAP is the scheme run by the Home Office to enable the resettlement of people from Afghanistan to the UK.

Somerset's ARAP scheme is being led by Somerset County Council with guidance from the Home Office. We are working closely with Somerset County Council to ensure that we respond quickly to the health needs of potential arrivals.

As the programme continued, we undertook preparatory work to ensure that health needs can be met should any people be resettled in Somerset.

This includes provision of interpreters, cultural awareness and access to community support.

UKRAINIAN REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT

More recently, work has been undertaken, led by Somerset County Council, on how best to meet the needs of people resettling in Somerset from Ukraine. This has been fast paced but we have been able to draw from some of the work undertaken as part of the Afghan Resettlement activities. Numbers are already appearing to be higher than those arriving from Afghanistan and we are continuing to review the health needs and providing support to meet these.

TRAINING AND “LUNCH & LEARN” SESSIONS

TRAINING

We have continued to provide training on Equality Impact Assessments and have now extended this to include Engagement to ensure that all colleagues at the CCG are able to engage with all areas of the community to ensure our Equality Impact Assessments are fully informed in terms of barriers (both perceived and actual) and experiences are considered.

“LUNCH & LEARN” SESSIONS

Earlier in the year we launched our monthly “Lunch & Learn” sessions, which have continued throughout the quarter. These are designed as taster sessions for colleagues across a range of topics. We have held the following throughout the year:

- Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Health
- Barriers to Health for Asylum Seekers, Refugees and Migrant Populations
- Mental Health in Agriculture
- Beta-Blockers for Bias

EQUALITY IN NURSING TRAINING

In October 2021 we joined forces with Yeovil District Hospital NHS Foundation Trust (YDH) to deliver a module at Bridgwater and Taunton College to those enrolled on the local university Nurses Training Programme.

This two-hour module looked at different characteristics in different settings across Primary and Secondary care. Some of the topics included were:

- Ethnic minorities in maternity care
- Mental health crises in Accident & Emergency
- Transgender access to Primary Care

Each area focussed on the specific challenges in each of these setting for the different groups. The overarching theme of all topics aimed to reinforce the importance of a person’s identity in delivering patient-centred care.

Feedback from the students was overwhelmingly positive and we were asked as a result of this by one student to be interviewed for one of their degree papers which also took place in October.

GYPSY, ROMA AND TRAVELLER (GRT) COMMUNITIES

With the step-down of COVID-19 Response Cells within the county, we have been considering the future of the Cell that was created for Transient and Nomadic Communities. The Cell has representation from CCG, all District Councils, County Council, Gypsy Liaison Service, Avon & Somerset Police and Devon & Somerset Fire Service. There is an appetite to continue with the working group to retain the traction this group has gained around temporary sites, approaches to enforcement, access to health, fire safety, and much more.

Also, during GRT History Month, we worked with Somerset's Gypsy Liaison Officers to pull together commonly asked health questions when visiting sites. This resulted in the creation and publication of a GRT Health page on the CCG website: [Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Health - Somerset CCG](#)

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EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

We have had a long-standing process around the production of EIAs to ensure that any negative impacts on minority or vulnerable groups, and the Protected Characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, are avoided or mitigated.

Historically, this process has been undertaken by way of an understanding that this will be part of any activity to introduce, change or terminate a given service.

In June 2021, we received approval for a policy to underpin this requirement which is designed to ensure we are compliant with our Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). To complement the policy, we have designed a training package for all of our colleagues at the CCG, although offered to wider NHS colleagues, which launches on 12 July 2021. This is a combined training session to incorporate both PSED (and other equality duties) along with our requirements to engage with public and colleagues.

This is of particular importance as we begin to restore services and stand-down activities in response to the COVID-19 response.

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GP ACCESS CARDS

GP Access Cards is a national initiative to improve people's experiences of registering with a GP where they don't:

- Have an address
- Have proof of ID
- Have evidence of their immigration status

These cards are being delivered to local Healthwatch organisations to be distributed. Healthwatch Somerset has provided a supply of these to the CCG and County Council for people working within the community to encourage registration. These are currently being given our homeless population, GRT communities, sex workers, Refugees and Asylum Seekers, and anyone who might face barriers when registering.

We have provided information to Primary Care around the existence of these cards in case someone arrives to register and produces one.

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CANCER INEQUALITIES

Our Cancer Transformation Project has been undertaking work to look at where inequalities exist in terms of diagnosis and treatment of cancers.

They have established which communities see poorer outcomes or barriers in engagement with cancer services and are initially focussing on three areas:

- Learning Disability
- Mental Health
- Autism

The aim is to better understand the needs of each of these through proactive engagement with the communities. Then to use these findings to remove barriers or perceived barriers to ensure that everyone gets equitable access to appropriate treatments. Their work is being supported by Engagement and Equality Leads, along with subject-matter experts at the CCG.

The plans are to widen this work to look at other areas of concern, for example, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and/or Trans (LGBT+), Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT), and many more.

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BSL/ENGLISH INTERPRETING REVIEW

NHE England and Improvement (NHSEI) commissioned the North of England Commissioning Support Unit (NECS) to undertake a national review of how BSL (British Sign Language)/English Interpreting is offered to d/Deaf patients across all services. This national review aims to provide organisations, including CCGs and ICSs, with best practice guidance and recommendations.

CCGs and ICSs are responsible for commissioning all interpreting services (both verbal and non-verbal) for Primary Care and Somerset has changed its provider to Word360. Word360 has provided interpreting services for both of Somerset's Trusts for some years.

The working group were keen to have representation from a CCG/ICS in their group and Somerset CCG was recommended to them by NHSEI.

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YEOVIL PRIDE 2021

On 21 August 2021, we teamed up with Yeovil District Hospital to attend the second Yeovil Pride event, which included a march through the town centre.

We had relatively short notice of this event due to COVID-19 restrictions but plan to have a much bigger presence in 2022. We have already commenced conversations with South Somerset District Council, SWISH and others around joining up all public services at the event.



EASTERN EUROPEAN WELLBEING EVENT

We have been working with a large group of Eastern European people living in the Sedgemoor area. It became clear that there were a number of cultural, language and other barriers to accessing healthcare and other services being experienced by these families.

With support from Somerset County Council's Public Health Team, and other services, we ran a "wellbeing afternoon" where they are living which included:

- Sexual health information and self-testing kits
- Primary Care signposting
- COVID-19 testing
- Mental Health information and signposting
- Information around accessing education

We met with approximately 50 people during the afternoon and provided appropriate information and support.

We continue to work with the group to encourage increased access to mainstream services available in Somerset.

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ADVANCING MENTAL HEALTH EQUALITY

Somerset NHS Foundation Trust (SomersetFT) has commissioned the Royal College of Psychiatry to run a project to look at how mental health services in Somerset can be made more inclusive for minority groups and communities that are known to experience poorer outcomes.

The project group has representation from both statutory services and community providers and is looking to run for three years.

The group has reviewed each group and collectively decided that Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) communities were to be its first focus.

The CCG has been appointed the lead of this sub-group and has met to discuss the most pressing need. It was agreed by the sub-group that early intervention and suicide prevention specifically in respect of GRT men should be the key priority.

Working with national GRT community and charitable organisations, we are looking to provide a list of recommendations to SomersetFT on how to improve engagement with services and how to retain people for the duration of their treatment.

Subsequently, the project group has agreed another focus area is LGBT+ and a sub-group has now been formed to take this work forward. The Chair post for this is temporarily being held jointly by the CCG and SomersetFT to retain the momentum with a view to appointing a permanent Chair from the community in early 2022/2023.

The third area of focus is rural communities which should be launching its working group in early 2022/2023.

“GET YOUR QUEER CHEER HERE!”

On 17 December 2021 we joined forces with YDH and SomersetFT to host the second virtual LGBT Christmas event.

This year we had people joining from Somerset CCG, both Trusts, NHS England and people from neighbouring Trusts and CCGs.

There were approximately 20 people that joined the event which consisted of an informal virtual gathering along with a quiz.

The event was open to anyone who identifies as LGBTQIA+ and those who are allies.

We plan to run our third event again next year.

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