

Report to: People Scrutiny Committee

Date of meeting: 17 March 2025

By: Director of Adult Social Care & Health

Title: Seldom heard communities and people

Purpose: To provide the Committee with a 12-month update in respect of the action plan agreed upon the publication of the original Scrutiny review of Equality and Inclusion in Adult Social Care and Health

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The People Scrutiny Committee is recommended to comment on and consider the progress being made against the agreed actions at Appendix 1.

1. Background Information

- 1.1 In October 2023, Cabinet approved the report of the People Scrutiny Committee on its review of Equality and Inclusion in ASCH. There were nine recommendations in the report. In response the Adult Social Care and Health (ASCH) department submitted an Action Plan on the recommendations and in July 2024, presented a six-month update on the Action Plan to the People Scrutiny Committee.
- 1.2 This report provides a further update on steps taken in implementing the recommendations.

2. Outcomes for people from seldom heard communities

- 2.1 In the last year, we met with 27 different community-based partners working with seldom heard communities. We have used the insight to inform our work and engagement with people from those communities.
- 2.2 As a result of this report and ensuing actions, we have improved representation of people from seldom heard communities and have better representation on a number of our engagement forums, including:
- Inclusion Advisory Group;
 - Disability Rights Reference Group; and
 - Citizens' Panel.

This includes people with sensory impairments, those from rural areas, those digitally excluded and those with lower levels of literacy.

- 2.3 A new East Sussex Healthy Ageing Partnership has been established to prioritise health and care issues for younger older people as well as consideration of the impact of intersectional identities on older people from different backgrounds.
- 2.4 Another new group called East Sussex Gypsy Roma Traveller Health Inequalities Partnership Group has been set up to ensure partners are better able to work together to improve outcomes and address some of the health inequalities experienced by Gypsy Roma Traveller people.

- 2.5 These system-wide partnership groups will help us to focus together on some of the identified seldom heard communities with the aim of ensuring we are listening to and receiving feedback from people from those communities and tackling any identified barriers to improve their health and care outcomes.

3. Community Engagement Framework

- 3.1 One of the identified actions in recommendation 5 was the drafting of a Community Engagement Framework for the Council. As reported in July 2024, work on this started in May 2024 with the setting up of a cross-council working group. This work was then paused in August 2024 owing to savings pressures on all of the departments. We anticipate this work to start in March 2025 and for the Community Engagement Framework to be agreed in due course in summer 2025.
- 3.2 A council-wide Community Engagement Framework would ensure all staff and community members are aware of our aims, values and plans around community engagement and collaboration. The community engagement framework would support departments to work more closely together and avoid duplication when targeting the same groups of people through different work streams.

4. Conclusion and Reason for Recommendations

- 4.1 The recommendations from the Scrutiny Review have been embedded with most actions completed and the work is established in ongoing projects and pieces of work.
- 4.2 A full update of the progress made on the Review recommendations are outlined in the Action Plan at Appendix 1. The People Scrutiny Committee is recommended to comment on and consider the progress being made against the agreed actions at Appendix 1.

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