

‘Let’s use the power of people’s experience and voices to address health inequalities’

Good for Wessex event: Engaging in health inequalities summary

20th November 2018

Background

Health inequalities are growing. These will only be addressed by enabling those affected to have a voice in shaping the solutions to the issues they face. Wessex Voices brought together people from health, local authorities, housing, local Healthwatch and the wider voluntary sector to:

- Create a common understanding of what we mean by health inequalities and how current patient and public involvement can address these issues
- Share what is already working in terms of engaging with communities to address health inequalities and improve equitable access to services
- Identify areas where we can improve engagement and amplify the voice of people affected by health inequalities to bring about changes.

This is a summary of key messages and recommendations from the event, and a call to action for everyone who reads this.

Key messages and recommendations summary

Key messages	Recommendations
<p>1. Amplifying the voice of people, communities who experience health inequalities and those that work with them, is needed to inspire action to bring about change.</p>	<p>1.1 Share stories from real people with decision makers in ways that create an emotional impact and challenge assumptions.</p> <p>1.2 Consider how a range of stories can be used as tools to bring about change.</p> <p>1.3 Tell people what has changed as a result of their feedback. Be honest about what hasn't.</p>
<p>2. It is important to be clear about who experiences inequality and discrimination.</p> <p>Multi-morbidity and disability free life expectancy data, not just overall life expectancy, is helpful as it makes it clearer what health services and their partners can do to address the issues.</p>	<p>2.1 Be clear about definitions of inequality and equality and what these mean for your populations.</p> <p>2.2 Give priority to addressing health inequalities in planning and delivery of services, and measure the impact.</p> <p>2.3 Ask and discuss how funding for health inequalities is distributed, in particular how the NHS funding formula and inequalities weighting for primary care is allocated locally.</p>
<p>3. It is important to recognise the impact of other policies on health inequality and equality. Possibly the most important are those that impact on financial insecurity, such as national policy on welfare rights and housing. While policy is set by government it is important to be clear about what local health systems can still do.</p> <p>80% of our health and well-being is about having access to good housing, schools, employment, food, open spaces etc, and only 20% is about access to health services.</p>	<p>3.1 Push for health inequalities to be on agendas regularly at all levels of the system and in individual organisations.</p> <p>3.2 Make sure there is a balanced voice of those who are rarely heard with those who are always heard in service reconfiguration. Continue to challenge the depth and reach of engagement and coproduction at all levels of service design. Healthwatch can play a role to champion this.</p>

<p>4. People’s mental health is important as it affects their ability to take control of their own lives and to make changes for themselves.</p>	<p>4.1 Continue to challenge stigma around mental health issues. Provide mental health awareness training for frontline staff who are dealing with people’s physical health.</p> <p>4.2 Ask and discuss how funding allocations decisions for mental health services are made, particularly how activity levels affect funding and therefore provision.</p>
<p>5. Do not be overwhelmed by the task. Small local improvements can make a difference.</p> <p>It is not the NHS’s job to solve all inequalities but as a significant part of the health and social care system they can do better.</p>	<p>5.1 Work with the public to make localised decisions about health communities. Make it simple and rewarding for people to get involved. Include all community and frontline workers, from food banks, pharmacies to taxi drivers to hairdressers in this.</p> <p>5.2 Offer small grants and in kind support so people’s voice is heard and they are able to create their own solutions.</p>

A call to action:

1. Take this summary to the highest level meeting in your organisation you can, discuss it and ask what they might do differently as a result.
2. Tell us where you took it, what was said and what further action will be taken.
3. Tell us what you learnt from doing this and what would help you make this discussion stronger.

Please share your discussions on the response sheet over the page. We will collate and share the responses from organisations an ongoing basis.

Good for Wessex event: Engaging in health inequalities summary - Call to action response

1. Which meeting did you take the 'Good for Wessex event: Engaging in health inequalities summary' to and when?
2. Who was represented there?
3. What did they say?
4. What further action will be taken?
5. What you learnt from doing this?
6. What would help you make this discussion stronger?

Thank you for taking the time to do this. We will collate and share responses on www.wessexvoices.org. Please return your response to Sue Newell, Wessex Voices Project Managers on Sue.Newell@helpandcare.org.uk.