**Equality and Diversity in the LAS – December 19th 2016**

**Meeting with Melissa Berry and Mark Hirst**

**Patients’ Forum: Kathy West and Malcolm Alexander**

1. **Staff Records:** The Electric Staff Record ESR, has not been used by the LAS in the past, despite being the standard NHS system. It will be introduced and will include details of languages spoken by staff. This may help to provide an enhanced service for patients who do not speak English.We would like an update for all equalities issues, languages and other areas that would support and promote greater diversity.
2. **Health Education England has given £500, 000**  to the LAS Academy for developments toward a diverse workforce.
3. **New Posts:** Two new posts will be funded by the LAS to promote equality and diversity in the workforce and with patients. The staff will work on administration, outreach work towards recruitment and sessions with staff to understand more about their needs and to build effective relationships them. Janice Markey will return to the LAS in January 2017, but we are unclear about what role she will have.
4. **Resources:** The resources for Equality and Diversity in the LAS have doubled. We would like to have more details about this money will be spent.
5. **Promoting the LAS:** The team will work with Margaret Luce to promote the LAS to underrepresented communities. We discussed the need for a proactive approach especially in relation recruitment from schools and colleges.
6. **Band 6 –** This upgrade for staff has now been agreed by the government. However, clarity is need about how this will be paid for. The proposal is that there will be fewer paramedics, but more technicians. This creates difficult issues regarding which staff have the professional skills to discharge patients not taken to hospital. Is it safe for non HCPC registered front line staff to diagnose patients and discharge them?
7. **Recruitment of technicians** more easily can reflect London’s diversity because they can be directly recruited from the local area, rather than following a paramedic degree.
8. Andrew Grimshaw will be Acting **Chief Executive** when Fionna leaves.
9. **Stonewall Top 100 Employers Index** – LAS has 46th place. The LAS previously believed that this index suggested that the organisations had achieved high scores for all protected groups but is now aware that this is not the case and refers only to LGBT staff. We would like to see the evidence of improvements for LGBT staff as a result of this successful assessment of the LAS
10. **Listening Events:** The first listening event for BME staff was attended by 17 staff together with Melissa Berry and Heather Lawrence. Further events will be held, for example in east London on 20/12. Melissa and Heather will also meet staff at A&E departments while they are on duty. They will start with UCH.
11. **Bullying and Harassment:** Cath in HR is continuing work to support staff who experience bullying and harassment from managers or colleagues.
12. **Stepping Up Programme:** The Leadership Academy has stopped funding new entrants, but will fund new entrants from the LAS, to enable staff to “step-up” from grade 5 to grade 7 and thus to take on senior/managerial role.
13. **Blue Lights Collaborative:** This organisation is being used to make better contacts with London’s diverse communities and to promote recruitment.
14. **Recruitment Manager:** Recruitment will take place shortly and it will be recommended to invite a Forum member to be a lay member of the recruitment/selection panel.
15. **Non-Executive Directors:** The Board continues to be composed of people of a single ethnicity and only one woman (who is shortly leaving). Heather Lawrence is committed to changing this situation. The Forum has asked for a place on the selection panel for future NEDS, but has been refused. We have raised with issue with NHS Improvement.
16. **Recruitment of BME staff:** Noted that the EOC has the most diverse team of staff in the LAS. The Call Handler group are paid on Band 3 and tend to be recruited locally.
17. **Staff Survey:** The response rate for 2016 is 43% and the results should be available in February 2017. The Forum will invite Mark Hurst to speak at the Forum meeting to provide details of the results.These results are vitally important to the success of the LAS and will influence the LAS during its return visit in February.
18. **LAS Equality and Diversity Meeting:** The date is yet to be provided, but is expected in January 2017. A preliminary meeting has been held with Ricky Lawrence, Sandra Adams, Melissa and others. We strongly advised that the Terms of Reference should be updated and advised that the meetings in the past were achieving nothing. We also asked for a copy of the LAS E&D strategy. The strategy will go to the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) and then to the Board, but it needs to be reviewed and updated first.
19. **Champions for Protected Characterists:** Noted that apart from the Champion for disabilities that the others provided no leadership and there were no outcomes in terms of providing greater equality for people with protected characteristics. We do not think champions are an effective way of achieving outcomes for groups with protected characteristics.
20. **VIP Awards:** We asked or an award to be given to the staff member who has shown the greatest leadership in the promotion of racial diversity in the LAS. The issue will be referred to Charlotte from Communications.

**www.londonambulance.nhs.uk/working\_for\_us/vip\_staff\_awards/how\_to\_nominate.aspx**

1. **WRES Action Plan:** Melissa will send again to the Forum.
2. **BME Staff Conference:** This is being planned.Date not yet known.

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