Title:	**KEY MATTERS AND ESCALATIONS REPORT**
Name of Committee:	**PEOPLE PARTICIPATION & EQUALITIES COMMITTEE (PPEC)**
Committee Chair:	**Fazilet Hadi**
Meeting Date:	**7th December 2023**

Summary of key messages:

This was the Committee's first meeting following the development session which was held in August 2023. The Board is to note the new title of the Committee; People Participation and Equalities Committee which was changed to better reflect the equality issues in respect of colleagues and people participation that the Committee covers.

Reports/ presentation(s):

Quality Strategy Review (Priority 4 People participation): An update was provided on the quarter 2 position of this priority, and assurance provided that the majority of actions are on target for completion this financial year. The Committee oversees priority 4 of this strategy – with the other 3 strands being evaluated at QISCom (Quality Improvement and Safety Committee).

The Committee requested further information regarding the Learning Disability Strategy/ workstream which is being undertaken, it was noted that a task and finish group which includes the voice of staff and parents/ carers has been developed to support this strategy – with its emphasis being on the education and training of staff, alongside the on-going work of reviewing our enabling and accessibility processes/ systems. It was highlighted that the Trust continues to participate in existing groups to share learning with Co-production Leads across the systems we work within. Additionally, Luton and Bedfordshire Adults Co-production Leads are working in conjunction with 2 other organisations to review co-production and service user feedback for the Virtual Wards Programme and End of Life Pathway. Trust wide work is evidenced within Co-production Leads updates (to the Trust wide Working Together Group and via escalation to the People Participation and Equalities Committee) detailing involvement with Local Authorities and Education providers amongst other sectors.

People Strategy Review (Programme 2 Diversity and Inclusion): An update was provided on the mid-year actions. The Committee oversees Programme 2 of this strategy – with the other strands being evaluated at QISCom (Quality Improvement and Safety Committee) and at Board.
Key headlines presented to the Committee identified work around the diverse recruitment panels, this is an ongoing workstream in conjunction with the Cultural Diversity Network and Diversity and Inclusion Steering Group. It was also noted that significant work is required to implement 'No More Tick Boxes' in relation to removing bias from all aspects of the recruitment process, the Human Resources team are progressing this project. The Trust's violence and aggression work is ongoing especially in relation to culturally diverse colleagues, it is hoped that improvement should be demonstrated within the Staff Survey outcome, which is due in 2024.

Digital Transformation Presentation: The Communication Team presented the new Trust website which has been designed with improved accessibility features, points noted included:
- The Trust is required to adhere to numerous regulations relating to website governance, the main regulation of note is the Public Sectors Bodies Accessibility Regulations that ensure service users/ carers/ public can access service information however they choose (this requirement is monitored by the Government Digital Service).

- By law the Trust is required to be digitally accessible, by following the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG).
- The Trust has increased website accessibility via the Recite tool – this is available in the top corner of websites and when turned on increases functionality to include:
  - Reading aloud.
  - Altering colour size and font, including dyslexic friendly font.
- Newer websites are able to scan through website pages and report any issues with accessibility, this is performed on a daily basis by the team to ensure that the Trust's pages remain accessible to all service users.
- To further assist the design, process the different ways in which service users absorb information is taken into consideration and user profiles are created in conjunction with co-production to test website design.
- The target reading age for websites is 9 years old, with Atkinson's Hyper Legible font designed with the Braille Institute used. PDF's and leaflets are being phased out as websites become more accessible.
- Web browsers are backdated to ensure service users with older technology still retain the capability to access the majority of the information.
- Transcripts for videos are included, with the script language being able to be altered, for longer videos time codes will be included going forwards.

The Committee noted that the next steps for this piece of work, included:
- Easy Read documents on all service pages and high-profile content – to include co-production work.
- BSL (British Sign Language) videos on service pages and high-profile content.
- The recruitment of additional digital volunteers to test webpages.
- An external audit of the platform to be commissioned.
- Inclusion of a roadmap on the website to evidence to service users how the Trust is improving accessibility to its web content.

Anti-racism plan: The Anti-Racism Plan was approved by the Committee in May 2023; updates against the plan were provided. Additionally, it was noted that the Trust would be supporting the Denny Review outcomes (a review of health inequalities in Bedfordshire, Luton, and Milton Keynes (BLMK)). Themes of this evaluation included interpreting, translation, accessibility, and cultural competence. Assurance was provided that although cultural competency is not specifically mentioned within the Anti-Racism Plan the Above Difference course scheduled for January 2024 is part of the Trust's cultural competency plan. It was highlighted that information for staff is available on the Intranet concerning the needs of different communities, however the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Lead is working with services to provide refresher training/ information for staff.

Escalation report from The Trust Wide Working Together Group: The report identified examples of good practice, which were highlighted and noted by the Committee.

Equality and Diversity Report: The Trust's stretch target to increase cultural diversity with Bands 6, 7 and 8a, was highlighted to the Committee, these will be reviewed on an ongoing basis. Updates for October showed:
  - Band 6 – a small increase to 11.27%.
  - Band 7 – a slight increase to 11.75%.
  - Band 8a – a small decrease to 7.96%.

To support the development of junior female staff in obtaining roles in these senior bands they are offered attendance at the Springboard course, it was noted that in 2023 there was a specific cohort for culturally diverse staff members.

Accessible Information Policy: It was highlighted that this policy is used to demonstrate how to implement the Accessibility Information Standards and evidence compliance with the Equality Act, with a particular emphasis on protected characteristics. The policy has been amended so that it now uses 'plain English' to increase accessibility and to assist staff members in their understanding of the support and services available for service users with communication requirements or learning difficulties. **The amendments to the Accessible Information Policy were approved by the Committee.**

Terms of Reference (ToR): It was noted that these were circulated prior to the meeting for approval within PPEC, several comments were received at the meeting therefore the ToR will be re-circulated and approved virtually once the amendments have been made.

Risk Review: There are currently no risks that are rated above 12 which are linked to the PPEC.

Key Issues to report and any escalations to the Board:

- The Above Difference training which is due to commence in 2024.
- Accessible Information Policy- approved at the Committee.

Emerging Risks/Issues:

None.

Examples of Outstanding Practice or Innovation:

The reports contained several examples of good practice including:
- The Website development by the Communications Team whose focus is to improve accessibility for all service users/ carers/ public.
- The on-going work of the Co-Production Leads and the development of the local Working Together Groups.
- Learning Disability Strategy development.
- Diversity stretch target work, which is looking to increase cultural diversity at senior bands across the organisation.

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Date:	2nd January 2024