

Introduction and overview

ALLMARK, Peter <<http://orcid.org/0000-0002-3314-8947>>

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Published version

ALLMARK, Peter (2010). Introduction and overview. In: ALLMARK, Peter, SALWAY, Sarah and PIERCY, Hilary, (eds.) Life and health: an evidence review and synthesis for the Equality and Human Rights Commission's triennial review. Sheffield, Equality and Human Rights Commission.

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LIFE & HEALTH: An evidence review and synthesis for the Equality and Human Rights Commission's Triennial Review 2010

Peter Allmark, Sarah Salway, Hilary Piercy (eds.)

Project Team:

Peter Allmark, Ruth Barley, Mark Faulkner, Eleanor Formby, Mike Grimsley, Martin Hyde, Saffron Karlsen, Alex McClimens, Hilary Piercy, Sarah Salway

July 2010

Centre for Health & Social Care Research
Sheffield Hallam University

Chapter 1: Introduction & Overview

Peter Allmark¹

¹ Principal Lecturer, Centre for Health & Social Care Research, Sheffield Hallam University

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The NHS provides a comprehensive service, available to all irrespective of gender, race, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief. It has a duty to each and every individual that it serves and must respect their human rights. At the same time, it has a wider social duty to promote equality through the services it provides and to pay particular attention to groups or sections of society where improvements in health and life expectancy are not keeping pace with the rest of the population.

NHS Constitution for England (Department of Health 2010) (pg3)

1.1 Context

This report forms part of the first triennial review of equality undertaken by the Equality and Human Rights Commission; its aim is to provide a comprehensive picture of the state of equalities and human rights within the domains of Life Expectancy and Health.

1.2 Method

Chapter three provides more detail on method. However, the aim throughout the report is to provide the best available evidence across the seven statutory equality strands on a set of indicators provided by the Equality and Human Rights Commission in its Equality Measurement Framework (EMF) (Alkire, Bastagli and Burchardt 2009). There is one chapter per strand plus one on class. The class chapter provides a necessary backdrop of information against which to assess inequality across the other strands. In addition to the core indicators of the EMF, each chapter includes information relating to other dimensions of LIFE and HEALTH that are felt to be important in terms of inequalities or human rights, as well as a discussion of the factors that contribute to the observed patterns of inequality across the strands.

1.3 Report structure

Chapter two of the report is a précis. This opens with some overall key messages of the report; it then sets out the key message sections from each

of the chapters that follow. Chapter three is concerned with method. It considers the place of HEALTH and LIFE in assessing inequality and the judgement of inequality as unfair using the capabilities approach adopted by the Equality and Human Rights Commission. Chapter three also provides detail on the practicalities of the report. The eight chapters after this set out the data on inequality for the seven strands plus class. Each chapter is headed by a set of key messages; these are also set out in the précis.

Chapter 4: Class

Chapter 5: Age

Chapter 6: Disability

Chapter 7: Race and ethnicity

Chapter 8: Sex and gender

Chapter 9: Religion and belief

Chapter 10: Sexuality (LGB)

Chapter 11: Gender identity (Trans)

1.4 Acknowledgements

A number of people helped in reviewing and commenting on chapters; we thank them for their valuable inputs. These were: Class - Ben Anderson; Age - Tony Warnes; Disability - Gordon Grant; Ethnicity - Punita Chowbey; Gender - Sarah Payne; Religion - Sheikh Aziz; Sexuality - LGB and Trans - Julie Fish.

1.5 References

ALKIRE, S., BASTAGLI, F. and BURCHARDT, T. et al (2009). Developing the equality measurement framework: Selecting the indicators. Manchester, Equality and Human Rights Commission. Research Report 31.

Department of Health (2010). The NHS constitution: The NHS belongs to us all. London, Department of Health.