

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), and Health Inequalities (HI) Annual Report

April 2024 – March 2025

Accessibility statement

If you require this document in an alternative language or format, please contact the Trust's Head of Equality Diversity Inclusion (EDI) and Health Inequalities (HI), Sharon Woma, by telephone or email:

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Legal statement

This document sets out how we have met the legal duties set out in the Equality Act 2010 – the Public Sector Equality Duty and the Health & Social Care Act 2022 and our obligations set out in the NHS Standard Contract 24/25 Service Condition 13 (SC13) – Equity of Access, Equality and Non-Discrimination.

The report outlines the work undertaken to meet our commitment to improve healthcare and health and wellbeing for all and to reduce health inequalities for our patients, local population and staff.

We have also highlighted some of our broader equality, diversity and inclusion work that supports our objectives set out in the Trust's Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Strategy 2020-24.

A new EDI strategic plan was published in June 2025, which will help us to make progress against the objectives set out in the NHS England's EDI Improvement Plan (6 High impact actions), the strategic plan also aligns with the aims of the new Trust strategy.



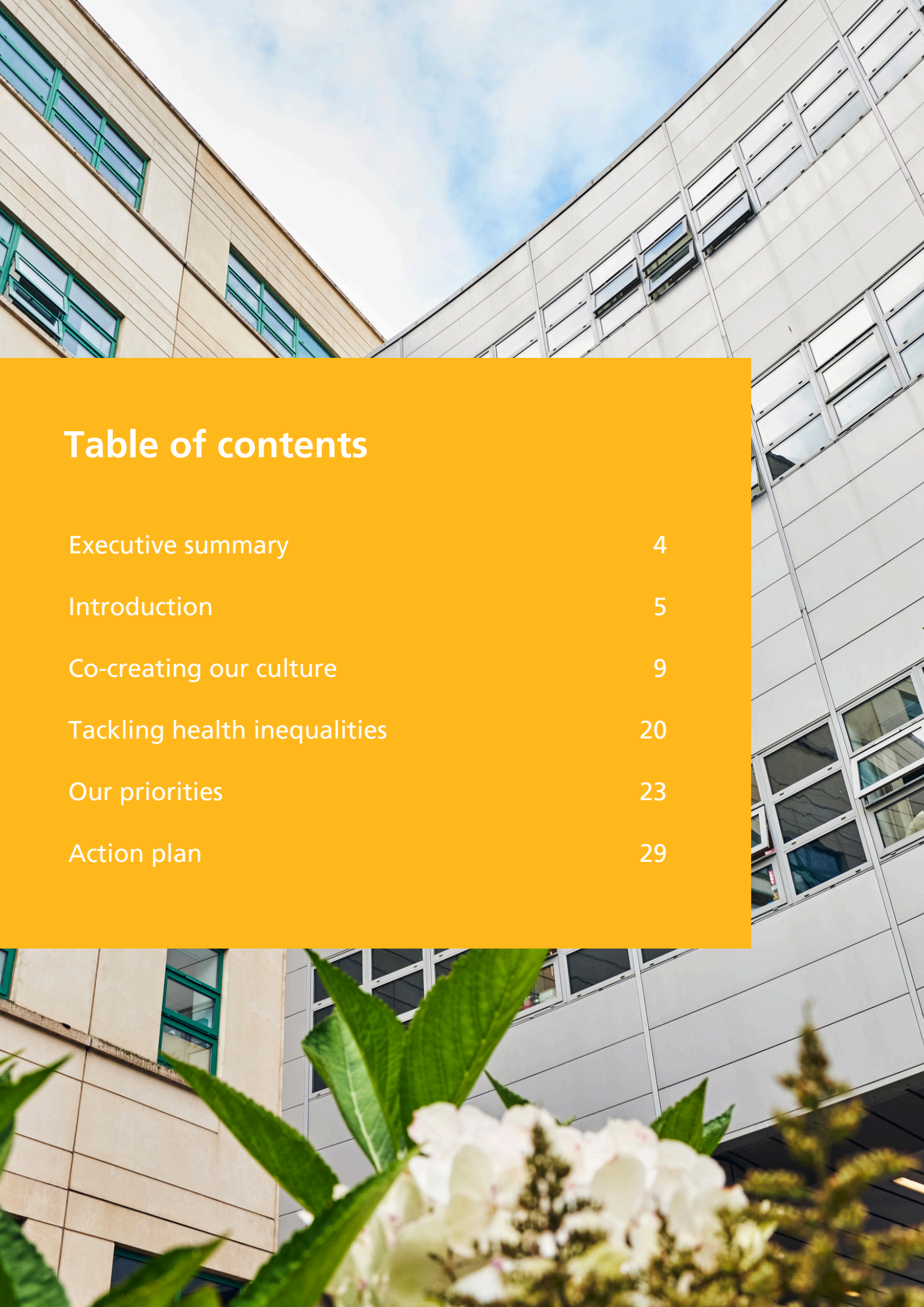


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Executive Summary

Lisa Thomas, Managing Director



The annual Equality Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) and Health Inequalities (HI) report reflects a year of progress in our pursuit of equity across the organisation. This report is benchmarked against our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) / Health Inequalities (HI) objectives, the NHS England six High Impact Actions and our system's Health Inequalities Strategy.

We have strengthened inclusive leadership, through Board-level commitments, involving more staff and patients in shaping the EDI and HI agenda and the provision of training and development.

We also hosted our first EDI conference, which focussed on allyship. Progress has also been supported by new training for staff including Cultural Competence and EDI Champions training and actions our divisions are taking to address discrimination.

Staff wellbeing remains central to our aims – we have expanded occupational health services and our staff have access to 24/7 support.

The report amplifies not only our resounding commitment to address EDI/HI issues within our organisation, but also in further improving our understanding of relevant data.

Our declaration in 'making inclusion everyone's business' centres around a summary of awareness raising, improvement in data quality and making data insights available, leading to enabling a three-year health inequality action plan, around the Core20Plus5 population and other activity.

Recognition is given to the advancement of technology echoed in the NHS 10-year Plan but also in our local work around inclusion.

Looking ahead, our priorities include further enhancing data quality, engaging with staff and patients to understand their lived experience; supporting and developing our workforce, and including the continuation of projects that address the abuse and discrimination our staff experience.

We will also introduce a Shared Electronic Patient Record to improve how we deliver care across the BSW Hospital Group.

This report supports our vision and new strategic direction.

Lisa Thomas
Managing Director

Introduction

This year's report sets out how we have made progress against our EDI/HI objectives over the year – driven by our shared vision, collective voices and commitment to improving together. Much of the work in the report has been shaped and delivered by our staff who are more engaged and involved in making change happen.

We have focussed on improving equity in the workplace including addressing unprofessional behaviours across the Trust. All divisions have been addressing discrimination, our EDI Driver Metric, and they have also delivered targeted interventions in response to staff survey. This has enabled us to sustain efforts throughout the year; including taking a data-driven approach to identify and support teams where there are higher levels of reporting.

We have also talked to staff and patients about their lived experience, this engagement helps us to look beyond the data and deepen our understanding of the impact of our policies, practices, services and culture across many groups of people.

Our staff are at the heart of making the Trust a great place to work, and so many of our staff and volunteers become champions, leading in areas such as EDI, health and wellbeing, and sustainability, to make the workplace and our processes more equitable and fairer. To enable our staff to succeed, we offer a range of high-quality training and leadership programmes.

We will continue to focus on 'making inclusion everyone's business', by raising awareness on health equity, improving

our health inequality data, and making data insights readily available. We will develop a three-year health inequality action plan to transform our work around our Core20Plus5 populations; increasing the number of staff who volunteer to drive change in their department and further explore the use of artificial intelligence (AI) to enable staff to learn independently.

The Trust's Local Strategic Direction and EDI and HI strategic plan coincide with the publication of the Fit for the Future 10 Year Health Plan 2025. Thousands of people informed the plan which will see the NHS place greater emphasis on preventative measures including addressing inequality drivers like obesity and inactivity; provide services that are tailored to the lived realities of a diverse population; bring care closer to home in our communities; improve digital and non-digital access channels and harness technological innovation. We will also equip our workforce to enable this transformation to take place.

Our new EDI and HI strategy is a roadmap for the future, which will help us to align our work with our Integrated Care System and regional EDI and health inequality plans as we work towards our collective goals. Our Board will continue to help to shape and support the EDI and HI agenda and have made EDI commitments for the second year running.

Sharon Woma

Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and Health Inequalities

Our values, aims and objectives

We are guided by our clear values Service, Teamwork, Ambition and Respect, which are underpinned by the NHS constitution's ethos, we are committed to compassion, dignity and equality. We work as a team and partnership across the BSW system to achieve the best outcomes for our patients and communities.

Service We put patients, service users and our diverse communities at the heart of all we do	Be compassionate
	Be dependable
Teamwork We work together across teams, roles and boundaries, supporting each other and valuing difference because no one delivers great care alone.	Be inclusive
	Be collaborative
Ambition We embrace diverse perspectives, evidence and lived experience to continuously learn and improve for our patients, our teams and ourselves.	Be curious
	Be courageous
Respect We show people they matter, treat everyone with dignity, listen carefully and welcome difference.	Be thoughtful
	Be open

The EDI Strategy 2020-2024 set our objectives which have directed our work over the past four years, this report focuses on initiatives delivered in the financial year April 2024 to March 2025.

Following the publication of our EDI and HI Strategic Plan for 2025-2028, our staff are keen for us to retain the same objectives and deliver against them with a greater sense of ambition and urgency.

The objectives are:

1. Inclusive and compassionate leadership
2. Represented and supported workforce
3. Support our patients and communities to achieve better life outcomes
4. Let every voice be heard

Our people, patients and community

We work with and serve a diverse community of people from all walks of life. Our Trust employs 6,056 staff including apprentices who are supported by 595 volunteers. We are proud to be an Inclusive Employer, a Disability Confident Employer and a Veteran Aware organisation – we have signed the Veteran's Covenant and achieved the Pride in Veterans Standard.

A profile of our staff, patients and Swindon population is included below. The proportion of male and female staff has remained the same since 2023, 82% female and 18% male. 58% of staff are full-time and 42% part-time. We have seen an increase in ethnic minority staff (by 3%) and disabled staff (by 1%), with no increase in LGB staff, however there is a greater prevalence of staff who have not stated whether they are disabled (16% of staff) or shared their sexual orientation (27% of staff) in our staff records.

These incomplete datasets hinder accurate analysis, and this might mask patterns of

inequity. Over time, disclosure rates are improving for all groups, we have implemented changes to the Electronic Staff Record (ESR) including annual reminders and raised the profile of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion including hosting regular awareness events. We will continue to promote the importance of sharing protected characteristics.

30% of our staff are aged between 31 and 40 years old, and 22% aged between 41 and 50 years old. In comparison, 7% of staff are 25 and under and 7% are aged between 61 and 70+.

The Trust Board includes seven executives and ten non-executives. Seven (41%) are female and ten (59%) male, two (12%) are from an ethnic minority background and two (12%) are disabled or living with a long-term health condition. We also have two Associate NEDs. The Associate role can act as a pipeline to improve the diversity of the board, both in terms of skills and protected characteristics.

	Female	Male	BME	White	Disabled	LGB	Hetero-sexual	Religion / Belief (all)
Staff	82%	18%	30%	63%	5%	2%	70%	57%
Volunteers	75%	25%	31%	63%	6%	4%	73%	60%
Patients	54%	46%	17%	76%	N/A*	N/A*	N/A*	47%
Swindon	50%	50%	19%	81%	16%	2%	90%	60%

Our integrated care system

The Trust is part of a group of organisations who work closely together as an Integrated Care System – Bath and Northeast Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire (BSW) Together Integrated Care System (ICS) and includes the Integrated Care Board, our three local authorities, three hospital trusts, independent providers, a mental health trust, an ambulance trust and voluntary sector organisations.

Collectively we take responsibility to improve the health and wellbeing of local people and our workforce; to tackle health inequalities including improving health and care access, experience and outcomes for everyone.

Within the system, the Trust operates in a group model, the BSW Hospitals Group, made up of Great Western Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, Salisbury NHS Foundation Trust and Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust. We have worked collaboratively over several years, and we are in the process of changing how we collectively function.

These changes will help us to pool resources more effectively, reduce duplication of services, increase shared governance, standardise practices across the group and reduce costs, increase buying power and increase capability to invest in innovation and digital infrastructure.

The group relationship will also provide an opportunity to address systemic inequalities in our staff and patient populations; we anticipate that future EDI and health inequalities plans will be centred around a group approach.

“We listen and work effectively together to improve health and wellbeing and reduce inequalities.”

The BSW vision



Bath and North East Somerset,
Swindon and Wiltshire Together



Co-creating
our culture

Inclusive leadership

Inclusive leadership is central to achieving the aims set out in our strategic plan – to improve representation, support our staff to thrive and succeed and to deliver equitable healthcare.

We have continued to embed inclusive leadership through leadership training and development, the appraisal system, and promotion of our leadership behaviours.

The Trust hosted its first EDI conference in November 2024, with a focus on allyship, this built on the foundations laid at our Leadership Conference the preceding year, when we launched the leadership behaviours.

EDI is also embedded in our leadership programmes ensuring staff have regular opportunities to learn and apply principles that support inclusion.

The Trust participated in the Diversity in Health and Care Partners Programme, alongside NHS organisations across the country. The leadership programme helps organisations to advance equality, diversity and inclusion through a year-long series of masterclasses with board and staff representatives – with access to thought leadership and tools to help organisations at the forefront of EDI practice.

We are also undertaking a programme of work to develop the organisational culture, including inviting staff to shape a values-led behaviours framework. This extensive cultural change programme will continue over the next three years.

Our commitment to change and the actions throughout the year, and highlighted in this report, has led to an improvement in some of the metrics we use to measure progress, including the Equality Delivery System's Domain Three which measures inclusive leadership, you can read more about these improvements in the [Equality Delivery System \(EDS\)](#) report.



Equitable access, experience and outcomes for our workforce

People Promise improvements Staff Survey results

The NHS People Promise is a commitment to creating a positive and inclusive working environment for all NHS staff. It outlines key themes that reflect what matters most to staff, such as compassion, recognition, safety, learning, flexibility, teamwork, engagement, and morale. The following analysis compares the Trust and Benchmarking Group Scores from 2023/24 to 2024/25, highlighting areas of improvement and decline.

We have slightly improved our score for 'we are recognised and rewarded', 'we are safe and healthy', 'we are always learning', 'we work flexibly' and morale.

Scores have slightly declined for 'we are compassionate and inclusive', 'we each have a voice that counts', 'we are a team' and 'staff engagement'.

Indicators	2024/25		2023/24		2022/23	
('People Promise' elements and themes)	Trust Score	Bench-marking group score	Trust Score	Bench-marking group score	Trust Score	Bench-marking group score
People Promise:						
• We are compassionate and inclusive	7.23	7.21	7.25	7.24	7.16	7.18
• We are recognised and rewarded	5.92	5.92	5.91	5.94	5.64	5.72
• We each have a voice that counts	6.69	6.67	6.71	6.7	6.64	6.65
• We are safe and healthy	6.14	6.09	6.11	6.08	5.83	5.88
• We are always learning	5.71	5.64	5.69	5.62	5.38	5.35
• We work flexibly	6.42	6.24	6.41	6.2	6.24	6
• We are a team	6.77	6.74	6.78	6.75	6.64	6.64
Staff engagement	6.82	6.84	6.85	6.91	6.7	6.8
Morale	5.93	5.93	5.91	5.9	5.65	5.68

Our staff survey data also indicates that staff experience abuse from patients and the public. Over 24.4% of staff experience bullying, harassment and abuse, 9.6% experienced discrimination, 12.8% physical violence and 8.8% were the target of unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature in the workplace from patients, service users or the public (GWH Staff Survey Results 2024). Our data shows that ethnic minority staff experience a higher level of discrimination than other groups.

The Trust is committed to protecting staff from abuse from third parties, the onsite security team attend call outs, we have policies in place to guide staff and specialist training for frontline staff including Maybo (a de-escalation course) and conflict resolution. In July 2025 the Trust is engaging with staff to understand more about their experiences and to identify what initiatives are having the biggest impact, we will also re-launch the 'Never OK' campaign, which reinforces a clear message that abuse is unacceptable, and will launch our 'GWH Guide to Addressing Racist Incidents' and its accompanying workshop.

NHS EDI Improvement Plan

The Trust has implemented the NHS EDI Improvement Plan to address staff inequalities. Our action plan for the year has been mapped against its high impact actions below:

HIA 1 High Impact Action One (HIA1): Chief executives, chairs and board members must have specific and measurable EDI objectives to which they will be individually and collectively accountable.

GWH EDI Objective 1: Inclusive & Compassionate Leadership

Embed 'listening to you' sessions with staff and patients	- Engaged with staff and patients to understand their lived experience – insights from engagement help to improve inclusive decision-making and inform actions. - The board continue to invite staff and patients to share their experience with the board.
Increase support and involvement with staff networks	The Board and staff network representatives participated in a joint workshop where they reviewed data and collectively shared feedback that has been used to shape the action plan for 2024-25 and the new Strategic EDI 3-Year Plan.
Improved ED&I documentation at Board Meetings including ED&I Data and ED&I references in submitted papers	The board papers have been developed including risk a assessment framework which staff complete to help the board to be better informed around the impact of their decisions. This will be followed up with Health Inequalities training for the Board in 2025-26.

HIA 2 High Impact Action Two (HIA2): Embed fair and inclusive recruitment processes and talent management strategies that target under-representation and lack of diversity.

GWH EDI Objective 2: Represented & Supported Workforce.

Create and implement a talent management plan to improve the diversity of executive and senior leadership teams.	- Established a Moderation Board in October 24 to assess line reports for current Execs to identify skill gaps, and readiness for succession. - Re-launched Stay & Thrive conversations, including publication of 'Stay Conversations' template in October 2024. - Offer career development opportunities through apprenticeships for senior staff, Scope for Growth career coaching and mentorship programmes. 28 Inclusion Recruitment Champions available to support interviews for Band 8B and above roles.
Implement a plan to widen recruitment opportunities within local communities, aligned to the NHS Long Term Workforce Plan.	- Appointment of a People Promise Manager – one year programme to improve workforce experience, bringing structure and pace and staff centred insights to our retention efforts. - Partnered with local organisations to deliver Project Search work experience programme for people with learning disabilities – to support them into employment; six young people took part this year and three have found paid employment. The Trust also delivers Dare to Doctor and similar programmes. - We also partnered with New College Swindon to deliver Pathway to the Future, 13 students from areas of deprivation participated in a year-long programme, where they were prepared for interviews and gained practical skills.

HIA 3

High Impact Action Three (HIA3): Develop and implement an improvement plan to eliminate pay gaps.

GWH EDI Objective 2: Represented & Supported Workforce

Undertake analysis of other staff groups	Ethnicity pay gap introduced in this year's reporting.
Review recommendations from Mend the Gap	- Launched Trust-wide mentoring programme in November 2024. Promotion will continue in 2025-26. - Targeted outreach to promote the bonus award schemes and to encourage female consultant participation. - Launched Flexible Working through ESR and created a monthly dashboard to track flexible working applications, along with ESR guides and toolkit and Trust-wide comms. - Leadership development opportunities across all banding – e.g. Learn to Lead for Bands 2-3 offered and Aspiring Leaders for Bands 4-6, Developing Leaders for Bands 7, 8a and 8b. A leadership programme was launched for new consultants in post for 2 years or less. Staff can also access a range of external programmes including NHS Academy's Edward Jenner, Mary Seacole and Rosalind Franklin. - Sixty-five of our female staff are apprentices and eighteen are male, 60% are White and 27% from a BME group. - Engagement and support for carers provided, including Carers Staff Network.

HIA 4 High Impact Action Four (HIA4): Develop and implement an improvement plan to address health inequalities within the workforce.

GWH EDI Objective 3: Support our patients and communities to achieve better life outcomes. And Objective 2.

Improve Data Quality	• Electronic staff records prompt staff to update their information annually. • Data highlighted during routine EDI training to raise awareness. • There was a review of historic flu vaccine uptake data by deprivation index with targeted engagement to encourage staff who under-utilised the service to receive the flu jab in 2024. • We have developed a data quality improvement plan, which will enable the Trust to improve our understanding of health inequalities in the workforce.
Deliver impactful health and wellbeing services for all staff	• Improved online Employee Assistance programme – Staff can access 24/7 counselling, financial advice, and salary sacrifice schemes are available for home, technology and the introduction of cycle purchases. • Count Me In initiative launched by joint staff networks, small funding was made available, including wellbeing boxes for staff and resources for staff who are neurodiverse. • Occupational health has delivered 1,957 management referrals, 2,210 pre-employment checks, and over 1,400 OH nurse appointments and we have expanded access to self-referrals for mental health and physiotherapy support. Plus 925 individual therapy sessions, with 92% of those completing therapy showing clinical improvement and nearly 1000 staff benefited from group-based wellbeing sessions. • 10% of our staff have accessed the new Wagestream service which enables staff to better manage their pay; and 97 staff attended two pension workshops (November 2024 and February 2025), with further workshops scheduled for 2025-26. • The Trust has a Guardian of Safe Working Hours who oversees the working hours that doctors in training are asked to do under the 2016 contract. The Guardian acts as a link to highlight issues raised by Trainee Doctors at Trust Board level.
Reduce bullying, increase civility and have a robust approach to all abuse and harassment	• 62 EDI champions support staff across their departments to address any unprofessional behaviours; our staff network chairs provide advice and guidance to staff and staff use other formal channels including Freedom to Speak Up Guardians and HR to raise concerns and seek support. • The Trust has a staff survey working group, including divisional representatives who lead on local action to improve their staff survey data, there was a Trust-wide focus on addressing discrimination and all divisional representatives took action, supported by their local EDI Champions. • Datix (incident reporting database) was updated last year to capture incidents that are linked to discrimination and this data is monitored through the Trust's strategic committee that oversees Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

As an Anchor Institute, make a positive impact by offering routes to employment, good work and career development

- The Trust offered a series of Dare 2 events, which are two-day summer schools for Year 12 students who aspire to work in healthcare – the programme included Doctor-2-Doctor (20 participants), Dare-2-Nurse (8 participants), Dare-2-Midwife (25 participants), Dare-2-Care (8 participants) and Dare-2-AHP (25 participants).
- See HIA2 for other work experience initiatives.
- We will expand the initiatives on offer in 2025-26 and take part in system initiatives to support care-leavers into employment.

HIA 5

High Impact Action Four (HIA5): Implement a comprehensive induction, onboarding and development programme for internationally-recruited staff.

GWH EDI Objective 2: Represented & Supported Workforce.

Train and develop International Recruits

- Supporting information from employers (SIFE) references have been introduced to support internationally educated staff to register with the NMC. Ten staff have completed the programme as at 31.3.25, with a further six predicted to finish at the end of April. Staff are supported by a SIFE lead and clinical practice educators to prepare for the OSCE exam and meet the NMC criteria.
- Delivered Student Nursing Associate (SNA) apprenticeship in collaboration with Oxford Brookes, which bridges the gap between the Health Care Support Workers qualification and Registered Nursing. Staff are released one day a week to attend university.
- We are supporting seven internationally educated nurses (IENs) who have enrolled on the Florence Nightingale Foundation leadership development programme for nurses and midwives and staff have taken part in leadership away days aimed at ethnic minority and internationally educated nurses.
- The Trust's Equality Lead Nurse (funded until 31.03.25) has supported internationally educated nurses to acclimatise to the Trust and represents their voice at key strategic meetings.

HIA 6

High Impact Action Four (HIA6): Create an environment that eliminates the conditions in which bullying, discrimination, harassment and physical violence at work occur.

GWH EDI Objective 4: Let every voice be heard. And Objective 2.

Improve awareness and understanding of key issues and promote behavioural change

- Launch of Expectation of Line Managers training to equip line managers to lead their teams well – over 500 have attended; and development of TED tool to help teams improve effectiveness. EDI embedded in leadership programmes, preceptorship and some mandatory study days.
- EDI Conference in November 2024, focus on 'Allyship' including Bystander training. Around 90 leaders attended.

Improve awareness and understanding of key issues and promote behavioural change	• Staff Networks initiatives included Pride celebrations, stand at Swindon & Wiltshire Pride and Black History Month and spoke at external events during key diversity calendar dates. Networks have formed a joint network to improve collaboration.
Improve staff engagement	• Staff involved in Improving Together, using the Trust's continuous improvement methodology to help co-design EDI initiatives. Staff also act as local champions and are involved in driving change in their department and division. • During the spring of 2025, there was Trust-wide engagement with staff to gather their views to shape the Trust's new values-led behaviours, which will launch in 2025-26.
Create a safe environment for all staff	• Developed the Sexual Misconduct Policy and implemented best practice actions. • Introduced 'Understanding Sexual Misconduct in the Workplace' training on ESR eLearning in January 2025. • Deliver a range of EDI-related training – including Cultural Competence; Addressing Unprofessional Behaviours; EDI Champions workshop; Inclusive Recruitment Champions training; Bystander training. • Compassionate conversations masterclass with 'A Kind Life' to explore the compelling evidence supporting compassion in healthcare, while developing powerful and practical skills for compassionate communication – attended by 143 people over 3 sessions. • Our Freedom to Speak Up Guardians hosted a series of online events during Freedom to Speak Up Month October 2024 to promote speaking up, featuring special guests and case studies centred around themes like 'international staff' and 'improving patient safety'.

In 2025-26 we will focus on developing and implementing a values-led behaviours framework; expanding our team of EDI champions and other volunteers; equipping staff with the skills to address unprofessional behaviours from colleagues and harassment and abuse from patients; delivering targeted interventions in departments in response to local data insights and supporting staff to live healthy and fulfilled working lives.

Key strategic groups oversee this programme of work including The Trust Wide Staff Survey Working Group, Inclusion & Health Inequalities Sub-committee and the People and Culture Committees.

Learning and development

The Trust launched Expectations of Line Managers one-day workshop to equip all line managers with the tools and knowledge to lead and manage people, the Trust has a target of 90% of existing managers and 100% of new managers, Band 6-8C, to attend this training.

New managers will be invited to attend within 6-months of joining the Trust, offering them the best opportunity to get to know our local processes and to know what is expected of them as people managers.

We also provide development programmes for staff who are keen to step into leadership roles, this includes the Aspiring Leaders 6-month programme for Band 4 to Band 6 staff and this year we also facilitated bespoke leadership training for ethnic minority staff.

EDI-related training has included Cultural Competence; Bystander training; Addressing Unprofessional Behaviours training and bespoke training for our EDI Champions and Inclusion Recruitment Champions and 94% of our staff have attended our online mandatory EDI training.

The Trust is exploring the use of artificial intelligence in training and development. We delivered a six-month pilot, trialling immersive virtual reality training, just over 180 staff enrolled on the programme and had access to over 30 workshops ranging from EDI to conflict resolution and interview and presentation practice, with 3112 training minutes.

This has supported staff to practice managing conversations or challenging

poor behaviour in a virtual environment and receive feedback based on their response. We will evaluate the pilot and consider how this technology can be expanded to support health inequalities awareness and tailored to respond to the needs of healthcare professionals in the BSW system.

The Trust developed a mentoring programme in November 2024, which is still in its infancy, we have delivered two Introduction to Mentoring workshops (February and April 2025) and will pilot mentoring which is accessible to all staff until April 2026.

We have harnessed A.I. to match mentors and mentees and to provide a reporting system, this will help us to identify trends that will inform learning and development and reduce the need for administrative input.

Mentoring is known to benefit under-represented groups of staff and should have a positive impact on our metrics that measure equal opportunities and career progression over time.



Improving Together

Our staff are at the heart of change initiatives, including the EDI and health inequalities work.

We use a continuous improvement methodology across the Trust called 'Improving Together'. This ensures that staff can help to shape EDI-related projects and have a say in the decisions the Trust makes that affects them.

Staff can get involved through varied forums, workshops, team initiatives and through our networks.

In the past the staff have helped to design EDI-training and to shape the EDI initiatives, this work will continue in 2025-26, in July, staff will take part in an initiative to address patient abuse and harassment.

Staff Networks

The Trust has six staff networks who represent minoritized groups of staff. These include:

- Differently Abled Network, representing our disabled staff.
- LGBTQ+ Network, representing our lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer plus staff.
- Race Equality Network, representing our ethnic minority staff.
- The Women's Network, focussed on supporting women in the workplace.
- Armed Forces Network, although armed services personnel and veterans are not a protected characteristic, the Trust recognises the unique challenges they face.
- Carer's Network, providing support and information for staff who may be caring for a family member, relative or friend whilst balancing working life.

Staff networks play an important role in the life of the Trust. Our staff networks engage with the Board and key strategic groups to help inform EDI plans and they act as supportive spaces for their members and welcome allies (who might not share the same protected characteristics as the beneficiaries of the network) who help to deliver various initiatives including engagement and workshops.

In August 2024, the networks formed a joint group to enable them to co-deliver initiatives and to identify shared priorities. The Joint Network's inaugural project is 'Count Me In', a small grant that is available to staff in the Trust who want to deliver local projects to address inequalities – 12 teams were awarded a grant in January 2025.

Winners included the Library who purchased two reader pens to support students with dyslexia and the Warfarin team purchased warfarin readers that can be loaned to patients who cannot afford a device.

This fits in with the Trust's ethos to make inclusion everyone's business, by resourcing projects that can make a difference.



EDI Champions

The Trust launched a programme to recruit, train and deploy EDI Champions in January 2024, a voluntary role which staff opt into.

The champions support staff who experience unprofessional behaviours and promote inclusion in their ward or office area.

The programme was evaluated in January 2025 to identify the impact of this group. At the time, the Trust had 62 EDI Champions, with over 200 hours of activity logged – our champions have supported or signposted other staff and managers; shared ideas for improvement with HR and other departments; volunteered to deliver training or to deliver an event; shared resources with their team; spoken at internal and external events; and hosted events to celebrate diversity days with their teams. 41% of champions have reported they have had a positive impact on their team and 20% said they have had wider impact across their division or the Trust; overall 47% of champions feel their presence and actions enable behavioural change.

The ambition is to have representatives in every department. Our 2025/26 action plan will include a focus on further recruitment.

Inclusion Recruitment Champions

The Trust launched its Inclusion Recruitment Champions programme in November 2023, when its first group of IRCs were trained to sit on interview panels.

The Trust currently has 25 recruitment champions, a volunteer role, who sit on interview panels for 8B and above roles. The champions provide an additional level of assurance that interviews are free from bias, whether conscious or unconscious,

ensuring a fair and inclusive process. The group is part of our wider programme of work managed by Recruitment and Resourcing teams, to improve representation in senior roles.

In response to requests from recruiting managers, the Trust will identify and train additional volunteers across 2025/26 who can sit on interview panels for any banding. We will evaluate their impact late 2025.

Volunteers

Our volunteers make a huge contribution to the health and wellbeing of our local population, giving their time, skills and expertise freely to support people in need.

Volunteers are crucial for the NHS's vision for the future of health and social care, as partners with, not substitutes for skilled staff.

They provide support in the following areas:

- Outpatient Welcome and Liaison Service (OWLS) - a 'buddy' programme for patients with mobility issues, disabilities, dementia or who are anxious about coming into hospital.
- Active Responder Service - volunteers respond to where the need is greatest across the hospital, they help out with pharmacy runs and urgent ward needs.
- Befriending patients, providing companionship and wellbeing support,
- Assist with feeding, tea rounds, and replenishing stock for staff
- Making up beds on wards
- Administrative support
- Welcoming patients and signposting them appropriately
- Tea trolley rounds for staff.



Tackling health inequalities

Our health inequalities work continued to evolve in 2024, in line with the BSW Inequalities Strategy Implementation Plan and the Core20Plus5 framework.

We have focussed on system-wide initiatives and work has centred around reducing disparities in access, experience and outcomes for minoritised and marginalised patients and staff.

Over the year, we have completed the actions set out in the Health Inequalities Action Plan, including engagement with our local population, 19 events were hosted by the Patient Experience and Engagement Lead, in addition to attending community events.

The Board, as part of their EDI commitments, hosted an event in the Swindon town centre in October 2024, where members of the public were able to share their experience of accessing health services with board representatives.

We have started to embed the Improving Together continuous improvement ethos into patient engagement; this will enable patients to be part of service design and improvement.

In July 2024 patients met at the Trust to share their ideas of improving the way we communicate with patients and understand their perceptions around moving to fully digital platforms. Insights from this engagement have been used to inform decision making.

We have also improved the quality and completeness of our datasets across services, analysing waiting lists to detect inequalities in the most challenged areas and improved demographic data to support performance reporting.

As an Anchor Institution, we work with system partners to address the social determinants of health, this includes providing work experience and employment to people from poorer socio-economic backgrounds, buying local when possible and reducing our environmental impact.

We partnered with Project Search, New College Swindon, Swindon Borough Council and Swindon SEND Family Voice to host eight interns who rotated around three different placements.

After the success of our first year of Project Search, our second cohort started in September 2024. Project Search is a transition-to-work programme to assist students (age 18-22) with developmental disabilities to obtain job skills that make them marketable in the workforce. During the summer of 2025 two of the students have gone on to find employment.

We are committed to providing a sustainable health and care system that delivers high quality care and improved public health without exhausting natural resources or causing ecological damage.

In 2021 we published our first Green Plan which focussed on reducing the carbon footprint in eight areas including estates and facilities, travel and transport, medicines and our workforce.

We measure our carbon footprint annually and set interim targets for reduction, with a commitment to be Net Zero by 2040.

Improving our Data and Insights

In 2024/25 significant progress has been made around the routine reporting of performance information split by key indicators such as ethnicity, deprivation, age and gender.

In addition, under the NHSE Statement on Information on Health Inequalities published in November 2023, the Trust along with BSW ICB is required to record and report on a variety of key metrics related to Health Inequalities, with specific focus on the following as an Acute trust:

- Elective activity vs pre-pandemic levels split <18 and >18, split by ethnicity and deprivation
- Emergency admissions for <18 split by ethnicity and deprivation
- Adult inpatient services offering smoking cessation
- Maternity inpatient settings offering smoking cessation
- Tooth extraction admissions for decay for children admitted as inpatients aged 10 and under

As shown below, each of these metrics is being actively reported on within the Trust, enabling cross demographic comparisons in these key areas, the ability to identify time-based trends and the impact of any specific interventions that are undertaken.

In 2025/26, further work will be undertaken to ensure alignment with the associated work being done in this area at an ICB level and also how we can better share learning and best practice across the Group.

In addition, we have liaised closely with colleagues at BSW ICB around Health Inequalities and Population Health data and initiatives, particularly through the monthly BSW ICS Population Health Intelligence Forum.

The BSW ICB data team have created a suite of Population Health / Health Inequalities reports, including Core20Plus5, hosted on the ICB portal and readily available to users across the ICB.

Developing our approach to addressing health inequalities

The NHS launched the Patient Safety Healthcare Inequalities Reduction Framework, which introduces five principles:

- Principle 1: All staff, patients, service users, families and carers have access to information, translation and interpretation services when needed.
- Principle 2: All healthcare staff receive undergraduate patient safety training, ongoing training, and accessible resources that improve their awareness and understanding of healthcare inequalities related to patient safety risks.
- Principle 3: Accurate and complete diversity data are collected for protected characteristics and inclusion health groups on digital platforms. (Including disaggregated data).
- Principle 4: Representatives of diverse communities are involved in the design and delivery of improvements aimed at reducing patient safety healthcare inequalities. This co-production involves drawing on the knowledge and experience of patients, service users, carers, families, communities and staff.
- Principle 5: Improve the understanding of patient safety healthcare inequalities and drive improvement through identifying priority areas for research.

This framework aligns with previous policy including NHS England's Core20Plus5 Framework, the NHS Long Term Plan, the EDI Improvement Plan and key actions in the NHS Standard Contract between the commissioners and the Trust – to restore services inclusively; mitigate against digital exclusion; ensure datasets are timely and complete; to accelerate preventative programmes and ensure leadership and accountability.



Our
priorities

Our priorities for 2025-2026

Our report highlights the extensive efforts we have made to improve equity for our workforce and patients.

We have a more diverse workforce, with an increase in disabled and ethnic minority staff and we provide development opportunities for staff to progress into senior roles; we know our data gaps can mask inequities and will continue to raise awareness about the importance of sharing protected characteristics.

We have switched focus from international recruited nurses, to helping our talented international recruits to meet the requirements for NMC registration and to access development opportunities. Where we have 'hard to fill' clinical and medical roles, we support international recruits to relocate.

We are preparing a workforce for the future, this includes professional development, training, career guidance, coaching and mentoring. Leadership development is available for staff in any profession or banding and we continue to offer apprenticeship roles.

We have leveraged technology to train our staff, including the use of A.I. to deliver immersive EDI and soft skills training. Our Expectations of Line Managers programme has been submitted for consideration for an HPMA award. The purpose of this programme is to equip line managers with knowledge, skills and confidence to enable them to be excellent line managers.

We recognise that some of our staff disproportionately experience inequalities, across health outcomes and working life experience and more broadly the wider

social determinants (housing, education, environmental factors etc), in response we deliver a programme of work to address this imbalance including a robust occupational health and health and wellbeing service, a Trust-wide effort to address discrimination and other unprofessional behaviours, established divisional working groups and a network of volunteer staff who champion inclusion and equity.

The NHS EDI Improvement Plan (High Impact Action 4), sets out a requirement to address health inequalities in the workforce, including reducing bullying and discrimination, which can lead to ill health, absenteeism and staff turnover.

The Trust re-launched the Never OK campaign in June 2025, in partnership with Wiltshire Police, putting a spotlight on the personal impact of abuse, whilst reminding staff, patients and visitors that abuse of NHS staff is never OK. This will be coupled with a 'Guide to addressing racist incidents' which will help staff to respond and a Safe to Speak survey will be undertaken during the autumn and winter months to understand the lived experience of staff and identify good practice from across the Trust to enable shared learning.

We have a common aim, with our system partners, to improve the health and wellbeing of our local population and to prevent illness. Improving our datasets has been a priority for 2024-25, this has given us more insights into our patients, but there is still more work to be done to meet the needs of our Core20Plus5 population groups, which will be reflected in a new Health Inequalities three-year plan, due to be launched in the New Year 2026.

We recognise we have a long way to go to get to equity, which means we have to do things differently for some groups; a necessary step in achieving equality.

To support this, we have recently published our 2025-2028 EDI and HI Strategic Plan, which sets out high-level ambitious objectives and aims to drive progress across both workforce and patient agendas; with a commitment to build detailed action plans annually that responds to the changing needs of our staff and patients and the data we monitor.

Some of our 'year one' (the financial year April 2025 to March 2026) initiatives are highlighted in the following section.

Looking ahead

In our next reporting year, 2025-26, we will continue to respond to the six high impact actions in the NHS EDI Improvement Plan, to improve equality, diversity and inclusion for staff.

- Supporting staff to address harassment, bullying and abuse. The Never OK campaign will ensure that all staff, patients and visitors receive a clear message.
- Eliminating discrimination will continue to be the EDI Pillar Metric and this will have a positive impact on bullying, harassment and abuse, which also disproportionately impacts disabled and ethnic minority staff. An intrinsic part of our improvement plans includes empowering and mobilising our EDI champions who can take local action and the work of our divisional leads who are responsible for driving change in their departments. We want to increase the number of EDI champions in the Trust so that all staff can have access to this trained group.
- Staff from minoritised backgrounds are under-represented in senior leadership roles and we have maintained a gender pay gap in favour of males (£7.32). We will continue to provide leadership development opportunities, utilise our Inclusion Recruitment Champions for Band 8B and above interviews, and provide opportunities for staff to speak-up about their concerns, including tailored support for our internationally educated staff. As an anchor institution, we will continue to target groups from poorer socio-economic backgrounds, including introducing a guaranteed interview scheme for Care-Experienced Young People (CEYP) and delivering Dare 2 Doctor, Project Search and similar schemes.
- We will offer in-person and online support for staff and continue to recruit and train Mental Health First Aiders, and Health and Wellbeing Champions, and deliver health and wellbeing days and Schwartz Rounds alongside our proven occupational health services. Our staff also experience health inequalities and improvements in our datasets will help us to provide the right support.
- We will explore the use of artificial intelligence (A.I.) bespoke scenario-based training modules to help staff to navigate difficult conversations and to de-escalate; and introduce health inequalities training to equip staff to engage in improvements.
- Seek opportunities to improve workplace inclusion across our BSW Hospitals Group.

There is an ongoing programme of work to improve the quality of our data for both staff and patients. Gaps in our demographic information can mask inequalities and we will encourage staff to share their information and to update patient records when they have an opportunity.

The new Shared Electronic Patient Record will launch in 2026. The new system will bring patient information together in one place and will be shared across the BSW Hospitals Group, this will improve data quality and help our staff to standardise care processes and deliver care efficiently, effectively and safely and provide a smoother care journey for our patients wherever they are treated.

We will also take a system approach to improving Accessible Information Standards, a new system/BSW group will form later in the year.

Our health inequalities plan will respond to the needs of our BSW Hospitals Group, BSW Integrated Care System and regional and national priorities; and we are committed to engage and to co-produce with our local population and patients so that we can provide great care, that is inclusive, equitable and accessible.

If you would like to get involved in equality, diversity and inclusion and health inequalities work, please email gwh.inclusion@nhs.net.



Measuring performance

The NHS uses several frameworks to measure our progress against key metrics including the Gender Pay Gap; Equality Delivery System (a self-evaluation tool); the Workforce Disability Equality Standard and Workforce Race Equality Standard which compares the working life experience between different groups of staff to highlight any inequalities; Sexual Orientation Monitoring (SOM) Information Standard; and Accessible Information Standard.

The results from these assessments and standards inform our action plans every year and help us to demonstrate our commitment and legal obligations set out in the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty.

We use these metrics along with talking to our staff and patients to set priorities and actions for the year ahead.

This year, engagement has included the 'Slice of Life' which brought staff and board representatives together to discuss their working life experience in an informal setting, in December we held a graduation ceremony for our EDI Champions to promote the opportunity, highlight the work of champions and thank them for their commitment to improving inclusion in their area of work, and board representatives met with patients in a community setting at a Change the Narrative event, to discuss accessibility.

Throughout the year our Head of Patient Experience and Engagement meets with patients and the public to help improve service delivery.

As a result, we have seen some improvements in the metrics that we use to measure progress highlighted in the following:

- Accessible Information Standards
- Equality Delivery System
- Gender Pay and Ethnicity Pay Gaps
- Workforce Disability Equality Standard
- Workforce Race Equality Standard

You can read the above reports on our [Trust website](#). The Accessible Information Standards is found on the next page.



Accessible Information Standards

The Accessible Information Standard (AIS) applies to all NHS organisations; by applying the Standard, the Trust ensures that public information and communication with its staff and population is accessible. We are committed to following the principles of the AIS which requires a specific and consistent approach to identifying, recording, flagging and meeting people's information and communication needs, where those needs relate to a disability or sensory loss.

We currently have a link on our website to advise the public of how they can inform us of any specific needs, and we are then able to add an alert to our main patient administration system to highlight this to all staff.

Our publications and reports can be made available in a number of formats upon request, and we have new resource folders on each of our ward areas to support staff in communicating with patients who may have additional challenges. The practical resources and guidance are particularly helpful when caring for patients who have experienced a stroke or a brain injury, patients who are deaf or hard of hearing, patients with learning disabilities, autism, dementia or patients who do not speak fluent English.

Patients can access British Sign Language (BSL) interpreters, including a video transfer system called SignLive, which can be used in most areas of the trust and is available 24/7 to connect to a BSL interpreter. We also have various hearing loops, amplifiers and systems to support those with hearing loss. A new portable hearing loop can be taken to any area of the hospital. Our Outpatient Welcome

Liaison Service (OWLS) provide a team of volunteers who can assist patients on arrival at the hospital, escort them to their appointment, wait with them and escort them back to their transport home.

Work throughout the year has included engagement with diverse communities to understand their needs including people with learning disabilities, complex needs, unpaid carers and the deaf community.

The Trust will introduce a new electronic patient administration system in 2026. The functionality will support us to better identify and flag patients with additional needs, where reasonable adjustments may be needed or where alternative communication processes are required. It is hoped that this will be able to be linked to automatic alert to the appropriate team or department to ensure that the necessary action is taken.

Representatives of the Differently Abled Staff Network, made up of disabled staff and allies continue to provide feedback relating to improving accessibility across the site – progress in this work is severely impacted by financial constraints, however, plans for 2025-26 include improvement to lighting across public footpaths and a trust wide accessibility review to support prioritisation of work.

The Inclusion & Health Inequalities Subcommittee continue to oversee the improvements in Accessible Information Standards. A new lead will be appointed for this programme of work in 2025-26 and there are plans for the formation of a system group.



Action plan

Action Plan 2025 - 2026

High Impact Action (HIA)	EDI Objective	Action	Measures of Success
1: Board	Inclusive & Compassionate Leadership	Board set commitments for 2025-26, including engagement with staff to understand their lived experience and review of all EDI-related data to support shaping and driving actions. The Board will also undertake 'safety visits', which will incorporate discrimination, bullying and harassment and other unprofessional behaviours.	- Increased diversity of Board - Number of events attended by Board - Board appraisals reflect EDI commitments
2: Recruitment	Represented & Supported Workforce	- Improve demographic information – raise awareness of data and encourage staff to share their demographic information to improve data quality. - Increase the number of Inclusion Recruitment Champions and expand their coverage, IRCs currently sit on interviews for Band 8b and above roles, this can be expanded to roles where we need to see more progression. - Deliver programmes that support recruitment from groups that are economically or otherwise disadvantaged – Project Search, Dare 2 programmes, Carer's Charter initiatives.	- Increased representation in senior roles - Reduction in unknown demographic status by 5% - Growth in Inclusion Recruitment Champions by 20% - Maintain participation rates in Dare 2 and Project Search programmes
3: Pay Gaps	Represented & Supported Workforce	- Develop Disability Pay Gap processes and publish in 2026, alongside Gender and Ethnicity Pay Gap reporting. - Promote and deliver leadership and development to all staff. - Continued delivery of Expectation of Line Managers training which helps line managers to support and develop their teams. - Continue the existing Mentoring programme that runs until March 2026 and evaluate.	- Publication of the Trust's first Disability Pay Gap report in 2026 - Attendance and evaluation of leadership training - Expectation of Line Management targets achieved - Completion and evaluation of mentoring pilot in March 2026

4: Workforce Health Inequalities	Better life outcomes	• Improve data dashboards to support tackling workforce health inequalities to support expanded data requirements. In April 2026, the NHS will introduce new Staff Standards that will measure our performance around the provision of nutritious food/drink; reduction in violence, racism and sexism; standards of healthy work/OH support; and flexible working. • Pilot Cultural Ambassadors to improve the experience of staff involved in formal and informal processes. • Our data suggests that staff have equitable access to health and wellbeing and occupational health services, we will continue to monitor access and provide a wide range of support, including 24/7 online support to all staff.	• Improved accessible data dashboards available to key stakeholders • Recording of 3 Cultural Ambassadors utilised in formal and informal processes • Evaluation of access to OH and wellbeing services by demographic group continues to show equitable access • Publish Differently Abled Network Guide to reasonable adjustments
5: Internation ally recruited staff	Represented & Supported Workforce	• SIFE Programme – support Internationally educated nurses to acquire their RCN Pin. • Access to leadership programmes for internationally educated staff.	• Staff enrolled on SIFE have successfully attained RCN Pin (target to be set once baseline established) • Internationally educated staff currently enrolled have completed Florence Nightingale programme
6: Addressing bullying, harassment, discriminati on	Represented & Supported Workforce Let every voice be heard	• Increase the number of EDI Champions, these are staff who are trained to address unprofessional behaviours in their area of work, their intervention can help to support minoritised staff who are more likely to experience bullying, harassment and discrimination. • Deliver planned EDI Champions training and the rebranding of the EDI Champions training to ensure this is accessed by any staff – thus equipping staff to address any unprofessional behaviours. • To support staff who are unable to attend face-to-face or virtual training, we will explore other learning modalities including self-paced modules (for example revising the EDI mandatory training and exploring the use of AI in EDI training).	• 20% growth in number of EDI Champions • Positive evaluation of the work of EDI Champions • Re-design and launch of re-branded EDI Champion's training • Reduction in WDES and WRES metrics that measure discrimination and bullying and harassment from patients and colleagues

6: Addressing bullying, harassment, discrimination	Represented & Supported Workforce Let every voice be heard	- Promote Never OK campaign and delivered associated initiatives including Safe to Speak Survey for staff to understand their experience of patient abuse, which will enable targeted initiatives and the launch of 'Addressing racist incidents' guide and training to help staff combat discrimination, there is a Trust-wide target to reduce these incidents. - Working group to form to launch the Trust's behavioural framework, a new set of behaviours, co-designed with staff, that are supportive of the Trust's values. - These initiatives will contribute towards HIA4, as they are linked to improving staff health and wellbeing.	See previous page
Health Inequalities		- Develop Health Inequalities training to improve staff awareness; including health inequalities training for the Trust Board and Trust Management Committee. - Continue to improve data to expand our data analysis capability and develop data dashboard for staff. - Expand membership to committee who oversee health inequalities (IHISC) to enable increased oversight of Core20Plus5 priorities.	- Launch of Health Inequalities training; delivery of training to Board and TMC - Improved patient data dashboard - Increase in speciality representation on committee – Inclusion & Health Inequalities Subcommittee