

EQUALITY AND INCLUSION STRATEGY

EQUALITY OBJECTIVES 2024 - 2025

April 2024



Overview

Equality, diversity and inclusion matters greatly to us as an organisation and plays a key role in demonstrating who we are, what we do and what we stand for. There is no place in NHS Forth Valley for any form of discrimination and we want to be recognised as an organisation that values equality, diversity and inclusion in our workforce, for the people who use our services and in the local communities we serve. We believe everyone should have the opportunity to make healthy choices, live healthy lives and have access to high-quality, person-centred health and care services.

In November 2021, we published our NHS Forth Valley Equality and Inclusion Strategy titled 'Everyone Means Everyone'. This Strategy outlines the organisation's vision and associated workstreams for improving Equality and Inclusion during the period of 2021 to 2025. Within this Strategy, our initial Equality Objectives for April 2021 to March 2024 were identified. In September 2023, we published our latest Annual Progress Report to reflect upon the progress being made against our Strategy as we seek to advance equality to ensure we have an inclusive, fair-for-all organisation where everyone really does mean everyone.

In order to enable us to set our Equality Objectives for April 2024 to April 2025, we have undertaken various stakeholder engagement activities to ensure we are best capturing the needs of our local communities. We conducted a short anonymous public survey, held public drop-in sessions and liaised with local and national colleagues to help inform these new Equality Objectives. We feel it is vital that we gain lived experience input and feedback and would like to extend our appreciation to everyone who took the time to share their views.

Our 2021 - 2024 Equality Objectives

Progress Update

Objective One

Users of services have a positive experience, have their dignity, rights and needs respected, are provided with person centred care and are equal partners in the planning of it. We aim to remove barriers and reduce inequalities experienced by those users of our services.

As a Service

- We have made improvements to our Community Languages System to make booking an Interpreter easier and ensure we only hold the information required by GDPR;
- We have added alerts to the clinical system used by Secondary Care colleagues to notify that an Interpreter is required for those patients in our database;
- We have been piloting a mobile Interpreter service that enables staff to access interpretation via a moveable unit or app on their department devices to assist with urgent or shorter interactions, improving patient experience and safety;
- We continue to support individual service users with any accessibility concerns, barriers to care or issues related to protected characteristics.

As an Organisation

- There continues to be an abundance of work ongoing to improve patient experience and reduce inequalities across the organisation. Some recent highlights include, Realistic Medicine initiatives, a Tinnitus Support Day, Therapist visits, ICU patient football visits and a new Long-Covid Service.

Next Steps

- Publish our British Sign Language (BSL) Plan, which has been a joint venture with Local Authority colleagues to promote integration and improve access for our Deaf community;
- We are reviewing our training menu available for staff.

Our 2021 - 2024 Equality Objectives Progress Update

Objective Two

Staff and users of our services will know how to recognise, identify and report hate crime incidents and feel confident and supported in the process of doing so.

As a Service

- Members of our team have undergone training from Police Scotland to allow the Service to be an official Third Party Reporting Centre for hate crimes.

As an Organisation

- Increased awareness and training for staff on how to appropriately signpost for help;
- Staff made aware of local Third Party Reporting Centres across Forth Valley;
- Ongoing awareness and promotion of relevant Police Scotland messaging shared via NHS Forth Valley official communication channels.

Next Steps

- Members of the team are involved in Police Scotland's national working group as they look to review and update their current system and processes for hate crime reporting;
- As part of our wider Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training review, we will consider the effectiveness of current staff training in relation to hate crime incidents, identifying any gaps and making improvements where necessary in response to staff feedback.

Our 2021 - 2024 Equality Objectives Progress Update

Objective Three

All people accessing or receiving palliative and end of life care will not experience inequalities, with a specific focus on barriers experienced by those in protected characteristic groups.

As a Service

- Our team work hard to ensure that any palliative or end-of-life patient who requires interpretation, are allocated the same Interpreter for the duration of their care. This consistency helps to improve patient experience by making for a more cohesive and supportive interpretation partnership;
- We again work with individual patients and service users and this includes those in receipt of palliative care or end-of-life treatment. We can support and signpost accordingly to help to reduce inequalities where possible and improve the overall experience.

As an Organisation

- The ReSPECT (Recommended Summary Plan for Emergency Care and Treatment) process helps to identify individual preferences for emergency care and support informed decision-making in a person-centred way that considers individual need, including any inequalities or barriers to care;
- Our Spiritual Care and Person-Centred Care colleagues continue to provide tailored support and assistance to meet individual needs;
- NHS Forth Valley receives very positive Care Opinion reviews in relation to palliative care, praising staff for being kind and professional.

Next Steps

- Liaise with colleagues to identify themes in relation to barriers and inequalities experience by palliative patients to make further improvements.

Our 2021 - 2024 Equality Objectives

Progress Update

Objective Four

To prevent, treat and improve access to mental health services for all people, with a specific focus on barriers experienced by ethnic communities, young transgender people, and those with a learning disability.

As a Service

- We provide information to those accessing services for the first time in their own language, providing an Interpreter to relay the process and advice on where to get support, including accessing urgent mental health support;
- We liaise with a Resettlement Officers locally to ensure appropriate health information is provided in the appropriate language;
- We can provide statistical data regarding communities accessing mental health services who are utilising interpretation services;
- Again, we provide 1:1 support for any service user or staff member who requires additional support and will be considerate of any additional barriers or challenges resulting from a protected characteristic and help/signpost accordingly.

As an Organisation

- Again, there are a lot of examples of best practice and innovation but some to highlight include:
 - Support is available for any Interpreters who require a debrief or informal chat following complex or challenging appointments;
 - Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) are recruiting to their Young People and Parent/Carer participation groups to involve service users in decisions regarding service design and delivery.

Next Steps

- Liaise with lived experience individuals to learn more about any potential barriers or challenges and how we can work to address them.

Our 2021 - 2024 Equality Objectives Progress Update

Objective Five

People accessing sexual health services will not experience inequalities, with a specific focus on understanding and removing barriers experienced by those in protected characteristic groups.

As a Service

- Our process for booking interpretation takes consideration of cultural sensitivities or potential conflicts of interest within communities and ensures any requests for interpretation are appropriate.

As an Organisation

- Our Sexual Health Service and Women and Children's Services have a dual handset to utilise for interpretation services to allow the service user to have increased confidentiality, privacy and engagement;
- Our Sexual Health Service also offers a dedicated Young Persons' Service with drop-ins and LGBTI+ support.

Next Steps

- We will continue to liaise with colleagues and service users to provide support in addressing inequalities and access issues, including cultural sensitivities.

Our 2021 - 2024 Equality Objectives Progress Update

Objective Six

All staff, experience a caring and listening work environment and work environment which is free from discrimination, specific focus will be given to monitoring the experiences of those from protected characteristic groups.

As a Service

- We continue to offer 1:1 support for all staff and provide guidance in relation to reasonable adjustments and Access to Work input;
- We offer wellbeing support, guidance and signposting and provide awareness sessions to outline the support available for individuals and teams;
- We offer awareness training for staff members and tailor this to the needs of individual teams or services.

As an Organisation

- There are lots of brilliant initiatives, projects and pieces of work that happen on a daily basis to support this objective, however some highlights include: the Culture Change and Compassionate Leadership Programme, International Recruitment Programme Culture Sessions, Peer Support and Keepwell outreach clinics for staff.

Next Steps

- Continuing with our planned creation and support of Staff Networks;
- Promoting the support available for staff across the organisation;
- Linking with the Culture Change and Compassionate Leadership Programme;
- Launching our new service name: Equality, Inclusion and Wellbeing Service and holding awareness sessions across the organisation.

Our 2021 - 2024 Equality Objectives Progress Update

Objective Seven

Robust data on the characteristics of the people in Forth Valley (including equality and socio-economic disadvantage data) will be collected.

As a Service

- In line with NHS Forth Valley GDPR and Information Governance policy, we hold only essential information for our service users that enables us to add system alerts and gather trends in geographical areas and alter service provision accordingly;
- We collect anonymous feedback via staff surveys and analytics for our staff wellbeing support media sources to help inform the work we do by identifying needs and trends. For example, an increase in those seeking support for financial wellbeing allows us to plan extra sessions and support materials.

As an Organisation

- Colleagues have been working hard at making improvements to our data collection methods and storage, including both staff data and patient data.

Next Steps

- We acknowledge that there is still work to be done and will be working closely with colleagues going forward to support improvement work in relation to data collection.

Our 2021 - 2024 Equality Objectives Progress Update

Objective Eight

All staff will have a better knowledge of Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) processes and the importance of them in relating to the nine protected characteristics groups and in giving due consideration to areas of disadvantage as set out by the Fairer Scotland Duty.

As a Service

- We are at the final stages of our EQIA improvement work and aim to have an updated process in place by May 2024 that will ease access, aid reporting and streamline the process for staff.

As an Organisation

- Colleagues continue to seek advice, support and guidance in relation to Equality Act (2010) protected characteristics to help promote inclusion.

Next Steps

- We are liaising with colleagues both locally and nationally to ensure our EQIA process is as robust, efficient and user-friendly as it can be and are keen to learn from others and share our own learning also;
- We will be launching our new EQIA process later this year and will organise accompanying training and education sessions for staff;
- We are working with colleagues from Women and Children's to consider how we implement the Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment into our EQIA process.

Over 400 individuals engaged directly with us in relation to our new Equality Objectives. Whilst this number is only a very small proportion of our local Forth Valley community, we were grateful for all those who took the time to get involved and their input has been invaluable in helping to shape our new Equality Objectives. In addition to the learning gained from participants, we also continue to reflect upon our engagement approach to enable us to continually adapt this to increase reach and improve our volume of engagement. The full analysis of the public survey can be viewed in appendix 1, however the main themes identified from all of our engagement methods were:

- Accessibility Barriers - mainly digital and physical
- Awareness and Training - for staff
- Discrimination - based on protected characteristics
- LGBTQ+ Inequalities
- Dementia Awareness and Carers Support
- Racism, including Discrimination and Microaggressions
- Communication - barriers, accessibility and methods
- Flexibility and Support - in relation to appointments and also staff experience

Of all the feedback received, very few comments did not embody our organisational vision and values. There were however six responses who raised concerns regarding the following areas:

- gender identification and use of terminology;
- mistrust across protected characteristics;
- misunderstanding of importance of equity and equality across health provisions;
- a challenge to the financial resources allocated to EDI work.

We are grateful for all feedback as this will assist in future learning. Comments such as those detailed above, illustrate the continued need for ongoing education and awareness within the scope of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

Equality Objectives 2024 - 2025

Our new April 2024 to April 2025 Equality Objectives have been developed in response to the feedback we received, in addition to the learning from our evaluation of our previous April 2021 to March 2024 objectives. Whilst we acknowledge that the objectives below do not cover all areas of equality, diversity and inclusion, we believe that they capture a varied and appropriate range of key issues where we aim to make significant improvements over the coming year. You will notice that we have also reduced the number of objectives we are outlining this time around. This is to ensure we can devote sufficient resources and focus to each, whilst continuing the next step work of our previous objectives, such as the completion of our EQIA improvement plan and the ongoing workstreams associated with the Women's Health Plan.

Our new Equality Objectives for April 2024 to April 2025 are:

Objective One - Improving Accessibility

To make our services, premises and resources more accessible, removing barriers and considering potential challenges.

Objective Two - Awareness, Communication and Engagement

To promote the work happening across the organisation to support equality and diversity and review the way in which we communicate and engage with our local communities.

Objective Three - Training and Education

To review current training, identifying gaps and promoting training and education that promotes inclusion and challenges inequalities.

Objective Four - Supporting our Workforce

To continue to review our support offers for staff to improve the working environment, promoting inclusion, compassion and equity.

Alternative Formats

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Call: 01324 590886



Text: 07990690605




Email: FV.disabilitydepartment@nhs.scot

APPENDIX

ENGAGEMENT SURVEY RESULTS

For a full copy of our Engagement Survey results or particular data or discussion points, please email fv.disabilitydepartment@nhs.scot with your preferred format and we will get this to you as soon as possible.

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