

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and Health Inequalities Strategic Plan

2025 – 2028

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Executive summary

I am pleased to present our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) and Health Inequalities (HI) Strategic Plan for 2025 to 2028.

This ambitious plan will support the culture of our organisation for the next three years, building a more inclusive, equitable and supportive environment for our workforce and local people.

Our plan sets out how we will create a sense of belonging for all, a place where everyone - regardless of background, identity or differences – feels valued, respected and supported.

The plan outlines how we will achieve this through four strategic objectives:

1. Inclusive and Compassionate Leadership – Making inclusion central to leadership at all levels to drive equitable outcomes.
2. Represented and Supported Workforce – Ensuring all staff feel empowered, respected and supported.
3. Transformative Care – Delivering personalised, accessible care that meets the diverse needs of our population and addresses current disparities in access, experience and outcomes.
4. Giving everyone a voice – Encouraging relevant and timely engagement and feedback to drive decision making.

Through a phased approach we will focus on building inclusion, scaling innovation, embedding our efforts and sustaining change.

We will build on the strong foundations we have created in the past four years by developing sustainable staff-led initiatives to enhance the diversity of voices heard at every level of the organisation. Initiatives include new leadership behaviours, staff networks, EDI champions, listening events and training and mentoring opportunities.

We will also harness our role as an anchor institution for local communities, embracing the unique opportunity we have as a large employer and healthcare provider to make healthcare

more equally accessible and tackle the unfair inequalities which exist within the Swindon population.

By working in partnership with local people we will ensure that our organisation is truly representative of the communities we serve and that we understand the issues which affect the health, wellbeing and life chances of so many.

I hope that through reading our plan you will learn more about our commitment to set ourselves a new standard which places inclusion and equity at the heart of every decision we make and everything we do.

The plan will be the blueprint for a significant cultural shift, and we look forward to your support, engagement and allyship as we continue the next phase of our journey.

Jon Westbrook

Interim Managing Director



Introduction

Beyond Boundaries

Welcome to the next chapter of our journey – a bold, innovative, and ambitious plan that will shape our future from 2025 to 2028.

We are keen to lead the way in creating a safe, supportive and inclusive workplace and healthcare experience. This means addressing longstanding inequalities that our teams of staff, volunteers and patients experience and being committed to transforming the way we work, care, and lead.

Our strategic plan will build on the progress we have made over the past five years and is aligned with the Trust's new strategic direction, where EDI and HI are highlighted as an important part of delivering outstanding care.

Our success will rely on removing the boundaries that limit our practice, our mindsets and the way we engage with our staff and population, by leveraging innovative practices and talent from across the workforce.

We will build on our progress since our previous EDI Strategy (2020-2024) and ensure our plan responds to local needs set out in the Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire Integrated Care Board's People Plan and Leading for Inclusion Strategy. We will also be working alongside the South West regional priorities, the NHS England EDI Improvement Plan and the voices of our patients and local population.

Resetting to transform

To achieve meaningful progress, we aim to build a culture of belonging, and embed the Trust's STAR values – Service, Teamwork, Ambition, and Respect – in everything we do.

This approach strengthens our commitment to creating an inclusive environment where voices are heard and everyone feels valued. By focusing on inclusion and belonging, we will ensure that individuals across our workforce and community can thrive, contribute and achieve their full potential.

Diversity

Diversity represents the richness of differences among people, whether in background, identity, perspective or experience. The NHS is inherently diverse, reflecting the communities we serve and the teams and volunteers we work alongside.

Acknowledging the unique lived experiences of every individual, we are committed to listening, learning and taking meaningful action to celebrate and embrace diversity.

Equality

Equality is our ultimate goal – a state where every individual has access to the same opportunities, experiences and outcomes. However, we recognise that equality cannot be achieved without equity.

Equity

Equity is how we address the unique disadvantages that individuals and communities face, ensuring that everyone has what they need to access the same opportunities. Equity requires us to tailor our support, resources and interventions to meet diverse needs, recognising that treating everyone the same is not always fair. By taking a people-focused approach, we ensure that we prioritise fairness, compassion and respect for every individual.

Inclusion

Inclusion is the intentional effort to create an environment where everyone feels they belong. This means taking targeted steps to reach all members of our local communities, with a particular focus on supporting people disproportionately affected by health inequalities.

Our new strategic plan is a movement which centres around harnessing the power of our diverse workforce, creating a workplace where every voice matters, and people can be their authentic selves.

Together, we will push the boundaries of what is possible, setting a new standard for EDI and HI.

Our people and communities

We work with and serve a diverse community of people from all walks of life. Our Trust employs over 5,000 staff who are supported by over 400 volunteers. We are proud to be an Inclusive Employer, a Disability Confident Employer and a Veteran Aware organisation, having achieved the Pride In Veterans Standard.

We serve a population extending beyond Swindon, to villages in Wiltshire, Berkshire and Gloucestershire and in 2023/24 we had over one million patient contacts. We take pride in our role as an anchor institution for Swindon, are invested in the town's economic and environmental success and are focused on addressing health inequalities that impact the most vulnerable people in our community.

We are working to address disparities in healthcare provision and work closely with partner organisations focusing on the wider determinants of health including housing, green spaces, healthy foods, education and employment.

We want to involve patients and local people in shaping local healthcare and will continue to work with staff, partner organisations and different local communities to ensure we are listening to people who are representative of our population when making improvements to the services we provide.



Our Integrated Care System

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

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

BSW Integrated Care Strategy vision

Collectively, we take responsibility for improving the health and wellbeing of local people and our workforce, tackling health inequalities including access, experience and outcomes. We recognise that a supported workforce leads to better patient care and that a diverse workforce is essential to fully understanding the needs of our population.

As a system, we are currently delivering against the BSW Integrated Care Strategy, our ‘Joint Forward Plan’, which sets out how we collectively propose to exercise our functions in the next five years, and the BSW Inequalities Strategy which provides a framework for cross-system activity to reduce health inequalities. The BSW Inequalities Strategy provides the foundation for our shared understanding of health inequalities, bringing together local data and intelligence and focusing on our CORE20PLUS5 population.

In addition, we work closely with NHS England and have agreed a set of priorities to improve workforce inclusion, with a commitment to create a culture where people feel valued, heard and able to do their best work. Our priorities also include developing compassionate and inclusive leaders, recruiting, developing and retaining a diverse workforce and improving the experience of staff with protected characteristics.

We are aligning our priorities to the South West Regional Leadership for Inclusion Strategy, which sets out three strategic aims – leadership development and accountability, championing innovation and aligning culture and policy reform, and developing a regional accountability framework that all partners subscribe to.

Improving performance

We use several NHS frameworks to measure progress against key metrics, including:

- The Gender Pay Gap Report
- Equality Delivery System (a self-evaluation tool)
- The Workforce Disability Equality Standard and Workforce Race Equality Standard
- Sexual Orientation Monitoring Information Standard
- Accessible Information Standard
- NHS England statement on health inequalities
- NHS Core 20 plus 5 framework

Our progress against these measures informs our plans each year and demonstrates how we are meeting our commitments as set out in the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty.

National papers including The state of the national health service (Lord Darzi) 2024 report, the NHS People Plan and People Promise and The future of NHS human resources and organisational development report also help shape our strategic plans.

We are focused on improving how we measure our performance on issues such as pay gap reporting, including the ethnicity and disability pay gap and improving the quality of patient data so we have a better understanding of health inequalities in our local population.

Governance

In line with our Improving Together Strategic Deployment Framework, we select key indicators to support improvement against our overall Trust strategy. For 2025/26 we have selected metrics under the 'Better Together' strategic pillar related to equity of access for our population and under the 'Valued Teams' strategic pillar one related to staff inclusion. This means they are incorporated into our monthly Integrated Performance Report (IPR) for Board and form part of the routine performance management structure in the Trust.

Oversight and assurance at a more granular level will be maintained through the Inclusion and Health Inequalities Subcommittee and the People and Culture Committee, ensuring that progress remains on track and aligned with the Trust's broader strategic objectives.

Our vision

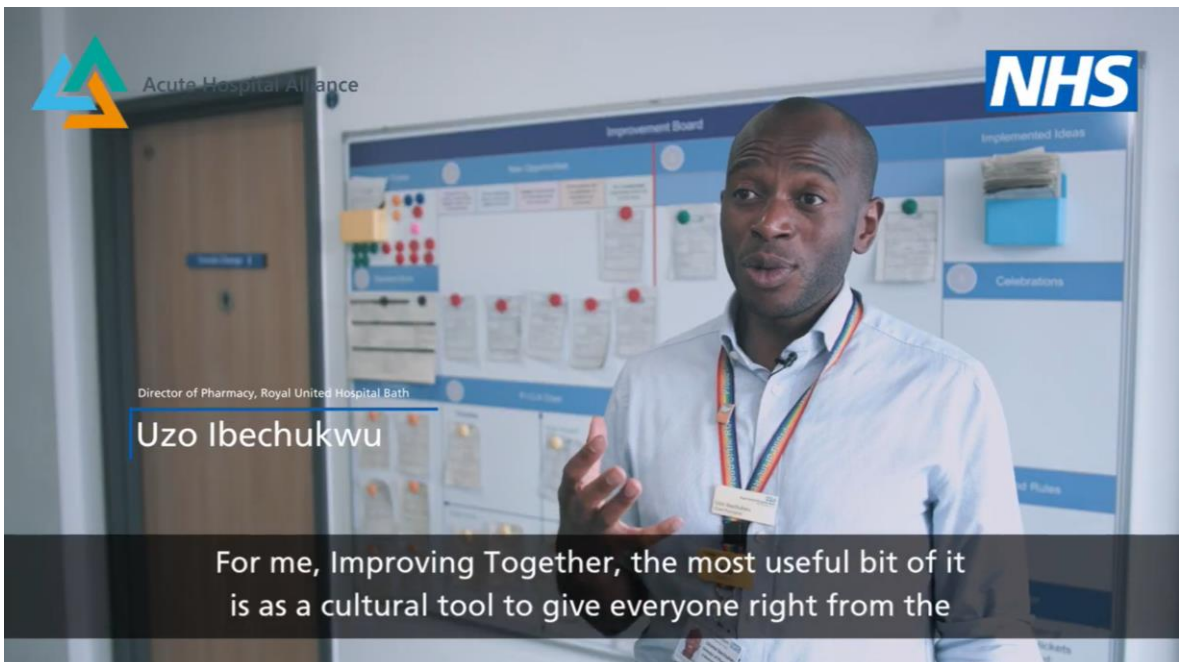
Leading and Improving Together

Our vision is simple – to be a renowned leader in healthcare, where everyone feels valued, heard and empowered.

We recognise that structural inequalities not only hold us back but prevent us from reaching our full potential. Removing barriers to equitable access, experience and outcomes is a challenge that we must tackle, and success is only possible when our stakeholders – our board, leaders, staff, volunteers, system partners, patients and local population – work together to make change happen.

As part of our commitment to continuous improvement, we will develop how we measure the effectiveness of the EDI/HI education and development opportunities that we offer to staff. We will ensure that these programmes are impactful and contribute to improvements which can be clearly measured.

We will use our Trust-wide approach to improvement – Improving Together – to help us to deliver equalities work which provides value for money and which is sustainable.



Watch the video: [How we're all Improving Together](#)

Strategic objectives

Ambition in action

Our EDI and HI strategic objectives are the foundation of our plan and are designed to turn our vision into reality. Each objective is a call to action, pushing us to be bolder and to make a lasting impact.

We have listened to our staff and volunteers through a range of engagement exercises, with feedback showing our strategic objectives set in 2020-2024 should remain as we are making good progress.

We must now maintain momentum and focus, as we continue to work towards the below EDI and HI objectives.

	1	2	3	4
Objective	Inclusive and compassionate leadership	Represented and supported workforce	Transformative care	Giving everyone a voice
Goal	Redefine leadership at every level, making inclusion an imperative	Create a workforce where everyone is celebrated and can work and live well	Transform healthcare making it personalised, accessible and equitable for all	Ensure that every voice is heard and has a role in driving our decision-making processes
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Immersive training Improve support for managers Shared accountability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workforce engagement and education Address workforce inequalities 	Improve data and partnerships with system and local people to address health disparities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve speaking up and listening processes Engagement with stakeholders
Impact	Leadership reflects and champions equity and fosters a culture of continuous improvement	A diverse and inclusive workforce, with representation across all levels, leading to higher satisfaction, retention and performance	A healthcare system that meets and anticipates population needs, leading to improved patient outcomes and satisfaction	A culture of co-creation and empowerment, where feedback is welcomed and seen as essential to our growth and success

Our priorities

2025 – 2028

Over the next three years we will take bold steps to create a more inclusive, equitable and high-performing organisation. Guided by our strategic objectives, we will focus on embedding inclusion and health equity across all aspects of our work.

In 2024/25 and 2025/26 we will establish a strong foundation by enhancing data quality, implementing key actions from the NHS EDI Improvement Plan and increasing engagement with both our workforce and the communities we serve. We will embed initiatives like our allyship programme, enabling individuals to actively champion inclusion in their daily interactions.

In 2026/27 we will scale innovation, leveraging emerging technologies like AI-driven tools to deliver impactful EDI training and better data analysis. By expanding our capacity through system partnerships and targeted development programmes, we aim to position the Trust as a leader in inclusive practices. We will focus on embedding accountability at all levels of the Trust and begin the process of integrating EDI and HI into performance management processes. We also plan to host our second system-wide EDI conference to share insights and celebrate progress.

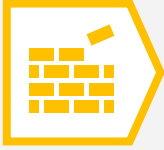
In 2028/29 we will sustain and celebrate our achievements by conducting a comprehensive evaluation of the Strategic Plan, using data-driven insights to refine our approach and ensure long-term success. By hosting events to recognize the contributions of staff, champions and partners, we will reinforce our shared commitment to transform healthcare and ensure equity for all.

This three-year journey will set a new standard for equality, diversity and inclusion and health equity, creating a legacy of lasting change for our workforce and the communities we proudly serve.

A four-step roadmap has been shared on the next page which summarises our priorities. A detailed action plan will be produced annually accompanied by the EDI and HI Annual Report and published on the Trust website.

Strategic framework

Roadmap 2025 – 2028



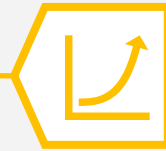
Step 1: Building inclusion

- Improve data quality
- Embed allyship
- Increased engagement with patients and workforce
- Deliver against NHS EDI Improvement Plan, BSW HI Plan and NHSE SW Plans



Step 3: Embedding and expanding

- Integrate EDI/HI into performance management processes building accountability at every level
- Improved system learning and second EDI conference



Step 2: Scaling innovation

- Pilot innovative EDI programmes, leveraging AI
- Expand EDI/HI related training
- Increase capacity through system partnerships and allyship



Step 4: Sustaining and celebrating

- Conduct evaluation of Strategic Plan, using data driven insights to refine approach and ensure long term success
- Celebrate achievements

Delivering the future together

Engagement and communication

To bring this strategy to life, we need the full engagement of our staff and community. We will communicate our progress through dynamic channels – including interactive webinars, established corporate communications channels for staff, the EDI newsletter, staff networks, social media and through governance channels, ensuring everyone is informed, involved and empowered.

The future starts now

By drawing on best practice, experience and the ingenuity of local people, we will drive change. We will take steps towards harnessing talent, technology and insights, to create a Trust where everyone has the potential to thrive and live well, every voice is heard, and every life is valued. This includes working more closely with our system partners, particularly our BSW hospitals group partners – Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust and Salisbury NHS Foundation Trust – and the NHS England strategic leadership and inclusion groups in the South West region. We will also continue to build relationships with local people and the groups that represent our local communities.

Improving Together, our Trust-wide approach to continuous improvement, is at the heart of this work, supporting teams to make measurable progress against key metrics relating to workforce and the patient experience.

If you would like to learn more about any of the EDI or HI work taking place across the Trust or local and regional healthcare system, or would like to get involved, please contact

gwh.inclusion@nhs.net.

