

Interim Equality Outcomes and Mainstreaming Plan 2025-2029



We are committed to making health and care accessible by eliminating discrimination, promoting inclusion and ensuring a Human Rights based approach underpins all our functions and services.



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1. Introduction

At NHS Fife, we serve a vibrant community of around 370,000 people with the dedication of our 8,500-strong workforce. Our comprehensive healthcare services span acute hospitals, community settings, and primary care across Fife.

This document outlines NHS Fife's interim Equality Outcomes and Mainstreaming Plan for 2025–2029. As a public sector organisation, we remain committed to complying fully with equality legislation, including the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), and transparently reporting our equality progress through regular updates.

In light of the ongoing employment tribunal, this interim plan sets out strategic priorities that will guide our equality and inclusion work over the coming months. It is anticipated that the tribunal outcome and associated recommendations will inform a comprehensive review and update of this plan, which NHS Fife will publish in autumn 2025.

We remain committed to maintaining and strengthening our approach to equality, diversity, and inclusion. This interim plan demonstrates our continued commitment and ensures we uphold our legal and moral obligations towards staff, patients, and the communities we serve.

2. NHS Fife's Mainstreaming Update

2.1 About NHS Fife

NHS Fife is dedicated to meeting the health needs of approximately 370,000 residents in Fife to deliver safe, accessible, and high-quality health and care services.

NHS Fife's diverse range of facilities includes two main hospital sites and eight community hospitals. These facilities are integral to our healthcare service and are supported by a robust primary care network including GPs, dentists, opticians, and pharmacies.

For more detailed information, please visit NHS Fife's website [here](#).

2.2 Leadership and Governance

2.2.1 The Board

The NHS Fife Board comprises of executive and non-executive members. It is responsible for strategic leadership, governance and ensuring the delivery of high-quality health services across Fife. Its role is to ensure patient-centred care, equity and efficiency within NHS Fife. The role of the Board is specifically to:

1. Improve and protect the health of local people
2. Improve health services for local people
3. Focus clearly on health outcomes and people's experience of their local health system
4. Promote integrated health and community planning by working closely with other local organisations
5. Provide a single focus of accountability for the performance of the local NHS system.

The NHS Fife board is accountable to the Scottish Government through the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care.

2.3 Equality Impact Assessments

NHS Fife updated the Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) Stage 1 template in July 2024 to incorporate a brief United Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment (CRWIA), in accordance with the introduction of the new legislation.

Through the improvements made in 2022 to the EQIA process, we have seen an increase in the number of EQIAs published. 10 EQIAs were published in the 2021-2022 period, and to there have been 20 published between 2023-2024. This is a 100% increase in EQIA publication since 2021-2022. All published EQIAs can be found on the NHS Fife website [here](#).

We continue to monitor and audit our EQIA process and seek to make regular updates and improvements as and when they are required.

2.4 Anti-Racism Plan

As part of our ongoing commitment to advancing equality and eliminating racial and ethnic discrimination, NHS Fife is in the early stages of developing an Anti-Racism Plan, with work set to be initiated in 2025. This initiative, requested by the Scottish Government and required of all health boards, will build on our existing work and aims to drive significant, organisation-wide, and systemic improvements in both our services for patients and our support for our workforce. We have already begun laying the groundwork for this essential plan, engaging with stakeholders and experts to ensure its impact is far-reaching and effective. Through this plan, we are making a concerted effort to address and dismantle barriers, with a strong focus on creating a more inclusive and equitable environment for all.

2.5 Workforce Update

NHS Fife remains committed to advancing workforce equality, diversity, and inclusion, in line with NHS Scotland's Staff Governance Standards and the increased national focus on supporting ethnic minority staff groups, particularly in response to the lessons learned during the pandemic.

Our commitment to supporting international recruits has been recognised with the International Recruitment Pastoral Care Quality Award, presented by the Scottish Government in April 2024. This award reflects the high-quality pastoral care provided to our internationally recruited nurses and radiographers and reinforces our dedication to fostering an inclusive and supportive working environment.

To further enhance our approach, we are strengthening our workforce data collection on protected characteristics. This will improve the quality of published workforce data, ensuring continued compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty and the Disability Confident initiative.

NHS Fife is also focused on fostering an open and supportive culture, where staff feel empowered to raise concerns. To support this, a Speak Up/Whistleblowing Coordinator was appointed in September 2024, reinforcing our commitment to transparency, learning, and continuous improvement. Encouraging staff to speak up is central to improving experiences for both colleagues and patients.

Aligned with our Anchor Institution ambitions, we have strengthened our employability strategy through the appointment of an Employability Lead and Officer in 2024. This reflects our commitment to expanding employment opportunities, increasing workforce diversity, and engaging with priority groups, including those from areas of multiple deprivation within Fife. By enhancing accessibility and career pathway support, NHS Fife aims to attract and develop talent from local communities.

2.5.1 Staff Networks

NHS Fife LGBT+ Network:

NHS Fife recognises the vital role that staff networks play in fostering an inclusive, supportive, and equitable workplace. These networks provide a platform for staff to connect, share experiences, and influence positive change across the organisation.

Building on the success of the LGBT+ Network and the Neurodiversity Staff Network, NHS Fife is committed to strengthening and expanding its Diverse Ethnicity Network (DEN) to ensure that ethnically diverse staff have a dedicated forum for engagement, advocacy, and professional development. The DEN will play a key role in supporting NHS Fife's ongoing work to address racial inequalities and promote a culture of anti-racism.

Additionally, NHS Fife acknowledges the importance of learning from the ongoing employment tribunal. We are fully committed to reflecting on its findings, implementing any recommendations, and ensuring that staff networks are supported in addressing issues of equality, inclusion, and workplace culture. The tribunal's outcome will inform the further development of our staff networks, ensuring they are equipped to support staff, promote meaningful change, and drive continuous improvement in equality and human rights.

As part of this commitment, NHS Fife will:

- Engage with staff networks following the tribunal outcome to ensure recommendations are fully understood and addressed.
- Provide additional support and resources to networks to help implement best practices in inclusion, representation, and workplace culture.
- Ensure leadership accountability, with senior management engaging directly with staff networks to action meaningful change.

NHS Fife remains dedicated to creating an open, inclusive, and supportive environment where all staff feel valued, heard, and empowered to contribute to a diverse and equitable workplace.

Fife Neurodiversity Staff Network:

The inaugural Neurodiversity Natters meeting, held on 2 December 2024, marked a significant milestone. This pioneering event was open to all members of the staff including those from the voluntary sector, independent sector and Fife Council. With over 50 attendees, the meeting provided a dynamic platform for exploring key aspects of neurodiversity in the workplace and fostering an open dialogue about the future direction of the network.

The event set the stage for continued collaboration, with participants eager to shape the network's growth and impact in promoting a more inclusive and neurodiversity-friendly working environment.

Through the experiences of developing these networks and efforts to set up a Diverse Ethnicity Network, we have realised the invaluable addition these make to the organisation. Therefore, it has been decided that a specific equality outcome will be set relating to strengthening and enhancing the NHS Fife equality staff networks.

2.5.2 Young People

We have chosen to prioritise efforts to attract young people into employment with NHS Fife.

One example of our initiatives is the EMERGE programme, a collaboration between NHS Fife, Fife College, and National Education Scotland. This program targets school pupils aged 14-16 from areas of deprivation who are interested in a career with NHS Fife. Participants undertake a 12-month qualification through Fife College, which includes a placement within NHS Fife and related site visits.

The objectives of the programme are:

- To offer comprehensive and practical exposure to various healthcare roles and functions.
- To support personal and professional growth through mentorship and hands-on experience.
- To enable participants to achieve an academic or vocational qualification in a health and care-related subject.
- To prepare the next generation with real-world employment experience.

The programme commenced in August 2024 with an initial uptake of five pupils, and further engagement is ongoing. NHS Fife and HSCP will offer work placements between January and May 2025.

Additionally, NHS Fife has partnered with Motivation, Commitment and Resilience (MCR) Pathways, a high school mentoring and talent development program that supports over 3,000 care-experienced and other vulnerable young people across Scotland. This programme helps them realise their full potential through education. Currently active in four high schools across Fife, MCR Pathways is seeking mentors to work with students from the 3rd year upwards for one hour per week throughout the academic year.

We currently have six mentors within NHS Fife, with an additional ten expressing interest in becoming mentors for the 2024/2025 academic year.

We are also renewing our commitment to increasing the number of modern apprenticeship opportunities across various job families within NHS Fife. These apprenticeships provide an alternative to further or higher education by offering participants the chance to work, learn, and earn while obtaining a recognised qualification.

2.5.3 Staff Wellbeing

At NHS Fife, we are dedicated to supporting our employees' well-being, providing appropriate assistance when they are unwell, and fostering a culture of kindness where colleagues care for one another.

We proudly held the Healthy Working Lives Gold Award from 2016 until its cessation in 2022. Building on this legacy, we launched our new Staff Care programme in November 2024. This initiative is complemented by the Staff Health and Wellbeing Framework and Action Plan, which align with the Four Pillars of Wellbeing. Each area of wellbeing is supported by:

- Workplace policies, processes, and guidance
- Internal wellbeing initiatives
- Resources available to employees in need
- Communications on wellbeing and how to access support

Key resources and services currently available to support our employees include:

- Peer Support
- Spiritual Care – Staff Listening Service
- Occupational Health
- Staff Psychology Support

Additionally, registered health professionals have access to the National service PROMiS.

Our Occupational Health services include:

- Direct access to Counselling
- Direct access to Physiotherapy
- Occupational Therapy – specialist support, adjustments, redeployment, etc.
- Occupational Health Occupational Therapist
- Occupational Health Mental Health Nursing

For full details on how NHS Fife is supporting staff wellbeing, please refer to the NHS Fife [Staff Health and Wellbeing Framework for 2023 to 2025](#).

2.5.4 Equality Profiling

NHS Fife will publish data regarding equality profiling, including the gender, disability and ethnicity pay gap statements in their end of year report which will be published on the NHS Fife [website](#) after April 2025.

2.5.5 Staff Training

In autumn 2024, the NHS Fife corporate induction equalities module was updated to include current equality topics and new duties, such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Throughout 2025, we will review additional equality-related modules and mandatory training requirements to ensure they remain relevant and comprehensive.

Individual services and departments also frequently undertake additional and targeted training sessions that relate to relevant and topical equality aspects in addition to the listed online modules.

2.5.6 Hate Reporting

Following the NHS Fife Diverse Ethnicity staff survey, we have enhanced our efforts to encourage the reporting of incidents related to Protected Characteristics.

There has been a significant increase in overall incident reporting in the last 2-year period compared with the previous (2020-2022) period. It is crucial to determine whether this change reflects a shift in the actual occurrence of incidents or are due to variations in reporting practices.

3. Interim Equality Outcomes 2025–2029

As part of our ongoing commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion, we are introducing this interim set of equality outcomes. This plan reflects our dedication to addressing key areas of inequality and driving meaningful change across NHS Fife. We recognise that the outcome of the ongoing tribunal may inform future priorities, and we are committed to reviewing and updating this plan in autumn 2025 to ensure it fully aligns with any recommendations.

3.1 Racially Conscious Maternity and Neonatal Care:

Ensure that all individuals, regardless of racial or ethnic background, receive equitable maternity and neonatal care services that meet their cultural and health needs

OUR AIM	HOW WE'RE TAKING ACTION	WHAT'S NEXT?
Ensure equitable maternity and neonatal care services that meet cultural and health needs for all racial and ethnic groups.	Conduct patient experience and satisfaction surveys to assess accessibility, cultural competence, and care experiences across different ethnic groups.	Analyse survey results and develop targeted actions to address identified disparities.
Identify and address racial disparities in maternity and neonatal health outcomes.	Analyse health outcome data and service usage records, identifying trends and disparities in outcomes for different racial and ethnic groups.	Develop reports highlighting disparities and implement targeted interventions to improve equity in care.
Provide race-conscious and culturally sensitive training for staff.	Deliver training on racial disparities in maternal and neonatal health, improving staff awareness and confidence in providing culturally competent care.	Continue monitoring training completion rates and evaluate effectiveness in improving patient care experiences.
Improve accessibility and use of interpreting services in maternity and neonatal care.	Increase availability of interpreters and promoted the use of interpreting services to enhance patient communication.	Track interpreter usage statistics and address any gaps in service provision.
Ensure policies and procedures are inclusive and responsive to diverse racial and ethnic needs.	Review existing policies and procedures to assess inclusivity and responsiveness.	Implement policy updates to embed cultural considerations into maternity and neonatal care pathways.

3.2 United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child – Article 12

To promote initiatives that facilitate the meaningful participation of all children and young people, including marginalised groups, in matters that affect their lives, fostering an inclusive environment.

OUR AIM	HOW WE'RE TAKING ACTION	WHAT'S NEXT?
Ensure children and young people, including marginalised groups, can meaningfully participate in decisions affecting their lives.	Promote the use of Care Opinion Bear to increase engagement and feedback from young people.	Monitor engagement levels and explore additional ways to encourage participation from diverse groups.
Develop a more child-friendly complaints process.	Create an accessible and adaptable complaints procedure tailored to the needs of children and young people.	Evaluate uptake and refine the process to ensure it is effective and widely used.
Improve informed consent processes for children and young people in media use.	Develop a clear, well-documented procedure for obtaining consent for media use involving children and young people.	Review and refine consent procedures based on feedback to ensure they are robust and child friendly.
Embed children's rights into decision-making processes.	Expand the use of Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessments (CRWIA) within the Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) process.	Track and increase the number of CRWIAs completed, ensuring they are fully embedded in decision-making.
Strengthen engagement with children and young people in health and social care.	Review the FHSCP Children and Young People's Participation and Engagement (P&E) Framework to align with best practices.	Implement and promote the updated framework, ensuring active youth participation.
Explore modern, youth-friendly communication methods to improve engagement.	Investigate the potential use of digital platforms (e.g., BlueSky, TikTok) to reach young people.	Develop and test engagement campaigns using these platforms, measuring their effectiveness.

3.3 Workforce

Outcome 1: To strengthen and enhance NHS Fife's workforce diversity by establishing inclusive staff equality networks by 2029, ensuring that all staff members feel represented, supported, and empowered to contribute to a culture of equality and inclusion.

OUR AIM	HOW WE'RE TAKING ACTION	WHAT'S NEXT?
Establish and strengthen inclusive staff equality networks to ensure all staff feel represented, supported, and empowered.	Conduct a staff engagement needs analysis to determine which networks are most needed.	Finalise and launch new staff networks, ensuring they are inclusive, well-supported, and sustainable
Ensure staff networks have clear governance and strategic direction.	Developed Terms of Reference for staff networks to define their purpose, scope, and goals.	Support networks in implementing their governance structures, ensuring alignment with NHS Fife's wider equality objectives.
Improve awareness and engagement with staff networks.	Create communications materials (posters, digital content, email newsletters) to raise awareness of networks and encourage participation.	Expand outreach and engagement efforts, ensuring staff at all levels and across all roles are aware of and can access networks.
Increase leadership support and visibility within staff networks.	Encourage senior leadership participation in network activities and discussions.	Formalise leadership accountability, ensuring senior staff actively support and champion networks.
Provide training and development opportunities for network members and leaders.	Establish a network leaders' group to support development and capacity-building within networks.	Deliver targeted training sessions for network leaders to enhance their ability to advocate and drive change.
Monitor and evaluate the impact of staff networks on workforce diversity and inclusion.	Integrate staff satisfaction and engagement surveys to assess the effectiveness of networks.	Regularly review network performance, using feedback to refine and strengthen their impact.

Outcome 2: To assess and enhance diversity across the management and leadership of NHS Fife, ensuring this reflects the diversity of our workforce and the communities we serve, by 2029

OUR AIM	HOW WE'RE TAKING ACTION	WHAT'S NEXT?
Ensure that NHS Fife's leadership and management roles reflect the diversity of our workforce and the communities we serve.	Conduct a workforce diversity audit to assess the current representation in leadership and management positions.	Analyse audit findings and use them to inform targeted actions for improving diversity in leadership.
Identify gaps and areas for improvement in leadership diversity.	Carry out benchmarking exercises.	Develop a Diversity Improvement Plan with measurable targets and accountability mechanisms.
Support career progression and leadership opportunities for underrepresented groups.	Explore the development of mentorship and leadership development programmes to support staff from diverse backgrounds.	Design and implement structured mentorship programmes, ensuring equal access to leadership pathways.
Promote inclusive recruitment and selection practices.	Review existing recruitment and promotion processes to identify potential barriers to diverse leadership.	Enhance inclusive recruitment strategies, ensuring all selection processes promote fairness, equity, and opportunity for all.

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Our SMS text service number **07805800005** is available for people who have a hearing or speech impairment.

To find out more about accessible formats contact:

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