

Welsh Ambulance Services University NHS Trust

Strategic Equality Plan Annual Report 2024-2025



GIG
CYMRU
NHS
WALES

Ymddiriedolaeth Brifysgol GIG
Gwasanaethau Ambiwllans Cymru
Welsh Ambulance Services
University NHS Trust

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Introduction

Welcome to Welsh Ambulance Services University NHS Trust Annual Report on our Strategic Equality Plan for 2024-2025.

This report outlines the progress we have made over the past year to achieve the Trust's Strategic Equality Objectives and the steps taken to address the inequity experienced by our staff and service users to help us be more inclusive of all who come into contact with the Trust.

Our Strategic Equality Objectives

- Design Equitable Services
- Lead by Example
- Be an Employer of Choice
- Create Allyship

Growing our People Networks



We have continued to develop our People Networks to offer support to our colleagues with a protected characteristic. Our People Networks are open to all colleagues, including allies. They offer a safe space for colleagues to share their experiences without judgement. Our members also help to attend and promote key events within the workplace and out in our communities to help raise awareness of the challenges that people with a protected characteristic may face in their everyday life.

A snapshot of each of our People Networks can be found on the following pages.

LGBTQ+ People Network

96

Members

This number has remained relatively static, and more work can be done to try and increase membership. The Network is primarily led by the Network Chair.

Bronze
Award

With the support of the Network, the Trust was awarded a Bronze Employer Stonewall Award in May 2024 and has climbed over 100 spaces in the UK Workplace Equality Index to rank 118th out of 246 organisations. The Trust will continue to seek partnerships with organisations who can help us to drive improvements for our LGBTQ+ communities.



Celebrating Pride

During 2024 the Network supported the Trust to attend multiple Pride events across Wales, including Aberystwyth, Swansea, Cardiff and Wrexham. These events provided an opportunity for LGBTQ+ staff and volunteers to celebrate their diversity with pride whilst also engaging with the community to seek feedback about LGBTQ+ experiences and expectations of using our services.

The Network continues to be an active member of the National Ambulance LGBT+ Network which meets quarterly.

Chairs of LGBTQ+ Networks across NHS Wales also met this year to discuss more collaboration on joint initiatives to improve the experiences of LGBTQ+ people.



Rhwydwaith
LGBTQ+
Network



BEAM People Network

Established in July 2024

6 Members

- ❖ Participated in Race Equality Week Five Day Challenge in February 2025.
- ❖ Attended Big Halal Expo in Cardiff in February 2025 which attracted over 3000 attendees.
- ❖ Held first Iftar event in WAST in March 2025 to raise awareness and celebrate Ramadan with Muslim and non-Muslim colleagues.
- ❖ Trust membership established with Race Equality Matters.
- ❖ Regular monthly network meetings.
- ❖ Network members on the interview panel at the Trust's annual graduate paramedic recruitment event to help bring more diversity to the recruitment process.
- ❖ Networking with the National Ambulance Black Minority Ethnic Forum.



Carer Peer Support Network

NETWORK MEMBERSHIP

Network membership grew by **137%** during 2024

Rhwydwaith Gofalwyr

Carers Network

2023

2024



2024 CELEBRATION EVENTS

April 2024 Raising awareness of the Carers Leave Act 2023

June 2024 Carers Network celebrated its 1st anniversary

November 2024 Carer Confident Level 1 Award

NETWORK ACTIVITY

March

WEBINAR

Promoting Carers Rights and the Carers Leave Act 2023

April

CELEBRATION EVENT

Carers Wales, Carers Leave Act celebration in the Senedd

September

PEOPLE NETWORKS

New look page developed on Siren

November

CARERS RIGHTS DAY

Learning session with Carers Wales

BITEZISE LEARNING VIDEOS

- Support at Home
- Introduction to Caring
- Carers Active April Campaign
- Personal Independence Payment (PIP)
- Carers Needs Assessment
- Carers Passport

NETWORK INVITED TO FEEDBACK ON

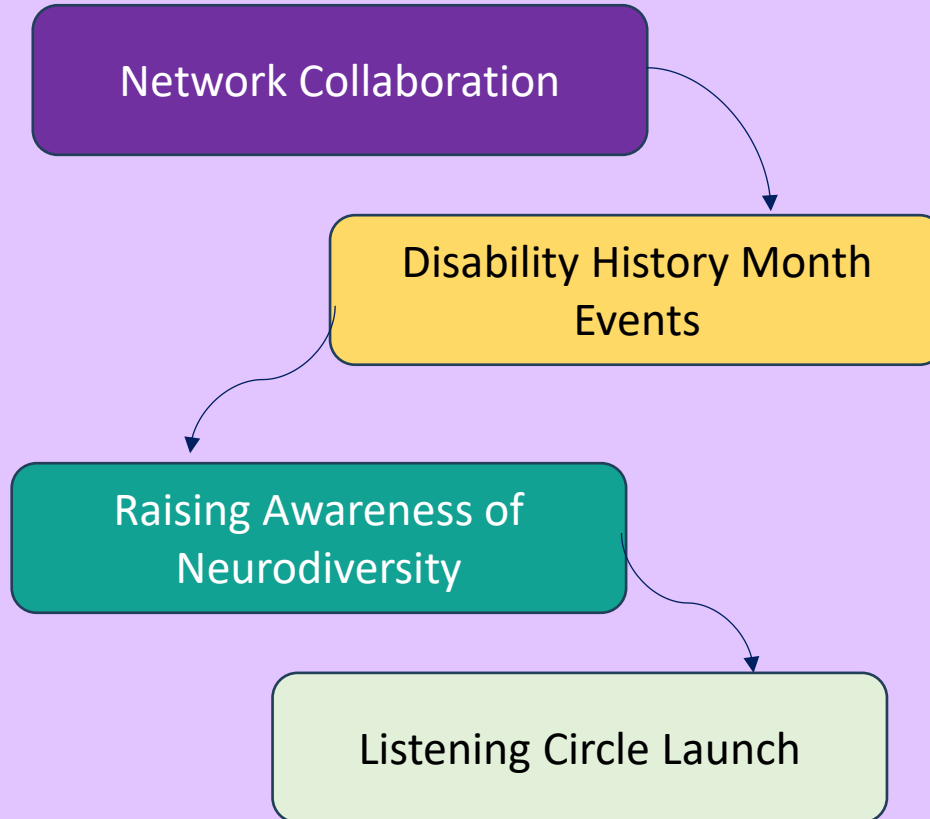
- Draft EQIA Policy
- Track the Act
- Uniform Survey
- Refusal to treat

Purple Space Disability Network



Nothing About Us
Without Us

Network Growth
200%



- Support from Purple Space to explore network identity, objectives and inclusion
- Members agreed branding of the network to promote unity and visibility across the Trust
- Created safe spaces for colleagues to share experiences and concerns
- Focused sessions on neurodiversity lived experiences of colleagues
- Partnership working with Wales Council for Deaf to host Deaf awareness sessions

Women's People Network

Women's
NETWORK

RHWYDWAITH
Menyw♀d

105 Members

New Sub-group established to focus on matters affecting women in the workplace:



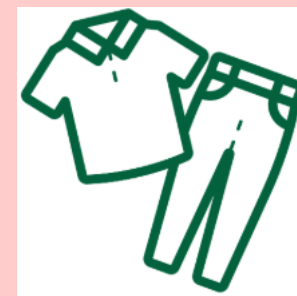
Imposter Syndrome
Career Progression
Baby Loss Awareness

Series of Women's Health Information Sessions delivered throughout the year focussing on:



Menopause
Endometriosis
Vaginal Health

Network Member appointed as the Trust Rep on the **National Uniform User Steering Group** to help drive forward improvements to women's uniforms



WAST Voices Network



2024 –2025

99 WAST VOICES ADVOCATES



WAST VOICES IS AN INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY THAT EMBRACES SURVIVOR LEADERSHIP, INCLUSION AND CULTURAL GROWTH

EVERYONE HAS A VOICE!

THE NETWORK PROVIDES ACCESS TO SAFE LISTENING SPACES, DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES, MENTORING AND GUEST SPEAKER SESSIONS.

BOOK COMPETITION

Increasing understanding of equity, diversity and inclusion

CAMPAIGNS AND CO-PRODUCTION

Raise awareness, engage and drive action

EVENTS

Explore challenging topics, build connections and foster engagement

INFORMATION SHARING

Enhance knowledge to improve decision-making

4

BOOK COMPETITIONS

Engaging over 100 colleagues

8

CAMPAIGNS

Love-bombing, Domestic Violence, Sexual Safety, Ramadan, LGBTQ+

4

EVENTS

International Men's Day, Emotional Health, A&E Staff Engagement Roadshows



ENHANCING KNOWLEDGE

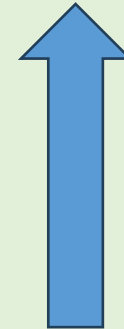
EDI Spotlight, Black History Month, Race Equality, Islamophobia, BSL, Older People, LGBTQ+ History Month, Allyship, Being an Active Bystander

Welsh Language and Culture



753 (17%)

Welsh Speaking Staff
(Level 3 and above)



Up **1%**
since the
previous
year



New Welsh Language Network

- Established in January 2025
- 18 Members
- Promote Welsh language and culture across the Trust
- Working in partnership with other NHS Wales Welsh Language Networks to represent the Trust at the National Eisteddfod in Wrexham 2025

Welsh Language Advisory group

- Increased links with EDI Steering Group to ensure that Welsh Language is treated the same as other protected characteristics within Wales
- Joint working with the Head of Inclusion and Engagement on inclusive initiatives
- Oversees the Welsh Language Standards Statutory Report

Growing our Culture Champions Network

The **Culture Champions Network** continues to lead by example, creating a **more inclusive workplace** where allyship and positive behaviours are part of everyday interactions. The network is helping to shape a workplace where equality, diversity, and inclusion are valued and actively promoted.

Culture Champions play a hands-on role in **driving cultural change** by encouraging open conversations about workplace culture, challenging negative behaviours, and supporting colleagues in creating a more respectful and welcoming environment. To strengthen their impact, champions are taking part in allyship training and other development opportunities, including the **Demystifying Culture workshop**. These sessions provide a space for important discussions what needs to change within our workplace culture and how champions can influence that change in their roles.

A **regular newsletter** for Culture Champions also focuses on key cultural issues, with recent editions providing a **spotlight on Civility in Healthcare, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion and Speaking Up Safely**. These newsletters have been well received and are now shared with senior leaders and non-executive directors. By learning and developing together, our Culture Champions build confidence to have important conversations and act as a positive, supportive network.

Leadership and Culture

Developing Inclusive Leadership and Management

We have been developing a new Leadership and Management Behaviours and Development Framework (Our WAST Way) to improve workplace culture at WAST. Launching in Spring 2025, this framework defines the leadership behaviours needed to create a more compassionate, inclusive, and collaborative workplace. It is based on evidence from the NHS and other sectors, demonstrating that this type of leadership leads to better outcomes for staff, teams, and patients.

The framework reflects the changing expectations of leaders in public service, including ethical and legislative responsibilities to promote a positive and inclusive culture. Engagement in the development of this framework included input from over 350 leaders and managers, to ensure it aligns with staff needs.

Management Essentials

Work has been underway on the development of Management Essentials. This programme provides managers with the skills, knowledge, and behaviours needed to lead effectively and inclusively. It offers:

- Clear expectations of a manager's role, focusing on both what they do and how they do it.
- Access to policies and guidance to ensure fair and consistent people management.
- On-demand resources to support managers in handling sensitive conversations, addressing inappropriate behaviour, and encouraging staff to speak up.
- Workshops and training to build confidence in leadership, allyship, and building an inclusive culture.

This programme will help to improve employee experience, engagement, and inclusion, supporting managers in creating a workplace where all staff feel valued and empowered.

Leadership and Culture

Leadership Symposiums – Driving Cultural Change

Twice yearly, we bring around 150 senior leaders together to discuss key leadership and cultural issues. Recent symposiums have focused on compassionate leadership, psychological safety, and speaking truth to power.

These discussions help leaders shape a culture where staff feel safe, supported, and heard. These symposiums are vital in embedding inclusive leadership and allyship, ensuring that our senior leaders are actively role-modelling the behaviours we need to improve our workplace culture.

Executive Leadership Team (ELT) 360-Degree Feedback

In 2024, our Executive Leadership Team (ELT) undertook a 360-degree feedback process, gathering insights from senior leaders, trade union partners, and external stakeholders. This has increased awareness of the impact of leadership and the importance of role-modelling a compassionate, inclusive, and collaborative approach.

The process is also helping to strengthen relationships across leadership levels and with Trade Union Partners (TUPs). Feedback and development sessions have been held jointly, building trust, collaboration, and shared decision-making. A key outcome has been closer engagement with TUPs, reinforcing more inclusive and effective leadership across the organisation.

Leadership and Culture

Strengthening Social Partnership

Over the past year, we have strengthened our partnership with TUPs, working together to improve staff engagement and workplace culture. Progress includes:

- Early engagement with TUPs on policy development and service design, ensuring staff voices shape key decisions.
- Reflective practice in meetings, improving trust, respect, and collaboration.
- The 'Walking in Each Other's Shoes' development programme, enhancing understanding between managers and Trade Unions.
- Proactive partnership working, ensuring managers engage with TUPs before major changes.

There is now more focus on open dialogue and TUPs and leaders, and this is helping to build a more inclusive and accountable leadership culture. While differences remain, there is now a greater focus on shared purpose, improving outcomes for staff, patients, and communities.



Ambulance Leadership Forum 2025

In March 2025 the prestigious Ambulance Leadership Forum (ALF) took place, hosted by the Association of Ambulance Chief Executives (AACE). As a highly respected annual conference, ALF brings together key stakeholders—including managers, leaders, policymakers, academics, and partners—who are committed to advancing the UK ambulance sector.

As Chair of AACE, our CEO, Jason Killens, had the honour of hosting this esteemed event, which included presenting the Outstanding Service Awards. These awards recognise exceptional contributions within the sector, and we were proud to celebrate three colleagues from Team WAST who received this prestigious recognition:

Jonathan Davies, Locality Manager – Outstanding Welfare and Wellbeing Champion

Tamara Williams, Health Board Clinical Lead – Outstanding Contribution to Cultural Improvement

Kayleigh Wheeler, Operations Manager Ambulance Care – Excellence in the field of Diversity

In addition to these accolades, several of our colleagues were invited to present on key topics throughout the event, further showcasing the Trust's leadership and expertise.



Supporting and Developing our Workforce

Supporting our Workforce's Health and Wellbeing

Our Occupational Health and Wellbeing Team have developed a new Health and Wellbeing Plan for our workforce alongside a revised Occupational Health Policy and an Occupational Immunisation and Screening Policy.

Part of this work has seen the introduction of a Health Surveillance Programme, and a new digital tool to increase accessibility for our staff and line managers to support services. We have also launched a new health diagnostic tool to provide health checks for staff aged 45 and over.

Improving the Personal Appraisal and Development Review (PADR) Process

We are reviewing the PADR process to ensure it reflects our commitment to a compassionate, inclusive, and collaborative workplace. Rather than being a tick-box exercise, PADRs will focus more on meaningful development conversations. This year, we have been gathering feedback from staff, managers, and best practices across the sector, with further insights being collected from our Culture Champions network. Changes will be implemented in Autumn 2025, ensuring the process is fair, engaging, and supportive for all staff.

Team Cultural Reviews

In 2024, we conducted cultural reviews in three services. These reviews ensure staff voices are heard and help to drive meaningful change by:

- Giving staff a voice in shaping workplace culture.
- Addressing concerns raised by staff and trade unions to create a fairer work environment.
- Embedding transparency and continuous improvement into leadership decisions.
- Encouraging allyship and collaboration, strengthening relationships between teams.

Sexual Safety

Building on our campaign to promote sexual safety within the Trust we have developed a multi-level training plan designed to target different staff groups to raise awareness and eliminate sexual harassment within the Trust.

Level 1	The first level of training targets staff of all levels. The EDI Team have worked with our WAST Voices Network, TUs, and our People Services Team to co-design a bespoke sexual safety awareness session which will be rolled out to all staff from April 2025 onwards.
Level 2	Building upon the general awareness training, a more detailed session targeted at line managers has been developed and will be targeted to managers within key operational areas where sexual safety concerns have been raised from April 2025 onwards.
Level 3	Specialist training for People Services Team, TUPs, Safeguarding and other key members of staff whose role may involve investigation of sexual safety concerns in the workplace. This session will be delivered by NWSSP's Legal and Risk Team who developed the training in partnership with the AACE Sexual Safety Lead.
Level 4	Specialist training delivered by external experts in the sexual harassment field at internal development days.
Level 5	Sharing and learning from best practice at national conferences and events. Within the past six months, the Trust's Sexual Safety Lead has worked alongside the UK Ambulance Sector Sexual Safety Lead to develop and deliver a series of workshops and webinars to staff across the UK.

Sexual Safety

Examples of the specialist training provided to our workforce in 2024-2025:

- ✓ London Metropolitan University Session on 'The Impact of Pornography', Dr Fiona Vera-Gray
- ✓ Julie Stone, Ethics Consultant, 'Professional Boundaries' session delivered at the Operational Development Day
- ✓ Support for those involved with complex cases (Catherine Goodwin, WAST)
- ✓ Sexual Safety & Safeguarding (Raynor Griffiths, NMC)
- ✓ The Rise of Extreme Misogyny & Incel Activity (Gemma Howlett, University of Cumbria)
- ✓ Preparing for the Worker Protection Act (Helen Badger, Browne Jacobson)
- ✓ The Role of the Regulator (Hugh Tregoning, HCPC)
- ✓ We need to talk about AI (Karen Chummun, NHS England)
- ✓ Sexual Safety & Neurodiversity (Hannah Bragg, SWAST)
- ✓ Empowering Voices: The experiences of Muslim Women (NHS Muslim Women's Network)

Sharing Best Practice

Dr Catherine Goodwin, Assistant Director of Inclusion, Culture and Wellbeing and Clinical Psychologist at WAST has worked with the AACE National Sexual Safety Lead to deliver the following sessions in 2024-2025:

- Workshop at the National Public Sector Leaders Sexual Safety Conference
- HPMA Webinar on Navigating the Complexities of Workplace Sexual Safety Cases and understanding the impact upon people professionals



Allyship and Active Bystander Training

Allyship and Active Bystander Training

The Trust continues to roll out its Allyship and Active Bystander Training to staff. This award-winning training intervention was developed in-house specifically to relate to staff working within the healthcare sector. The full-day programme aims to provide an in-depth awareness and learning to understand the challenges faced by people within minority and protected groups, and those who are vulnerable or are disadvantaged. Practical approaches to bystander intervention are promoted to staff to encourage more people to eliminate discriminatory behaviours and promote equity for all.



Colleagues rate this training
4.67 out of 5 stars

90% of attendees **learned a great deal** or a lot

92% of attendees **will use what they have learnt** in the workplace **every day** or often

100% of attendees said that the training **met their expectations**

100% of attendees would **recommend the training** to others

Allyship and Active Bystander Training

HPMA Cymru Award

The Trust won a HPMA Cymru Award 2024 for its Bystander to Upstander initiative, which was designed not only to raise awareness among staff of equality, diversity, and inclusion but give them practical tools to challenge discrimination and inappropriate behaviours.

“Creating a diverse and culturally aware workforce that demonstrates respect, empathy and understanding for others is a priority. And when everyone can bring their whole self to work, it helps us to deliver the best possible service to the people of Wales”

Angela Lewis,
Director of Culture Change

“By equipping staff not only with knowledge but the practical skills to safely intervene in a problematic situation, we’re transforming from passive bystanders to pro-active upstanders.”

Paola Spiteri, Retention Lead

It is one of many initiatives and programmatic changes introduced by the organisation in the last couple of years to promote a culture of inclusion.

More than 200 staff across the Trust have completed the Allyship and Active Bystander training since May 2023.



Advancing Equality, Eliminating Discrimination and Creating Allyship

Reasonable Adjustments Training

Our People Services Team continue to develop and roll out bitesize training for line managers and one of these focuses on reasonable adjustments in the workplace. This year, this session was digitalised and incorporated into the Our WAST Way programme to help us deliver this training to more line managers.



Listening to our BSL Service Users

The experience of a patient whose first language, BSL was captured through collaboration with their Llais advocate. The story highlighted communication barriers which continue to affect access to NHS services by those whose first language is not English. This story was presented to the All-Wales Digital Stories Network and at QuEST Committee. Work to improve our communication with BSL service users is underway and will form part of our plans to implement the All Wales Accessible Information and Communication Standards.



Advancing Equality, Eliminating Discrimination and Creating Allyship

International Women's Day

The Trust celebrated International Women's Day 2024, celebrating the social, economic, cultural, and political achievements of women. The day also marks a call to action for accelerating women's equality.

"International Women's Day is a fantastic opportunity to celebrate the contribution of women across our organisation, whether as employees or volunteers. "So many women juggle more than one role, as workers, breadwinners, partners, parents, caregivers, and much more besides. "This is our opportunity to thank them for everything they do, in and outside of work and to wish all women a very happy, safe and peaceful International Women's Day."

Estelle Hitchon, Director of Partnerships and Engagement

Supporting People with IBD

As part of our commitment to supporting colleagues with disabilities and long-term health conditions, the Trust's Purple Space Disability Network is collaborating with Crohn's and Colitis UK to deliver awareness sessions on inflammatory bowel disease (IBD). This will provide valuable insights into living and working with conditions such as Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis. By raising awareness, we aim to improve workplace support, promote open conversations, and ensure that staff affected by IBD feel heard and supported in their roles. Additionally, this awareness is crucial for our frontline staff, as it enhances understanding of the challenges faced by patients with IBD. Many individuals with Crohn's or colitis may experience urgent medical needs, and hidden symptoms.

Citizen Voice - People & Community Network

103 Network members

This is a multi-stakeholder network to support the collective development, awareness and promotion of positive service user experience, accessibility and inclusion within our services.

Plans have been made to grow the Network with a focus on:

- **age**
- **geographic location**
- **diversity, equity and inclusion**
- **Welsh language**

An action plan has been drafted to include engaging with young people in formal and informal education and using population health data to highlight key geographic areas across Wales.

People & Community Voice Group

In recent months the group undertook an annual effectiveness review to ensure a clear vision of reflection, learning and improvement to capture the Trust's aim of meaningful engagement as set out by the Trust's strategic goals.

Feedback from one of our Network members:

"If the Service really wants volunteer 'advisers', it has to be a two-way relationship and not just a title."

After an open, discussion with the group, it became clear that more needs to be done for these meetings to provide the most value for Network members and the Trust.

The Principles of Co-production

We will grow the Network and develop the People & Community Voice Group in accordance with the **five principles of co-production**, as defined by the Co-Production Network for Wales.



Value all participants, and build on their strengths



Develop networks of mutual support



Do what matters for all the people involved



Build relationships of trust; share power and responsibility



People can be change makers, and organisations enable this

Community Involvement & Co-production

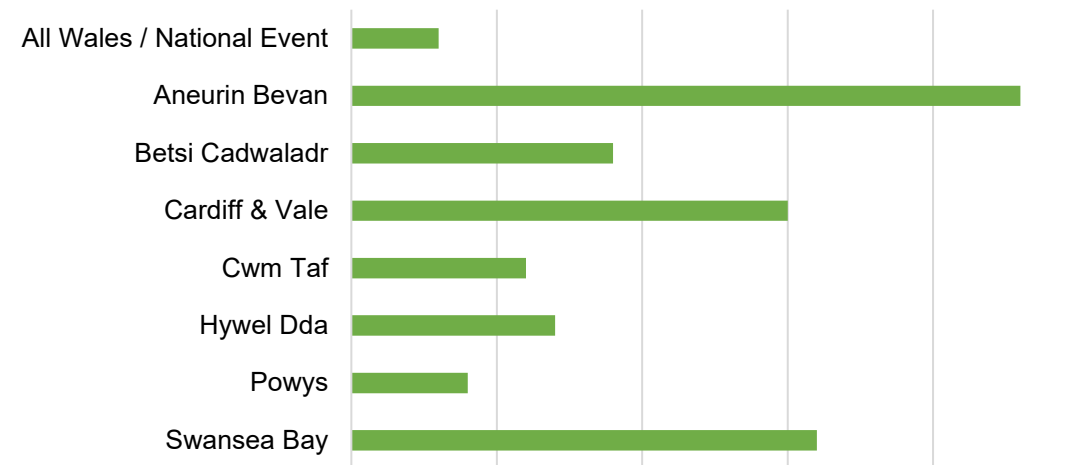
96

Face-to-face
engagement
opportunities
attended

5,641

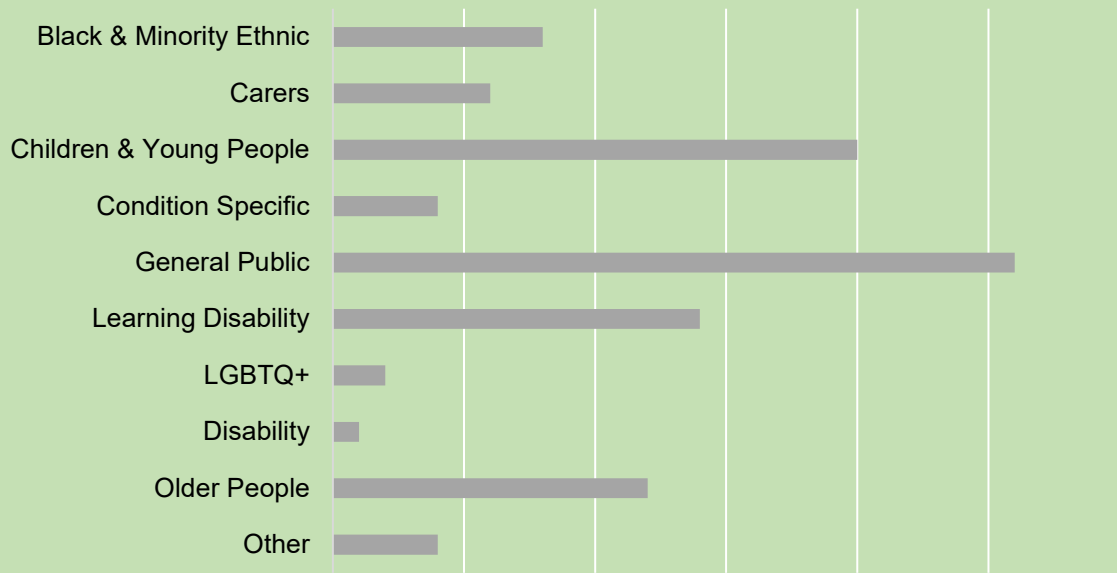
People engaged
with across Wales

The Patient Experience and Community Involvement (PECI) Team attended 96 face-to-face engagement opportunities across Wales, engaging with 5,641 people. They listened to people's experiences of using Trust services, captured public sentiment and asked people to tell us what matters most to them if they should ever need to use our services in the future.



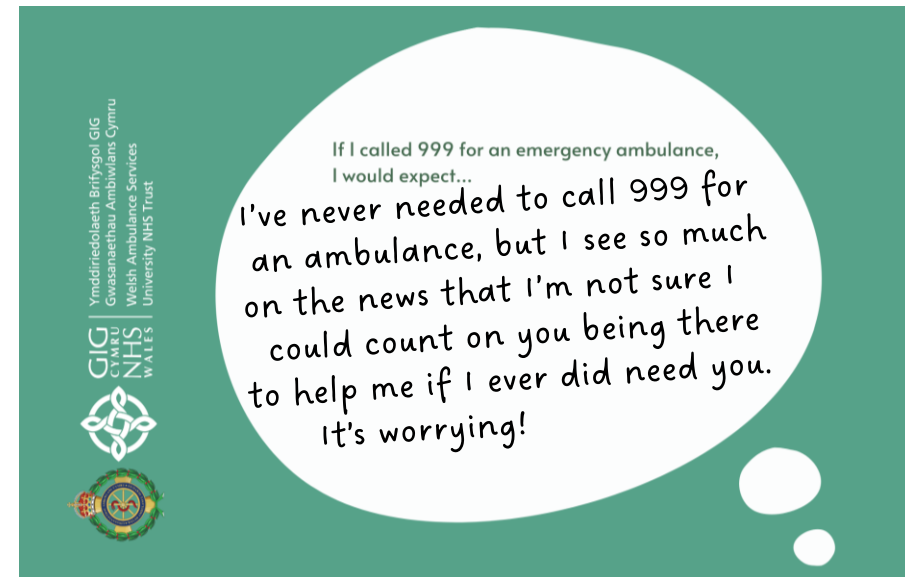
We covered all Health Board areas across Wales, with an increased number in Betsi Cadwaladr and Hywel Dda, which have been areas where we needed to increase our reach. This was also highlighted as an action in the recent PECI Internal audit.

Community Involvement & Co-production



Experiences and feedback, captured through our engagement with communities continued to cover a large cross section of the population.

Targeted engagement with groups known to experience health inequalities, barriers to accessing health care and those who have poorer health outcomes continued. This ensure that the voices of the most vulnerable in society had an opportunity to share their views and experiences.



Support for Autistic, Learning Disability and Neurodiverse patients across Wales

Pain assessment for patients who are autistic and/or have a learning disability is a consistent theme from experience feedback. Patients have told the Trust that it is vitally important for staff to understand their individual needs when on-scene, and this year we have introduced a new function on our electronic patient clinical record (ePCR) system. The new 'Needs' tab prompts responders and clinicians to ask if a patient has a learning disability, is autistic, or is neurodiverse. These options then reconfigure ePCR pages with further prompts around accommodations and adjustments when taking observations. These new prompts focus on communication difficulties TEACH mnemonic, (Time, Environment, Attitude, Communication, Help) reminding responders of the adjustments and accommodations that communities have told us that we need to make. Responders can access additional supporting information relating to a patient, such as the Improvement Cymru Health Profile, and reveals additional prompts and tools for assessing pain.

We have continued to talk and work with people with a learning disability, carers, family and professionals, listening to experiences and how we can best support people. We have co-produced resources to help improve people's access and a Learning Disability 'Celebration Day' for the public, patients, carers and families in the Aneurin Bevan region was held in October 2024.

"This exciting development not only puts the themes of 15 years of patient experience data at the heart of front-line service delivery improvement but also enters WAST into a new era of data collection around communities, which can help begin to address the health inequalities they experience when accessing health services."

Matt James, PECI Coordinator

NHS Wales Performance Framework

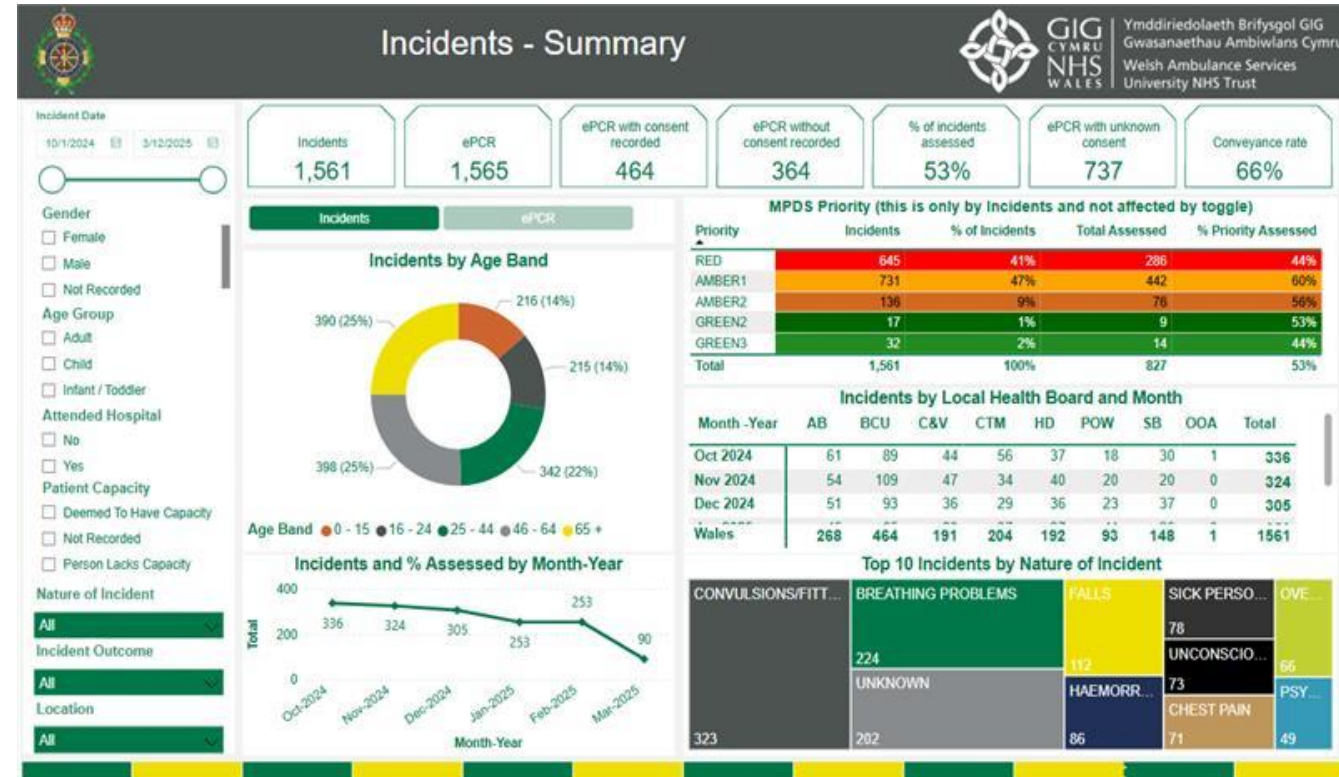
Performance Measure Learning Disabilities

Learning Disabilities Dashboard

The dashboard went live on 1st October 2024, and reports on data of a patients' additional need. The dashboard sorts data according to demographics (age range, gender) and other categories such as incident closure type and call prioritisation.

Between 1 October '24 – 31 March '25, there have been 1,696 ePCR records where an additional need has been recorded. Convulsions/fitting and breathing problems have been the top two nature of incidents recorded. This data is valuable in understanding the wider national picture of health amongst the learning disability population and the impact on patient experience.

Experience data has informed agreement from Welsh Government to reshape some resourcing to appoint an Advanced Clinical Practitioner for Learning Disability to inform and improve our service model for people with learning disabilities and complex needs.



Engaging with our Dementia Community

The Trust engaged with different dementia groups and communities across Wales, helping us to educate people about our dementia work. We offer familiarisation opportunities so people can come inside our vehicles and look around. This helps us to identify issues which people affected by dementia have when inside our environments. Feedback from dementia communities has led to the introduction of many improvements, including:

- A project in Ceredigion, co-designed by the local dementia community which has introduced pictures of areas of local beauty inside the vehicles, as well as genre specific music and activity booklets to support patients on ambulance transport.
- Using reminiscence therapy with people living with dementia to demonstrate a positive impact on patient experiences especially with patients who are distressed or agitated when in our care. There is evidence of improved transfers of care and opportunities to create meaningful relationships and moments using music and distraction for an improved patient experience.
- The development of a Patient Activity Toolkit, available to all staff, which will benefit anyone requiring distraction or occupation when in our care.



Engaging with our LGBTQ+ Communities

Over the past six months we have engaged with LGBTQ+ communities at various Pride events across Wales to seek feedback about LGBTQ+ experiences and expectations of using our services. This engagement supports Welsh Government's **LGBTQ+ Action Plan for Wales** vision to improve health outcomes for all LGBTQ+ people, specifically Action 5: *Involve LGBTQ+ communities in designing public services* and Action 18: *Understand and Improve experience of LGBTQ+ people in the health and social care sectors*.

As a result of this engagement, the Network Chair will work with the ACE National LGBT+ Network to update existing CPD resource around HIV & AIDS and develop a new Mental Health CPD resource to educate and help ambulance service staff provide better care to people living with HIV. To help with this, our LGBTQ+ Network Co-Chair has linked with Fast Track Cymru to run a workshop for WAST staff around HIV awareness, the ambition to end HIV transmission in Wales by 2030, and preventative medication such as PrEP and PEP and the U=U campaign.

In addition, LGBTQ+ History Month was celebrated within the Trust again this February with a series of local events across Wales promoted to staff alongside national online webinar events.



LGBTQ+ Action Plan for Wales:

Together in Pride – making Wales the most LGBTQ+ friendly nation in Europe



February 2023

Engaging with our Ethnic Minority Communities



A central goal of the Welsh Government's [Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan](#) is reducing health inequalities experienced by Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people and ensuring their voices are heard in shaping decisions about services. The PEGI Team continue to work closely with the Trust's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Team to embed the actions of this plan across the Trust. Research data tells us that people from minority ethnic backgrounds and deprived

areas continue to face challenges such as accessing care late, experiencing longer waits and have worse health outcomes. The Trust has participated in the HEAR 1 and 2 research studies which focused on the use of interpretation services by asylum seekers and refugees in primary and emergency healthcare in Wales and now forms part of the British Medical Association (BMA) Refugee and asylum seeker patient health toolkit.

WAST Welcome Pack

We implemented an improvement project to reduce the number of steps to access the WAST welcome pack. The welcome pack has been promoted to communities at all relevant engagement events attended. We have also produced a new instruction leaflet to help people better understand how to access this new resource.



Helping to create an Anti-Racist Wales

Ramadan and Iftar Event

In March, the BEAM People Network hosted the Trust's first Iftar event at our headquarters in Newport. This event was well attended with representation from our Trust Board, including Non-Executive Directors, and provided an opportunity to learn about Ramadan and the breaking of the fast. Staff and volunteers were invited to share traditional food with our Muslim colleagues and watch prayers. The Secretary General for the Muslim Council of Wales also attended and delivered a talk about Ramadan. Attendees were appreciative of the event and commented on how much they learned about Muslim culture which will help us create allyship and a better understand the needs of our Muslim colleagues and service users.

Mela Event

We have continued to engage with minority ethnic communities across Wales by attending several events, including Cardiff Mela, Wales's biggest multicultural celebration. We spoke to people about what matters most to them when using ambulance services. People told us that having information available in their own language is vital, especially in a healthcare emergency. People also said that NHS services understanding the different cultural needs of communities is central to improving overall experiences.

Big Halal Expo

In February, the Trust attended the Big Halal Expo event in Cardiff to engage with Muslim communities. This event saw approximately 3000 visitors throughout the day where staff worked with children to practice CPR skills, listened to service user experiences, and promoted volunteering and recruitment opportunities within the Trust.



Helping to create an Anti-Racist Wales

NHS Muslim Women's Network

The Trust has welcomed members of the NHS Muslim Women's Network into WAST to share their experiences of bias and discrimination. Two of these network members work within other Ambulance Trusts and were able to connect with our workforce to help them understand the impact of institutional racism. To build upon this work and to help us attract a more ethnic diverse workforce and support existing Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff in the workplace, we have made links with the NHS Shuri Network, an NHS and care network of women from minority ethnic groups in digital health who are challenging the system to take action and supporting women from ethnic minorities to succeed in their careers.



Maternity Skin Tone Initiative



Our Midwife Local Safety Champion has arranged black skin tone simulation mannequins to enhance training for childbirth. This includes a birth simulator mannequin, neonatal mannequins, adult CPR mannequins, a suture kit and IV arm. Our Public Health Registrar has analysed population data to identify areas with high numbers of ethnic minority emergency care births and as a result, these mannequins will be added to our training suites in Swansea, Cardiff and Newport. The training resources will also be loaned out to other areas to ensure that all staff have an opportunity to train with black skin tone simulation mannequins.

Workforce Diversity Report 2024-2025

We are pleased to see some improvements to our overall workforce diversity with small increases the number of ethnic minority staff, staff with a disability and those who are LGBTQ+.

This year, we have reviewed our Recruitment and Selection Policy which includes detailed guidance on eliminating unconscious bias throughout the recruitment process to help us improve our workforce diversity. The policy also encourages diverse interview panels and positive action.

We have also accepted the recommendations outlined in the Workforce Race Equality Standard Report for 2024 which has helped us to focus our efforts on increasing support for our Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic colleagues and those who wish to join the Trust.

A full copy of our workforce diversity report can be found in the appendices.

“

Staff from Black Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds increased from 1.36% to 1.63%

”

“

Staff with a disability increased from 6.75% to 7.94%

”

“

Staff who identify as LGB+ increased from 5.6% to 5.72%

”

“

Women increased from 50% to 50.5%

”

Workforce Race Equality Standard Report 2024

In June 2024, NHS Wales published its first Workforce Race Equality Standard (WRES) Report which analysed data from the NHS Staff Survey, the Electronic Staff Record System, and disciplinary cases.

The data highlights areas within the Trust which require attention. The following recommendations ask us to focus on three key areas where Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic colleagues are being disproportionately impacted in comparison to White colleagues

- 1. Low levels of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Staff recruitment into WAST**
- 2. Likelihood of staff being appointed after shortlisting**
- 3. Likelihood of staff being put through disciplinary process**

In response to the report findings, we have implemented the following actions:

- Undertaken a review of a number of workforce policies through an anti-racist lens. These have included:
 - Recruitment and Selection Policy
 - All Wales Disciplinary Policy
 - Flexible Working Policy
- Implemented an Inclusive Recruitment initiative within our Digital Team.
- Appointed three Investigating Officers who will assess the need for disciplinary action involving Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic colleagues.
- Developed and delivered people development initiatives to raise awareness of the discrimination and to encourage more inclusive workplace cultures.

Workforce Diversity

Digital Team Inclusive Recruitment

To address the lack of ethnic diversity within our workforce following the findings of the WRES Report, we have implemented an initiative within our Digital Team. We reached out to ethnically diverse communities to help target our recruitment promotion. The wording on job advertisements was amended and we strategically promoted the vacancies on various platforms to reach more diverse applicants. For the purposes of the data below, we have used the acronym BAME to denote Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic applicants.

3 x Unconscious Bias Training Sessions delivered to 6 Recruiting Managers covering the following:

- Setting the scene – a summary of WAST workforce diversity
- Unconscious bias and how it affects recruitment
- Group discussion – identifying personal unconscious bias and recognising the challenges and barriers that applicants may face
- Diverse interview panels
- Further advice and support

2 x workshops for BAME applicants

- Meet the Team
- TRAC Recruitment Process
- Q&A

19 Vacancies

131 Interviews held
57 (43.5%) BAME applicants

1270 Applications received

1005 (79%) from **BAME** applicants

1 Workshop attendee successfully **appointed** to a vacancy within our **Estates Team**

19 Offers made
5 (26%) to **BAME** applicants

Workforce Diversity

Our efforts to improve ethnic workforce diversity in the Digital Team Inclusive Recruitment Initiative also had a positive impact upon applicants with other protected characteristics:

Disability

89 (7%) Applicants with a disability

9 (7%) Interviewed

4 (21%) Positions offered

Welsh Speakers

44 (3.5%) Welsh speaking applicants

8 (6%) Interviewed

2 (10.5%) Positions offered

LGBTQ+

40 (3%) LGBTQ+ applicants

7 (5%) Interviewed

1 (5%) Positions offered

Next Steps

- Continue to encourage compassionate leadership principles and introduce cultural interventions to encourage a more inclusive workplace
- Roll out unconscious bias training to recruitment managers and offer support to diverse applicants who may be disadvantaged
- Work with Swansea University to offer support to graduate paramedic students with a protected characteristic at our annual recruitment event
- Explore options to introduce and internal gateway review of disciplinary cases
- Provide support for women and other minority groups to progress into senior management roles

Gender Pay Gap 2024-2025

We are pleased to see our gender pay gap decrease slightly over the past year to **5.3%**.

In comparison to other UK Ambulance Trusts, the Welsh Ambulance Service is performing well. However, we recognise that our gender pay gap is still mainly caused by a disproportionate number of men within our most senior roles, and a disproportionate ratio of female-male employees working part-time contracted hours.

We will continue to support our female colleagues in the workplace to seek career progression opportunities. In the coming months, we will support our female operational leaders to participate in a national scheme for aspiring operational directors to encourage a more equal representation of female directors in the future. We are also introducing a number of senior professional roles within our clinical teams which we hope will attract more female applicants.

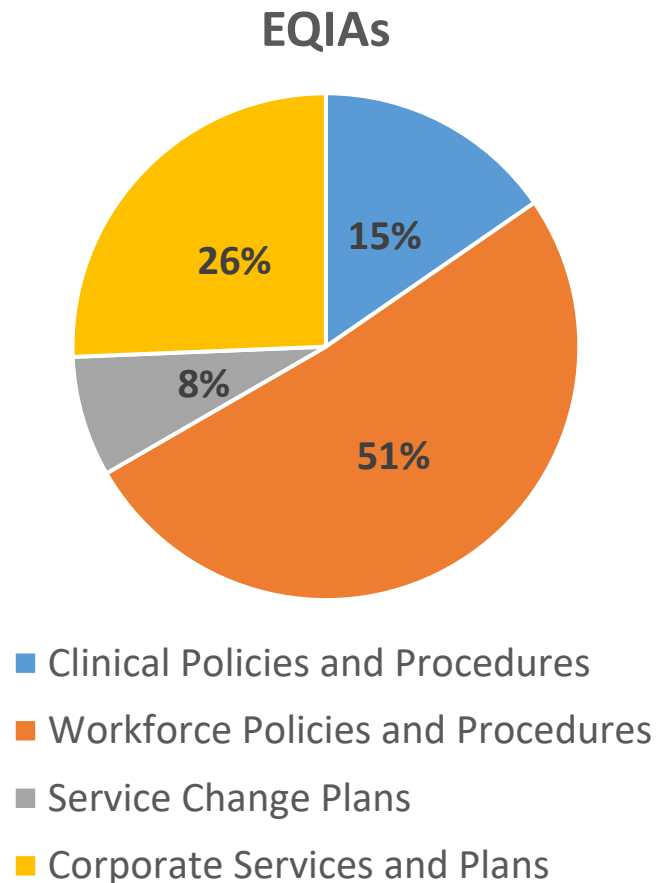


Down
from 5.6 to
5.3%



Equality Impact Assessments EQIA

Within 2024-2025 the Trust has completed 39 equality impact assessments



EQIAs which were of particular relevance to our SEP objectives included:

- **Integrated Medium Term Plan** – ensures that EDI is embedded in everything that we do and we will attempt to increase equity and fairness for all and eliminate discrimination.
- **Clinical Model Transformation Plan** – helps us to plan future services which meet the needs of individuals and supports the Wellbeing of Future Generations Goals.
- **Digital Plan** – focus on digital poverty and digital literacy, particularly amongst our ageing population.
- **Welsh Language Policy** – ensures that we continue to increase our capacity to deliver services through the medium of Welsh and that we treat Welsh no less favourably than English.
- **Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Policy** – aims to support women who are vulnerable and eliminate discrimination.
- **Recruitment and Selection Policy** – encourages an inclusive approach to fair and unbiased approach to recruitment to improve workforce diversity.

Governance and Scrutiny

New Director of Culture Change

We have increased capacity in the leadership of our People and Culture Directorate by splitting our Director of People and Culture role into two separate posts – A Director of People Service and a Director of Culture Change. Angela Lewis, who held the former combined director role has been appointed as our new Director of Culture Change. This change in role allows for more prioritisation on equity, diversity and inclusion and we now have additional focus and resource at executive level which ensures that equity, diversity and inclusion is threaded through all of our committee meetings and at Trust Board.

Raising the profile of initiatives at an executive level has enabled the Board members to fully embrace their key responsibilities and achieve their personal equity, diversity and inclusion objectives and we are seeing an increase in the involvement of all Board members in supporting events, such as our Iftar event and Pride parades. Promoting our channels for speaking up safely and creating psychological safety remains a priority for the Trust and as a result, themes around equity, diversity and inclusion have been identified and reported to the Non-Executive Directors and the Chief Executive Officer regularly via the Director of Culture feedback reports. Spotlights on culture are also being held during our Executive Leadership Team meetings which have a focus on the equity, diversity and inclusion themes identified.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Steering Group

We have strengthened our Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Steering Group throughout the year with the appointment of a new Chair, Angela Lewis, Director of Culture Change and Executive Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Champion. This group has been formalised to improve scrutiny and provide assurance by reporting routes into the Executive Leadership Team and People and Culture Committee. The group consists of stakeholders to represent each directorate and the Board.

The Chair has taken an active role in motivating our networks and encouraging their development. After meeting with each of the networks, the Chair has been instrumental in raising the profile of our people networks at Board level which has seen an increase in attendance at network events and recognition for the awareness raising and support that they provide to staff.



Looking Ahead to 2025-2026

To build upon the work already undertaken we have developed our Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Steering Group which will oversee action plans across the Trust which include many actions to help us achieve our Strategic Equality Plan Objectives. Next year we will focus upon the following areas:

- Our sponsors will support our Aspiring Board Member to learn and flourish within the health sector to encourage more representation on our Board from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- Review our current procedures for accessing timely and quality interpretation and translation services for service users who do not speak English. This will be conducted in line with the All Wales Accessible Information and Communication Standards.
- Monitor the implementation of the Clinical Model Transformation Programme to ensure that any changes to service delivery are accessible and improve the health and wellbeing of our service users.
- Provide staff with access to a suite of sexual safety training with a focus on specific topics such as sexism within social media to educate staff and prevent sexual harassment.
- Host the Health Zone at the Mastering Diversity Conference in Cardiff to showcase exemplary practice and leadership culture and to learn from best practice across Wales.



A copy of our Strategic Equality Plan 2024-2028 can be found here:

<https://ambulance.nhs.wales/about-us/treating-people-fairly-our-strategic-equality-plan-2020-2024/>

Looking Ahead to 2025-2026

- Undertake a workshop with staff who have completed the Allyship and Active Bystander training programme to assess the impact it has made upon their confidence to increase allyship to help eliminate discrimination and disadvantage.
- Adopt and roll out the Anti-racist Wales mandatory e-learning training module to help make it more meaningful for ambulance colleagues.
- Ensure that all line managers undertake the basic elements of Our WAST Way management and leadership training by completing the Regular Check-ins and Crucial Conversations training.
- Support and encourage diversity in the recruitment activity for large scale graduate paramedics and executive appointments and continue to offer supportive professional development opportunities to those in post.
- Work towards achieving Employer Carer Confident Level 2 and support unpaid carers by implementing developing a Carer's Policy and flexible working solutions.
- Introduce a disability passport scheme for staff within a disability to help implement appropriate reasonable adjustments in the workplace.



Please contact a member of the team to learn more about our Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan for 2025-2026:

AMB_Inclusion@wales.nhs.uk

Our Reflections

Reflecting on the progress made over the past year, we are confident that our Strategic Equality Plan Objectives are relevant to the challenges we face in providing emergency healthcare services to the population in Wales.

Building upon our People and Culture Plan objectives which focus on improving our workplace culture, capacity and capabilities, our Strategic Equality Objectives continue to be threaded through the Trust's strategic plans, including our IMTP, Quality Plan, Clinical Model Transformation Programme and our Wellbeing of Future Generation Wellbeing Objectives.

We will continue to ensure that equity, diversity and inclusion are at the heart of our plans to ensure that our services meet the needs of individual service users and are focused upon person-centred healthcare. We are pleased to see how far we have come as an organisation to create a fair and inclusive service for our service users, staff and stakeholders over the past year.



Contact Us

For further information on our Strategic Equality Plan and how we are meeting our objectives, please contact the Team by emailing

AMB_Inclusion@wales.nhs.uk



GIG
CYMRU
NHS
WALES

Ymddiriedolaeth Brifysgol GIG
Gwasanaethau Ambiwylans Cymru
Welsh Ambulance Services
University NHS Trust

Strategic Equality Plan Annual Report
2024-2025