



GIG
CYMRU
NHS
WALES

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

STRATEGIC EQUALITY PLAN 2024-2028



A WORD FROM THE CHAIR AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE



JASON KILLENS
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

COLIN DENNIS
CHAIR

As Chair and Chief Executive of the Welsh Ambulance Service NHS Trust, we are proud to present our Treating People Fairly Strategic Equality Plan for 2024-2028.

Reflecting on the progress made over the past four years, 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. This new four-year plan builds upon the foundations which have been laid and continues to maximise our efforts to be an exemplar organisation for equality, diversity and inclusion. Over the next four years we will continue in our ambition to lead by example and succeed in creating a truly inclusive environment for all, treating everyone fairly regardless of who they are, their background or circumstances.

There is no denying that the last four years has seen significant challenges which have greatly influenced the way in which we work. The COVID-19 global pandemic had an unprecedented impact upon people's physical and mental health and wellbeing. This coupled with the impact of leaving the EU and the ongoing cost of living crisis has changed the way in which healthcare services are delivered. These events have had a detrimental effect upon everyone, with some of the most vulnerable people within our communities finding themselves faced with even more challenges. Health inequalities have been brought to the forefront highlighting the need to bridge the gap and eliminate discrimination. This plan focuses its efforts on doing just that; providing services that are equitable and accessible to all, tailoring our service to meet individual needs.

This plan has been developed to align with our new People and Culture Plan and will sit alongside our Delivering Excellence: A Vision for 2030 strategy. We have also developed a new set of behaviours and cultural values for the Trust which are woven through all of our strategic plans. This plan underpins these behaviours and is designed to further embed them throughout the Trust.

We are an organisation that prides itself on celebrating diversity and individual differences. We value and respect all those who come into contact with the Trust. We continue to support our staff to develop an understanding of the communities we serve in order to meet people's individual needs and make a positive contribution in the delivery of healthcare services. This plan is not just about compliance with legislation; we appreciate the value and benefits of having a diverse workforce that is culturally aware in order to improve the quality of care and increase innovation to adapt to our evolving diverse population.

We look forward to collaborating and working in partnership with our staff, citizens, commissioners and other key stakeholders and groups across health and social care, the public sector and beyond to achieve the ambitions and commitments set out in this strategy.

As the Director and Non-Executive Director with the lead for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion across the Welsh Ambulance Service, this is our opportunity to share with you why we believe it is so important that we make greater progress towards achieving our strategic equality objectives over the next four years.

As a Trust we want to work more effectively with our people and the public to enable them to recognise, understand and value difference and the positive impact that diversity brings. We want everyone to understand that this is not just about compliance or a problem to be solved, or even just because we feel a moral and ethical obligation to do something to tackle injustice. It is all these things and more. We firmly believe this is about showing leadership at all levels of the organisation and throughout the health and social care system. This is about doing what's right for our people and for our public.

We are committed to putting our people and culture at the heart of everything we do. Creating a diverse and culturally competent workforce that demonstrates respect, empathy, support and understanding for others is a priority. By investing in our people, we hope to enhance creative thinking and innovation, helping them to realise their full potential. We recognise that this is key to achieving success in improving the quality of care and service user experience.

Engaging with our staff, service users and stakeholders has been a crucial part of developing our strategic equality objectives. Listening to what people want and hearing their ideas for change has helped us to identify themes of focus and has provided clear direction for the Trust in order to become a truly inclusive organisation. This has led us to developing four overarching objectives which will aim to help us:

- Design equitable services
- Lead by example
- Be an employer of choice
- Create allyship

The above objectives are intrinsically linked with the aims of our People and Culture Plan which focus around culture, capacity and capability. The Strategic Equality Plan reinforces our ambition to create a positive and inclusive working environment, where everyone can bring their whole self to work, actively contributes and is proud to work for #TeamWAST. Our people should all feel valued, respected and supported to help us deliver the best possible service to the people of Wales.

We look forward to seeing the plan being implemented over the next four years and we are confident that by aligning our Strategic Equality Plan, our People and Culture Plan and our long-term vision, we will succeed in achieving our objectives.

INTRODUCTION



Hannah Rowan

HANNAH ROWAN
NON-EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Angela Lewis

ANGELA LEWIS
DIRECTOR OF PEOPLE
AND CULTURE

WHO WE ARE



Over 4000 members of staff ranging from paramedics, nurses, consultants and ambulance care assistants to corporate teams, workforce managers, finance assistants, estates and maintenance teams, plus many more invaluable people who make up our workforce.



Providing a range of frontline healthcare services including emergency paramedicine, non-emergency patient transport and healthcare advice via NHS 111 Wales.



Over 700 volunteers who include Community First Responders, Volunteer Car Service Drivers and others who provide voluntary services for our staff and service users.



Serving just over 3.1 million people in Wales across 7 Health Boards and 22 Counties.

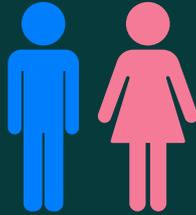
THE PEOPLE WE SERVE



115,000 veterans



Over one fifth aged 65yrs+



49% 51%



6% identify with an ethnic group other than white



18% speak Welsh



21% with a long-term health condition or illness expected to last 12 months or more



Polish, Arabic and Romanian are the three most common languages across Wales apart from English and Welsh



10.5% unpaid carers



900 BSL service users



1.4 m Christians
67,000 Muslims
12,000 Hindus
10,000 Buddhists
5,000 Pagans
4,000 Sikhs
2,000 Jews



Over 10,000 people with a different gender to their sex assigned at birth



77,000 identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or another minority sexual orientation



22,000 cannot speak English or Welsh very well

BACKGROUND

The Trust is committed to implementing a series of strategic equality objectives because we value our staff, service users and stakeholders. We believe that everyone has the right to be treated fairly with dignity and respect. We recognise that some people face additional challenges in their everyday lives for a number of reasons. In particular, those with a protected characteristic, minority and vulnerable groups, people who experience socioeconomic disadvantage, people who speak Welsh, unpaid carers, veterans and people who belong to the armed forces community. It is our aim to meet the needs of everyone and ensure that our services are accessible and inclusive of all those who come into contact with the Trust.

There are also a number of legislative and statutory duties placed upon the Trust to help us deliver equitable services. A number of national strategy and policy drivers have shaped our thinking and the design of our strategic objectives. These include:

- Wellbeing of Future Generations Act
- A Healthier Wales, the Health and Social Care (Quality and Engagement) (Wales) Bill 2019
- A More Equal Wales, Is Wales Fairer?
- Public Sector Equality Duty

As a public body, we have a responsibility to ensure we consider how we can positively contribute to a fairer society through advancing equality and good relations amongst everyone in our day-to-day activities and the design of our policies and services. When making decisions and delivering services we must have due regard to:

- Eliminating discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited under the Act.
- Advancing equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- Fostering good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

As well as the General Duty, we have a responsibility to meet the Specific Duties in Wales. The Specific Duties underpin the General Duty. These can be found here alongside more information on the Public Sector Equality Duty:

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/guidance/public-sectort>

PROTECTED CHARACTERISTICS

What are the protected characteristics?



Age



Disability



Race and Ethnicity



Religion or Belief



Sex or Gender



Gender Reassignment



Sexual Orientation



Marriage and Civil Partnership



Pregnancy and Maternity

WELSH LANGUAGE



Within Wales, the Welsh language is treated the same as a protected characteristic and has its own legislation to ensure its protection. The Welsh Language Standards require organisations to provide public services through the medium of Welsh and promote opportunities for people to use the Welsh language. The Trust values and respects our Welsh speaking staff, service users and stakeholders, and actively supports the recruitment of Welsh speaking staff and recognises the importance of delivering bilingual services. The Trust's Welsh Language Framework which incorporates the More Than Just Words Action Plan 2022-27 sets out our aims and objectives to increase the visibility and opportunities for the Welsh language and outlines our targets to increase support for our Welsh speaking communities and our Welsh learners. Feedback from our consultation and engagement on the Strategic Equality Plan demonstrated how important bilingualism was to our service users in terms of inclusivity and equality. Therefore, our Strategic Equality Plan has been developed to sit alongside our Welsh Language Framework and will both aim to ensure that Welsh speakers are not discriminated against or disadvantaged in any way.

INTERSECTIONALITY



We recognise that many individuals have more than one protected characteristic. The intersectionality of people with multiple characteristics means that they are likely to experience unique modes of discrimination or different barriers and challenges compared to people with just one characteristic. The Trust aims to take a more intersectional approach to understanding our equality, diversity and inclusivity data and priorities where appropriate.

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Listening to people is key to helping us learn how best we can create a truly inclusive organisation. This plan has been shaped by the views of our staff, service users and stakeholders. Consultation and engagement is an ongoing process here at the Trust which has resulted in opinions being gathered via a range of methods. Our Patient Engagement Community Involvement Team have been talking to members of the public at various public events, such as health and wellbeing events, school educational events and recruitment open days. Staff have also attended specific events for people with a protected characteristic to ensure that everyone has had the opportunity to voice their opinions. For example, conversations were held at various Pride events, local sight loss support groups, homeless cafés, mosques, churches, volunteer conferences, learning disability groups, multicultural drop-in cafes, and many more.

In addition to the face-to-face conversations, an accessible online survey was available to all (paper copies and alternative formats were available upon request). National charities and support groups such as Age Cymru, Welsh Government Youth Parliament and Carers Wales, were also invited to complete the survey.

The Strategic Equality Plan was also discussed in detail at various stakeholder groups and internal meetings, for example, the NHS Wales Equality Leadership Group and the Welsh Language Advisory Group. Staff have also had the opportunity to help shape the plan at a series of roadshow events across Wales.

We recognise that consultation and engagement is an ongoing process. We want our Strategic Equality Plan to be flexible to adapt to the needs of our people; objectives can be strengthened, actions can be added, and priorities can change to meet the needs of our people. Therefore, plans are in place to ensure that the conversations continue and regular reviews of our objectives will take place. Progress and updates will be reported and published annually on our website.

OUR HEALTHCARE SERVICES

Improving the quality of our services and the outcomes for service users is a key priority for the Trust. In line with the requirements of the Duty of Quality which forms part of the Health and Social Care (Quality and Engagement) (Wales) Act 2020, the Trust is committed to implementing improvements across all service areas. There are clear links between the Strategic Equality Plan and the six domains within the Duty of Quality which aim to ensure that the care we deliver is safe, timely, effective, efficient, equitable and person-centred. Therefore, the actions set out within this plan will each have the underlying aim to enable our staff to be their best in order to deliver the best healthcare services.

OUR STRATEGIC EQUALITY OBJECTIVES

We will aim to

DESIGN EQUITABLE SERVICES

LEAD BY EXAMPLE

BE AN EMPLOYER OF CHOICE

CREATE ALLYSHIP

DESIGN EQUITABLE SERVICES

What will we do?

By 2028 we will improve the way we plan and design our services to ensure that they are designed to suit the needs of our diverse population.

When designing our services we will consider the specific needs of people to ensure that our services are accessible to all and inclusive of everyone.

How will we do it?

Continue to develop and implement robust impact assessments throughout each of the service planning stages.

Undertake regular engagement and consultation with our service users and build relationships with communities and individuals who find accessing our services challenging. We will listen to their feedback and look for solutions together.

Amend service plans and implement changes where necessary to help meet the needs of our service users.

How will we measure our success?

Evidence of more robust EQIA and QIA procedures, including socioeconomic and Welsh language impact assessments.

Feedback from engagement and consultation events will inform future planning and result in positive changes and improved healthcare services.

Putting Things Right concerns with EDI links will demonstrate positive outcomes and provide lessons learnt.

Digital patient record systems which capture individual patient needs to minimise clinical risks and discrimination.

Physical environment assessments to identify accessibility.

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What will we do?

We will encourage all our staff actively promote a culture of inclusion and wellbeing across the organisation.

Staff will demonstrate an understanding and awareness of the individual needs of the diverse population that we serve.

Our executive and non-executive teams and senior managers will promote the Trust as an inclusive organisation. They will display genuine empathy and support for those who are disadvantaged in any way. They will not accept discriminatory behaviour in any form.

How will we do it?

Use lived experience to help identify where improvements can be made and ensure that staff are supported to put their ideas into practice.

Continue to develop, evaluate and embed WAST behaviours which foster inclusivity and respect for everyone.

Create links and support networks with other organisations who aim to eliminate discrimination.

Ensure that senior leaders and managers' personal objectives include a focus around improving equality, diversity and inclusion.

How will we measure our success?

Meaningful commitments in our IMTP, our People and Culture Plan, and other published strategies which will be monitored by the executive and non-executive team.

Evidence of executive and non-executives personal objectives and actions which aim to improve equality, diversity and inclusion, eliminate discrimination, promote the use of Welsh language and a thriving Welsh culture.

Visible support for people with a protected characteristic at national events and conferences and joint working initiatives with 3rd sector partners.

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BE AN EMPLOYER OF CHOICE

What will we do?

We will aim to increase the diversity in our workforce so that it is reflective of the population we serve.

Staff will feel at ease to bring their whole self to work and will be free from judgement and discrimination in the workplace.

We will proactively offer support to staff according to their individual needs in order to help them perform in the workplace to the best of their ability.

How will we do it?

Develop recruitment strategies which include targeted recruitment initiatives.

Ensure that our strategic workforce plan is reflective of the needs of our diverse population.

Health and wellbeing initiatives such as the Wellbeing Service.

Promote our Freedom to Speak Up process.

Provide accessible education and training opportunities to all staff.

Establish career progression pathways which are fair and inclusive of all staff.

How will we measure our success?

Workforce equality monitoring reports, WRES Report, NHS Staff Surveys and HIVE pulse surveys will show an improvement in staff satisfaction and will reflect changes in our workforce diversity.

Feedback from staff engagement events will be used to inform changes to improve employee experience.

Feedback from recruitment events will evidence engagement with diverse populations.

Feedback from staff access occupational health and wellbeing support.

Improvement in staff Welsh language skills.

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What will we do?

We will equip our workforce with the skills and knowledge to act as true allies to all those who face discrimination and challenges.

We will increase staff awareness and understanding of the issues faced by minority groups to create empathy and create a series of staff support networks.

How will we do it?

Develop and deliver training sessions for staff to increase their knowledge of equality, diversity and inclusion matters.

Work with external experts on less well known topics of equality, diversity and inclusion to help raise awareness amongst staff of the challenges that people may face.

Create psychological safety for all staff who wish to raise concerns.

How will we measure our success?

Examples of staff applying their learning within the workplace, for example, being an active bystander, raising concerns and showing support for staff.

Feedback from training.

Staff surveys will show an increase in psychological safety amongst staff.

Staff will report an increased confidence that concerns will be addressed appropriately.

Monitor respect and resolution cases with a link to EDI, Welsh language and other forms of discrimination and apply learning outcomes to prevent further incidents.

Get Involved

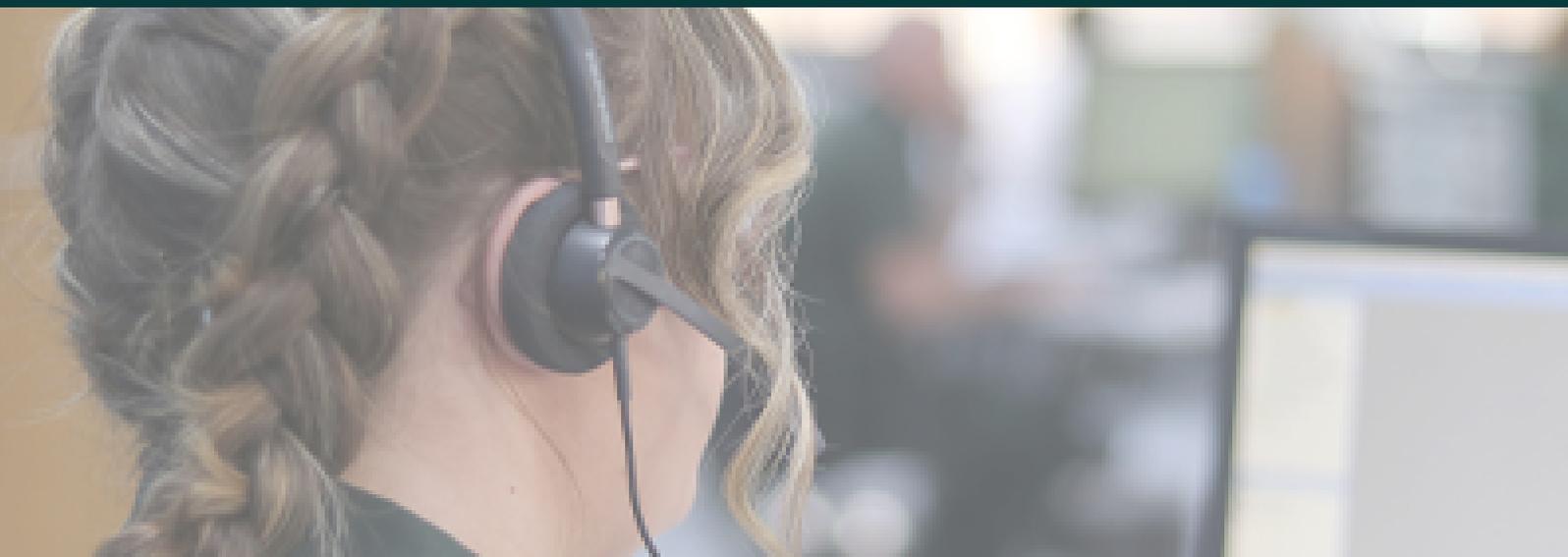


Thank you for taking the time to read our Strategic Equality Plan for 2024-2028.

We welcome all comments or questions on all aspects of this plan.

If you would like to comment, know more about the work, or how to get involved, please contact:

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