

NHS WESTERN ISLES EQUALITY OUTCOMES 2025-29

Equality Outcome 1	
<p>Embedding Anti-Racism plan to eliminate racism in relation to both workforce and service users within NHS Western Isles</p> <p>Evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under-representation of ethnic minorities in employment. • National and local data highlighting disparities in employment and career progression for ethnic minorities. • To facilitate community engagement through cultural integration. 	
<p>Relevant General Equality Duty Aim:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advance equality of opportunity between people who have a protected characteristic and those who do not. • Encourage good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. 	<p>Protected Characteristic(s) covered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Race
<p>Activities for accomplishing this Outcome:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to provide training for all staff, with a focus on recognising and addressing unconscious bias. • Establish a dedicated support network for ethnic minority staff, providing support and career development opportunities. • Promote cultural awareness and celebrate diversity through events and initiatives. • Develop and deliver cultural awareness information sessions to front line workers. • A series of social events run in partnership with CNES Adult Learning, focusing on food, 	<p>How we will measure success:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased representation of ethnic minorities in NHS Western Isles employment. • Higher engagement and participation in cultural awareness events and initiatives. • Improved data collection and analysis on the experiences of ethnic minority staff. • Number of participants. • Feedback from training and events. • Established focus group. • Gaps in services identified.

<p>dance, music, and the arts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a multi-cultural focus group. • Provide information on available health services. • Identify barriers to service uptake. • Health Literacy training in partnership with CNES Adult Learning 	
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Equality Outcome 2	
<p>Improve accessibility to disabled people by ensuring digital and physical access including BSL to meet the diverse needs of a population who have a range of disabilities.</p> <p>Evidence</p>	
<p>Relevant General Equality Duty Aim:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. • Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. 	<p>Protected Characteristic(s) covered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disability
<p>Activities for accomplishing this Outcome:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training staff to bring awareness and skill to use the existing resources including BSL via online learning. • Involving disabled people in designing and developing services 	<p>How we will measure success:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number and quality of documents produced in the relevant formats. • Access issues highlighted by patients e.g. disabled toilets and parking spaces. • Monitoring the usage of existing resources and identifying gaps.

Equality Outcome 3	
<p>NHS Western Isles will ensure to have departmental operational protocols in place to address the needs of staff and patients with protected characteristics, especially to those belonging to LGBTQ+ groups.</p> <p>Evidence</p>	
<p>Relevant General Equality Duty Aim:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. • Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. 	<p>Protected Characteristic(s) covered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sexual Orientation
<p>Activities for accomplishing this Outcome:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review key NHS WI policies to ensure all patients and colleagues with protected characteristics have their needs adequately met. 	<p>How we will measure success:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Departmental operational protocols are identified and in place to support patients and staff with protected characteristics. <p><i>At this time there is considerable uncertainty in connection with emerging guidance from the EHRC flowing from the recent Supreme Court decision. We will need to wait for further NHS Scotland guidance in relation to single sex spaces and transgender welfare rather than implementing our own policy.</i></p>

Equality Outcome 4
<p>An increased proportion of young people and disabled people are supported to enter employment or training.</p> <p>Evidence:</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people are under-represented in the workforce. • Disabled people are under-represented in the workplace. From data issued by the Scottish Government in 2022 just over 50% of disabled adults in Scotland were in employment in comparison with 82.5% of working age adults without disabilities. • Increased number of disabled people unable to access gainful employment. • Declining population across the Western Isles (outward migration). • Creation of local employment opportunities. 	
Relevant General Equality Duty Aim: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advance equal opportunities between people who have a protected characteristic and those who do not 	Protected Characteristic(s) covered: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age • Disability
Activities for accomplishing this Outcome: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grow the number of apprenticeships available across the organisation. • Support the number of student placements available across the organisation to obtain gainful work experience. • Disability Confident Employer compliance (Disability-Confident-Offering-an-interview-to-disabled-people.pdf) 	How we will measure success: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased number of apprenticeship opportunities. • Continuation of student placement programme across all service areas. • Increase in the number of disabled candidates progressing to interview. • Increase in the number of disabled candidates securing employment. • Improved collation of data of employees with disabilities (communication/education).

Equality Outcome 5
Provide equal opportunities in respect of recruitment for all Protected Characteristics.

Evidence	
Relevant General Equality Duty Aim: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advance equal opportunities between people who have a protected characteristic and those who do not 	Protected Characteristic(s) covered: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All PCs
Activities for accomplishing this Outcome: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New recruitment training module for all managers which will have a specific section on equal opportunities in recruitment. 	How we will measure success: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of managers who have completed the training.
Equality Outcome 6	
Zero claims of discrimination in employment by informing and training staff in this area.	
Evidence	
Relevant General Equality Duty Aim: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advance equal opportunities between people who have a protected characteristic and those who do not 	Protected Characteristic(s) covered: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All PCs
Activities for accomplishing this Outcome: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One aim of the new learning and development strategy is to increase compliance with statutory and mandatory training. Access to further training opportunities will not be provided to staff unless statutory and mandatory training is up to date. This will be monitored by managers through Turas Learn and Turas Appraisal. 	How we will measure success: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased number of staff trained in equalities Turas mandatory training module.

Equality Outcome 7

Enhancing Access, support and inclusion for D/deaf people in the Western Isles

Evidence

'There are estimated to be around 850,000 people with hearing loss in Scotland, one in six of the population, and of those, 70% are over 70. It is projected that this figure will increase by 50% in the next 20 years'[See Hear-A strategic framework for meeting the needs of people with a sensory impairment in Scotland (2024)].

- D/deaf people often experience discrimination, exclusion, loneliness, mental exhaustion, listening fatigue, prejudice, lack of reasonable adjustments, depression and anxiety with negative impact on their health, independence, social and working status.
- There are approx. 3500 Audiology patients in the Western Isles, which is approx. 13% of the population (Data from Audiology Dept, WI Hospital, 2025).
- Recent data collected from online local public survey via Deaf and Hearing Loss Isles Associated Support (DAHLIAS) social media page (March 2025) showed that 33.3% classed themselves as Deaf, 22% hard of hearing, 66.6% had no BSL skills and only 22.2% use BSL.
- British Sign Language (BSL) and Lipreading classes are vital to D/deaf persons and others to promote better communication skills and support.
- Peer support for the wider community, family and friends of people with any degree of hearing loss is much needed.
- Deaf and hard of hearing people report a lack of understanding and awareness surrounding their deafness and its effects. This suggests a lack of deafness awareness and deafness associated information and education.
- High proportion of deaf and hard of hearing people also report suffering with tinnitus for which there is no specific education or support.
- The rural island geography can make support services harder to reach. Telephone consultations and booking appointments e.g. G.P appointments, often done over the telephone is not suitable to D/deaf people as many have issues with hearing on and/or cannot use the telephone due to the nature of their hearing loss.
- Lack of BSL interpreters in the Western Isles and lack of accessible communication support, e.g., no live subtitles available on NHS Near Me Video conferencing clinic appointments.
- D/deaf people often experience social exclusion and loneliness due to poor communication support in various community activities and family

gatherings.

It is important for D/deaf people in the Western Isles to access healthcare, public and other community services with assessable communication support in line with NHS Western Isles BSL plan. BSL users have a basic right to access healthcare and public services either via face-to-face BSL interpreters and/or via Sigh Live online website.

The aim of this Equality Outcome is to ensure that D/deaf people have the equal opportunities.

Relevant General Equality Duty Aim:

- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not.

Protected Characteristic(s) covered:

- Disability. This is because of the profound impact flowing from the hidden disability of hearing loss.
- Race. BSL is now a language with protected legal status in Scotland.

Activities for accomplishing this Outcome:

- Access to funded/ partially funded accredited British Sign Language (BSL) training for D/deaf and Hard of Hearing people and their support networks.
- Access to funded/ partially funded accredited lipreading training for D/deaf and hard of hearing people and their support networks.
- NHS WI to promote Deaf and Hearing Loss Isles Associated Support (DAHLIAS) peer support group for D/deaf users, their family and friends and the wider community and work towards increasing their membership.
- NHS WI to hold events to mark Sign language Week, Deafness Awareness week.
- Encourage D/deaf individuals to use services provided by Western Isles Sensory Centre.
- Promote accessible

How we will measure success:

- Audits
- Feedback forms
- Surveys
- DAHLIAS group discussions and input.

communication e.g. email, SMS text for booking appointments.	
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