

Public Authority Statutory Equality and Good Relations Duties Annual Progress Report 2023-2024

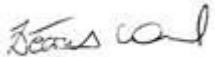
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Documents published relating to our Equality Scheme can be found at:

<http://www.westerntrust.hscni.net/1596.htm>

Signature:



This report has been prepared using a template circulated by the Equality Commission.

**It presents our progress in fulfilling our statutory equality and good relations duties,
and implementing Equality Scheme commitments and Disability Action Plans.**

This report reflects progress made between April 2023 and March 2024.

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Introduction

This is the Trust's 17th Annual Progress Report on Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Order (DDO) for submission to the Equality Commission of Northern Ireland. In preparing this Annual Progress Report the Trust has used the template provided by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (ECNI). The Report provides assurance to Trust Board on how the Trust has fulfilled its legislative obligations and gone beyond compliance to achieve best practice in promoting equality of opportunity and good relations.

Part A of this Report provides an overview of the work undertaken in compliance with the Trust Equality Scheme obligations ([click here](#) for Trust Equality Scheme). It is important to note that this Report does not detail all of the work that the Trust carries out to promote equality of opportunity and good relations and to address inequalities as a key element of the Trust's business is to improve health and wellbeing and address inequalities.

2024-2029 Health and Social Care (HSC) Equality Action Plan and Disability Action plan

During 2023/24 the 5 Health and Social Care Trusts and the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service Trust continued to work collaboratively on the development of their future 5 year Disability Action Plan and Equality Action Plan from 2024 to 2029. The engagement and formal consultation on the draft plans have greatly shaped our actions over the next 5 years. An outcome report has been produced to share the feedback we received and how we responded to it.

These plans outline how we will take proactive initiatives to improve equality of opportunity and to promote positive attitudes for disabled people and improve their participation in public life. The plans and outcome are also available in easyread. Through partnership working, we live our Health and Social Care values to ensure there is regional consistency and equity across all the Trusts in terms of this important programme of work. It also helps to maximise the resources that are available to us and to share best practice. (Click [here](#) to view Plans and associated documents).

Updates within Appendix 1 and 2 of this progress report provide updates on the actions not completed in the previous Equality Action Plans and Disability Action Plans for 2018 - 2023. Appendix 1 relates to the actions within the Equality Action Plan, Appendix 2 relates to compliance with our legislative duties under Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended) (DDA) to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and to encourage their full participation in public life. We will begin reporting on actions on the new Plans in 2024/2025.

Western Trust Corporate Plan 2023/24

Under normal circumstances, the Trust would have been setting out corporate priorities and plans for the next four years in line with business planning arrangements required of Arms' Length Bodies (ALB's) by the Department of Health (DOH). However, while further advice was awaited on the requirement for Corporate Plans pending agreement on a new Programme for Government (PfG), the Trust developed a one-year plan for 2023/24. [Click here](#) to view the plan.

The plan for 2023/24 was approved by Trust Board and came at a time of continuing pressure on the healthcare system. Despite the challenges the Trust remained determined to turn this

plan into real action, to focus on rebuilding and recovery from the pandemic and to make measurable improvements to our services for our patients and clients.

The plan included a new vision and mission which are underpinned by our guiding HSC Values and inspired by the great work that our staff do every day. We also have a new set of strategic priorities that give an insight into the programmes of work we are prioritising so that we achieve the outcomes needed for our population.

Our Mission: We are West, Caring Together, Committed to Better.

Our vision: Working together to provide the best health and social care so that:

- People who need us feel cared for
- People who work with us feel proud
- People who live in our communities trust us

WHSCT Strategic Priorities

Quality and Safety

- Providing best care
- Growing a culture of openness and learning
- Embedding our Quality Improvement approach

Workforce Stabilisation

- Looking after and valuing our people
- Belonging in the HSC
- Growing for the future

Performance and Access to Services

- Delivering our targets
- Changing and improving our services using a co-production approach
- Driving business intelligence

Delivering Value

- Securing financial sustainability
- Maintaining effective financial governance

Culture

- Living our mission every day
- Embedding our new structures

Western Trust Corporate Plan 2024 to 2027

During the latter half of 2023/24, we engaged with our Trust Board, Corporate Management Team, our staff and our stakeholders and service users in the development of our Corporate Plan for 2024 to 2027 and to review and agree our strategic priorities and corporate objectives over the next three years.

As part of this process, we have also taken account of national, regional and local priorities to ensure that our Corporate Plan is aligned to the strategic direction and priorities outlined in a range of regional policies and strategies, in particular:

- Systems, Not Structures: Changing Health & Social Care ¹
- Health and Wellbeing 2026: Delivering Together ²
- Making Life Better 2012-2023 ³
- Local Council Community Plans. [Click here](#) for FODC Plan. [Click here](#) for DCSD Plans.
- Future Planning Model Integrated Care System NI Framework⁴

Key Issues and Needs in the Western Trust Area

We recognise that demand for our services is increasing across all areas and it is a challenge for our services to keep pace. Together with the recruitment challenges we face along with other health and social care organisations, this means that our patients and clients are waiting longer than we would want to access our services. We must therefore continue to be innovative and flexible, and work even more closely with our partners both in health and social care and in the wider community to ensure all our resources are used as effectively and efficiently as possible to meet the needs of our local population. We are also mindful that helping people to live well, independently and as part of a community that is at ease with itself is as important as treating them for their immediate health and care needs. So we want to place greater emphasis on preventing illness and promoting wellbeing.

It is widely recognised that the health and social care system as a whole is facing considerable demand and financial pressures and is operating within an ongoing cycle of contingency and recovery plans. The Western Trust has some of the highest poverty and deprivation rates in the region resulting in a high level of need in areas of the West and an associated high demand for care. In line with national and regional trends, we have a growing ageing population which also brings an increased level of need for health and social care services. Together with the backlogs for planned care which built up during the COVID-19 pandemic, these have contributed to a substantial demand/capacity imbalance across many of our acute and community services, resulting in long waiting lists and a significant level of unmet need impacting on the health outcomes for our population.

Traditionally, access to quality healthcare services has been perceived as the most important factor in achieving better population health outcomes. However, the accepted evidence and research tells us that access to high quality health care influences about 20% of our health outcomes at a population level. The other 80%, relates to behaviours, socioeconomic conditions and other factors that are often challenging to address in terms of health care provision. Source: Factors that influence Population Health - Source: Institute for Clinical Systems Improvement (2014) Going Beyond Clinical Walls: Solving Complex Problems. We are therefore increasingly focused on the importance of working in partnership across the entire system, involving all sectors, partners and citizens, to best meet the needs of our population.

Deprivation

The Multiple Deprivation Measures (MDM)⁵ 2017 indicate that 5 of the top 10 most deprived areas in Northern Ireland are in the Western Trust. The Access to Services Domain measures

¹ [Systems, Not Structures - Changing Health and Social Care - Full Report | Department of Health \(health-ni.gov.uk\)](#)

² [Health and Wellbeing 2026 - Delivering Together | Department of Health \(health-ni.gov.uk\)](#)

³ [Making Life Better - Strategic Framework for Public Health | Department of Health \(health-ni.gov.uk\)](#)

⁴ [Integrated-Care-System-ICS-NI-Framework-May-2024.pdf](#)

the extent to which people have poor physical and online access to key services and indicates that 6 of the top 10 areas with poorest access to services are in Fermanagh and Omagh.

Poverty Rate

The publication entitled “The Northern Ireland Poverty and Income Inequality report (2021/22)” uses data collected from the Family Resources Survey & NISRA to provide estimates of the proportion and number of individuals, children, working age adults and pensioners in Northern Ireland living in poverty, and other statistics on household income and income inequality. (Click [here](#) to view document)

The poverty rate in Northern Ireland does not vary greatly by broad area classification with rural areas having only a marginally lower poverty rate (16%) than urban areas (17%). However, the breakdown of poverty rates by LGDs show that poverty rates vary substantially by local area. Rates of poverty in NI are highest in Derry City & Strabane (22%), Fermanagh & Omagh (21%) and Causeway Coast & Glens (21%).

Mental Health

All HSC Trusts across Northern Ireland are currently experiencing a high level of mental health admissions. However, recent statistics⁶ have indicated that 35% of the total number of mental health hospital admissions across Northern Ireland in 2022/23, under the Mental Health programme of care, were in the Western Trust area. Despite the increase in admissions the Trust continues to meet the presenting need of the population of the Western Trust through significantly escalated hospital capacity, whilst we continue to review our community services in line with the mental health strategy for Northern Ireland.

Geography

The Trust’s catchment area extends over 4842 km² and serves a population of approximately 300,000, increasing to approximately 410,000 when the population of the Northern Health and Social Care Trust is taken into account for which the Trust provides a sub-regional service for ophthalmology, trauma and orthopaedics, urology and oral surgery. The Trust provides a wide range of health and social care services from a number of hospitals, community facilities and people’s own homes across a geography which has a mix of highly urbanised and extensive rural communities. This, alongside high levels of multiple deprivation and related health inequalities in some areas of the Trust geography, creates significant challenges for service delivery for the Trust as a health and social care provider and for service users accessing services.

Coterminous with the Trust geography are the 3 councils areas, Derry City and Strabane District Council, Fermanagh and Omagh District Council and, (for Limavady area) the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council.

Our services

We deliver services to our population from:

- 7 Hospitals
- 11 health centres and clinics

⁵ <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/deprivation/northern-ireland-multiple-deprivation-measure-2017-nimdm2017>

⁶ [Northern Ireland Inpatient Activity Statistics 2022/23 \(nisra.gov.uk\)](#)

- 9 children's homes
- 30 day centres
- 8 residential homes and 1 hostel
- 6 training centres
- 12 administration hubs
- As well as directly into thousands of people's homes.

Each year we deliver approximately

- 100,000 inpatient and day case admissions
- 20,000 operations
- 220,000 outpatient appointment
- 120,000 emergency department attendances
- 300,000 imaging tests
- 20,000 renal dialyses
- 4,000 births

Each year we provide support to people in our communities through approximately:

- 1,800 residential and nursing home placements
- Domiciliary care services to 4,500 people in their home
- £4.5 million annual spend on community equipment
- 245,000 Community allied health professional contacts (e.g. physiotherapy, occupational therapy)
- 17,000 social work contacts
- 390,000 community nursing and health visitor contacts
- 7,000 mental health assessment referrals

Our Changing Population Needs

The 2021 Census⁷ results indicate changes in the population in the council areas within the Trust catchment area:

Council Area	Percentage of Older People aged 65 and over within Council area		Percentage of Younger People Aged 0-14 within Council area	
	2011 Census	2021 Census	2011 Census	2021 Census
Derry City and Strabane District Council	12%	16%	21%	20%
Fermanagh and Omagh District Council	14%	18%	20%	20%
Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council	15%	19%	19%	19%

In Fermanagh and Omagh District Council the population is 116,812, up 3.2% from 2011. Derry City and Strabane District Council 2021 Census information indicates an increase in the total population by 2.1% to 150,756. Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council population has increased by 0.06% from 2011 to 141,746.

⁷ [Census Area Explorer \(nisra.gov.uk\)](https://www.nisra.gov.uk/)

The Trust works within a diverse society and we want to improve how we support the differing needs of those people and families who receive our services and of the staff who provide these services. We are committed to meeting our roles and responsibilities in the promotion of equality of opportunity, good relations and diversity in the services we offer and within the workforce that provides these services.

The 2021 Census identifies that 3.4% of Northern Ireland's population (65,600 people) belong to other ethnic groups. This is around double the 2011 figure (1.8% – 32,400 people) and four times the 2001 figure (0.8% – 14,300 people). All council areas within the Western Trust have recorded an increase in their ethnically diverse population in the past 20 years. Based on the 2021 Census, ethnic minority groups account for 1.4% of the population of Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council, 2.3% of Derry City & Strabane District Council and 1.7% of Fermanagh & Omagh District Council.

Within the Trust, we provide services and employ staff regardless of their age, dependent status, disability, gender, marital/civil partnership status, political opinion, race, religious belief and sexual orientation. We respect diversity and believe that by knowing our public and staff better we can provide better services.

The Western Trust wants to support people on their life journey and help our staff to provide appropriate care when required. We believe that this will be achieved by working in partnership with patients, service users, carers, families, staff, communities and other agencies to co-design and co-produce our services.

We want to safeguard and support the most vulnerable in society to achieve this we work in partnership to support and promote the health and social wellbeing of the communities we serve.

PART A – Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and Equality Scheme

Section 1: Equality and good relations outcomes, impacts and good practice

1 In 2023-24, please provide **examples** of key policy/service delivery developments made by the public authority in this reporting period to better promote equality of opportunity and good relations; and the outcomes and improvements achieved.

Please relate these to the implementation of your statutory equality and good relations duties and Equality Scheme where appropriate.

During 2023/24 we continued to rebuild our hospital and community services, to address the residual impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on our services. We continued to be committed to addressing health inequalities preparations which were introduced to support the development of an Integrated Care System in Northern Ireland. This initiative involves a range of partners who will be required to work together to develop approaches that will address inequalities in access, experience and outcomes for patients and service users.

As part of our approach to delivering on our strategic priorities we will continue to focus on our general surgical services to ensure effective, safe and sustainable surgical services are provided to meet the needs of the Western Trust population. During 2023/24, this will focus on the expansion of Omagh Hospital and Primary Care Complex as a regional elective day case and endoscopy centre while at the same time we will continue to develop the arrangement to support the Elective Overnight Care Centre at the South West Acute Hospital.

The past few years have been unprecedented in terms of impact on the population, services and our staff. The pandemic has brought to the fore the outstanding care the Trust provides for patients and the commitment of health and care staff in responding to the crisis. It also demonstrated the strength that comes from working with our partners and showed our willingness to adapt and innovate in order to maintain service delivery to those who need our services.

The pandemic has also shone a light on health inequalities and the growing waiting lists for elective care. Integrated Care Systems for population health planning have come increasingly into focus, which recognise the need to develop population health planning and management approaches that address inequalities in access, experience and outcomes, working with local partners across health, social care, and beyond.

Our Public Health work

Vaccine Programmes

The Vaccination Hubs are located within the 3 Acute Hospital with clinics throughout the programme reducing in line with demand. On average, there were 5 clinics per week held in Altnagelvin Hospital, 2 in OHPCC and 2 in SWAH. Clinics were arranged for evenings, early mornings, weekends and night duty to facilitate staff who work unsocial and flexible hours to have an opportunity to receive the vaccine.

In an attempt to increase uptake and ensure access, mobile clinics were held in targeted Trust facilities where a number of staff are based e.g. Waterside Hospital, Grangewood, Lakeview, Health Centres and Community facilities. Managers were notified in advance and asked to promote the programme with their staff and to encourage uptake. Opportunistic Vaccine

promotion had some impact in encouraging ad hoc vaccine uptake. Vaccinators were proactive in targeting hospital wards and departments to increase the opportunity for staff to avail of the programme. Inpatients within the Acute Hospitals were also identified and offered to be vaccinated. Walk in appointments were also encouraged.

The Trust continued to make full use of social media, its website, staff and user forums, local voluntary sector colleagues and statutory partners to ensure staff and service users are aware of key changes and contact information if they had queries/feedback etc. We are committed to ensuring information is available and accessible.

Spring 2023

In March 2023, the Department of Health announced that a spring COVID19 booster vaccination would be offered to those at a higher risk of infection. It was agreed that the HSC Trusts would be responsible for vaccinating the following cohort:

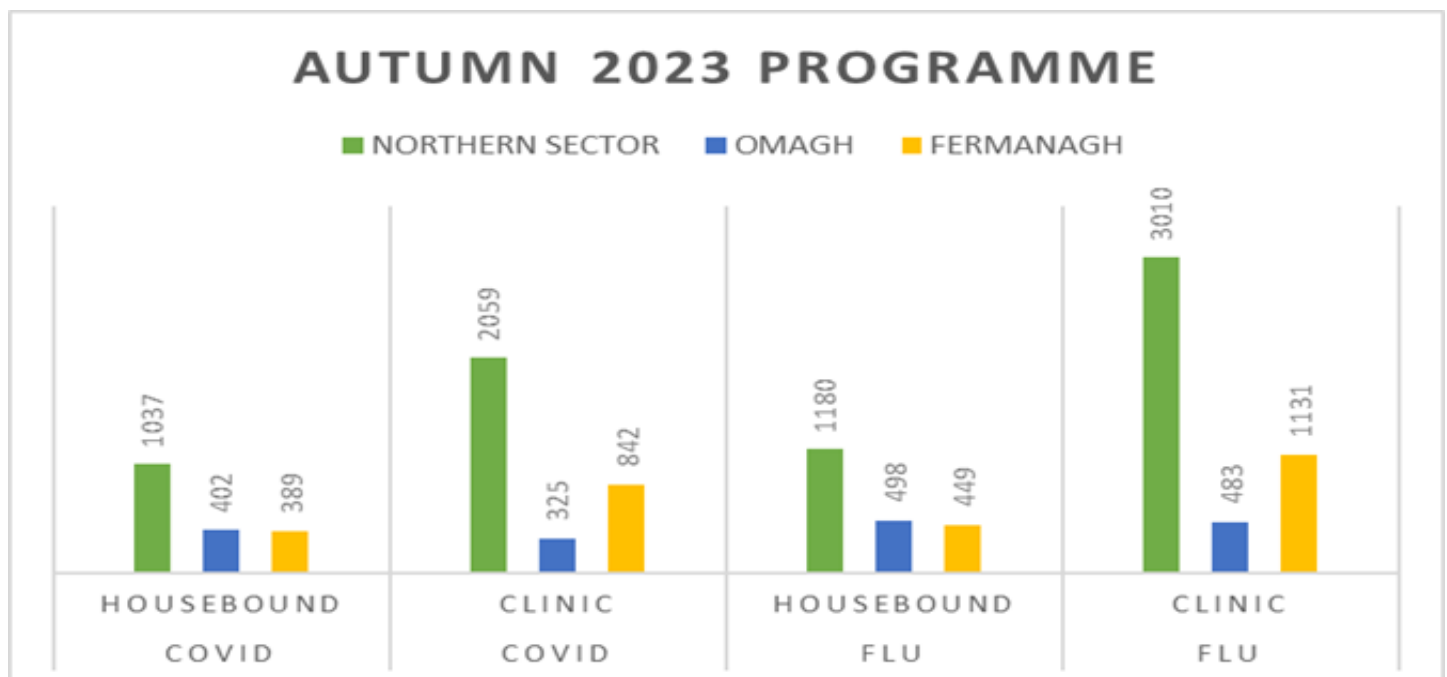
- persons 75+ years and housebound (referred by GP Practices);
- frontline HSC workers.

The programme ran from 15 April 2023 to the end of June 2023 with the highest uptake being from the housebound cohort with a total of 1363 vaccines administered Trustwide and 416 attending clinics within the acute sites.

Autumn 2023

The Autumn 2023 vaccination programme commenced on 18 September 2023 with the Vaccination Team being co-administered and provided to:

- frontline HSC workers including NIAS staff;
- those aged 12 to 15 years of age who are carers;
- those aged 12 to 15 years of age who are household contacts of someone who is immunosuppressed;
- those who are housebound (referred by GP Practices).



School Leavers Vaccinations

Regionally uptake remains lower than desired uptake rates and all Trusts are working closely with PHA and Education Authority Colleagues to raise awareness of the importance of Vaccinations to prevent illnesses in children, young people and young adults.

MMR Vaccine Catch Up Campaign

In January 2024, the PHA launched a mumps, measles and rubella (MMR) vaccine catch-up campaign in an effort to prevent the spread of the diseases. This came as a result of the rising numbers in parts of England and Europe. All HSC Trusts were asked to prepare for the roll-out of the campaign. A scoping exercise carried out by the PHA estimated 12,000 doses were required regionally. The PHA circulated a standard letter to the identified cohort inviting them to attend the Vaccination clinics for 1 or 2 doses of MMR.

WHST's Vaccination Team and School Nursing Team worked closely together to provide additional clinics to those identified. The clinics began on 10 February 2024 and ran until 6 April 2024. All clinics were funded by the PHA and offered to;

- those aged 6 to 25 years of age;
- frontline HSC workers;

The campaign was delivered via Saturday clinics facilitated by Vaccination Team and School Nursing Teams. 140 vaccines were administered to 6-25 year olds and 46 vaccines to 46 HSC staff members.

Mental Health

World Mental Health Day campaign 2023

WHST worked with HSC Trusts, PHA, Inspire and the NI Mental Health Champion to develop a 5 week regional campaign to link World Suicide Prevention Day on 10 September 2023 to World Mental Health Day on 10th October 2023. 'Walk and Talk' highlighted the benefits to mental wellbeing of getting outdoors, connecting with nature and other people. Campaign materials developed included a campaign booklet linking people to their local Walking Groups and highlighting the benefits to mental health; a training brochure with links to all available mental health and suicide prevention training, a downloadable poster to advertise local walks and examples of social media posts. A number of walks were organised with Trust staff and local communities. Walks were held in Altnagelvin, South West Acute Hospital (SWAH) and Tyrone and Fermanagh Hospital, Omagh, as well as Limavady, Ballymagorry and Enniskillen. All information is on the Minding Your Head website at [Walk and Talk 2023 | Minding Your Head](#)

Staff also worked with over 500 Ulster University students and staff at Magee campus, L'Derry, to support their mental wellbeing and connect with their peers, familiarise them with their new surroundings (if new to the college) and signpost to local services. Similarly, mental wellbeing sessions based on the Take 5 framework were delivered to around 110 Adult Learning Disability service users and their families in day care centre across the Trust area with groups taking part in pencil art, music matters sessions, arts and crafts and a Take 5 disco.

MANifest: Connecting men with Mind Fitness

Men are three times more likely to die by suicide than women and are less likely to seek help until they are in crisis. To address this, WHST has worked with the other HSC Trusts, Men's Action Network and Men's Health Forum in Ireland to develop a course for practitioners called

MANifest: Connecting Men with Mind Fitness. Following an extensive regional pilot, MANifest was launched at Men's Health Week 2023 by the Mental Health Champion for NI, Professor Siobhan O'Neill. Since then, as a result of a regional facilitator's training course, 21 people have been trained, 6 from the Western Health and Social Care Trust to roll out the course in their Trust areas, supported by a mentor programme and a range of training and support resources.

Men's Health Week 2023

128 people attended a conference to mark the week in the Great Hall, University of Ulster, Magee Campus. Keynote speaker was Professor Siobhan O'Neill who endorsed the need for men's mental health training. Breakout rooms informed attendees about local men's health projects including 'Plough On' for rural communities, the Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) social café in Derry and the HEAL care leavers project presented by male care leavers themselves. Other Men's Health Week activities included:

- A series of videos were created featuring men from across the Trust area talking about what the picture of health means to them. This featured on social media throughout the week along with social media posts and signposting to resources. [Click here](#) for videos.
- 'Self-Compassion for Guys' webinar delivered to 45 men
- 29 Western Trust staff trained in SafeTALK suicide prevention training to support men working in the Estates Department in the WHSCT.
- Stands during the week in South West Acute Hospital (SWAH) and Altnagelvin. 1,000 MAN manuals distributed.
- Events held in Drumquin, Strathroy, Brookborough, Donemana targeting over 100 men in these local areas.

Mental Health and the Online World

The Western Digital Safeguarding Steering Group addresses the emotional wellbeing of children and young people in the online world and is committed to delivering evidence-informed training and resources to make technology and the Internet a safer place for all. Evidence demonstrates that children and young people who are disadvantaged or vulnerable are more likely to experience harm online yet little is being done to address this despite a series of recent high profile media stories. As a result of a joint planning and a needs assessment conducted between the Northern and Western Trust Digital Safeguarding Groups, a series of 8 masterclasses were facilitated to mark Safer Internet Day 2024. These were delivered both online and face to face and included topics such as technology assisted abuse, Incel awareness, vulnerability online and how to manage it and key themes for parents. Around 170 attended all 7 sessions which were co-facilitated with partner organisations including Nexus NI, Bournemouth University, NSPCC and PSNI. Feedback has been excellent with practitioners saying they need more of this type of learning to keep up with new and emerging trends.

Digital Safeguarding Core Awareness has also been developed covering the key issues including those that are new and emerging such as the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI). 35 people attended training in Fermanagh House in June 2023 in partnership with Fermanagh and Omagh District Council, Policing and Community Safety Partnership (PCSP). Further training was delivered in the Lodge Hotel, Coleraine in October 2023 in partnership with Northern Health and Social Care Trust (NHSCT) and Causeway Coast & Glens PCSP. 53 practitioners attended and the session included input from National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC), Gamcare and the Dry Arch CyberPal project. Feedback from the sessions was extremely positive.

Our Regional Work

Regional screening template and toolkit

Regionally work has been carried out to develop a two part screening template that has been piloted in the Belfast Trust. The aim is to develop a user-friendly template for policy makers. There has been engagement with Equality Commission (ECNI) colleagues and suggested amendments have been incorporated and shared with the Commission for ratification. It was envisaged that this template would be adopted by the Trusts in collaboration with the Commission however, discussions continue.

Regional Disabled People's HSC Forum

Trusts continue to engage with, and attend, the Regional Disabled People's HSC Forum. The Forum consists of service users, Trust representatives, Department of Health, Department of Education, Department of Infrastructure, Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, Children's Law Centre and voluntary organisations.

Human Rights Training Resource for Residential Settings

The Trusts are working collaboratively to develop an online human rights training resource for Trust staff and partner organisations to increase awareness of human rights principles in the delivery of care in a residential setting.

Communication

The Trust continued to make full use of social media, its website, staff and user forums, local voluntary sector colleagues and statutory partners to ensure staff and service users are aware of key changes and contact information if they had queries/feedback etc. We are committed to ensuring information is available and accessible.

Accessible communication

From 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 the Western Trust had a total of 8,937 sessions of foreign language interpreting, via both face to face and telephone. The Top 5 languages used for interpreting sessions within the Trust remain unchanged: Polish, Arabic, Hungarian, Bulgarian and Lithuanian. Appendix 3 provides details of interpreting.

The Regional Remote Interpreting Service provides Sign Language Interpreting for people who are Deaf, deaf-blind and Hard of Hearing, both in person and virtually, across HSC Trusts and Primary Care services. The service is commissioned by the Department of Health's Strategic Planning and Performance Group (SPPG) and comprises of two elements:

Video Relay System: enables Deaf people to telephone any HSC service via a remote British Sign Language (BSL) or Irish Sign Language (ISL) interpreter. The Deaf person contacts the interpreter via the service app, using their smartphone/ tablet or via the secure video link/app using a computer. Once they are connected, the interpreter telephones the HSC service provider on the Deaf person's behalf

Video Remote Interpreting: enables deaf people to communicate fully in health and social care appointments, meetings and consultations, e.g. hospital and GPs etc. The Trust has a statutory obligation to ensure all health and social care communication is inclusive.

Communication support available via SLI include:

- Face to Face Sign Language Interpreting
- Remote Sign Language Interpreting
- Relay Interpreters
- Interpreters for deafblind people
- Lip speakers
- Electronic Notetakers
- Speech to Text Reporting

Work continues to support the implementation of the HSC Regional Remote Sign Language Interpreting Service, by promotion within the Deaf community both individually and in groups, and ensuring other services and professionals are aware of the service, how to meet DDA requirements and promote positive access for Deaf users within their service. Engagement continues with individuals to become confident in accessing the service independently, through face to face interpreting and use of new Sign Video service, requiring support with technology for some users.

Sensory Support staff offered training locally across the acute and community sector teams to support the transition to the new model of service delivery. This service will lead to better outcomes as it supports good communication throughout all pathways including the clinical assessment, treatment and care of deaf people across all our services.

The Sensory Support team continues to promote equality by having regular feedback with our services users, who have a range of sensory needs. This has allowed the service to provide a menu of support options including individual work to group work, based on feedback on the needs of those with hearing and sight loss. A number of groups were set up to support those in need of practical advice, emotional support and to seek to empower users fully.

Hearing Aid Users

Based on testimonials and service users concerns, a group has been established to support hearing aid users. This service has been reviewed with users, resulting in changes to content of the sessions, and a longer term support group has been established. This Group is user led, with a volunteer facilitator trained through the Trust's volunteer department. A regular Deaf user group offers support to access services and have their opinions heard on service delivery. A feedback questionnaire has been designed to encourage regular feedback and the promotion of care opinion which is now part of our information pack.

Provision of Foreign Language Interpreting

The Trust continues to provide a robust face-to-face and telephone interpreting service for patients/clients who do not have English as a first language. This is part of the Trust's commitment to ensuring and promoting equality of access to all our services. During the pandemic demand for Telephone interpreting increased, this service is provided by The Big Word. The top 5 languages in the Western Trust during the 2022-23 reporting period were:

1. Polish
2. Arabic
3. Hungarian
4. Bulgarian
5. Lithuanian

Good Relations

The Joint Equality, Good Relations and Human Rights Forum, established in partnership with HSC Trusts, Department of Health, ECNI, Human Right Commission (HRC) and Community Relations Council (CRC) continues to meet. The Forum promotes and encourages collaborative working and offers opportunities to share best learning and improve outcomes.

Good Relations Week 2023 ran from Monday 18 September to Sunday 24 September 2023 with the theme 'Together', with a mission to embody the spirit of togetherness celebrating peace-building and cultural diversity in its annual contribution to eradicating sectarianism, racism, and inequality across the region.

The Trust Ethnically Diverse Staff Network secured funding to coordinate two engagement events to celebrate Good Relations Week. An event was held in the Manor House Hotel, Enniskillen which 53 people attended. A further event was held in the Waterfoot Hotel, Derry/L'Derry with 119 people attending. The events have given more focus to the Network and the membership has grown to include not only our ethnically diverse staff but others who believe they can make a difference in this area.

The Western Trust remains committed to the promotion of good relations amongst people of different religious belief, race or political opinion. HSC Trusts produced a consistent, clear and unequivocal statement for the HSC Sector to outline our pledge to promote good relations amongst everyone - our patients, service users, carers, visitors and staff.



The Good Relations posters previously developed (see above) will continue to be prominently displayed throughout HSC facilities in Northern Ireland to remind everyone of this important commitment. The poster was also adapted to Easy read, see next page. Work to develop the Trust Good Relations Strategy will continue.

We will work together to make good relationships with everyone



We will welcome everyone.

We will make all Health and Social Care spaces welcoming and safe for everyone.



We will be fair and respectful.

We will see everyone as important.
We will treat other people in the way we would like to be treated.



We will treat everyone in a good way.

It does not matter

- how you look
- where you are from
- what language you speak
- who you vote for
- what religion you follow.

If someone is treated badly then we will do something about it.

Our Priority Programmes of Work

(refer to page 4 for information on WHSCT Strategic Priorities)

Strategic Priority: Delivering Value

Delivering Value Management Board (DVMB) continued as part of the new “Working Together for Better Care” programme of work, with revised terms of reference. The programme has continued to support financial breakeven by closing out the residual cash savings target and projects, oversee the in year savings plan for 2023/24 and further develop efficiency and productivity gains across the Trust. The board continues to oversee some 12 projects as well as new and enabling projects. DVMB leads on the data development agenda for the Trust.

Working Together Delivering Value was established in 2019 as the Trusts formal 3 year Financial Recovery programme. The aim of the programme was to report financial breakeven. The programme launched in 2019/20 with a number of tactical savings projects (95% were achieved) and with a number of cross cutting big programmes of work.

As a resulting of the pandemic, the Working Together Delivering Value programme extended into 2022/23, with a cash savings target of £2.9M remaining, which were subsequently achieved in 2023/24. Overall planned savings of £19.1M were achieved in 2023/24.

In July 2022 the Trusts Corporate Management Team agreed to the refresh of current structures for the oversight of strategic programmes of work, service efficiency and reform projects. Taking effect in September 2022 with the overarching theme of “Working Together for Better Care”, a new corporate executive board was established with the existing terms of reference for Delivering Value Management Board reviewed and refocused.

The Strategic Change Board focuses on:

- Influencing and implementing System-wide service reconfiguration to improve sustainability of services, as that impacts services in the Western Trust
- Delivering strategic DoH led reforms to services to improve access to, or safety of services, including the HSC Digital Strategy
- Focussing on DoH led areas of performance oversight/management, being able as a CMT to understand, challenge and support those areas where the Trust Services are “outliers”, enabling senior officers to articulate the improvement actions underway, and promote approaches regionally which are successful
- Strategic changes at a local level which have the potential to significantly shift the Trust’s capabilities or profile within HSCNI – City Deal, North/South collaboration (including Corporation and Working Together initiatives), Fermanagh and West Tyrone Pathfinder (others to be discussed)

A number of different programme boards were established to oversee individual projects as well as to take responsibility for managing the change or improvement:

1. Adult Integrated Care Board
2. Children Services Board
3. Digital Transformation Board
4. Elective Care Board
5. Integrated Care Systems Implementation Board

6. Mental Health and Disability Board
7. Unscheduled Care and Flow Board

Strategic Priority: Performance and Access to Services

Adult Mental Health and Disability Services

Adult Learning Disability (ALD) PPI Positive Action Initiative

The scheme has successfully supported an individual into permanent employment within the WHSCT support services department. They have advised that they enjoy their role and continue to be supported in this by the WHSCT Rossville Group. However, this test case has highlighted several challenges that are currently being worked through. These include support for individuals both during the process and upon taking up posts, induction and training and the working environment. Roles and responsibilities of steering group members and the involvement of the Trust Occupational Health Team have also been discussed. As a result of this the steering group has not yet moved to start further placements. Staff are also liaising with Belfast Trust for information on how their similar project was managed and are keen to apply any learning to the WHSCT initiative.

The WHSCT HR department have also been working to establish a new contract to allow service users to test work placements for a period of 6 weeks prior to a decision being made to progress to paid employment. WHSCT provided the Inter HSC/ NHS employee activity placement agreement in November 2023.

Western Trust Disability Steering Group (DSG)

Due to changes to staffing within Directorates and resources, the group, which includes representatives from the Community & Voluntary sector, the Patient Client Council and Trust Staff had not met. The Adult Mental Health and Disability Directorate have advised that the group will be reconvened and commence meetings in 2024.

Mental Capacity Act (NI) 2016

The Mental Capacity Act (MCA) (NI) 2016 provides a statutory framework for the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DOLs) and ensures that people who lack capacity to make a decision and are deprived of their liberty have legal safeguards in place. These patients and clients are some of the most vulnerable that the Trust care for, or where we support their care setting. The first phase of the Mental Capacity Act (NI) 2016 was implemented on 2nd December 2019. When fully implemented it will bring together mental capacity and mental health legislation under the one legislative framework to protect some of the most vulnerable people in our community.

Where a person lacks capacity and they are being deprived of their liberty, for example in a hospital, care home or daycentre, a Deprivation of Liberty safeguard must be applied for. The Trust has the duty to ensure that everyone who is currently deprived of their liberty has had their circumstances reviewed and that, where appropriate, the relevant safeguards are in place. The safeguards stipulate that an authorisation is required to legally sanction the deprivation. An authorisation may be sought through a Short Term Detention Authorisation, A Trust Panel Authorisation and an Extension Authorisation.

A Short Term Detention Authorisation is used in hospital settings only where there is examination, or examination followed by care and treatment. A Trust Panel Authorisation is sought to authorise any other Deprivation of Liberty outside of the hospital setting. The Panel is

made up of three senior professionals including those with a medical and social work background. An Extension Authorisation is a review and extension of a Trust Panel Authorisation.

In order to drive forward the implementation of MCA, the Trust has a Project Board in operation. The aim of the project is to direct and manage the implementation of the first phase of the Mental Capacity Act (NI) 2016 and to ensure that The Trust and its staff are compliant with statutory duties.

The Department of Health continues to support the implementation with regional guidance, updates and stakeholder engagement. Trust staff have access to regular updated guidance on the ongoing challenges in implementing the requirements under the Act ensuring that emergency provisions provide staff with protection from liability if they take all reasonable steps to implement the additional safeguards as soon as practically possible.

The Trust's MCA Team has a robust training plan in operation to ensure that training is made available to all Trust staff to assist with their understanding of their responsibilities and roles within the legislation and to develop and support the processes required for the implementation of the legislative requirements. Additional support is provided through managers' workshops, staff support sessions and bespoke training for those impacted by the MCA legislation."

The MCA team continue to develop the team. Since the last report we have recruited three new members of staff to support MCA within the acute setting. These staff include Mental Capacity Act Practitioners, and Mental Capacity Act Authorisers. In addition a new Mental Capacity Act lead has been recruited. The team continue to progress with recruitment in line with service need and Phase two of the implementation of the Deprivation of Liberty legislation.

MCA continues to be supported by DOH, SPPG and Western Trust Project Board. As we move closer to the implementation of Phase two of the legislation, the Western Trust will develop plans and structures to lead and develop this work.

Self-Directed Support (SDS)

The Trust continues to imbed the 'Self Directed Support' (SDS) personalisation agenda within its Programmes of Care, to ensure care is personalised and flexible to individual need. At the end of March 2024 the Trust had 7605 packages (for 7181 individuals – 424 mixed options) of care & support through this process, this consists of:

- 1537 Direct Payments.
- 4 Managed Budget
- 5183 Trust Arranged Services
- 881 Cost Neutral Cases

1204 packages ceased between April 2023 and the end of March 2024. The number of One-Off Shortbreaks for carers delivered through the SDS process continues to increase.

Recovery College

The Mental Health Strategy NI 2021-2031 acknowledges the central role the Recovery Colleges have in driving recovery focused organisational change – involving people with lived experience in every aspect of the service through co-production, the employment of peer staff. The Trust's Recovery College continues to offer free psycho-educational courses and workshops promoting meaningful recovery, self-management and hope. Courses are open to everyone with an

interest in mental health and wellbeing and are held throughout the Trust area. The venues chosen are neutral, taking into consideration socio-economic, political and cultural diversity ensuring inclusivity and equity for all. Courses may be of particular interest to those who experience mental health difficulties, their families and supporters, staff, students or individuals who want to know how to look after their mental health and emotional wellbeing.

With the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic and the associated restrictions, the Recovery College adapted to meet the needs of its students, initially with its Reaching-Out Campaign. This included, the production of a range of videos on mental health, in collaboration with various mental health professionals throughout the Trust. These are promoted on the Trust's social media channels and have continued to be a valuable permanent resource which can be accessed at any time on the Trust's YouTube channel and on the Recovery College page on the Trust's website.

The WHSCT has invested in the Virtual Recovery College Learning Management System providing a digital platform which offers free, flexible, online learning experience – providing a range of training and practical tools to support mental health and well-being. The Recovery College promotes and supports this digital platform as it offers accessibility to all in our community. This platform extends beyond any boundaries and is available to all who wish to.

The Recovery College continues to adapt, modernise and improve. The College intends to recruit a part-time Peer Educator in June 2024, enabling an increase in the number of students engaging with and to broaden the scope of our work. Attendance at the courses/workshops have increased steadily. The College has also forged links with the community and rural organisations to foster strong connections and offer services.

Primary Care and Older Peoples Services

Care at Home Support Team (CHST)

The Trusts CHST have enhanced local knowledge of the homes within the Western Trust area, their managers and their staff through regular contact and engagement. The Team have developed strong relationships with the Care Homes through involvement and engagement, and continue as a single point of contact. The CHST provide support to care homes including in relation to outbreaks and provide advice on relevant policies and updated PHA guidelines. The CHST are the link with Care Homes, the Trust and the Public Health Agency (PHA).

The CHST carry out a training needs analysis in each of the homes and then provide face to face training on a wide range of clinical education topics. They deliver tailored clinical training at the request of individual care homes where a specific need has been identified, through audit and risk assessment. CHST enhance core competencies and are building the confidence of care home staff through a programme of practice development. They also work in collaboration with the Palliative Care Project in the facilitation of training.

The Team also signpost and link the homes to Allied Health Professionals within the Trust to ensure the ongoing needs of residents continue to be addressed and therefore maintaining resident safety and prevention of safeguarding issues. They complete a daily analysis of the Emergency Department (ED) attendance of residents who attend ED departments in the Trust with follow up advice/training when required.

The CHST hold Business Continuity Meetings monthly with care home managers and invite guest speakers to discuss their role and initiatives they are involved within care homes e.g. Discharge planning team/ Palliative care and Hospital at Home Team. The Team are involved in Quality Improvement work on Falls Prevention and End of Life Care Pathway in Care Homes pilot.

Primary Care Multi-Disciplinary Teams (MDTs)

Since July 2018 the Trust has been working in partnership with Derry GP Federation to implement Primary Care Multi-Disciplinary Teams across 27 GP Practices. These teams provide direct access, in a Primary Care setting, to Physiotherapy, Mental Health and Social Work support to the patient population served by the Derry GP Federation. Additional Health Visiting and District Nursing staff are also provided through the model. These professionals are increasing capacity in General Practice by seeing patients who would otherwise be seen by a GP.

To date, a total of 132 MDT staff are in post across the professional groups for Social Work, First Contact Physio, Mental Health, Health Visiting and District Nursing including 6 professional leads. The MDT Mental Health Practitioners and their Lead are employed by the Derry GP Federation. All other staff are employed by the Trust.

Work undertaken in the reporting period by MDTs includes:

Work with Older people

The service provision for older people had a focus on promoting emotional, mental and physical wellbeing, maintaining mobility, independence and safety in the community, building resilience and support networks, as well as educational awareness of how older people can manage their own health and wellbeing.

The social workers in GP practices have provided a range of group based physical activity opportunities for older people. These are available in both urban and rural areas. Relevant training has been provided to staff to enable them to facilitate groups safely, taking into consideration the needs of the older population.

Educational workshops were planned and facilitated, involving community and voluntary stakeholders in many of the different localities – raising awareness of age related issues and how these may be managed and addressed.

In recognition of isolation and loneliness disproportionately affecting older people, and weakening support networks that come with age, the team has now organised and facilitated a series of Chat Tea Trains in partnership with Translink. Promoting connection, and social opportunity, those over 65 have been able to avail of a day trip to the North coast. Local schools, a theatre group and the U3A have provided entertainment. Feedback has indicated that for some, this has been their only social outlet /contact with others, which they have looked forward to. Organic friendships and network of supports have been developed, and via the social work team and meeting others, awareness has been developed of available community based supports. Sharing our learning and feedback from this initiative, at the most recent event, we joined up with the MDT team in the Northern Trust, working together on this initiative, so that service users in both regions benefited.

Intergenerational Projects

Several Inter-generational projects have been delivered – bringing together older people identified as being lonely or isolated in the community with local primary schools. Feedback from the older people has indicated that this provided a sense of hope, care and something to look forward to. The schools involved highlighted that it promoted a sense of citizenship among the children, empathy, a greater level of respect and value for older people.

Social/reminiscence cafes have been set up in collaboration with local businesses. Attendees have highlighted how it has created opportunity for the development of support networks, opportunities to socialise that they ordinarily would not have, and brief respite for carers. For those service users with dementia, they and their loved ones have spoken of the benefits this provision had to their relationship – providing positive communication and an outlet opportunity.

Work with people who have disabilities

MDT Social workers in Primary Care focus on the social determinants of health and wellbeing, and strive to promote inclusion, access to support services or resources, wellness and opportunity for participation. Advocacy is key aspect of the day-to-day role.

All of the activities available for older people are also available for those with disabilities. Programmes are inclusive and have been made available to patients with dementia, sight loss and wheelchair users. Appropriate risk assessments and supports are put in place in order to ensure meaningful participation.

In order to improve service provision, address issues of discrimination and with regards to access, the social work service within GP practices arranged deaf awareness and basic sign language training for practice reception staff. Additionally, hearing loop systems were installed in practices. Training was also provided to social work staff from the Sensory Support Service, and the use of technology and Apps highlighted to promote engagement and access. Computer tablets have been purchased to support the use of technological apps and communication.

Functional Neurological Disorder

Social work staff identified a number of patients and their carers who were struggling to manage their symptoms of Functional Neurological Disorder, the associated impact upon their everyday life, and issues of stigma. Combining lived and professional knowledge, training was delivered to social work staff, and a scoping exercise undertaken across all of the practices to establish the level of potential need. Patients expressed that they and their families would benefit from additional support with regards to symptom management and building resilience with regards to the impact the condition has had on their everyday life. In response a 6 week programme has been developed focusing on peer support, education on the condition itself, symptom management and resilience building. The programme is being delivered by a social worker, with contributions from neuro physiotherapy, a psychotherapist, and the Trust carers' coordinator.

Carers

In response to carer stress regularly presenting as an issue in practice a number of carers support groups have been established across practices to strengthen resilience, capacity and the health and wellbeing of carers. Social workers have also engaged with Western Trust Carers Co-ordinator and organised monthly carers support hubs throughout the Trust area.

Ethnicity

A Health Visiting Group has been established in partnership with the North West Migrants Forum to provide targeted support for refugee, asylum seeker and migrant families. This is a valuable joint initiative which aims to support cultural diversity and recognises the distinct challenges faced by this specific population in Derry. The Health Visiting Group incorporates 'stay and play' sessions for children, baby massage classes, and bespoke health visiting information sessions to meet service-user needs. This service, not only supports infant and parental well-being, but also play a pivotal role in their successful integration into our community and directly targets inequalities faced by migrant, refugee, and asylum seeker families. By providing tailored support and resources, we aim to ensure that these families have the same opportunities for health and well-being as the local population. The focus on collaboration and community involvement also fosters a more inclusive atmosphere, promoting understanding and integration across different cultural groups within Derry. In addition, health visitors and MDT Social Workers are working in partnership to provide culturally enriching experiences for the refugee, asylum seeker and migrant families through targeted funding.

Geographical isolation

Some of the rural localities within the Trust area have limited support services in the community for families, or are outside of the geographical remit to access the likes of Surestart services. In response the practice social workers have liaised with their health-visiting colleagues and community partners to plan and facilitate parenting support groups, parent and toddler groups to provide parenting support, education and stimulation opportunities.

Health Visiting

Health visiting is involved in meeting the health, development and wellbeing needs of refugee children and their families. The Derry/Strabane council area within the Trust is one of the main areas for the dispersal of Asylum seekers with a projected number of 600 +. Health Visitors are working in collaboration with the MDT SWs to plan how to meet their needs.

Parenting Support

Social workers and health visitors have developed a range of programmes and initiatives across various practices offering support and advice for parents /babies /children, particularly in geographically isolated areas /areas outside of Surestart remit. This has included rhyme time, breastfeeding support, infant massage, education regarding child development, sleep, routines, managing behaviour etc. Also an opportunity to connect other parents who may face isolation. Community Cuppa is a weekly parenting group facilitated by social workers and health visitors that continues to grow with approximately 30 attendees per week, this group has been running for over 12 months, and is open to patients from all practices, feedback is extremely positive.

Health Improvement, Equality and Involvement Services

Western Trust Diabetes Prevention Programme

The Diabetes Prevention Project (DPP) in the Western Trust is part of a regional Northern Ireland Diabetes Prevention Programme funded by PHA which has been established to help delay or prevent the onset of Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus (T2DM). The DPP programme supports the 'Health and Wellbeing 2026: Delivering Together agenda. DPP as it is a universal project and is open to anyone that presents to their GP with high glucose levels and fall within the following parameters:

- Adults 18+

- Not pregnant at referral
- Blood glucose level in the past 3 months that indicates pre-diabetes
- (HbA1c 42-47 mmol/mol. FPG 5.5 – 6.9mmol/l)
- No subsequent diagnosis of T2DM

DPP is aimed at individuals who have been identified as being pre diabetic by their GP or Practice Nurse and are referred to the programme via the GP Clinical Care Gateway (CCG) system. Central to the programme is education and awareness raising around nutrition, physical activity and behaviour change to encourage participants to adopt a lifestyle behaviour change in order to reduce the risk of developing T2DM.

DPP is outcome based. The key outcome is Diabetes prevention i.e. to reduce/ maintain HbA1c levels for participants by the end of each programme (HbA1c results are verified). Secondary outcomes include weight loss and increased physical activity, through the adoption of healthier long term behaviours using a lifestyle approach.

Between February 2019 to 31 March 2024- 3,245 people have been referred on to the DPP. Not all referrals translate into individuals availing of offered programmes. GPs are noting significant changes and improvement to their patients and are very supportive of the DPP.

145 registered onto programmes, 78 individuals engaged with their programme (April 2023 to March 2024) of which 45 completed between 1-10 sessions, 33 completed 11+ of their 18 session over a 9 month period. Currently of those who participated:

1. 15% are no longer in the pre-diabetic range (12 individuals)
2. 26% reduced their HbA1c pre-diabetic figure (20 individuals)
3. 33% did not progress towards T2DM (26 individuals) this was the initial objective of the project. Point 1&2 exceeded expectations
4. 26% increase in range (20-individuals)

In summary 87% of those who participated in the DPP greatly increased their health outcomes and reduced their risk of developing T2DM through attending the programme (353 individuals). Evidence of success has also been reflected by participant's weight loss. Collectively participants have reduced their weight by 865Kg = equivalent to 136 stone.

In addition to the benefits for participation delaying the onset of T2DM has positive long-term effects on the financial implications for the health service. In addition, research shows that reducing T2DM further reduces the risk of other associated complications such as, cardiovascular disease, stroke, amputation, high cholesterol and hypertension. Feedback from participants has been extremely positive.

Autism Social Cafes

The Trust Child Development Intervention Coordinator within the Health Improvement Equality and Involvement Department arranged a series of events throughout the Trust area which were delivered in partnership with local statutory services and community and voluntary organisations. The events were for parents and carers of children of all ages, who have:

- an autism diagnosis
- are awaiting an assessment

- are displaying early indicators (suggesting their child may be neurodiverse)

Significant numbers of parents and carers, as well as representatives from within the Trust and relevant organisations attended. Each event featured information stalls and several services and organisations facilitated informal workshops. The events were an opportunity for parents and carers to meet and learn what programmes and services are available to them and to meet others who are also raising neurodiverse children.

Community Food and Nutrition Team

The Community Food and Nutrition Team (CFNT) works as an integral part of the Public Health Dietitians Group (PHDG) NI which has representation from all 5 Health and Social Care (HSC) Trusts and is commissioned by Public Health Agency (PHA) to address key public health nutrition priorities.

CFNT has continued to work collaboratively with PHDG to develop and expand the Public Health Dietitians YouTube Channel, which houses a range of evidence-based nutrition information which is free of charge and accessible to everyone. In 2023-24, the channel has been viewed 25,800 times. Following a scoping exercise with the general public, the following new content has now been created and uploaded to the channel:

- Weaning (short video series)
- Eatwell Guide overview
- Nutrition during pregnancy and breastfeeding (short video series)
- Caffeine and energy drinks videos

During the reporting period, all community nutrition education tutor training has been reinstated across the WHSCT (Cook it!, Food Values, Solid Start, Making the Most of Your Slow Cooker).

A new project to address rural needs saw the PHDG partner with the regional Farm Families Health Checks team at Balmoral Show from 10 -13 May 2023 to offer service users nutrition and dietary advice as a result of finding out they had a health condition during the health check (high blood pressure / cholesterol).

A new regional training course 'Food and Health Essentials' and a supporting physical resource has been developed this year, following surveys and focus groups conducted with staff and volunteers from Community & Voluntary sector organisations. Tutor training includes a module on ethnic minority diets and best practice guidance when working with these groups to promote key nutrition messaging.

Link to Wellbeing Project

Launched in November 2022 and funded by National Health Service (MHS) Charities, this project aims to support individuals waiting for orthopaedic surgery to maximise their physical, mental and emotional wellbeing in preparation for surgery.

The project is led by the Trust Health Improvement, Equality and Involvement Department in partnership with the Trauma and Orthopaedic service and 12 local Community and Voluntary Sector organisations who will deliver 8 week community based 'Prehabilitation' style programmes to individuals on waiting lists for hip or knee replacement surgery.

These programmes will be delivered throughout the geography of the Trust and will cover a number of different topics to include; movement and mobility, healthy eating, pain management, peer support, mental health and condition management. In 2023/24 19 programmes were delivered with 238 Patients attending

Engaging with Partners:

Pathfinder/Integrated Care Systems: The Pathfinder project established the premise of working in partnership with many stakeholders to build a shared consensus of the population health plan for accessible and integrated care in the Fermanagh and West Tyrone area.

Whilst the work of the Pathfinder Project commenced within the Southern Sector of the Trust, the forthcoming roll out of Integrated Care Systems (ICS) in Northern Ireland in 2024/25 will see this model of stakeholder engagement, involvement and partnership working; coupled with population health data implemented across the Western Area.

The ethos of an ICS is to bring together a range of partners to plan health, social care, and other services, to improve health and wellbeing and reduce health inequalities in Northern Ireland. The ICS NI is a single planning system for health and social care in NI, with three core aspects:

1. Working locally in partnership with others, including partners beyond the HSC, to identify local needs, agree priorities and identify what collective action should be taken to effect change. To support this, five Area Integrated Partnership Boards (AIPBs) with local planning responsibilities will be established.
2. Working regionally in partnership to support the work of the AIPB, identify areas for regional collaboration and support shared learning.
3. Applying this integrated approach in practice, with the Department of Health's Strategic Planning and Performance Group (SPPG), supported by the Public Health Agency (PHA), planning and managing integrated care and services across the system, informed by local and regional collaboration.

The proposed membership of the each AIPB will include representation from across organisations and sectors which have a role in the health and social wellbeing of the population of Northern Ireland. This includes Health and Social Care Trusts and primary care, local councils, the voluntary and community sector, and service users and carers. A recruitment exercise has just been completed by the Department of Health and the intended establishment of the Western Area AIPB will be late Autumn 2024.

The WHSCT continues to prepare itself as an organisation for the implementation of ICS. Close working relationships has been maintained with Fermanagh and Omagh District Council through Community Planning endeavours and the Integrated Wellbeing Network; with Senior Trust representation included in the membership of the Integrated Wellbeing Network Management Board. Mechanisms are in place for Derry City and Strabane District Council through the Community Planning Partnership and various workstreams.

Health Improvement Equality and Involvement Work:

The Health Improvement Equality and Involvement (HIEI) Department within the Trust co-ordinates and supports projects in areas identified as 'Neighbourhood Renewal' (NR). These

projects are funded by the Department for Communities and administered by the HIEI Dept. in partnership with local community organisations. The Neighbourhood Renewal Projects use a Community Development approach to involve local people in the decisions and actions that affect their health. The projects bring together representatives from the community, voluntary and statutory sectors to improve health and wellbeing and reduce health inequalities within the Neighbourhood Renewal areas. In total 122 Health Initiatives were delivered Trustwide within the NR areas with 4,206 people benefiting from health interventions.

Trust staff have worked alongside Derry City and Strabane District Council, Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council, Fermanagh and Omagh District Council and community and voluntary groups on various initiatives including e.g. to promote campaigns e.g. Digital Safeguarding Core Awareness, Positive Ageing Month. Health Literacy (HL) continues to be reported on within the Western Trusts 3 local community plans (Derry City and Strabane District Council/Fermanagh and Omagh District Council/Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council) as well as the Making Life Better framework.

The Trust worked alongside partners to develop a brochure of events and activities for over 50s, some of which are available all year round. We have also continued to work with Community and Voluntary Groups as detailed throughout this report, including to issue small grants to promote physical activity and reduce loneliness and social isolation among older people. Work continues with HSC Colleagues to improve the Health and Wellbeing of the population we serve. We have worked with all partners on a number of initiatives including e.g. Loneliness Strategy, Mental Health, Mens Health Week and Link to Wellbeing.

Community Support Derry City and Strabane District Council (DCSDC) Area

The Trust supported DCSDC to establish an older persons reference group to ensure older peoples voices are heard and listened to in the development of services/initiatives in the Derry and Strabane Council area. A number of events have been held throughout the Council area including on falls prevention and to promote Mental Health. HIEI supports the Age Friendly Officer in the council area with ongoing work relating to age friendly initiatives including the development of their Age Friendly Plans and most recently the DCSDC Over 50s Reference Group. Community Relations staff from the council attended the Ethnically Diverse Staff Network event in Derry in September 2023.

Community Support Fermanagh & Omagh District Council (FODC) Area

FODC have taken the lead to implement community health and wellbeing plans in each of the 7 DEA areas. Several communities have now developed their plans which include health checks and community pharmacy projects, Trust staff continue to support and advise. Other areas have also promoted programmes. A number of events have been held throughout the Council area including on age friendly initiatives, falls prevention and to promote Mental Health. Community Relations staff from the council attended the Ethnically Diverse Staff Network event in Enniskillen in September 2023 and continue to liaise with the group.

Older People

The Health Improvement department continues to offer support, guidance and resources to help older people stay healthy and independent for as long as possible. The Western Trust worked alongside lead partners including Derry City and Strabane District Council, Causeway Coast and Glens council, Fermanagh and Omagh District Council, the Public Health Agency and numerous Community and Voluntary Sector Organisations to promote the annual Positive Ageing Month across the West during the month of October 2023. The WHSCT worked

alongside partners to develop a brochure of events, activities and programmes for older people where they can receive advice to help keep them active, healthy and connected to their local communities. In addition to providing a full month of packed activities for older people, the Western Trust issued 70 small grants to C&V partners amounting to £28,612.95 to promote physical activity and reduce loneliness and social isolation among older people. Additionally, the Health Improvement Officer supports the Age Friendly Officer in the local three council area with ongoing work relating to age friendly initiatives including the development of their Age Friendly Plans and most recently the Derry City and Strabane District Council Over 50s Reference Group.

Falls Prevention

The Health Improvement Team has developed a number of Falls Prevention resources to aid Health Professionals in reducing the number of falls in people aged 65+. These include the Falls Action Plan, Falls are Preventable Booklet, Falls Checklist and the Up and About Plan. These have been disseminated to a range of Health Care Professionals and Health Improvement Professionals in the Western Trust area. These resources are also provided to Community and Voluntary Sector organisations which work with older people including South West Age Partnership (SWAP), University of the Third Age (U3A) and the Healthy Living Centres and to older people and their families/ carers through various health fairs and older people's events. Additionally, the Health Improvement Officer has updated the Western Trusts Health Improvement Department website providing members of the public with an array of falls resources and information.

In 2023/2024 the Health Improvement Officer delivered 17 falls awareness sessions to approximately 299 older people across the Western Trust area. The sessions covered a range of topics regarding falls including falls statistics, why falls occur, practical measures to prevent falls, fear of falling, and what to do if you have a fall. Particular focus is placed on staying active and maintaining/improving strength and balance, maintaining a healthy diet and creating safe home environments. The Western Falls Prevention Steering Group has continued to meet on a quarterly basis and provides a platform for sharing best practice and encouraging collaborative working among key staff working in the falls prevention area, including WHSCT staff, Community and Voluntary Sector staff and the local district councils (age friendly officers and home safety staff).

Traveller Health and Wellbeing Programme

The Traveller Health and Wellbeing Programme (THWBP) has continued to engage and build relationships with Travellers across the Trust area. Census 2021 data show there are 2609 people (0.14% of the population) who identify as Irish Traveller resident in Northern Ireland.^[1] It is likely that these figures are an underestimate of the number of Irish Travellers resident in Northern Ireland. 20% of all Irish Travellers living in NI live in the Western Trust area (Fermanagh & Omagh (293) + Derry City & Strabane (218) = 511).

The Traveller Health and Wellbeing Programme delivered 10 Traveller Cultural Awareness sessions facilitated by Donegal Travellers Project between April 2023 and March 2024. A total of 217 individuals completed sessions drawn from a broad range of statutory, community and voluntary agencies. The sessions provide individuals with the opportunity to learn about Traveller culture and how they can provide a more culturally aware and inclusive service. Two of the sessions were exclusively offered to Trust staff.

^[1][Census 2021 main statistics for Northern Ireland \(phase 1\) | Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency \(nisra.gov.uk\)](https://www.nisra.gov.uk/census2021-main-statistics-for-northern-ireland-phase-1)

THWBP staff work hard to engage and build effective relationships with Travellers across the Western Trust area. In developing programmes staff are guided by their discussions with Travellers. Meaningful participation is an integral part of the development of the Traveller Health and Wellbeing Programme (THWBP) and best achieved when effective Traveller led structures can support Traveller representation in relevant decision making bodies both at a local and regional level. To this end the THWBP together with the Traveller Action Group have been working towards the establishment of Traveller led organisations in Derry & Omagh in recent years.

A successful women's conference was held in Derry in March 2023. This was attended by some 65 women drawn from across Ireland including 15 from Derry/Strabane. Many issues were discussed, education, accommodation, employment, discrimination, health, family etc. A report of the event was published within the reporting period and will inform future work of the THWBP. Arising from the conference a group of women from Derry met to plan the delivery of a programme of activities. Work will continue to support the establishment of Traveller led organisations. The programme is also engaged with regional efforts to build Traveller participation through the Regional Traveller Health Forum and The Executive Office Thematic group.

Improvement Through Involvement as a strategic priority

WHSCCT PPI Strategy & Action Plan

In 2023/2024, the Western Trust Patient and Public Involvement (PPI) Involvement Team invited service users, carers, staff, local community and voluntary sector organisations and the wider public to participate and collectively review and help co-produce the new PPI involvement Plan. This Action Plan will ensure that we are embedding the 5 standards of involvement across all directorates and programmes of work within the Trust.

Work plan was provided to the "Improvement through Involvement" committee in March 2023 which demonstrates how the five standards for involvement have been embedded throughout the Trust at all levels of the organisation. This takes into account involvement within our governance structures, PPI training, monitoring and opportunities to get involved.

Health Literacy (HL) continues to be reported on within the Western Trusts 3 local community plans (Derry City and Strabane District Council/Fermanagh and Omagh District Council/Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council) as well as the Making Life Better framework. Health Literacy will remain a priority going forward.

The Involvement Manager has met with PHA, DOH and other trusts to share knowledge and practice on current HL work. Involvement Lead sits on Regional HL group (originally established by Western Trust, HIEI team but now passed to Department of Health. Plans for 2024/25 to re-establish links and set up a new Western Trust HL steering group moving forward. Actions currently being developed include training and skills for staff and community sector, service user / carer involvement in development of resources.

Involvement Clinics

The Involvement Team offer monthly involvement clinics open to all WHSCCT staff to enquire and gain information on involvement related issues and avail of practical PPI support and guidance, utilising a drop in / informal approach. 10 clinics took place over 2023/24.

Involve Training & Support

In March 2023, the Involvement Team delivered a pilot PPI/ Involvement training session to the HIEI Department. A pre and post questionnaire was conducted with an invite to a focus group to provide feedback on the training. Future sessions were co-designed based on feedback and input.

The Involvement Team facilitated a number of PPI/ Service User and Carer Involvement training sessions in 2023/2024 that will give an understanding of involvement and how it can be easily implemented into your work. The training sessions explore the benefits of involvement, levels of involvement and methods that can be used to help involve service users, carers and staff.

A number of staff throughout the Trust, completed Data Collection information sessions and Engage/ Involve/ Co-Production E Learning Modules. As a result there has been an increase in the monitoring returns to capture PPI/ Involvement activities.

Plans to work with Trust colleagues and service user / carer reps on a regional PPI training suite have begun and it is hoped the Involvement Team will be in a position to offer a more regional, stream lined training programme/s in 2023/24. We continue to promote a hybrid approach to training offering both face to face and online options.

Service User Involvement Opportunities, Training and Support

In 2023/2024 the Involvement Team provided PPI/ Involvement training sessions for Trust staff. From April 2023, 93 Trust staff participated in these information sessions. These sessions:

- Gave an understanding of Service User and Carer Involvement and how it can be easily implemented into your work
- Explored the benefits of involvement for service users, carers, staff and the Trust
- Discussed methods and levels of involvement

167 staff completed Engage/ Involve/ Co-Production e-learning Modules. As a result there has been an increase in the monitoring returns with 81 involvement surveys completed in 2023/2024.

The Involvement Team deliver a minimum of 10 PPI Training sessions each year, with the majority delivered face to face. Trust Staff are regularly advised of training available via frequent Trust Comms and team meetings.

Equality Team Training

Training delivered/arranged by the Equality Team from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024:

HSC Remote Sign Language Interpreting Service (online): Facilitated by Sign Language Interactions this training demonstrates how staff can access a remote interpreter to support their clinical assessment, treatment and care of Deaf people 22 staff attended the 3 sessions of this training..

Disability Awareness Training: Employers for Disability NI EFDNI have resumed face-to-face training. 3 sessions were held during the reporting period with 43 staff in attendance. The training covers Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) overview and case law with a brief overview of legislation followed by case study exercise using DDA cases. A variety of learning methods are used including an exercise on Language etiquette and Disability awareness training video

clips. There is also an overview of five key disability areas; hearing loss, visual disability, learning difficulty and disability, physical disability and hidden disability, including mental health. Information is provided on the nature and extent of disability, as well as good practice in interacting with people with disabilities.

‘Making a Difference’ E-learning programme: ‘Making a Difference’ is a regional interactive programme tailored specifically to the healthcare setting and aims to ensure that all staff realise the importance of their part in creating an inclusive and welcoming environment for all colleagues and service users. The programme is provided in two modules – a general module applicable to all HSC staff and an additional module for those with management responsibilities. The modules are scenario-based to capture a range of practical and contemporary equality and diversity issues across employment and service provision. The programme is mandatory for staff within the Western Trust.

‘Making a Difference’ is supported by a regional Equality Training manual for staff which complements the programme. Staff can download a copy of the training manual via the programme. The programme is also complemented by a suite of HSC Discovering Diversity awareness modules, which all staff are also encouraged to complete. The aim of the training is to show how to make a difference by:

- Promoting positive attitudes to diversity
- Ensuring they treat everyone with respect and dignity
- Behaving in a way that is in keeping with HSC values and equality and human rights law

Uptake of the Making a Difference E-learning Programme training continues to increase, with a total of 3,019 staff members completing this training between 1st April 2023 and 31st March 2024. The Trust’s Compliance figures for this training has shown a 12% increase (from 53% to 65%).

Deaf Awareness Training: This training, delivered by the British Deaf Association (BDA) has returned to face-to-face sessions. During this reporting period 4 sessions with 29 participants were held.

Visual Awareness Training: This training has returned to face-to-face and is delivered throughout the Trust by Eyecare Liaison Officers from RNIB. This training provides staff with skills and knowledge to ensure that service users with a visual impairment receive a high level service. 3 sessions were held with 50 participants.

Sexual Orientation Awareness Training and Transgender Awareness sessions

Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity session was delivered by the Regional and Western Health and Wellbeing Officer from the Rainbow Project. In February 2024, 14 people attended including Trust staff and external partners. There was a Q and A session afterwards. The Session ran virtually via zoom. The Session aims:

- To provide clarity around appropriate language and terminology
- To raise awareness of the key barriers to accessing support and services
- To raise awareness of key health inequalities
- To raise awareness of the provision of support services for LGBTQIA+ people and their families
- To increase understanding about the practical improvements that can be made for practice

- To gain more confidence in supporting LGBTQIA+ people
- To raise awareness of the specific issues related to gender identity and gender dysphoria

Traveller Cultural Awareness Training: The Traveller Health and Wellbeing Programme delivered 10 Traveller Cultural Awareness sessions facilitated by Donegal Travellers Project between April 2023 and March 2024. A total of 217 individuals completed sessions drawn from a broad range of statutory, community and voluntary agencies. The sessions provide individuals with the opportunity to learn about Traveller culture and how they can provide a more culturally aware and inclusive service. Two of the sessions were exclusively offered to Trust staff.

Working with Interpreters Training (Foreign Language/Sign Language): this training is delivered on an on-going basis throughout the Trust. The training aims to improve the experience of patients/clients who do not have English as a first language or who have a hearing impairment. The Equality Team also offers the training to specific teams/units, as per requests. The Working With Interpreters Training is supported by Trust Communication Support Guidelines, which contain information for staff on accessing Foreign Language and Sign Language Interpreters, and Written Translation.

Equality staff continue to work closely with the Business Services Organisation (BSO) who manage the Northern Ireland Health and Social Care Interpreting Service (NIHSCIS) (face-to-face interpreting provider). Equality staff worked with the NIHSCIS Manager to ensure that Interpreters were able to receive vaccines at Trust clinics.

Equality Screening Training: This training is delivered by Equality staff to Senior Managers and their staff who are involved in developing policies/proposals/strategies and implementing changes to services. While no formal sessions of this training were completed during the reporting period, one to one support and advice to managers increased on specific pieces of service change work.

EQIA TRAINING: the Equality Team offer specialist support and training to staff within Directorates who are involved in EQIAs/consultation exercises, on request. 6 sessions completed for this period with 31 participants.

Strategic Priority: Quality and Safety

Dementia Service Improvement in the community

Dementia pre diagnosis programme

In keeping with the Northern Ireland Dementia Care pathway 2018 all individuals awaiting an assessment and their carers should be given pre diagnosis information and support. Older Peoples Mental Health Service in partnership with the community sector developed and facilitated a programme in 2023/24 which aimed to do this.

The Dementia Engaged and Empowered in Derry & Strabane (DEEDS) project were commissioned to provide the 6 week pre diagnosis programme in L'Derry, Strabane and Limavady. A total of 30 carers and 30 people awaiting a dementia diagnosis participated in the 3 programmes.

Dementia post diagnosis drop in sessions

In 2023/24 post diagnosis sessions were delivered for people newly diagnosed with dementia and their families. These took place in L'Derry and Enniskillen. The WHSCT dementia navigators facilitated the monthly sessions. They provided education on the condition and practical tips on how to live well with dementia in the community. They provided information on local community based services. People with dementia and their carers were given the opportunity to come together with others in the same situation to share experiences and learn from each other. Local organisations were invited to each session to promote their services e.g. Alzheimers Society, home safety officers, fire service, Dementia NI etc.

Dementia training for university nursing and paramedic students

The Dementia Service Improvement lead for the community was asked by the school of nursing and paramedics in the University of Ulster at Magee to deliver dementia training to their first year students. Many of these students when qualified will have direct involvement in the care treatment and support offered to people living with a dementia and their carers across a wide range of healthcare settings. Training took place in December 2023 for paramedic students. A further 2 dementia training sessions were delivered in March 2024 for first year general nursing and mental health nursing students. This training will now be delivered every year to the students. A 3 year evaluation is underway.

Community Dementia Service Improvement group/Hospital at Home

The multi-agency Community Dementia service improvement group continues to meet bi monthly. Chaired by Older Peoples Mental Health Service, the group provides members a forum to discuss and exchange information, and develop opportunities for effective multidisciplinary, interagency and voluntary and community sector working. A number of joint initiatives were delivered this year including an event to mark World Alzheimers day in September.

From 03 July 2023, Acute Care at Home has been rebranded as the regionally recognised title **Hospital at Home (H@H)**. There are two H@H services within the Western Trust. The Northern Sector (NS), formally known as Acute Care at Home, will continue to provide admission avoidance Comprehensive Geriatric Assessment services to frail and older residents living within the Cityside, Waterside, Limavady, Claudy, Dungiven, Strabane and surrounding areas. The Southern Sector (SS) H@H currently accepts patients from the Fermanagh area.

Since its establishment in 2016, the Hospital at Home (NS) Service has provided care and treatment to almost 3500 patients. The service accepts referrals from GPs, Primary Care ANPS, NIAS, Inpatient physicians, Community Respiratory Teams, and Specialist Nurses. H@H provides ward level care in a patient's own residence. The team has similar access as inpatient wards to laboratory and radiological investigations and offers a full multidisciplinary team including;

- Consultant Geriatrician
- Specialty Doctors
- Advanced Nurse Practitioner
- Staff Nurses
- Healthcare Workers
- Physiotherapist
- Occupational Therapist
- Pharmacist

The demand for the service is growing significantly year on year. The team has made several adaptations internally to increase capacity, however this remains an ongoing challenge.

Carer Support Team

Considerable work has been undertaken by the Carers Support Team to continue to support carers. The Trust has a Carers Coordinator and is recruiting for 2 (part-time) Carers Development Workers, the project also has administrative support. The Carers Support Team maintain a Carers Mailing List. At the end of the reporting year the Team were in contact with 2,935 carers on the Carers mailing list. Those registered on the mailing list receive a regular Carers Newsletter. 2,212 Carers are receiving weekly electronic information shots in addition to the Newsletter.

During Carers Week 2024 3 face-to-face events were arranged for Carers across the Trust area. The events included workshops on Hope and Resilience, health checks, complimentary therapies and information stalls.

The Carers Support Team facilitate 3 Carers walking groups across the WHSCT area and a 'Knit and Natter' group. The Carers Coordinator continues to meet social work teams to provide information and training on Carers Support with a particular focus on Carers Assessment training. The coordinator delivers carers support training to new Trust managers as part of their induction training.

The Carers Support Team, in conjunction with the GP Federation MDT Social Work Team, have launched a Carers Hub in the Derry/L'Derry area and are working on a further 2, it is hoped these will be launched in September 2024. The Carers Support Hubs are places where carers can gather regularly to meet, talk with the Carers Coordinator or social work staff and access information and support.

Care Opinion

Care Opinion is an online Real Time user feedback system introduced regionally to embed a culture of openness and transparency across the 6 HSC Trusts. It is an independent non-profit feedback platform for HSC, supported by the Department of Health and implemented by Public Health Agency (PHA), which enables service users and their families, to give feedback on their care and share their stories with others. A number of staff have been trained to respond to feedback.

For the period April 2023 to March 2024 Care Opinion received 1,067 stories with 78,636 public views. 909 (85%) stories were extremely positive about the care received. 13 stories related to the deaf community have been translated into BSL and ISL. These are available to view on the Care Opinion website.

Designated responders including those staff delivering direct care, commissioning or monitoring services are trained to respond directly to feedback. To date 679 WHSCT staff have received training on the system, 639 of which are trained care opinion responders and 40 are readers on the system. Training is delivered using a hybrid model of face to face and/or virtual via teams and facilitated by Patient Client Experience facilitator.

Patient/ carers/ service users can submit feedback through a range of mediums such as a Freephone helpline number manned by Care Opinion staff, free post feedback form which Care opinion issue a yearly quota to each trust yearly, or directly online through the website www.careopinion.org.uk or via QR code or invitation link.

The Care Opinion site features a choice of 95 languages, changes to size of contrast and font for visual acuity, an audio function to read each individual story and work is in progress to develop ISL/BSL functionality for responding. Changes to the children's logo on the care opinion site is currently under development with the support from service user involvement.

Strategic Priority: Workforce

Involvement and inclusivity

HSC LGBTQ+ Staff Forum

The HSC LGBTQ+ Staff Forum exists to support LGBTQ+ employees within the HSC and create a more LGBTQ+ inclusive work environment. The purpose of the Forum is:

- To create visibility for LGBTQ+ people in our organisation (HSC)
- To provide a point of contact and sign posting for LGBTQ+ employees
- To be actively involved in HSC policy development To be accessible with a mailing list, meetings, activities/events
- Improve our knowledge of intersectionality in our LGBTQ+ community

Ethnically Diverse Staff Network

The WHSCT Ethnically Diverse Staff Network provides a platform for Ethnically Diverse staff to raise and discuss issues and concerns and get support and advice. The network is a key point of contact for Ethnically Diverse staff in order to create a safe, welcoming and shared working environment that embraces good relations and diversity within the workforce. The Network aims to meet every eight weeks.

Following a survey completed by Ethnically Diverse Staff an Implementation Plan was developed. Attendance at the meetings reduced and the plan was not implemented as would have been expected. The Trust have invested in a resource to support this work and the broader Equality, Diversity and Inclusion agenda across the organisation. This post was approved and funded through E&G funds and it is anticipated that an appointment will be made to this role by the end of May 2024. The group was also successful in securing funding to coordinate two engagement events during Good Relations Week in September 2023 in the Manor House Hotel, Enniskillen where 53 attended and in the Waterfoot Hotel, Derry/L/Derry where 119 attended. The events have given more focus to the Network and the membership has grown to include not only our ethnically diverse staff but others who believe they can make a difference in this area. The group is really keen to revisit the Implementation Plan once there is a dedicated resource to support this.

Flexible Working

Western Health & Social Care Trust continue to be committed to embedding flexible working into the culture of the organisation and supporting our employees with opportunities to support a healthier work life balance. In April 2022, the Trust launched a new Flexible Working Policy which allowed all staff employed by the Trust the day one right to request flexible working. The policy provides a range of flexible working opportunities that staff may request.

To support the roll-out of the Flexible Working policy, the Trust also developed Home and Hybrid Working Guidance and the Working Longer Guidelines. In addition to opportunities available through the Flexible Working Policy, all employees of the Trust can also apply for other special leave included within the Special Leave Provisions. These provisions include

leave in relation to domestic, personal and family reasons as well as a number of other leave categories outlined within the provisions.

Staff with Caring Responsibilities

The Trust Carers coordinator is working with Health Improvement and HR colleagues on the development of the Carers Framework online hub to support WHSCT staff who have a caring role. This will be launched in September 2024.

Improving the Health and Wellbeing of Trust Staff

Staff Wellbeing remains a priority within the WHSCT. Investment and development into supporting staff well-being utilises a multifaceted approach. The Wellbeing Framework, HSC Healthier Workplaces Network, the Staff Wellbeing Forum, cross-departmental and regional engagement forums help to support and guide this body of work.

A total of 313 staff wellbeing sessions ran for staff in 2023-2024 with 10,642 participants. Sessions aimed to support staff across a range of health topics including physical health, mental health and emotional wellbeing, spiritual health and financial wellbeing. This year 353 staff attended menopause specific sessions.

A menu of programmes was developed quarterly and all programmes and activities were promoted via Trust internal channels. Communication input also includes photographs, graphics and videos pre and post events including Director Wellbeing Guardian messages to staff.

Staff roadshows across 3 hospital sites gave opportunities to engage with 350 staff. Targeted sessions included 2 Mood Matters sessions with Estate Services staff facilitated by Aware Defeat Depression.

A survey with approx. 200 responses helped to inform the menu of programmes this year. 105 staff signed up to the cycle to work scheme and 38 for the swim scheme. A total of 3,500 resources were disseminated to staff and banners created and used at staff wellbeing events.

The We Are With You (WAWY) project framework included WHSCT Directors having a 3 month tenure to provide leadership around staff wellbeing holding a Wellbeing Guardian title to host events for staff during their tenure. Wellbeing Guardian x 10 ran during this reporting period.

A key component of the WAWY project involved recruiting 50 Health champions over a 2 year period. At present 61 Health Champions have been recruited and Director Wellbeing Guardians have hosted 4 Health Champions engagement sessions to boost enthusiasm for promoting wellbeing and to thank staff for their input.

Examples of key policy and service developments to better promote equality of opportunity and good relations are outlined as follows:

- 1.1** The Trust continues to mainstream Equality/Section 75 duties throughout the Trust.
- 1.2** Procedures are in place to ensure that new and revised policies are subject to Equality Screening and Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) where applicable.
- 1.3** Most training is returning to face to face after having been adapted and moved online due to Covid 19. See Section 24 of this report for detail re training delivered during 2023-2024.
- 1.4** The Trust continues to promote effective internal and external communication via a wide range of media, and through regular meetings of the Senior Leadership Group.

- 1.5** The Trust is committed to making its services accessible and information available in alternative formats.
- 1.6** The Trust provides an accessible complaints procedure for all patients and clients and continues to monitor complaints received.
- 1.7** During this reporting period the Equality Team refreshed the Trust local consultee database to support effective consultation and engagement
- 1.8** The Trust provides an accessible complaints procedure for all patients and clients and continues to monitor complaints received.
- 1.9** The Equality Team maintain a screening log which is updated regularly and records equality assurance processes.
- 1.10** Quarterly Equality Screening Reports outlining the screening outcomes of all policies/proposals approved in the quarter have been made available since 1 April 2011. Reports can be accessed on the Trust's website and staff intranet. Consultees are advised of the availability of the reports.
- 1.11** As recommended by the Equality Commission's Guidance for Public Authorities on the Implementation of Section 75, the Western Trust Equality Scheme is accompanied by an Action Based Plan (Equality Action Plan).
- 1.12** Applicants for posts within the Western Trust are requested to complete Section 75 information. Those applying online via HSCRecruit can voluntarily complete the Equal Opportunities Monitoring form which includes their section 75 information
- 1.13** The Human Resource, Payroll, Travel and Subsistence (HRPTS) system means staff can maintain and change Equality and Diversity data, apart from Community Background. However, staff who are appointed and who we have not entered a perceived community background can change their record to reflect their community background. It is anticipated that this will aid accurate reporting on Section 75 data.
- 1.14** In response to carer stress regularly presenting as an issue in practice a number of carers support groups have been established across practices to strengthen resilience, capacity and the health and wellbeing of carers. Social workers have also engaged with Western Trust Carers Co-ordinator and organised monthly carers support hubs throughout the Trust area
- 1.15** The Trust's Equality Lead is a member of the Regional Equality and Human Rights Steering Group (REHRSG). REHRSG bi-monthly meetings are led by the Department of Health (DoH), in partnership with HSC Equality Leads. As a member of this Forum the Equality Lead shares information and updates from the regional meetings with Trust Directors on a regular basis.

- 2 Please provide **examples** of outcomes and/or the impact of **equality action plans/** measures in 2023-24 (*or append the plan with progress/examples identified*).

Please see Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 for a detailed update of actions progressed in year 5 (2023-2024) of the Equality Action Plan and the Disability Action Plan

- 3 Has the **application of the Equality Scheme** commitments resulted in any **changes** to policy, practice, procedures and/or service delivery areas during the 2023-24 reporting period? (*tick one box only*)

☒ Yes ☐ No (go to Q.4) ☐ Not applicable (go to Q.4)
Please provide any details and examples:

Ongoing:

Equality Screening continues to emphasise the need for staff to consider how they involve people as early as possible in decision-making. It also highlights the need to consider providing information in alternative formats.

The Trust has prioritised Section 75 in all aspects of its business agenda and has established a range of governance, management and reporting mechanisms that reflect this. The Trust's Equality Team provides staff with the information, training, advice and resources to support staff to have the appropriate level of knowledge, expertise and skill to mainstream S75 duties.

Service Users and Staff have access to both foreign and sign language interpreting as well as translated information.

The regional Equality, Good Relations and Human Rights; Making a Difference eLearning programme is mandatory and compliance is monitored.

The Trust Consultation list is regularly reviewed.

- 3a With regard to the change(s) made to policies, practices or procedures and/or service delivery areas, what **difference was made, or will be made, for individuals**, i.e. the impact on those according to Section 75 category?
Please provide any details and examples:

Please also refer to response to Section 1 in this document.

Screening of policies, practices or procedures and/or service delivery areas has resulted in considerations on how to promote equality of opportunity and good relations. For example there is better engagement with those affected by policies and decisions including with service users and carers.

Accessible Communication

Emphasis is placed on the need to provide information in alternative formats for service users/visitors and staff etc. Also to consider how information is communicated to staff. HSC Making Communication Accessible for All booklet shared with staff during the reporting period and is available on the Trust intranet

site.

Human Resources Payroll and Travel System (HRPTS)

This system means that staff are now able to update their own Equality and Diversity Data, apart from Community Background (unless they are newly appointed to the Trust). This provides more accurate data for Equality Screening and Equality Impact Assessments (EQIA).

Western Trust Local Consultee List

The Trust's local consultee list is updated regularly by Equality staff.

Regional HSC Consultee List

This list is regularly updated.

3b What aspect of the Equality Scheme prompted or led to the change(s)? *(tick all that apply)*

☐ As a result of the organisation's screening of a policy *(please give details)*:

☐ As a result of what was identified through the EQIA and consultation exercise *(please give details)*:
Examples provided above

☒ As a result of analysis from monitoring the impact *(please give details)*:

The Trust continues to monitor its workforce across the nine equality categories. This monitoring information is used for all section 75 screening of proposals that impact on staff. This supports the assessment of impact and the identification of potential of adverse impact.

☒ As a result of changes to access to information and services *(please specify and give details)*:

The provision of interpreters and translated accessible information continues to result in effective information provision and better communication in situations where a clear understanding is required.

The Remote Sign Language Interpreting Service introduced to assist with issues accessing face-to-face interpreters during the pandemic and aid with social distancing and infection prevention and control measures continues to be available to service users and staff.

The Trust website includes links to translated and Easyread versions of information.

☒ Other *(please specify and give details)*:

The WHSCT Complaints Team considers specific Section 75 related complaints and promotes positive action as required.

The Equality office have developed training and briefings for service areas in relation to Effective Consultation and undertaking EQIAs which supports existing training for staff.

Arrangements for assessing compliance (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 2)

4 Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within job descriptions during the 2023-24 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

- ☒ Yes, organisation wide
- ☐ Yes, some departments/jobs
- ☐ No, this is not an Equality Scheme commitment
- ☐ No, this is scheduled for later in the Equality Scheme, or has already been done
- ☐ Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

All job descriptions include: Employees must ensure that equality and human rights issues are addressed within the post holder's area of responsibility in accordance with the Trust's Equality Scheme

5 Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within performance plans during the 2023-24 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

- ☒ Yes, organisation wide
- ☐ Yes, some departments/jobs
- ☐ No, this is not an Equality Scheme commitment
- ☐ No, this is scheduled for later in the Equality Scheme, or has already been done
- ☐ Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

The national Knowledge and Skills Framework (KSF) continues to be the process linked to annual development reviews of all Trust staff and personal development plans. Equality and diversity is one of the 6 Core Dimensions and it reflects a key aspect of all jobs and underpins all dimensions in the KSF. During the reporting period the Trust continued to focus on the completion of appraisals to ensure staff have the knowledge and skills they need to do their job and that key areas for development are identified.

In response to the ECNI report 'Section 75 statutory Equality and Good Relations Duties: Acting on the evidence of public authority practices' June 2018 and in recognition that effective leadership is critical to the successful implementation of our Equality Scheme, new guidance for Board Members was drafted in March 2020. With an emphasis on mainstreaming equality the guide aims to support HSC Board Members to understand the statutory Board responsibilities as they relate to matters of equality, good relations and human rights. The guide forms part of the induction pack for new Board Members within the Trust.

'Equality' is one of the core mandatory training requirements for all Western Trust staff and Mandatory Training is a key component of the appraisal discussion. Therefore, Equality Training forms part of every Personal Development Plan created through this process.

Equality Screening training and Working with Interpreters training is available.

6. In the 2023-24 reporting period were **objectives/ targets / performance measures** relating to the section 75 statutory duties **integrated** into corporate plans, strategic planning and or operational business plans? (tick all that apply)

- ☒ Yes, through the work to prepare or develop the new corporate plan
- ☒ Yes, through organisation wide annual business planning
- ☐ Yes, in some departments / jobs
- ☐ No, these are already mainstreamed through the organisations ongoing corporate plan
- ☐ No the organisation's planning cycle does not coincide with this 2023 - 2024 report
- ☐ Not applicable

The Trust continues to prioritise Section 75 within all aspects of its business agenda and has established a range of governance, management and reporting mechanisms to reflect this. Equality sits within the Performance and Service Improvement Directorate and supports all Trust Divisions to ensure Section 75 is mainstreamed and integral to planning processes.

Commitment to Consultation

The Trust remain committed to the meaningful and effective involvement of service users, carers and the general public across all programmes of work. In line with the 2012 reform act, the Trust continues to uphold its commitment to ensure service user, carers and the public are consulted on the commissioning, planning, provision, change and evaluation of services. Trust have been working alongside HSC partners to finalise the regional consultation scheme and guide- Involvement and Consultation scheme which will ensure best practice in regards to public consultations. This document was signed off and adopted from December 2022.

Equality action plans/measures

7 Within the 2023-24 reporting period, please indicate the **number** of:

Actions completed:

Actions ongoing:

Actions to commence:

These actions are included in the New HSC Equality Action Plan 2024 - 2029, please refer to Appendix 1 for further information on Actions or view the new HSC Equality Action Plan by clicking [here](#).

Examples provided in Appendix 1

8 The HSC Equality and Disability Action Plans are 'live documents' and therefore are constantly under review to ensure they deliver on outcomes.

See Appendix 1 for details of progress made with regards Year 5 action measures.

9 In reviewing progress on the equality action plan/action measures during the 2023-24 reporting period, the following have been identified: *(tick all that apply)*

The new 5 year HSC EAP and DAP (2024 - 2029) was developed and included extensive engagement and consultation with stakeholders.

- ☒ Continuing action(s), to progress the next stage addressing the known inequality
- ☒ Action(s) to address the known inequality in a different way
- ☒ Action(s) to address newly identified inequalities/recently prioritised inequalities
- ☒ Measures to address a prioritised inequality have been completed

Arrangements for consulting (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 3)

10 Following the initial notification of consultations, a targeted approach was taken – and consultation with those for whom the issue was of particular relevance: *(tick one box only)*

☒ All the time ☐ Sometimes ☐ Never

11 Please provide any **details and examples of good practice** in consultation during the 2023-24 reporting period, on matters relevant (e.g. the development of a policy that has been screened in) to the need to promote equality of opportunity and/or the desirability of promoting good relations:

The Trust recognises the importance of proper and timely consultation as an

integral part of fulfilling its Section 75 obligations when making decisions and planning services. For all public consultations the details are sent out to over individuals, groups and organisation on the Trust's Consultation Database. Consultation documents are made available on the Trust's website with the consultation document is available in alternative formats. Following consultation, a detailed consultation feedback report is drafted and time is taken to consider all the responses. All of those who provided feedback and participated in the consultation process are informed of how their feedback influenced the final decision.

The new 5 year EAP and DAP (2024 - 2029) which was developed regionally included extensive engagement and consultation with stakeholders.

- 12** In the 2023-24 reporting period, given the consultation methods offered, which consultation methods were **most frequently used by consultees**: *(tick all that apply)*

- ☒ Face to face meetings
☒ Focus groups
☒ Written documents with the opportunity to comment in writing
☒ Questionnaires
☒ Information/notification by email with an opportunity to opt in/out of the consultation
☒ Internet discussions
☐ Telephone consultations
☐ Other *(please specify)*:

Please provide any details or examples of the uptake of these methods of consultation in relation to the consultees' membership of particular Section 75 categories:

See also response to 11.

- 13** Were any awareness-raising activities for consultees undertaken, on the commitments in the Equality Scheme, during the 2023-24 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

New/Updated documents are forwarded regularly to those on the Trust Consultee List following approval within the Trust including e.g. ECNI Annual Progress Reports, Quarterly Screening Reports, Rural Needs Report. Consultees are also advised of Consultations.

- 14** Was the consultation list reviewed during the 2023-24 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not applicable – no commitment to review

The Western Trust Local Consultee list is reviewed on an ongoing basis.

- 15** Please provide the **number** of policies screened during the year (*as recorded in screening reports*):

43

- 16** Please provide the **number of assessments** that were consulted upon during 2023-24:

0	Policy consultations conducted with screening assessment presented.
0	Policy consultations conducted with an equality impact assessment (EQIA) presented.
1	Consultations for an EQIA alone.

- 17** Please provide details of the **main consultations** conducted on an assessment (as described above) or other matters relevant to the Section 75 duties:

Temporary Change to Emergency General Surgery, South West Acute Hospital, Enniskillen

The Western Trust had to temporarily withdraw Emergency General Surgery Services at South West Acute Hospital, Enniskillen, from 18 December 2022. The Trust faced challenges recruiting consultant general surgeons to cover the emergency general surgical rota. This unplanned change was necessary to protect the health and safety of patients in the area who require access to Emergency General Surgery. The Trust held a 12 week consultation on the proposal from 17 January 2023 until 10 April 2023. A total of 632 people engaged with the Trust at these events, and 023) the Trust received 101 responses to the Consultation Questionnaire.

Details on the Consultation can be found via: [South West Acute Hospital – Emergency General Surgery Consultation | Western Health & Social Care Trust \(hscni.net\)](#)

- 18** Were any screening decisions (or equivalent initial assessments of relevance) reviewed following concerns raised by consultees? (*tick one box only*)

☐ Yes
 ☒ No concerns were raised
 ☐ No
 ☐ Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

The 12 week consultation on the proposal re Temporary Change to Emergency General Surgery, South West Acute Hospital, Enniskillen (details above)

Arrangements for consulting

The Trust recognises the importance of proper and timely consultation as an integral part of fulfilling its Section 75 obligations when making decisions and planning services.

For all public consultations the details are sent out to individuals, groups and organisation on the Trust's Consultation Database. Consultation documents are made available on the Trust's website with the consultation document available in alternative formats. Following consultation, a detailed consultation feedback report is drafted and time is taken to consider all the responses. All who provided feedback and participated in the consultation process are informed of how their feedback influenced the final decision.

In January 2023, WHSCT launched a 12 week public consultation closing April 2023 on the temporary change to Emergency General Surgery at South West Acute Hospital to seek the views of staff and the general public.

Prior to the launch of the public consultation, a project board was established with service user representation to help support and maintain urgent and emergency care services, making changes to existing services and introducing new services with a series of monthly meetings facilitated.

Seven public facing consultation events were hosted across the Fermanagh and Omagh District Council area with 579 attending the face to face events. A further 53 attended two consultations facilitated online. In addition, a consultation questionnaire accompanied the consultation document to encourage increased input from the general public with 60 responses collected to date.

Arrangements for publishing the results of assessments (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 4)

19 Following decisions on a policy, were the results of any EQIAs published during the 2023-24 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

The 12 week consultation on the proposal re Temporary Change to Emergency General Surgery, South West Acute Hospital, Enniskillen (details above in response to Q17 & Q18)

Details can be found via: [South West Acute Hospital – Emergency General Surgery Consultation | Western Health & Social Care Trust \(hscni.net\)](https://www.hscni.net/south-west-acute-hospital-emergency-general-surgery-consultation)

Arrangements for monitoring and publishing the results of monitoring (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 4)

20 From the Equality Scheme monitoring arrangements, was there an audit of existing information systems during the 2023-24 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

☒	Yes	☐	No, already taken place
☐	No, scheduled to take place at a later date	☐	Not applicable

Please provide any details:

Staff Monitoring continues via HRPTS to ensure the Trusts has an up to date equality profile of its workforce to support more effective screening of proposals and policies which may have an impact on staff.

Collection and analysis of interpreting provision: Sign Language and Foreign Language – please refer to appendix 3 of this report

Pending the outcome of an investigation into a complaint under Paragraph 10 of Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 alleging that the Western Health and Social Care Trust failed to comply with its approved Equality Scheme, the Trust delayed the review of its Equality Scheme until the 2024/25 reporting period to ensure that any recommended amendments required can be included. Staff from within the Trust are working with the ECNI on the investigation into the complaint and we await the outcome and findings and will implement its recommendations.

Monitoring of interpreting identifies the top 5 languages requested in the Trust - please refer to appendix 3 of this report.

Encompass – the new Electronic Health Record (EHR) for NI

The encompass programme is a Health and Social Care (HSC) wide initiative that will, by using the latest technology, introduce a digital integrated care record to Northern Ireland. This will support the HSCNI vision to transform health and social care in order to improve patient safety and health outcomes. The encompass programme will help HSCNI to work more effectively and efficiently through regional standardisation of care pathways and best practice and will create better experiences for those receiving, using and delivering services.

encompass will work jointly with the supplier Epic to provide up-to-date software to underpin HSCNI's transformation and service improvement programmes, allowing a radical overhaul of the way patient care is provided and managed within Acute and Community settings.

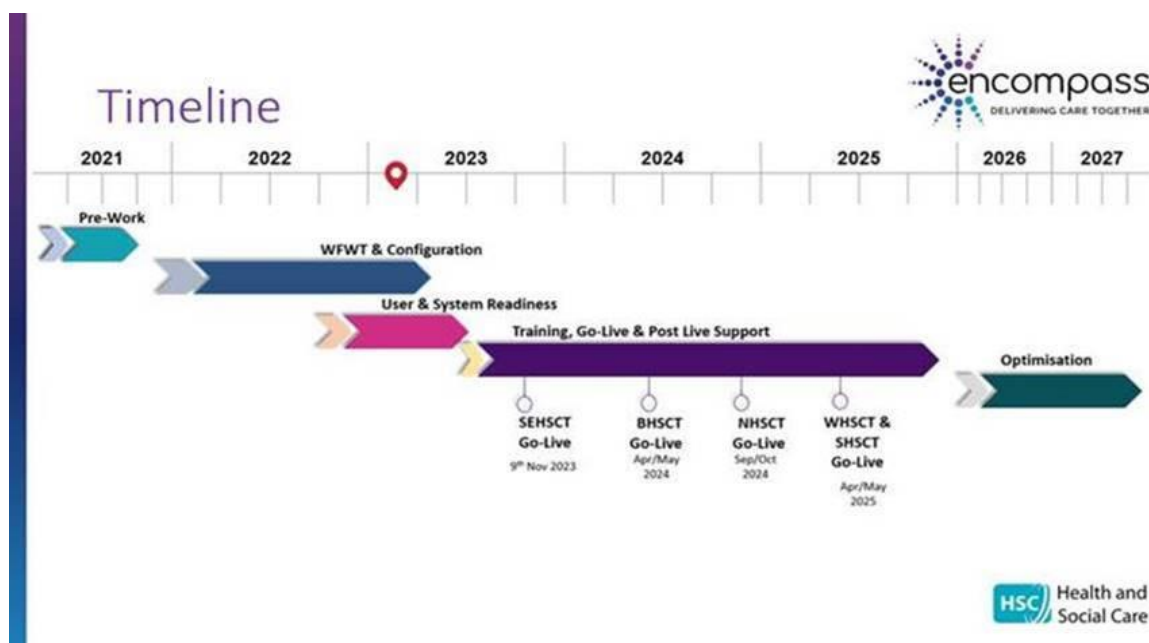


Table 1. encompass Timeline

The regional encompass Patient Engagement Council has been formed and will:

- Provide input into plans/decisions being made by the programme
- Offer and use expertise, knowledge, skills and live experience for the betterment of the programme
- Inform, shape, influence and sense check plans/decisions to be made by the programme
- Help set priorities
- Challenge the programme

The encompass programme is now mid-implementation, with two Trusts live, Belfast Health and Social Care Trust (BHSCT) AND South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust (SEHSCT) and Northern Trust agreed to go on 7th November 2024. Western and Southern Trusts have planned a Risk Summit with the regional team to consider and agree a go-live date for Spring 2025.

21 In analysing monitoring information gathered, was any action taken to change/review any policies? (*tick one box only*)

☐ Yes ☒ No ☐ Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

22 Please provide any details or examples of where the monitoring of policies, during the 2023-24 reporting period, has shown changes to differential/adverse impacts previously assessed:

N/A

23 Please provide any details or examples of monitoring that has contributed to the availability of equality and good relations information/data for service delivery

planning or policy development:

Staff Monitoring - has helped produce real time data to inform future equality screenings and Equality Impact Assessments in determining the impact of service changes on those potentially affected. Staff monitoring has also been useful to determine any policy gaps e.g. transgender policy. The Trusts completes an Article 55 review report every 3 years.

Article 55 Review Report

The Trust HR Department completes an Article 55 Review Report every three years which involves gathering and analysing information to inform the completion of the review.

Equality Screening - We use equality data to inform equality screening exercises, which in turn inform policy development

HSC Audit of Inequalities Document - HSC Organisations worked collaboratively to gather and update the emerging themes in relation to key inequalities experienced by the 9 equality categories. Collated data (qualitative and quantitative) was analysed and is defined, by Section 75 categories, to help develop indicators of levels of inequalities. The Audit of Inequalities document can be used as evidence for future screening and equality impact assessments and is a useful resource for both health and social care staff and representative organisations. Click [here](#) to view document.

Ethnic Monitoring of Service Users – continues on a number of HSC information systems including Child Health System, SOSCAR and NIMATS.

Updating of Trust Local Consultee List – allows Trust to ensure that information is accurate and up to date when issuing information re consultations/reports etc.

Staff Training (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 5)

- 24 Please report on the activities from the training plan/programme (section 5.4 of the Model Equality Scheme) undertaken during 2023-24, and the extent to which they met the training objectives in the Equality Scheme.

Equality Training forms part of the Trust Induction Programme. Trust Staff have access to online training or face-to-face, detailed via frequent Trust Communications and team meetings. Adhoc training is also delivered. One to one support, provided to staff on Equality Screening and Interpreting etc. has increased.

The training detailed below includes reference to/information on the Section 75 duties and Disability Duties. Further content is then developed to meet the requirements of the participants and the specific focus of the training. Much of the training is delivered by Trust staff, however for some training programmes delivery is in partnership with voluntary sector groups. Training includes:

‘MAKING A DIFFERENCE’ E-Learning Programme: This E-learning programme

was launched in the Western Trust in March 2018 as mandatory Equality, Good Relations and Human Rights Training for all WHSCT Staff and managers. The programme was developed regionally by HSC Equality Leads.

‘Making a Difference’ is an interactive programme tailored specifically to the healthcare setting and aims to ensure that all staff realise the importance of their part in creating an inclusive and welcoming environment for all colleagues and service users. It replaces ‘Discovering Diversity’ as the mandatory e-learning training for all WHSCT staff.

The programme is provided in two modules – a general module applicable to all HSC staff and an additional module for those with management responsibilities. The modules are scenario-based to capture a range of practical and contemporary equality and diversity issues across employment and service provision. The programme replaces the Discovering Diversity e-learning programme as the mandatory e-learning training for staff within the Western Trust and all staff are required to complete this.

‘Making a Difference’ is supported by a regional Equality Training manual for staff which complements the programme. The programme is also complemented by a suite of HSC Discovering Diversity awareness modules, which staff are also encouraged to complete. The aim of the ‘Making a Difference’ training is to show staff how they can make a difference by:

- Promoting positive attitudes to diversity
- Ensuring they treat everyone with respect and dignity
- Behaving in a way that is in keeping with HSC values and equality and human rights law.

To encourage uptake of the programme Equality staff continue to liaise with Directorates throughout the Trust. Trust Communications are also regularly issued. Equality staff continue to deliver sessions to groups of staff who do not have access to Trust Communications.

VISUAL AWARENESS TRAINING: This training provides staff with skills and knowledge to ensure that service users with a visual impairment receive a high level service and covers the practical and emotional impact of sight loss, sight loss statistics, support available, sighted guiding and information on improving practice and communication.

DEAF AWARENESS TRAINING: delivered by the British Deaf Association (BDA) throughout the Trust, the training includes an Introduction to deafness/Hearing loss and provides information on Communication Methods used by Deaf/Hard of Hearing people and how to communicate clearly.

DISABILITY AWARENESS TRAINING: delivered by Employers for Disability NI (EFDNI). EFDNI have adapted the training to deliver it via zoom to Trust staff, meaning a larger audience can be reached at each session. The training covers Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) overview and case law with a brief overview of legislation followed by case study exercise using DDA cases. A variety of learning

methods are used including an exercise on Language etiquette and Disability awareness training video clips. There is also an overview of five key disability areas; hearing loss, visual disability, learning difficulty and disability, physical disability and hidden disability, including mental health. Information is provided on the nature and extent of disability, as well as good practice in interacting with people with disabilities.

NEURODIVERSITY TRAINING: delivered by Employers for Disability NI (EFDNI). Offered to all Trust staff, this online session will highlight the perspectives of a range of people with neurodiverse conditions and the diversity of their experiences: autism, AD(H)D, dyslexia and dyspraxia. Key characteristics will be outlined and information provided on supporting neurodivergent people in the workplace

WORKING WITH INTERPRETERS Training (Foreign Language/Sign Language): this training is delivered face-to-face on an on-going basis throughout the Trust. The training aims to improve the experience of patients/clients who do not have English as a first language or who have a hearing impairment. The Equality & Involvement Team also offers the training to specific teams/units, as per requests. The Working With Interpreters Training is supported by Trust Communication Support Guidelines, which contain information for staff on accessing Foreign Language and Sign Language Interpreters, and Written Translation.

During the reporting period the Northern Ireland Health and Social Care Interpreting Service (NIHSCIS) also delivered an online session for their staff.

EQUALITY SCREENING Training: continues to be delivered by Equality staff as and when required to Senior Managers and their staff who are involved in developing policies/ proposals/strategies and implementing changes to services. The training provides information on Section 75 of the NI Act 1998 and requirements under Section 75 for Public Authorities; and informs staff why and when screening needs to take place and how to screen.

EQIA TRAINING: the Equality Team offer specialist support and training to staff within Directorates who are involved in EQIAs/consultation exercises, on request.

'LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL and/or TRANSGENDER - CREATING INCLUSIVE WORKPLACES': E-Learning Programme: available to all Trust staff. This e-learning programme was developed by the Public Health Agency in partnership with the Southern Health and Social Care Trust and has been informed by the experiences of individuals who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and/or Transgender (LGBT).

The programme is designed to be used by individuals, including staff and management, working in any setting. It is hoped that it will better inform individuals and organisations on the issues faced by lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender and help encourage workplace settings to be more LGBT inclusive, thus helping to create a more welcoming, safe and productive work environment.

TRAVELLER CULTURAL AWARENESS TRAINING: This training is arranged

by the Trust Traveller Health and Wellbeing Programme staff for Trust staff and a broad range of statutory, community and voluntary agencies. Sessions are facilitated by Donegal Travellers Project and provide individuals with the opportunity to learn about Traveller culture and how they can provide a more culturally aware and inclusive service.

LEARNING DISABILITY AWARENESS TRAINING; There are a number of Learning Disability Awareness Training Sessions available. The training will cover key issues faced by people with a learning disability, supports that can be used and the role of the Acute Liaison Nurse.

All Trust staff, especially hospital based staff are encouraged to attend one training session.

- 25 Please provide any examples of relevant training shown to have worked well, in that participants have achieved the necessary skills and knowledge to achieve the stated objectives:

All of the above training, with the exception of the eLearning training, has been evaluated. Overall evaluation feedback has been positive with staff finding that training was relevant, practical and thought-provoking.

Providing the Making a Difference Training via Zoom to groups of staff who do not have access to computers e.g. Estates, Transport etc. has increased numbers of staff who accessed the training.

Public Access to Information and Services (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 6)

- 26 Please list **any examples** of where monitoring during 2023-24, across all functions, has resulted in action and improvement in relation **to access to information and services**:

The Trust is committed to ensuring everyone is given equal access to information about services in a format they can understand. The Trust provides interpreting services on request to help patients and clients and staff to communicate when using services.

The monitoring of interpreting usage ensures the Trust can provide its information in the main languages. It also ensures that the appropriate type of interpreting is used for appointments. For simple, straightforward and short appointments, telephone interpreting is the most appropriate and most cost effective. Face to face interpreters are then available for more complex or sensitive appointments

Face to face Interpreters are provided and funded regionally through the Northern Ireland Health and Social Care Interpreting Service (NIHSCIS). Interpreters are professionally trained and adhere to a Terms of Engagement. Interpreters are bound by confidentiality and provide their services on a 24/7 basis. The BSO Face to Face Interpreting Service manages a central register of 450 self-employed Interpreters, covering 37 different languages. 30 new Interpreters were registered during 2023/2024 to meet demand for a range of languages including: Arabic, Bulgarian, Farsi, Ukrainian, Turkish, Tetum, Polish, Portuguese, Tigrinya,

Romanian, Russian, Somali and Ukrainian.

The Regional Communication Support Service (RCSS) was introduced on the 1 April 2023. SPPG hold responsibility for this Contract which offers a holistic communication support service for people who are Deaf, deafblind and hard of hearing. Availability of Sign Language Interpreters for any Health or Social Care engagement enables equity of access to health and social care services for this Service User Group. This Service is provided by Sign Language Interactions.

This Service offers the Deaf, deafblind and hard of hearing person the option to have face to face or remote video access to a sign language interpreter. The service is available 24 hours a day 7 days a week for staff and services users and provides access to British Sign Language (BSL) interpreters or Irish Sign Language interpreters (ISL). Service users can use this service to contact GP surgeries, hospitals, dentists, social care services etc.

Quarterly Screening Reports are drafted and issued.

Complaints (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 8)

27 How many complaints **in relation to the Equality Scheme** have been received during 2023-24?

Insert number here:

1

Please provide any details of each complaint raised and outcome:

This is a complaint under Paragraph 10 of Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 alleging that the Trust failed to comply with Chapter of its approved Equality Scheme, by failing to respond to a complaint within the agreed timeframes. Staff from the Trust Complaints department are working with the ECNI on the investigation into the complaint and we await the outcome and findings and will implement its recommendations.

Section 3: Looking Forward

28 Please indicate when the Equality Scheme is due for review:

The current Equality Scheme runs from 2018-2023, and is currently being reviewed. We had delayed the review pending the outcome of the complaint.

29 Are there areas of the Equality Scheme arrangements (screening/consultation/training) your organisation anticipates will be focused upon in the next reporting period? *(please provide details)*

Priority areas during 2023/24 include:

- As part of ongoing work through the Joint Forum with the other Trusts and the Equality Commission, the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission (NIHRC) had agreed in their business plan to design and deliver a regional

human rights training session to Health and Social Trusts on residential care for vulnerable adults. This was to be undertaken in 2021/22 however resourcing issues within the NIHRC meant they were unable to deliver this training. Trusts continued to liaise with NIHRC regarding this. The HSC Trusts are now working collaboratively to develop an online human rights training resource for Trust staff and partner organisations to increase awareness of human rights principles in the delivery of care in a residential setting.

- Equality staff will work with colleagues in the Trust Complaints Department to ensure that any recommendations from the current investigation are implemented.
- HSC Trusts will be rolling out the new regional 5 year Equality Action Plan and Disability Action Plan.

30 In relation to the advice and services that the Commission offers, what **equality and good relations priorities** are anticipated over the next (2023-24) reporting period? *(please tick any that apply)*

☒
☒
☒
☒
☐
☒

Employment
 Goods, facilities and services
 Legislative changes
 Organisational changes/ new functions
 Nothing specific, more of the same
 Other (please state):

Age Discrimination
 Shared Parental Leave
 Equality Screening Forms – new Two-tier forms
 Review of Part B of ECNI Reporting Template

PART B - Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended) and Disability Action Plans

Please refer to appendix 2 which relates to compliance with our legislative duties under Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Order (DDO): to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and to encourage their full participation in public life. This corresponds to our Disability Action Plan (2018-2023). By way of completion, Appendix 1 and 2 provide updates on the actions not completed in the previous Equality Action Plan and Disability Action Plan. We will begin reporting on actions in the new Plans in 2024/25.

The Western Trust remains committed to fulfilling our statutory duties and working towards best practice in all we do.

Attachments to this report:

Appendix 1: Updates on actions not completed in Equality Action Plan– carried forward to the new report

Appendix 2/Part B: Updates on actions not completed in Disability Action Plan – carried forward to the new report

Appendix 3: WHSCT Interpreting Information 2023/24



Western Health
and Social Care Trust

Appendix 1

Equality Action Plan

Year 5 Progress Report

2023/2024

The HSC Trusts have worked collaboratively to develop the new five year Section 75 Equality Action Plan and Disability Action Plan. Respective Trust Boards have approved the final plans, which are available [here](#). By way of completion, Appendix 1 and 2 provide updates on the actions not completed in the previous Equality Action Plan and Disability Action Plan. We will begin reporting on actions in the new Plans in 2024/25.

Section 1 – Ensuring the effective discharge of our Section 75 Equality Duties

We want to ensure that the focus is on outcomes for people within the nine Section 75 equality categories and to make a positive difference for them. The following actions are therefore aimed at simplifying the process.

Action Measure	Update
We will work with the Department of Health and other relevant stakeholders to make sure we are prepared for the introduction of Age Discrimination Regulations.	Included in new Equality Action Plan as legislation still not in place.

Section 2 – Promoting Equality in our Services

The following actions have been developed in response to what we have heard and are aimed at providing welcoming, person-centred and accessible services for everyone.

Action Measure	Update
We will work with the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission to develop a training programme on a human rights approach to dealing with complaints – building on work done by the Ombudsman’s Office.	The Trusts are working collaboratively to develop an online human rights training resource for Trust staff and partner organisations to increase awareness of human rights principles in the delivery of care in a residential setting.

Section 3 – Supporting our Staff

The following actions help to promote equality of opportunity for our staff and support them to understand their responsibilities in valuing differences and advancing equality of opportunity to ensure an inclusive and welcoming environment.

Action Measure	Update
We will ensure compliance with any new legislation governing gender pay reporting and address any inequalities identified.	Included in new Equality Action Plan as legislation has yet to be enacted by the NI Assembly.
Action Measure	Update
We will work with relevant organisations and Trade Unions to develop best practice in supporting our staff who are victims of Domestic Violence/Abuse.	The WHSCT updated policy is nearing completion and will provide robust information and advice to employees who are victims of Domestic/Sexual Violence and/or abuse, as well as their Line Managers and all Trust Staff. The Trust is currently exploring the feasibility of a volunteer support service for staff who are victims of these types of abuse and it is hoped that if possible, this can be launched alongside the new policy. Action 23 in the new Equality Action Plan will relate to this measure.



Western Health
and Social Care Trust

Appendix 2

Disability Action Plan

Year 5 Progress Report

2023/2024

Section 1 – Promoting positive actions and increased participation through training, awareness and resources

Disabled people have told us that promoting well-informed social attitudes to disability is central to securing the right to equality for all disabled people. We are committed to providing training and resources to support our staff in the implementation of our disability duties.

Actions to encourage participation by disabled people in public life:

Action Measure	Update
We will work with relevant organisations to adopt a communication standard in line with the Accessible Communication Standard in England to ensure information is accessible for all disabled people including those with autism and those with communication disability.	Included in the new Disability Action Plan as Trusts continue to engage with, and attend, the Regional Disabled People's HSC Forum. The Forum consists of service users, Trust representatives, Department of Health, Department of Education, Department of Infrastructure, Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, Children's Law Centre and voluntary organisations. Trusts have engaged with Encompass to advise in respect of accessibility requirements for all users going forward with the new system, as it is implemented in each Trust. The Trusts continue to promote the 'Making Communication Accessible for All' guide, which was developed in partnership with disabled people and representative organisations.

Section 2 – Supporting full participation of disabled people by improving accessibility

We have done much work over the years in enhancing the accessibility of HSC services but disabled people continue to tell us that barriers to full accessibility remain. We are committed to working with disabled people on the initiatives listed below to improve accessibility for and participation of disabled people when accessing our buildings, information and services.

Actions to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people:

Action Measure	Update
We will work with disabled people to make sure we are ready for the introduction of new legislation including: • Mental Capacity. • Age Discrimination (Goods/Facilities/Services).	The Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards as set out in the Mental Capacity Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 (MCA) became law on 2nd December 2019. This states that Trusts must make sure that everyone who is currently deprived of their liberty has been reviewed and safeguards have been put in place. Much of this work has been led regionally to coordinate implementation and ensure consistency of approach. Age Discrimination legislation has not progressed.

Section 3 – Supporting full participation of disabled people in our workforce

We know that there continues to be gaps between the proportion of disabled people employed in HSC compared with non-disabled people. We are committed to ensuring that disabled people are afforded equality of opportunity in respect of entering and continuing employment in HSC. We will work in partnership with disabled people to make sure our employment policies and practices and working environments are as inclusive and accessible as possible. Please note the nature of the actions detailed below will relate directly to participation by disabled people in public life.

Action Measure	Rollover to new Disability Action Plan
We will work with staff, schools and disability organisations to promote HSC as a disability friendly employer.	Actions that continue to promote HSC as a disability friendly employer are included in the new Disability Action Plan. Trusts have continued to engage with disability organisations and schools in highlighting HSC as a disability friendly employer including representation at various job / careers fairs at a local level. We also routinely collaborate with relevant stakeholders on employability and placement schemes to enhance job opportunities and work related experience. We continue to engage with our disabled staff to ensure they have a voice and influence the support provided including putting in place reasonable adjustments to support staff into and to remain in the workforce.



Appendix 3
Interpreting Provision
2023-2024

Table 1: Total Interpreting Provision with Language Breakdown 1 April 2023 – 31 March 2024

Language	Total Provision for each language		Total per Language
	NIHSCIS (face to face)	Big Word (telephone)	
Polish	2015	318	2333
Arabic	1346	272	1618
Hungarian	1092	395	1487
Bulgarian	379	177	556
Lithuanian	341	60	401
Romanian	222	78	300
Russian	230	86	316
Slovak	279	21	300
Somali	83	196	279
Ukrainian	251	27	278
Mandarin	125	43	168
Cantonese	119	0	119
Latvian	91	9	100
Farsi	73	45	118
Hindi	36	5	41
Urdu	45	3	48
Punjabi	65	8	73
Portuguese	39	9	48
Turkish	0	1	1
French	0	6	6
Amharic	0	31	31
Kurdish	0	59	59
Italian	0	1	1
Pashto	41	46	87
Oromo	0		0
Nepali	0		0
German	0	5	5
Spanish	52	13	65
Gujarati	0		0
Tamil	0	1	1
Vietnamese	0	10	10

Albanian	0	42	42
Tigrinya	0	38	38
Czech	0	6	6
Malayalam	0	1	1
Tagalog	0	1	1
Total Provision	6924	2013	8937

Table 2: No. of Provisions for Western Trust – NIHSCIS Only for past 15 reporting years for comparison:

Year	2023/ 2024	2022/ 2023	2021/ 2022	2020/ 2021	2019/ 2020	2018/ 2019	2017/ 2018	2016/ 2017	2015/ 2016	2014/ 2015	2013/ 2014	2012/ 2013	2011/ 2012	2010/ 2011	2009/ 2010
No. of provisions	6924	6647	6076	3703	7058	6914	6,237	6713	5693	6423	6272	5520	5051	4201	3777

Table 3: Total No. of Foreign Language Interpreting Provisions for Western Trust for past 15 reporting years:

Year	2023/ 2024	2022/ 2023	2021/ 2022	2020/ 2021	2019/ 2020	2018/ 2019	2017/ 2018	2016/ 2017	2015/ 2016	2014/ 2015	2013/ 2014	2012/ 2013	2011/ 2012	2010/ 2011	2009/ 2010
No. of provisions	8937	8280	7716	5397	8009	8045	8343	8901	7808	8440	8172	7476	6741	5348	5529

Table 4: Top 5 Language Interpreting Sessions within WHSCT for previous 10 years

2023/ 2024	2022/ 2023	2021/ 2022	2020/ 2021	2019/ 2020	2018/ 2019	2017/ 2018	2016/2017	2015/ 2016	2014/ 2015
Polish	Polish	Polish	Polish	Polish	Polish	Polish	Polish	Polish	Polish
Arabic	Arabic	Arabic	Arabic	Arabic	Arabic	Lithuanian	Hungarian	Hungarian	Hungarian
Hungarian	Hungarian	Hungarian	Lithuanian	Lithuanian	Lithuanian	Hungarian	Cantonese	Cantonese	Cantonese
Bulgarian	Bulgarian	Lithuanian	Hungarian	Hungarian	Hungarian	Mandarin	Lithuanian	Mandarin	Lithuanian
Lithuanian	Lithuanian	Romanian	Bulgarian	Bulgarian	Mandarin	Cantonese	Arabic	Lithuanian	Mandarin