



## Public Authority Statutory Equality and Good Relations Duties Annual Progress Report 2024-2025

### Contact:

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

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

### Signature:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Seamus Ward', is centered within a rectangular box.

**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 2024 and March 2025.**

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## Introduction

This is the Trust's 18<sup>th</sup> 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, currently due for review). 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.

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

In 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 greatly shaped our actions over the next 5 years. An outcome report was produced to share the feedback received and how we responded to it.

The 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).

Appendix 1 and 2 of this progress report provide updates on the actions within the plans. 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.

The plans are underpinned by our guiding HSC Values and inspired by the great work that our staff do every day. We also have a 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

# Western Trust 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 also took 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 <sup>1</sup>
- Health and Wellbeing 2026: Delivering Together <sup>2</sup>
- Making Life Better 2012-2023 <sup>3</sup>
- Local Council Community Plans. [Click here](#) for FODC Plan. [Click here](#) for DCSD Plans.
- Future Planning Model Integrated Care System NI Framework<sup>4</sup>

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

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

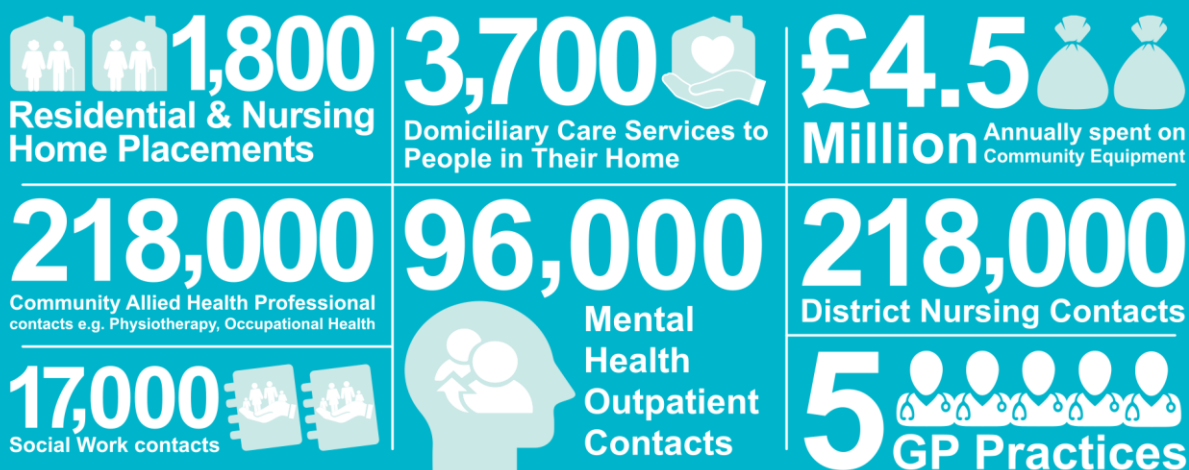
<sup>3</sup> [Making Life Better - Strategic Framework for Public Health | Department of Health \(health-ni.gov.uk\)](#)

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

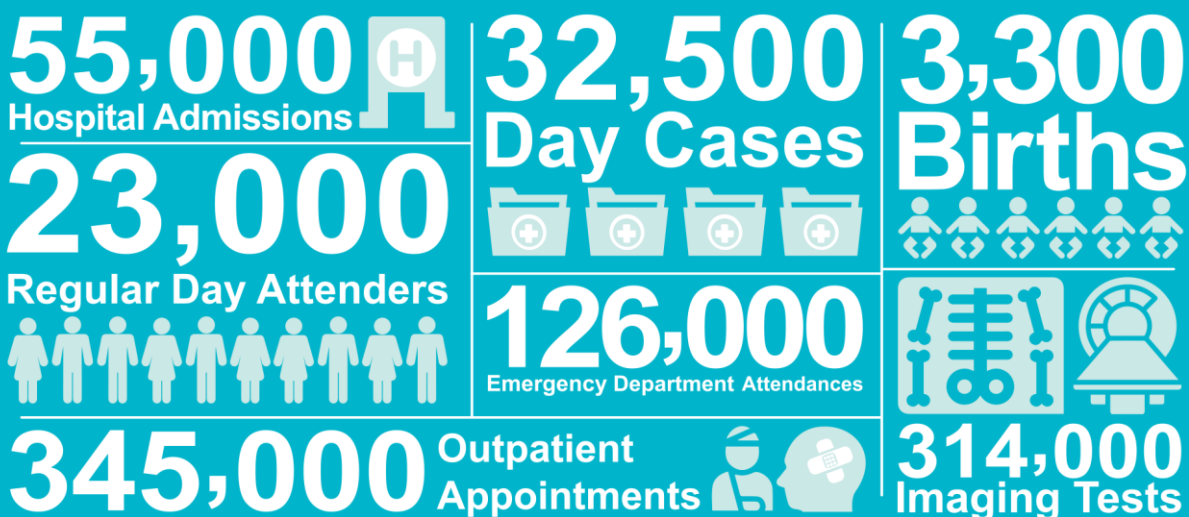
We Deliver Services From:



We Provide Support to People in our Communities Through Approximately:



Each Year in our Hospitals we Handle Approximately:



## **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)<sup>5</sup> 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 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)

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

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 statistics<sup>6</sup> 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 km<sup>2</sup> 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
- 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

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<sup>6</sup> [Northern Ireland Inpatient Activity Statistics 2022/23 \(nisra.gov.uk\)](https://www.nisra.gov.uk/nisra/2022-23-statistics/nisra-2022-23-inpatient-activity-statistics)

- 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 Census<sup>7</sup> 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 |
| <b>Derry City and Strabane District Council</b> | 12%                                                             | 16%         | 21%                                                        | 20%         |
| <b>Fermanagh and Omagh District Council</b>     | 14%                                                             | 18%         | 20%                                                        | 20%         |
| <b>Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council</b> | 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.

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 &

<sup>7</sup> [Census Area Explorer \(nisra.gov.uk\)](https://www.nisra.gov.uk/census-area-explorer)



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 2024-25, 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.*

We continue 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.

The past few years have been unprecedented in terms of impact on the population, services and our staff. The pandemic 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.

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.

#### **encompass programme**

The **encompass** programme is a 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. **encompass** will help HSCNI to work more effectively and efficiently through regional standardisation and best practice and will create better experiences for those receiving, using and delivering services.

HSCNI currently uses lots of different systems which cannot easily, or just can not, communicate with each other. Many of them are old and need to be replaced. This gives us an opportunity, rather than continuing to rely on paper records and replacing outdated technology system by system, to better use the investment needed in ICT to transform the way we care for people in Northern Ireland.

**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 setting

Implementation of the encompass programme is now almost complete with the final 2 Trusts, Western and Southern Trust to go-live on 8 May 2025.

## **Our Public Health work**

### **Vaccine Programmes**

The Vaccinations Hubs are located within the 3 Acute hospitals with clinics throughout the programme reducing as the seasonal programmes progressed in line with demand. On average there was 5 clinics per week in Altnagelvin Area Hospital, 2 in Omagh Hospital and Primary Care Centre and 2 in South West Acute Hospital. Clinics were arranged for evenings, weekends (as a pilot) and night duty to facilitate staff who work unsocial and flexible hours to have an opportunity to avail of the vaccines. Outreach clinics were also facilitated in Health Centres, Social Services buildings and smaller hospitals. The Vaccination Team also accommodated bespoke requests. GP Trust run practices also had clinics held on their premises. Daily walkabouts throughout all 3 hospitals were also done to promote uptake in busy clinical areas. Inpatients were vaccinated as identified by ward staff. Walk in and scheduled appointments were available throughout the programmes. The Vaccination Team worked closely with the Trusts communication department in promoting the service including video promotions by the Vaccination Service manager and key clinical professionals.

A total of 5764 Flu vaccines were administered and 3388 Covid vaccines to all eligible cohorts including staff. The Vaccination Service was tasked in April 2024 with administering the Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) to pregnant women at Antenatal clinics and Care Home residents (over 75). This programme runs until August 2025. 1523 RSV administered to date

The Vaccination Service also delivers the Pertussis vaccine to pregnant women at Antenatal clinics. This programme also runs until August 2025 with 711 vaccines delivered to date. The Service also continues to deliver the Measles Mumps and Rubella (MMR) vaccine although the uptake is greatly reduced - 41 MMR vaccines delivered to date. The Vaccination service is also involved in readiness for MPox including a pathway for vaccinating contacts of a positive or suspected case.

A staff survey was undertaken to gauge effectiveness of the service and seek ideas on ways to promote the service particularly the staff flu programme.

### **Mental Health**

WH SCT 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 2024 to World Mental Health Day on 10 October 2024 with a theme of 'Prioritising Mental Health in the Workplace' and 'Changing the Narrative on Suicide.'

A campaign pack and Mental Health training brochure was designed and promoted widely, the campaign pack is live on the [Minding Your Head](#) website. Services of support locally within WH SCT area were promoted including CRIS cards, helplines, local services available and training available. A calendar of events was created including a Papryus Hopewalk, Health Fairs and ARC Fitness recovery event. Mindfulness walks were organised across WH SCT area in partnership with the 3 councils for the public along with staff walking groups organised over lunchtimes. The freedom project launch by Extern was promoted via communication platforms

alongside Action Mental Health 'Art Trail' and a mental health awareness evening. The Trust also launched a sleep strategy 'Better Sleep & You' with a celebration event in October 2024.

CRIS flyers continue to be distributed, the CRIS flyers are Crisis Resources, Information and Support for anyone worried about their mental health and is designed to help support those suffering from mental health issues and provides details of mental health services available in their local area. Organisations represented on the card include; Emergency services, GP Out of Hours, Papyrus, Lifeline, Samaritans, Childline, AWARE NI, and local organisations such as Aisling Centre, Tara Centre, Koram Centre and Derry Well Women.

During 2024/25 work with refugees and asylum seekers increased and additional translated leaflets were developed. The CRIS cards were therefore translated into 8 more languages; Arabic, Somali, Kurdish Sorani, Farsi Persian, Ukrainian, Russian, Tigrinya and Amharic.

Over 300 nursing and paramedic students from Ulster University were trained in SafeTALK during the 2024-2025 period. SafeTALK training is delivered across the Western Trust area to community, voluntary and statutory sector. The WHSCT and Ulster University partnered up to support delivery of training to nursing/ paramedic students in either Year 1 or final Year of their degree.

### **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, WHSCT worked closely 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. Since the launch in 2023, Manifest training continues to be highly sought after with delivery of 4 courses, with 48 participants, during the 2024-2025 period. It is an identified need locally and interest/ engagement continues to be high.

### **Men's Health Week 2024**

Men's health week ran from 10 to 14 June 2024 in the WHSCT area with the theme of 'Know Your Numbers, Men's Health Counts'. A Men's Health Week webinar organised by Mens Health Forum in Ireland (MHFI) kick-started the campaign on 10th June 2024 to discuss the theme of 'Know Your Numbers' highlighting some of the important numbers men should know in terms of their personal health, blood pressure, cholesterol & important helpline numbers/organisations of support for Mental Health or when in crisis.

A calendar of events & a series of videos and promotional messaging was created and shared across social media platforms throughout the week, featuring the Chief Executive of the WHSCT, Trainee Psychiatrists and a Consultant in Sexual Health.

A variety of different events, fairs and talks occurred throughout the week, for both Service Users and staff including:

- Mullaghcarn climb
- 4 Health fairs were organised by WHSCT staff, community organisations and Derry City/Strabane District Council for staff and public to attend.
- Events were supported by organisations such as Papyrus, MAN, WHSCT, HIVE and Bogside Brandywell Health Forum
- Health checks were also offered to men free for height, weight and cholesterol checks.

- WHSCT Estates team organised a football match for male estates staff to compete in Magee Pitches on Friday 14 June 2024.
- The UK Park Run's were also involved with the campaign and promoted the theme on their socials and availed of resources.
- A 6-hour spinathon finished the week on 15 June 2024 organised by Men's Healthy Mind's.
- A MANifest workshop was delivered to 12 staff participants in Omagh on 18th June 2024.

## **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. A HSC Equality Lead representative attended and DPHSCF meeting in December 2024

### **Human Rights-based approach in Health and Social Care Services: Training Programme**

The Equality Team marked World Human Rights day on 10 December 2024 by sharing a new training resource developed by HSCNI Trusts for Trust staff. The short animation available by [clicking here](#) is about delivering care and treatment using a human rights-based approach. The approach helps staff to deliver services that are compassionate and patient/service user focused as well as improving the health of our community and the quality and care we deliver. This also aligns with the Trust core values and priorities.

The training is accompanied by written guidance and the programme is also promoted to those delivering commissioned services on behalf of Trusts. We want all of our HSC staff and those commissioned in the Independent Sector to model their behaviour to our patients/services users/carers and to colleagues based on the FREDA principles. Protecting the human rights of people who use our services is crucial to improving quality of care, quality of life, informed consent and safety. Key to delivering services across both our acute and community services by all staff is the FREDA principles.

### **Cultural Competency Framework**

On 5 February 2025, a regional event was held to launch the HSC Cultural Competency Framework. Health and Social Care Trusts collaborated to develop the framework to help reduce inequalities in health experienced by ethnic minority populations and patient groups across the region.

This new regional framework will help HSC staff to improve their confidence and competence in engaging with and providing services to people from a range of diverse cultural backgrounds. The Framework, which is underpinned by staff training and resources, including the 'Little Book of Cultural Competence', is designed to promote equity and enhance patient care.

The event was attended by the Health Minister, Mr Mike Nesbitt and included representatives from all Trusts, Public Health Agency, The Executive Office, Education and others to hear from the Trusts who presented on areas of best practice and to discuss the importance of this work with staff and service users. The work of the Trust Community Inclusion Workers and the Western Trust Ethnically Diverse Staff Network was highlighted during presentations.

## **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.

Trust Communications staff are working as part of a regional group which has been initiated, following a Cabinet Office Accessibility Audit on the website, and are working to agree standard regional protocols, further changes, and continue to develop our digital media channels. The aim is to resolve any outstanding accessibility issues by 31 December 2025. This has been updated accordingly, on 12 February 2025, within our Accessibility Statement on the Western Trust public facing website: [Accessibility Statement | Western Health & Social Care Trust](#)

### **Accessible communication**

From 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025 the Western Trust had a total of 9,419 sessions of foreign language interpreting, via both face to face and telephone. The Top 5 languages used for interpreting sessions within the Trust are: Arabic, Somali, Polish, Hungarian and Vietnamese.

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

### **Sensory Support Service**

The Trusts Sensory Support service is continuing to support access to services for the Deaf community both individually and in groups. They facilitate local Deaf user groups and support other WHSCT services, Community and Voluntary sector providers and all professionals with Deaf awareness and promoting equality of access to a broad range of health and social care services. They offer advice to ensure compliance with Disability Discrimination legislation and promote positive access for Deaf users within services. Engagement continues with individuals to become confident in accessing a range of services independently, through face to face interpreting and use of new Sign Video service, offering support with technology as required.

The Sensory Support team continues to promote equality and engages regularly with 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 fully empower individuals and achieve the best outcome for them.<sup>25</sup>

Sensory Support staff continue to offer training locally across the acute and community sector teams to support the transition to the new model of service delivery. The Regional Interpreting 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 Health and Social Care services.

### **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 2024-2025 reporting period were:

1. Arabic
2. Somali
3. Polish
4. Hungarian
5. Vietnamese

## 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.

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. Versions of the poster are also used in email footers by some staff.



# 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 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 overseeing the in year savings plan for 2024/25 and further develop efficiency and productivity gains across the Trust, with a further £27.5M savings achieved in 2024/25. The board continues to oversee some 12 projects as well as new and enabling projects.

Strategic Change Board focuses on:

- Driving forward and implementing system-wide operational improvements and transformation, involving staff and those who experience our services, their families and Carers in the change programme, using the principles of co-production;
- Acting in a strategic leadership capacity to oversee the delivery of reform and transformation in the Western Health & Social Care Trust’s services, aligning to the work of the HSC Performance and Transformation Executive Board, and any strategic change which impacts the services we deliver;
- Setting out performance measures and targets across the 4 quadrants of Safety and Quality, Performance, Workforce and Finance, for each area overseen by the SCB, and at an overarching level for the Trust;
- Ensuring that transformation continues in an integrated way within the Trust and at a regional level, including embedding innovations that have emerged during the pandemic;
- Providing clear direction and leadership on the delivery of transformation within the Trust, including those which are likely to be specific to the Western Trust, such as North/South Service collaborations;
- Acting as champions at both a regional level, within their organisations and communities, and to the general public as a whole ensuring coherent and consistent messaging.

Strategic Change Board ensures effective oversight relating to the Trust Improvement and Reform Boards which report to the Delivering Strategic Change Board. These include:

- Community & Older Person’s Improvement Board
- Children’s Services Board
- Digital Transformation Board
- Elective Care Board
- Mental Health & Disability Board
- Unscheduled Care & Flow Board
- ICS Implementation Board
- Stroke Services Board
- Cancer Board
- Pathology Transformation
- Encompass Implementation
- Equip Implementation
- Imaging Board
- Trust Procurement Board
- Women & Children’s Health Board
- Adult Mental Health Community Improvement Board

- Capital Development Project Board
- Strategic Property Asset Management Board
- R&D Board

## **Strategic Priority: Performance and Access to Services**

### **Adult Mental Health and Disability Services**

#### **Western Trust Disability Steering Group (DSG)**

Due to a number of factors including changes to staffing within Directorates and resources, the group, which included representatives from the Community & Voluntary sector, the Patient Client Council and Trust Staff had not met in some time. The Adult Mental Health and Disability Directorate reconvened the meetings with the first meeting held on 19 February 2025 with Trust membership of the group and Terms of Reference agreed and confirmed.

The Disability Steering Group will oversee much of the work from the Disability Action Plan (DAP). Each action in the DAP has a timeframe and identified owner who attends the DSG. An annual update on the group will be presented at the Trusts June 2025 Improvement Through Involvement Committee.

#### **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 service continues to develop the team. Since the last report we have recruited staff to support MCA within the acute setting. These staff include Mental Capacity Act Practitioners, and Authorisers and medical consultant capacity. In addition we are also in the process of recruiting an Acute Mental Capacity Act Lead and Senior Practitioner within the Learning Disability Directorate. The team continue to progress with recruitment in line with service need and allocated funding. The region is currently considering resources required to support Phase two of the implementation of the Dols legislation.

The Mental Capacity Act service are currently supporting intensive Transition work with Special Schools and children's Services ensuring Deprivation of Liberty safeguards are considered for young people who meet the criteria prior to their 18<sup>th</sup> Birthday.

MCA continues to be supported by Department of Health, Strategic Planning and Performance Group 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 7839 packages (for 7432 individuals – 407 mixed options) of care & support through this process:

- 1504 Direct Payments.
- 7 Managed Budget
- 5413 Trust Arranged Services
- 831 Cost Neutral Cases

1206 packages ceased between April 2024 and the end of March 2025. The number of One-Off Shortbreaks for carers reported to have been 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 and 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.

The Recovery College adapt 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, which provides 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 employed a new part time Peer Educator in August 2024, and a new full time Coordinator. The College continues to update workshops, and develop new workshops through coproduction. The enrolment and reminder process have been updated. The College has also forged links with community and rural organisations to foster strong connections, joint working and promotion of programmes.

## **Primary Care and Older Peoples Services**

### **Care at Home Support Team (CHST)**

The Trusts Care at Home Support Team (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 in conjunction with care home managers identify training needs through audit, risk assessment, incidents/SAls and then provide face to face training on a wide range of clinical education topics. 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 Team with the Extension for Community Healthcare Outcomes (ECHO) Project in the facilitation of training on various subjects with a recent presentation on supporting internationally educated nurses joining the workforce in Northern Ireland.

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, therefore maintaining resident safety and prevention of safeguarding issues. They complete a daily analysis of care home residents who attend the Emergency Department (ED) in the Trust with follow up advice/training when required.

The CHST hold Business Continuity Meetings with care home managers and invite guest speakers to discuss their role and initiatives they are involved within care homes e.g. My Home Life University of Ulster, Palliative care, Royal National Institute for Deaf People (RNID). The CHST also produce a Newsletter to highlight various topics including LGBTQIA+ in the care home sector. The Team are involved in Quality Improvement work on Falls Prevention and the End of Life Care Pathway in Care Homes pilot. They also participated in the development of the regional Human Rights-based approach in Health and Social Care Services Training Programme

### **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 125 MDT staff are in post across the professional groups for Social Work, First Contact Physio, Mental Health, Health Visiting and District Nursing including 5 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:

### **Addressing Health Inequalities**

Health Visitors work collaboratively with MDT Social Workers to develop community initiatives and establish Groups in areas of deprivation. 'Community Cuppa' is a weekly Group in the Shantallow area facilitated by a MDT Social Worker and Health Visiting staff. The Group is well attended by parents and children and service-user feedback demonstrates the positive impact on parental and child health and wellbeing.

'Little Birds' is another Health Visiting Initiative which delivers a 6 week nurture programme to vulnerable parents and children. The programme has been delivered in Young Parents Supported Accommodation and in Women's Aid. The programme supports parenting capacity, infant and maternal mental health and includes health education, enabling a reduction in health inequalities for vulnerable populations.

### **Work with Older people**

The service provision for older people has 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 facilitated, involving community and voluntary stakeholders in many of the different localities, raising awareness of age related issues, for example, falls prevention, living with pre diabetes or dementia, and how such issues may be managed safely at home.

In recognition of isolation and loneliness disproportionately affecting older people, and smaller support networks that come with age, Social Work Assistants have organised and facilitated a series of Chat Tea Trains in partnership with Translink and Derry & Strabane District Council. This initiative has continue to grow from strength to strength, promoting connection, and social opportunity, those over 65 have been able to avail of a day trips. 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 of available community based supports has developed. Feedback from patients highlight the demand for additional opportunities to connect. In light of this feedback Social Work Assistants organised the first ever Christmas Chat Tea Ball, offering 200 patients, for across 27 practices, the opportunity to get dressed up, and experience an evening of dancing, singing and laughter. Chat Tea Bingo took place in February 2025, offering 160 patients an evening of connection and fun. Feedback from each event highlighted the impact of social isolation and loneliness can have on an individual's health and wellbeing.

### **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. Projects have also included bring older people, who have a diagnosis of dementia, together with primary school children to complete Easter projects.

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, and an awareness of dementia in our community.

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.

Social Workers (SW) have been working in partnership with Age Concern Causeway, PHA, and Derry City & Strabane District Council (DC&SDC) on an initiative regarding the safety of patients with dementia who are lost or distressed, to ensure they are located timely, and that they are returned home safely. This initiative involves the person with dementia wearing a blue wristband that says 'I have dementia, scan the QR code with your phone if I need help'. Each QR code is individual and stores electronic information about the wearer. The dementia safeguarding scheme has fantastic benefits, as well as giving peace of mind to loved ones, the bands have supported those living with dementia to remain active, raise awareness and reduce the risks when in the community. GP Social Workers are supporting this initiative and providing wristbands and sharing information about the wristband when they deem appropriate during assessments and liaising regularly with Trust Dementia Lead.

### **Work with people who have disabilities**

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 physical disabilities. Appropriate risk assessments and supports are put in place for each event/group work activity 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, portable hearing loop systems were provided in all 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**

A Functional Neurological Disorder (FND) monthly group has been ongoing for approximately 18 months. This group was initially Social Work led but is now organised and managed by patients, with support from a Social Work Assistant. This group continues to provide patients and their families with additional support regarding symptom management, building resilience, peer support and education on the condition itself.

### **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 continue to engage with Western Trust Carers Co-ordinator and organise monthly carers support hubs throughout the Trust area. This support has recently extended to the Southern Sector carers hub.

### **Ethnic Minority Populations**

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 vulnerable population in Derry. The Health Visiting Group incorporates 'stay and play' sessions, baby massage, and bespoke information sessions to meet service-user needs. This service, not only supports infant and parental well-being, but also plays a pivotal role in their successful integration into our community and directly targets inequalities experienced by migrant, refugee, and asylum seeker families. By providing tailored support and resources, the Group aims 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 communities within the Derry GP Federation area have limited support services for families, or are outside of the geographical boundaries to access Sure Start services. In response to an identified gap in service provision, Health Visitors and community partners have initiated Health Visiting Groups in rural areas, including Clady Village and Lettershandoney Village, which provide 'Stay and Play', health education sessions and opportunity for social and emotional support. Health education sessions are facilitated by relevant statutory, community and voluntary organisations, enabling equity of service provision.

### **Health Visiting**

Health visiting is involved in meeting the health, development and wellbeing needs of asylum seeker and 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. Health Visitors are working in collaboration with the MDT SWs to support the needs of this vulnerable population.

### **Parenting Support**

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.

### **Fibromyalgia**

Fibromyalgia monthly peer support group has been ongoing for approximately 18 months. This group is run by Social Workers, and has been growing from strength to strength with positive feedback from patients who attend from all 27 practices. The group provide patients and their families with additional support regarding symptom management, building resilience, peer support and way patients can manage their own health and wellbeing at home.

### **First Contact Physiotherapy (FCP)**

First Contact Physiotherapists works at the frontline in Primary Care and have a 90% clinical role. 10% of their time is protected for non-clinical work and one of our priorities for this is in Community Involvement in tackling those factors that lead to health inequalities, governed by the social determinants of health, and there are currently projects being developed in the clinical areas of bone health, and persistent pain. The team are committed to improving access, representation on our teams and future engagement.

### **Health Improvement, Equality and Involvement**

#### **Community Inclusion Programme**

The Western Trust Community Inclusion Officer (CIO) took up post in late October 2024. The CIO works proactively to connect with individuals seeking international protection (ISIP) within the Western Trust area, offering practical help signposting and support to meet identified needs and improve uptake of services to support health, wellbeing and inclusion. They play a key role in facilitating and enabling engagement by other health professionals, community development workers and statutory and community/voluntary sector partners to improve health and

wellbeing. They help overcome barriers, build individual and community capacity, and work to reduce health inequalities.

Upon ISIP arrival into the Western Trust area, the CIO conducts regular welfare checks and provides ongoing assistance with general welfare tasks. These include helping with form completion for GP and dental registrations, making referrals to essential organisations and services, and offering general advice and signposting to community resources.

The Trust Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Officer was involved in creating CRIS cards which provide emergency numbers and information for those who are in need. The CIO collaborated with them to translate the cards into seven additional languages to support ISIP. These languages were Amharic, Farsi (Persian), Kurdish Sorani, Russian, Somali, Tigrinya and Ukrainian. The translated cards have since been distributed throughout the community.

The CIO has worked closely with Community and Voluntary groups within the Trust area to promote volunteering and to offer training opportunities for ISIP. Training courses, focusing on Level 2 Food Safety, Catering & Hygiene, aimed at enhancing employability skills, were funded. The CIO has also collaborated with local community and voluntary groups to introduce art classes for ISIP. Feedback from the participants for these events was positive. Refugee Awareness Training was also delivered to 16 Trust staff members with a further session planned for 2025/26.

An International Day of Celebration was held in February 2025 with the aim of promoting social inclusion in the local area and to promote the health and wellbeing of individuals. As part of the event 8 ISIP cooked dishes originating from their home country to share with attendees. Health checks were provided, information stalls from local organisations were available including the Women's Centre, WHSCT Health Visiting team, WHSCT Smoking Cessation team and Triax Neighbourhood Renewal team. 80 ISIP attended the event and the feedback was very positive.

### **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 is a universal project and is open to anyone that presents to their GP with high glucose levels and who 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 2025 - 3,823 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.

April 2024 to March 2025, 137 registered onto programmes, 76 (55%) individuals engaged with their programme, 29 people completed between 1-10 sessions, 47 people completed 11+ of their 18 session over a 9 month period. The outcomes results are as follows:

1. 13% are no longer in the pre-diabetic range (10 individuals)
2. 28% reduced their HbA1c pre-diabetic reading (21 individuals)
3. 35% did not progress towards T2DM (27 individuals) this was the initial objective of the project. Point 1&2 exceeded expectations
4. 20% increase in range (15-individuals)

In summary 76% of those who participated in the DPP 2024/2025 greatly increased their health outcomes and reduced their risk of developing T2DM by engaging in the programme. Evidence of success has also been reflected by participant's weight loss. Collectively participants during 2024 - 2025 reduced their weight by 9 stone.

In addition to the benefits of 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. 100% participants expressed satisfaction with behavioural change programme, with the majority reaching their goals.

### **Autism Social Cafes**

The Trust Child Development Intervention Coordinator within the Health Improvement Equality and Involvement Department arranged 5 social cafes throughout 2024/25 within 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)

154 parents, carers and representatives from 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 Trusts and is commissioned by the 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 2024-25, the channel has been viewed 39,500 times. Following a scoping exercise with the general public, the following new content has now been created and uploaded to the channel, fibre, salt, airfryers, childhood constipation series, healthier choices and preconception nutrition

Community nutrition education tutor training continues across the WHSCT with a focus on Face to Face delivery (Cook it!, Food Values, Solid Start, Making the Most of Your Slow Cooker). 'Food and Health Essentials' has been a popular training programme during the period with 51 tutors trained.

CFNT have worked closely with Western Trust Catering staff and the Nutrition Standards Coordinator in supporting the implementation of nutritional standards for catering in health and social care for staff and visitors. The team have supported 8 regional subgroup meetings alongside planning and facilitating a regional workshop on the standards review to 28 catering staff.

### **Link to Wellbeing Project**

The Western Trust launched the Link to Wellbeing project in November 2022. Funded by NHS Charities Together, the project supports individuals waiting for orthopaedic surgery to maximise their physical, mental and emotional wellbeing in preparation for surgery.

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

These programmes have been delivered throughout the geography of the WHSCT and cover a number of different topics to include; movement and mobility, healthy eating, pain management, peer support, mental health and condition management.

The HIEI Navigator worked in partnership with WHSCT Trauma & Orthopaedic (T&O) staff to identify patients who may benefit from participation in a community based programme. The programme included adults of all ages although a significant proportion of beneficiaries were aged over 60 years. In 2024/25 11 programmes were delivered with 96 service users attending.

### **Engaging with Partners:**

#### **Integrated Care Systems**

The establishment of a Western Area Integrated Partnership Board (AIPB) in shadow form provides the opportunity for the transition of Pathfinder to a region wide and area wide model of the planning and delivery of a population health approach.

Integrated Care Systems (ICS) in Northern Ireland in 2025/26 will see this model of stakeholder engagement, involvement and partnership working; coupled with population health data implemented across the whole 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. 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 PHA, planning and managing integrated care and services across the system, informed by local and regional collaboration.

The membership of the each AIPB includes 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. The Western Area AIPB met in shadow form for the first time in autumn 2024 and continue to meet on a monthly basis.

The WHSCT continues to engage as an organisation to assist with roll out of ICS. To compliment this, the Trust has established an Implementation Board, with senior representation from across the Directorates. 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.

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)**

DCSDC supported by the Trust have established a successful 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. Events continue to be held on an annual basis throughout the Council area including falls prevention, promoting Mental Health, general health and wellbeing and advanced care planning. 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 Plan, Positive Ageing Month and the DCSDC Over 50s Reference Group, who are currently carrying out walking audits.

### **Community Support Fermanagh & Omagh District Council (FODC) Area**

FODC have implemented community health and wellbeing plans in each of the 7 District Electoral Areas (DEA) areas. To date, twenty eight community wellbeing plans have been developed across the District, incorporating a range of community and wellbeing initiatives targeting all age groups, supported by the Trust. Programmes targeted the Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing including positive mental health programmes, physical health initiatives such as chair exercises, preventative activities such as health checks, and interventions targeted at tackling isolation and loneliness. Projects also targeted hard to reach groups with poor health outcomes including the Newcomer and Traveller families. This collaborative working ensures the best results in terms of health and wellbeing initiatives. The collaboration is carried through from planning, review and implementation stages.

### **Older People**

The Community Support Health Improvement Officer 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 2024. 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 52 small grants to C&V partners and older people's groups amounting to £26,992 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 Age Friendly Plans and the Derry City and Strabane District Council Over 50s Reference Group.

## **Falls Prevention**

The Community Support Health Improvement Officer (CS HIO) 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 Healthy Living Centres, the Stepping On Programme and to older people and their families/ carers through various health fairs and older people's events. In 2024/2025 the Health Improvement Officer delivered twenty two falls awareness sessions to approximately 336 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 CS HIO also delivered a Health and Wellbeing event, with a focus on accident prevention, for older people in February 2025. Nineteen organisations/ groups hosted a stand at the event and 66 participants attended. Bradley's Pharmacy and Cancer Focus delivered 18 Health Checks which consisted of blood pressure, blood glucose levels, body fat and a general conversation around medication and cancer prevention. Feedback was gathered and the event was very well received.

## **Loneliness**

The Community Support Health Improvement Department was awarded £6,250 in January 2025 to run a number of programmes in the Western Trust area to reduce loneliness. A number of initiatives were developed including a staff support fund in the WHSCT, where staff members could apply for grants of up to £100 to run a short programme within their remit to reduce loneliness among their patients and service users. Additionally, the Community Support Officers in Fermanagh and Omagh District Council, ran programmes across the seven DEAs to reduce loneliness in the areas, while CVS in Derry and Strabane including Altnagelvin Parent's Group and Foyle Women's Aid also ran a number of initiatives including chatty bench inception, arts and crafts classes, restorative yoga, exercise for young people among many others.

## **Traveller Health and Wellbeing Programme**

The Traveller Health and Wellbeing Programme has continued to engage and strengthen relationships with Travellers across the Western Trust area. In 2024/25 the programme engaged with 276 Travellers who participated in a range of health improvement programmes and/or have been supported to access a broad range of services/supports including health, housing, financial, education and training and employment.

The engagement of women has continued to increase through the women's programmes in both L'Derry and Omagh. Activities included mental health, menopause, healthy eating and money management.

A total of 153 people drawn from the statutory/community and voluntary sectors attended 7 sessions of the Intercultural and Traveller Cultural Awareness sessions delivered by Donegal Travellers Project. Some sessions targeted specific professions, for example social work. One session was also delivered to mental health nursing students in Ulster University.

The Traveller Health and Wellbeing Programme together with the Traveller Action Group have been working towards the establishment of Traveller led organisations in L'Derry & Omagh. In L'Derry, the Derry Traveller Group has been established as a voluntary association. The Traveller Health and Wellbeing Programme continues to support the Omagh Traveller Interagency Group to establish a Traveller led organisation. These meetings encourage collective learning through discussions, teamwork and shared activities allowing members to gain useful insights and strengthen understanding on Traveller issues.

## **Improvement Through Involvement as a strategic priority**

### **WH SCT PPI Strategy & Action Plan**

Strategic oversight is maintained through the Improvement through Involvement committee, which actively implements its 2 year work plan. The committee's role is to champion and monitor the effectiveness of involvement across the organisation, ensuring a continuous focus on meaningful engagement, co-production, and lived experience influence at all levels of decision-making.

A Trust-wide PPI Action Plan underpins this governance framework, guiding implementation and monitoring of involvement activity. The Involvement Team has also established structured communication and reporting processes within each Directorate, including the dissemination of monthly PPI updates, training opportunities and collection of Directorate level returns to track progress and impact.

The establishment of the Strategic Engagement Forum (SEF) approved by Strategic Change Board, represents a significant development in strengthening governance. The forum brings together service users and carers from diverse background with lived experience that reflects the people we serve and that represents each of the Trust Directorate's area of work. It plays a key role in informing strategic priorities, contributing to service redesign, and supporting the Trust's ambition to deliver inclusive and person-centred care.

### **Involvement Clinics**

The Involvement Team offer monthly involvement clinics open to all WH SCT 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 2024/25.

### **Involve Training & Support**

In 2024/2025 the Involvement Team provided PPI/ Involvement training sessions for Trust staff, 33 Trust staff participated in these information sessions. The 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

348 staff completed Engage/Involve/Co-Production e-learning Modules. As a result there has been an increase in the monitoring returns with 77 involvement surveys completed in 2024/2025.



The Involvement Team delivered monthly PPI training sessions, face to face and online sessions. Trust staff are regularly advised of training available via frequent Trust Communications and team meetings.

### **Service User Involvement Opportunities, Training and Support**

The Western Trust is committed to providing clear, accessible, and meaningful opportunities for involvement across all levels of the organisation. Service users, carers, and members of the public are actively encouraged and supported to engage in the planning, delivery, and evaluation of services.

The Trust maintains and continually updates a comprehensive stakeholder database and consultee list, which includes individuals from a broad spectrum of communities – including service users, carers, community and voluntary sector representatives, schools, universities, the business community and more. This database underpins the Trust's, 'Register of Opportunities', ensuring that opportunities for involvement are coordinated, targeted, and widely promoted through a centralised process managed by the PPI/Involvement Team.

In collaboration with the Public Health Agency (PHA), the Trust promotes regional opportunities via the Engage website, supporting equitable access to involvement activities across Northern Ireland.

### **Equality Team Training**

Training delivered/arranged by the Equality Team from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025:

**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.

**Disability Awareness Training:** Employers for Disability NI EFDNI have resumed face-to-face training. 1 session was held during the reporting period with 30 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

The uptake of the Making a Difference E-learning Programme training continues to increase, with a total of 2,249 staff members completing this training between April 2024 and March 2025.

**Deaf Awareness Training:** This training, delivered by the British Deaf Association (BDA) has returned to face-to-face sessions. During this reporting period 2 sessions with 24 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 42 participants.

**Traveller Cultural Awareness Training:** The Traveller Health and Wellbeing Programme delivered 7 Intercultural and Traveller Cultural Awareness sessions facilitated by Donegal Travellers Project between April 2024 and March 2025. A total of 153 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.

**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. 4 sessions took place with 72 participants during 2024/25.

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. The training was delivered to 4 staff members during the reporting period however one to one support and advice to managers increased on specific pieces of service change work.

**Refugee Awareness Training:** This new training aims to provide Trust Staff with information on the refugee and asylum sector and to raise awareness about the issues that they may face. The aim of the training is to give participants an understanding of:

- Asylum and refugee issues in the UK and NI in particular including:

- Up to date information on numbers, legal status and entitlements of both asylum seekers and refugees
- Clarity on the difference between asylum seeking and refugee status
- An overview of the process of claiming asylum
- An overview of the challenges involved in the transition process for those granted leave to remain/refugee status and a better understanding of how they might be supported.
- An overview of the current Refugee Resettlement Schemes in NI
- An insight into the vulnerability of those who come to seek asylum in NI and the barriers they encounter.
- Greater understanding of how to support integration within local communities.

The session was held in March 2025 with 16 Trust staff, who as part of their role work with refugee and asylum seekers.

## **Strategic Priority: Quality and Safety**

### **Dementia Service Improvement in the community**

#### **Dementia post diagnosis drop in sessions**

In 2024/25 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 2024 for paramedic students. A further 2 dementia training sessions were delivered in March 2025 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 currently 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 Dementia Action week in May 2024 and World Alzheimers day in September 2024.

### **Carer Support Team**

The Carers Support Team (CST) maintain a carer's mailing list, at the end of 2024/25, there were 3078 carers on the mailing list with 2332 receiving weekly emails. A copy of the Carers newsletter is posted to those on the mailing list every quarter.

In June 2024 during Carers Week, CST hosted 3 events throughout the Trust area in Omagh, L'Derry and Enniskillen. The events included information stands, complimentary therapies and a workshop. A Working Carers Rights presentation via Teams was also held. In December 2024, the team arranged 3 Carol Services throughout the Trust area, children from local schools sang and all of the hospital chaplains attended and carers had the opportunity to take part in the readings.

During 2024-2025 the carers support team facilitated a series of meetings with community and voluntary sector organisations to exchange information and explore collaborative working. Together with the GP Federation Social Work Teams, 3 Carers Support Hubs were launched throughout the Trust area, L'Derry, Limavady and Enniskillen. Carers have been involved since the planning stages of the Hubs, which take place on a monthly basis.

In September 2024 the Carers Framework Hub was further developed to ensure everyone in the organisation is clear about how they can access support for carers through the various support pathways. The Carers Framework Hub is continually up-to-dated with information. The hub is available via SharePoint and set out for easy access by either managers or staff with caring responsibilities within the Trust.

Carers walking groups continue on a weekly basis in Derry, Omagh and Enniskillen. The CST work closely with the Trust Communications Department to continually raise the profile of carers and showcase the events that the CST arrange. Information on both the Trust's public facing website and the internal Staff Carers Support Hub on the Intranet is updated in a timely manner so that carers are getting the right information at the right time.

### **Care Opinion**

Care Opinion is an online 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 anonymous feedback on their care and share their stories with others. A number of staff across the trust receive alerts when stories are published relevant to their scope of practice and have been trained to respond to feedback. The Trust aims to respond to every story that is published relevant to their area of work.

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, 617 staff are trained responders, 52 are readers on the system with 4 administrative staff for the system. Training is delivered using a hybrid model of face-to-face and/or virtual via teams and facilitated by the Patient Client Experience facilitator.

Patient/ carers/ service users can submit feedback through a range of mediums such as a Freephone helpline number, freepost feedback form which Care opinion issue an annual quota to each Trust, or directly online through the website [www.careopinion.org.uk](http://www.careopinion.org.uk) or via a 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 immersive reader to read each individual story and sign functionality for ISL/BSL. For young people, there is a friendly bear to help support the submission of a story and for people with learning disabilities and potentially for people with dementia there are online picture tiles to aid feedback.

For the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025 Care Opinion received 1,263 stories averaging approximately 105 stories per month with 143,379 public views to date. 1058 (84%) stories were extremely positive about the care received.

## **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

The Trust continues to engage with the Regional HSC LGBTQ+ Staff Forum alongside the Regional HSC Employment Equality Group. WHSCT had representation at a planning workshop held by the Staff Forum Committee, in February 2025. In addition, support has been dedicated to the Co-Chair of the Regional LGBTQ+ Staff Forum, to help raise the profile of the group's work and to encourage membership of the forum, by both members of the LGBTQ+ community, and its allies.

#### **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.

The Trust have invested in a resource to support this work and the broader Equality, Diversity and Inclusion agenda across the organisation. The HR Manager for Equality, Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging was appointed at the beginning of 2025. Membership of the group has grown to include not only ethnically diverse staff but others who believe they can make a difference in this area.

#### **Flexible Working**

The Western Trust continues our commitment to embedding flexible working into the culture of the organisation and supporting our employees with opportunities to support a healthier work life balance. We continue to see a significant interest and uptake of flexible working arrangements from staff across the Trust. Year-end report for 2024/25 demonstrates a high volume of requests and approvals from staff across all professional groups.

Trust Service Areas continue to investigate opportunities for flexible working within their teams, with HR continuing to promote the positive impact that can be seen from fair and reasonable consideration of all requests.

### **Staff with Caring Responsibilities**

The Trust Carers coordinator worked with Health Improvement and HR colleagues on the development of the Carers Framework online hub to support WHSCT staff who have a caring role. The Carers Hub was launched in September 2024.

Carers Digital is a website that hosts all information together for family carers. Staff can also download the care co-ordination application and a self advocacy guide as well as many more links to local information and support for carers which is specific to the Trust area.

The Trust is committed to supporting working carers, acknowledging their significant contribution and recognising the potential impact on their work life balance. The Carers Hub is a resource available to provide support and guidance all staff who are carers. The Trust is a member of Employers for Carers through Carers UK. The Trust will consider any mitigating measures for staff directly affected including requests for flexible working options in line with the Trust's Flexible Working Policy, Procedures and Toolkit. The Trust has a special leave policy which recognises that the lives of staff can be complex, acknowledges the varying and personal circumstances staff may experience and outlines how the Trust can support staff through different types of paid and unpaid leave.

### **Improving the Health and Wellbeing of Trust Staff**

The Western Trust strives to be a *Great Place to Work* with a focus on staff wellbeing. Investment and development into supporting staff well-being remains a priority within the Western Trust. The Wellbeing Framework, HSC Healthier Workplaces Network, the Staff Wellbeing Forum, communications with staff, cross-departmental and regional engagement forums help to support and guide the development and implementation of staff wellbeing initiatives within the Western Trust.

The Staff Wellbeing Team within the HIEI Department continue to promote and enhance provision of staff health and wellbeing through a range of services to maintain and improve wellbeing at work.

The introduction of The We Are With You (WAWY), Staff Wellbeing Project, funded by NHS Charities, provides the opportunity to further enhance programme provision for our WHSCT colleagues, resulting in the total number of wellbeing sessions delivered, 448 with a total of 14,431 staff participant engagements. The project has also recruited a total of 72 health champions across the organisation to take a lead in promoting health within their team/department. In addition, The WAWY project supports the Health Champions by providing training and facilitation opportunities and coordinates quarterly meetings with Wellbeing Guardians, so as they can provide feedback and updates to WHSCT Directors relating to staff wellbeing.

All WHSCT Directors have been invited to support and promote the health and wellbeing of staff by actively and visibly supporting the 'WAWY' by becoming 'Wellbeing Guardians' on a topic of their choice and furthermore fulfilling a visible and supportive role to promote key wellbeing initiatives within the organisation. To date, 8 WHSCT Directors have held the title of Wellbeing Guardian, each for a period of 3 months.

HIEI staff, along with representatives across all directorates coordinate and provide a monthly Menopause Cafe for WHSCT staff. The Cafes are delivered using a hybrid approach i.e. both in-person and face to face, and are facilitated by various subject matter experts along with the opportunity for participants Q&A. There have been a total 10 Menopause sessions provided, with 247 staff participation. In addition, WHSCT have developed a 'Managers Menopause Toolkit' as 'The Trust recognises that a large and increasing proportion of employees will be working through and well beyond the menopause. This policy recognises the impact of menopause on the working lives of employees'.

In February 2025 the Trust Wellbeing Team launched two new wellbeing initiatives for staff with the aim to both highlight and address health inequalities, whilst encouraging staff to prioritise their wellbeing. This included a new monthly Staff Wellbeing Magazine, THRIVE along with a Podcast, The TRUSTed Pod, hosted by WHSCT Director of Children and Families, Dr Tom Cassidy. Numerous articles have been published and conversations held, with subject matter experts within WHSCST, including, Prostate Cancer, Women's Health, Bowel Cancer and Heart Health.

A well-being guide has been produced as a tool to encourage WHSCT Staff to look after their wellbeing during the transitional time of encompass go-live. The online document provides well-being information, resources and opportunities to attend online mental health and well-being sessions.

**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** 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.
- 1.4** The Trust is committed to making its services accessible and information available in alternative formats.
- 1.5** The Trust provides an accessible complaints procedure for all patients and clients and continues to monitor complaints received. During the reporting period the Trust Complaints form has been updated to include questions relating to disability and communication support needs.
- 1.6** During this reporting period the Equality Team refreshed the Trust local consultee database to support effective consultation and engagement
- 1.7** The Trust provides an accessible complaints procedure for all patients and clients and continues to monitor complaints received.
- 1.8** The Equality Team maintain a screening log which is updated regularly and records equality assurance processes.

- 1.9** 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.
- 1.10** 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).
- 1.11** 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
- 1.12** 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.
- 1.13** 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
- 1.14** 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.
- 1.15** The Western Trust recognises that spiritual care is an integral aspect of health and social care. Total care includes care for the physical, social, psychological and spiritual dimensions of the person. Acknowledging an individual's spirituality, including their religion or beliefs, is essential for effective communication and comprehensive treatment. In September 2024 the Trust appointed a lead Chaplain to support the Trust Chaplaincy Team as they in turn support patients, families, staff and volunteers across the Western Trust catchment area. The Lead Chaplain is currently involved in the development of a revised Trust Spiritual Care Policy and sits on the Trust Ethics Committee, Directorate Senior Management Team, Ethnically Diverse Staff Network, Organ Donation Committee, Staff Health and Well-being Forum, Bereavement Forum, Palliative Care Forum and the Regional Lead Chaplain Forum.



- 2 Please provide **examples** of outcomes and/or the impact of **equality action plans/** measures in 2024-25 (*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 (2024-2025) of the Equality Action Plan and the Disability Action Plan Year 1 (2024-2025)

- 3 Has the **application of the Equality Scheme** commitments resulted in any **changes** to policy, practice, procedures and/or service delivery areas during the 2024-25 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:**

During the reporting period, in response to 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 Complaints Staff updated the Trust Complaints form to include questions relating to disability and communication support needs. A number of other actions were also undertaken including delivery of training Equality Training to Complaints staff.

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 continues to be 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.

The Trust Complaints form was recently amended to include questions relating to disability and communication support needs.

### **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). (The provision of equality information by staff is voluntary. Staff are encouraged to provide/record their equality information at recruitment stage and to update it during the course of their employment however, disclosure rates vary across the groups).

### **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.

Equality Lead provided Equality training for complaints staff.



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 2024-25 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 2024-25 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 2024-25 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 2024 - 2025 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 Planning Performance and Corporate Services 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 by Trust Board in 2025.

### Equality action plans/measures

7 Within the 2024-25 reporting period, please indicate the **number** of:

|                    |                                |                  |                                 |                      |                                |
|--------------------|--------------------------------|------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------------|
| Actions completed: | <input type="text" value="2"/> | Actions ongoing: | <input type="text" value="22"/> | Actions to commence: | <input type="text" value="6"/> |
|--------------------|--------------------------------|------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------------|

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 2024-25 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 2024-25 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 were developed regionally included extensive engagement and consultation with stakeholders.

- 12** In the 2024-25 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 2024-25 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 2024-25 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*):

26

- 16** Please provide the **number of assessments** that were consulted upon during 2024-25:

|   |                                                                                            |
|---|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 0 | Policy consultations conducted with <b>screening</b> assessment presented.                 |
| 0 | Policy consultations conducted <b>with an equality impact assessment</b> (EQIA) presented. |
| 0 | Consultations for an <b>EQIA</b> 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:

**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:

#### **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.

#### **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 2024-25 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

☐ Yes
 ☒ No
 ☐ Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

#### **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 2024-25 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*



|                                     |                                             |                          |                         |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Yes                                         | <input type="checkbox"/> | No, already taken place |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | No, scheduled to take place at a later date | <input type="checkbox"/> | 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 worked with the ECNI on the investigation into the complaint.

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.

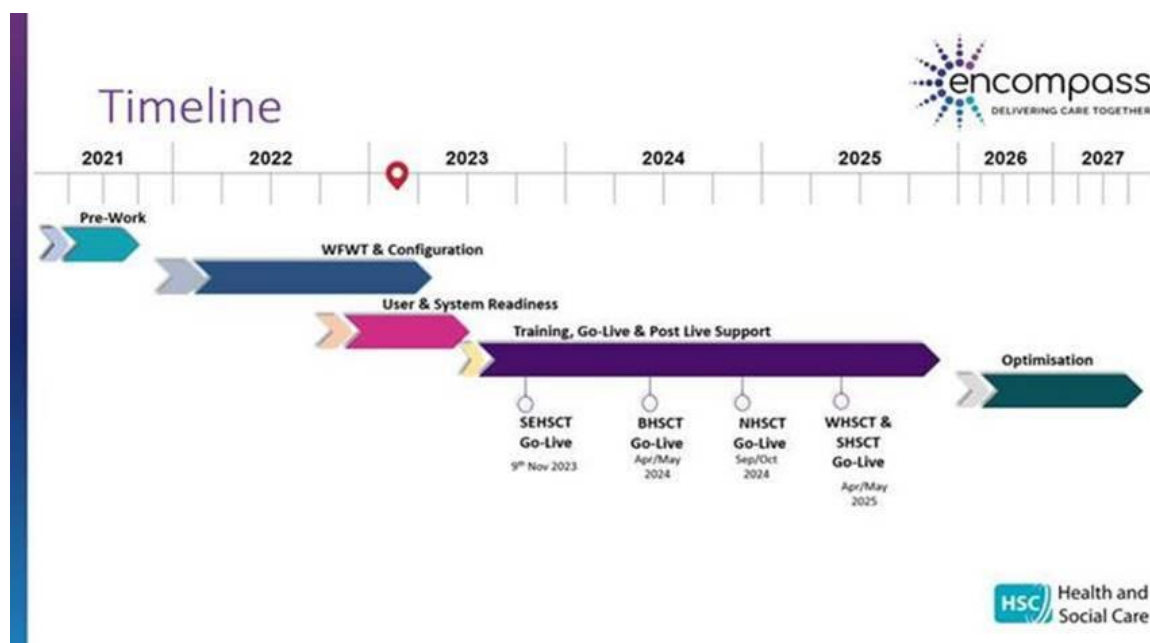


Table 1. encompass Timeline

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

Implementation of the encompass programme is now almost complete with the final 2 Trusts, Western and Southern Trust to go-live on 8 May 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 2024-25 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 complete 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, SOS CARE 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 2024-25, 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 is delivered by Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) and 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 includes 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 highlights 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.

**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.

### **SENSORY SUPPORT TRAINING**

Sensory Support staff continue to offer training locally across the acute and community sector teams to support the transition to the new model of service delivery. The Regional Interpreting 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 Health and Social Care services.

**LEARNING DISABILITY AWARENESS TRAINING;** There are a number of Learning

Disability Awareness Training Sessions available. The training covers issues faced by people with a learning disability when accessing acute services, supports that can be used, reasonable adjustments, 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 2024-25, 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 465 self-employed Interpreters, covering 35 different languages.

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 2024-25?

Insert number here:

0\*

Please provide any details of each complaint raised and outcome:

\* Staff continued to work with the ECNI to resolve 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 worked with the ECNI on the investigation into the complaint and actions were agreed and will be implemented. The actions included amending the Trust Complaints form and Equality Training for Complaints staff.

## 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 a 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 2024/25 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 continue to 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.

- Support for EQIAs/with Equality Screening
- Continuing to raise awareness and mainstreaming of equality.

30

In relation to the advice and services that the Commission offers, what **equality and good relations priorities** are anticipated over the next (2024-25) 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 (2024 - 2029). By way of completion, Appendix 1 and 2 provide updates on the actions not completed in the Equality Action Plan and Disability Action Plan.

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 in Equality Action Plan 2024 - 2029

Appendix 2/Part B: Updates on actions in Disability Action Plan 2024 - 2029

Appendix 3: WHSCT Interpreting Information 2024/25



Western Health  
and Social Care Trust

## **Appendix 1**

# **Equality Action Plan 2024 - 2029 Progress Report for 2024/2025**

# WHSCT Equality Action Plan 2024-2029 Update March 2025



## Section 1 – Improving the data we use to support decision-making

We know that high quality data plays a role in improving services and decision-making. When Trusts have good population data, they can identify areas that have worse health outcomes and target health and care resources to reduce health inequalities. Feedback from consultees has indicated that we need to improve the data we collect in relation to health and social care inequalities. The following actions are aimed at improving the data we collect to ensure the effective discharge of our S75 equality duties.

| The Trusts monitor staff across the 9 equality categories to ensure equality of opportunity. Staff input their own equality information on an online system but there are currently gaps in the data available.                                                  |                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Actions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | By when                                            | How we measure success                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Progress March 2025                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| 1. We will take active measures to encourage staff to update their equality monitoring information as part of corporate welcome/staff induction and by developing a regional and local campaign to encourage staff to update their equality profile information. | April 2024 and throughout the lifetime of the plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular awareness raising campaigns to encourage staff to update their equality data.</li> <li>Development of regional and local campaigns with timescales for staff to update their equality profile.</li> <li>Increase in percentage of staff completing their equality monitoring data.<sup>8</sup></li> <li>Promotional resources/Toolkits produced and disseminated to promote inclusion of all staff.</li> <li>Input into the EQUIP project to ensure the next HR IT system is fully appropriate and fit for operational purpose. Regional subgroups to support its development and implementation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Benchmark where appropriate with examples of good practice.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> | <b>Update:</b><br>Progressing within Regional Employment Equality Group. Representatives from Regional Employment Equality Group also involved in regional sub groups of EQUIP and regularly reports updates as required. |

<sup>8</sup> n.b. Provision of equality monitoring data on our Information System is voluntary for HSC staff but staff are encouraged to complete and update.

| ENCOMPASS is a new health and social care wide programme that will introduce a digital integrated care record to Northern Ireland.                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Actions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | By when                                            | How we measure success                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Progress March 2025                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| 2. We will work collaboratively to influence the ENCOMPASS programme to ensure that it monitors ethnicity, first language and communication support needs of patients and service users.                                                                                                                                  | Throughout the lifetime of the plan                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ethnicity and communication support needs recorded on ENCOMPASS system.</li> <li>Increased access to communication support in timely fashion.</li> <li>Improved policy formulation, service delivery and population health data.</li> </ul> | <p>Currently only available in English, function for Arabic but not activated at this time.</p> <p>Encompass say they will look at it another time. Service users can record own ethnicity and language needs in my Care app.</p> <p>Still work in progress</p> <p>Accessibility issues for staff raised by RNIB, solution being implemented to attach software such as Fusion and Dragon for those with sight loss.</p> <p>Accessibility issues also re Read &amp; Write Gold Assistive Technology Software.</p> |
| Under a new way of planning and commissioning services, the Integrated Care System (ICS) will bring together health and social care organisations, partners in voluntary and community sectors and local government, to develop population health plans to improve outcomes and wellbeing and reduce health inequalities. |                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Actions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | By when                                            | How we measure success                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Progress March 2025                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| 3. We will work with partners to ensure the inclusion and analysis of Section 75 data in the development of population health plans.                                                                                                                                                                                      | April 2025 and throughout the lifetime of the plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Robust population health plans including Section 75 data.</li> <li>Identification of health inequalities.</li> <li>Targeted services that address identified health inequalities and improve health outcomes.</li> </ul>                    | <p>Southern area will move from test to shadow Nov 2025</p> <p>Western area and South Eastern area are stood up in shadow in November 2024</p> <p>Belfast and Northern area to be stood up in early 2025</p> <p>PHA will have to publish population health plans for each AIPB</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |



## Section 2 – Addressing barriers to accessing health and social care

While much work has been done to date to promote equality of opportunity, it remains the case that there are a number of equality groups, who continue to face particular and unique barriers. During the listening events and consultation period, we heard many suggestions on how to improve equality of access to health and social care 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.

**Trusts have a duty to promote good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group. The regional Health and Social Care Good Relations Statement provides a consistent message in terms of our commitment to good relations. Belfast Health and Social Care Trust (BHSCT) has consulted on a co-produced Good Relations Strategy, which includes actions that will promote respect, equity and trust, and embrace diversity in all its forms.**

| <b>Actions</b>                                                                                                                                                                | <b>By when</b> | <b>How will we measure success</b>                                                                                                                                                                                        | <b>Update March 2025</b>                                                      |
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| 4. All Trusts will adopt the Good Relations Strategy and work collaboratively, with our partners, to take forward the actions and ensure consistency across Northern Ireland. | September 2026 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Co-produced Good Relations Strategy.</li><li>• Strategy adopted by all Trusts.</li><li>• Regional approach to promotion of good relations in HSC Trusts where relevant.</li></ul> | WHSCT plan to develop and launch a Good Relations Strategy by September 2026. |



| <b>We know that there is a lot of information available on improving health and wellbeing but we need to make sure that the content is understood and accessible.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
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| <b>Actions</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | <b>By when</b>                                     | <b>How will we measure success</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <b>Update March 2025</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| 5. We will co-develop a series of health and social care seminars with representative organisations, communities and individuals to support health and wellbeing and address inequalities.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | April 2025 and annually thereafter                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved inclusive health and well-being information, targeted at the effected communities.</li> <li>One regional seminar held each year.</li> <li>Feedback and evaluation of seminars.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <p>Regional Cultural Competency framework launch event 5 February 2025, attended by a number of Trust Staff and the Minister for Health.</p> <p>Online training and booklet developed to run alongside face to face training for staff. Formal launch within Trust planned for Good Relations Week in October 2025.</p> |
| <b>During Covid-19, the increased use of facemasks caused communication difficulties for Deaf and hard of hearing people and people who lip-read. The regional Health and Social Care Communication Support Service for People who are d/Deaf, d/Deafblind and Hard of Hearing was established in 2023 to provide consistent and improved access to communication support when accessing health and social care services.</b> |                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Actions</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | <b>By when</b>                                     | <b>How will we measure success</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <b>Update March 2025</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| 6. We will ensure staff are aware of the Health and Social Care Communication Support Service for People who are d/Deaf, d/Deafblind and Hard of Hearing and the facemasks approved by Infection Prevention                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | April 2025 and throughout the lifetime of the plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Greater awareness of the regional HSC Communication Support Service for People who are d/Deaf, d/Deafblind and Hard of Hearing.</li> <li>Greater awareness of the importance and availability of accessible facemasks.</li> <li>Improved communication and patient experience.</li> <li>Reduction in complaints.</li> <li>Increase in compliments/positive feedback.</li> <li>Proactive and targeted use of Care Opinion to</li> </ul> | <p>Regular communications issued regrading sign language interpreting options and booking arrangements.</p> <p>The contract for Sign Language Provision is with SPPG. 10/12/24 Equality Lead attended SPPG meeting with Trust IT Reps, Sign Language provider to discuss issues and concerns including re network.</p>  |

| Control, that are more accessible for people who have hearing loss, are Deaf/deaf and lip-read.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                | promote better communication.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <p>Western Trust Sensory support team have a service user group in place</p> <p>Working with Interpreter Training in Place for Western Trust staff.</p> <p>Trust Communication Support Guidelines to be updated and reissued.</p> <p>Various initiatives within Trusts to mark Sign Language Awareness week from 17 March 2025.</p> <p>Trusts to issue British Deaf Association (BDA) videos to help raise staff awareness of the barriers d/Deaf community face when accessing services and to improve experiences.</p> <p>Deaf Awareness posters to be further highlighted and reissued.</p> |
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| <b>The Northern Ireland Health and Social Care Interpreting Service (NIHSCIS) provides professionally trained interpreters on a face-to-face basis. Trusts also have a regional contract for telephone interpreting for people, whose first language is not English, when accessing Health and Social Care services across Northern Ireland. Feedback indicated that access to interpreting support remains a barrier for some when accessing services.</b> |                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>Actions</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | <b>By when</b> | <b>How will we measure success</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <b>Progress March 2025</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| 7. We will develop an interpreting card for patients and service users to present when they are in health                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | April 2025     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interpreting card for service users and patients to bring to their appointments to help support their communication needs.</li> <li>Promotion of card in training sessions.</li> <li>Increased staff awareness.</li> <li>Reduction in complaints about lack of interpreting support.</li> </ul> | Working with regional colleagues to develop card, which will have a QR code embedded. attached below example of card from SHSCT QR code will direct to page tiger to NIHSC and access codes. And also translated into different languages –                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |



| and social care facilities. The card will indicate that the service user needs an interpreter and include contact details.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | NINES and maternity – BHSCT to share                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
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| <b>Neurodiversity is a broad term, used to describe the many and varying ways in which human brains are wired. It encompasses the wide variety of ways humans think, learn, feel and process information. Neurodiversity can include Autism, ADHD, ADD, Dyslexia, Dyscalculia, Dyspraxia and Acquired Brain Injury. We acknowledge that staff, as well as patients and service users live with neurodiversity and there is a need to raise neurodiversity awareness in the workplace and in the provision of our services.</b> |                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Actions</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <b>By when</b> | <b>How will we measure success</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <b>Progress March 2025</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| 8. We will draft and co-produce neurodiversity guidance and a podcast for our staff along with key stakeholders including experts by experience.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | April 2026     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Production of an online signposting resource/service directory on neurodiversity services.</li> <li>• Increased awareness and information provision for staff in terms of people who are neurodiverse.</li> <li>• Improved user experience.</li> <li>• Improved awareness of information and services for people who are neurodiverse.</li> <li>• Dissemination and launch of guidance.</li> </ul> | <p>Western Trust currently has Neurodiversity Awareness Training for staff.</p> <p>Regionally a Neurodiversity Toolkit is being developed. A multi-disciplinary Task and Finish Group is gathering service user feedback and lived experience to inform the toolkit. Draft to be available June 2025 with Launch planned for Autumn 2025. Region wide access to the Oliver Magowan Training has been achieved. This training information will be disseminated across the Trust and is available on HSC Learn.</p> |

**We know that rurality has an impact on equality of access to services, especially for older people, due to lack of accessible transport, times of appointments and the availability of rural and/or community transport. Covid-19 has resulted in a widening of the digital divide affecting older people who may not be familiar with technology.**

| Actions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | By when                             | How will we measure success                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Progress March 2025                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
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| 9. We will work with our partners to ensure that the needs of older and disabled people, who reside in rural communities, are considered in service developments or by promoting and monitoring the use of the Rural Needs Toolkit for Health and Social Care and completing Rural Needs Impact Assessments to identify mitigations put in place. | Throughout the lifetime of the plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased awareness of the needs of older people who live rurally.</li> <li>• Raised awareness of best practice in overcoming rural inequality and providing adequate and appropriate mitigations.</li> <li>• Increased number of rural needs impact assessments, where appropriate, which evidence consideration of rurality in service design and service change with reduction in any potential inequality for those living in rural areas.</li> </ul> | <p>Rural Needs Toolkit for HSC staff available.</p> <p>DoH hospital reconfiguration holding public consultations ongoing now – Mike Nesbitt infrastructure.</p> <p>Rural Needs considered in light of any equality screening and draft rural needs annual report submitted mid-June 2025.</p> |

**We know that people may be reluctant to share their sexual orientation with health professionals and are unhappy having to disclose their sexual orientation repeatedly. We have also found that some people have had a negative experience when accessing health and social care services.**

| Actions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | By when                                                   | How will we measure success                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Progress March 2025                                                                                                          |
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| <p>10. We will implement the Rainbow Badge initiative whereby staff will complete online training to gain a HSC Rainbow Badge. This is a voluntary initiative. The badge will be used to symbolise an open, non-judgemental and inclusive place for people that identify as LGBTQ+.</p> | <p>April 2025 and throughout the lifetime of the plan</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adoption of Rainbow Badge initiative to ensure regional consistency.</li> <li>• Monitor the number of staff taking part in the initiative.</li> <li>• Gather feedback from staff and service users.</li> </ul> | <p>Being implemented at a local level in Trusts.</p> <p>New EDIB postholder progressing with scoping exercise for WHSCT.</p> |

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| 11. We will develop a resource for staff comprising professional body guidance on best practice for inclusion for people who are LGBTQ+. | April 2025 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guidance available for health and social care professionals.</li> <li>• Increased staff understanding of improving access to services for LGBTQ+ service users.</li> <li>• Reduction in complaints and increase in compliments.</li> </ul> | We await DoH and ECNI Guidance on this |
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## Section 3 – Supporting our staff

We know that our staff are our most valuable resource and the health and social care system in Northern Ireland is indebted to the work that they do every day and in particular, throughout the pandemic. We are committed to celebrating and embracing the diversity of our staff and to ensuring that they feel able to bring their authentic selves to work so that they feel valued and can continue to provide safe, effective and compassionate health and social care services.

| <b>We have one of the most ethnically diverse workforces in the public sector and it is vital that we continue to promote the inclusion and visibility of staff who come from ethnically diverse backgrounds.</b> |                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
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| <b>Actions</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <b>By when</b>                      | <b>How will we measure success</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <b>Progress March 2025</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| 12. We will support the ongoing work of Trusts' ethnically diverse networks.                                                                                                                                      | Throughout the lifetime of the plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Action plans developed to oversee Trusts' strategies on EDI for staff.</li> <li>• Policies reviewed, developed and recommended relating to EDI.</li> <li>• Internal and external EDI groups and networks better engaged.</li> <li>• Stronger links across the region between our Ethnically Diverse Staff Networks.</li> </ul> | 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 |

|                                                                                      |            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
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|                                                                                      |            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <p>embraces good relations and diversity within the workforce. The Network aims to meet every eight weeks.</p> <p>WHSCT Chair presented to attendees at the Cultural Competency Framework launch 5/2/25.</p> <p>The Trust have invested in a resource to support this work and the broader Equality, Diversity and Inclusion agenda across the organisation. The HR Manager for Equality, Diversity, Inclusion &amp; Belonging was appointed at the beginning of 2025. Membership of the group has grown to include not only ethnically diverse staff but others who believe they can make a difference in this area.</p> |
| 13. We will develop a Cultural Competency training and awareness programme for staff | March 2025 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A co-produced package of e learning is developed and made available for staff to access.</li> <li>• Staff access to supporting resources.</li> <li>• Deeper understanding of the key issues to help create a more inclusive environment for all.</li> </ul> | <p>Regional Cultural Competency framework launch event held 5 February 2025.</p> <p>Online training and booklet developed to run alongside f2f training for staff.</p> <p>Link to framework to be added to the mandatory Equality Training section</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |

**We know that there are still incidents of homophobia in the workplace towards staff who are LGBTQ+ and we know that there is an under-declaration amongst staff who record their sexual orientation as LGBTQ+.**

| <b>Actions</b>                                                                                                                                                              | <b>By when</b>                      | <b>How will we measure success</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <b>Progress March 2025</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
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| 14. We will continue to work in partnership with LGBTQ+ representative organisations to ensure that training and awareness raising resources are consistent and up to date. | Throughout the lifetime of the plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training developed to support staff to increase understanding of LGBTQ+ experiences.</li> <li>• Staff access to supporting resources.</li> <li>• Deeper understanding of the key issues LGBTQ+ people face to help create an inclusive environment for all.</li> <li>• Increased knowledge of appropriate language and policies that support inclusion.</li> </ul> | The Trust continues to promote the Regional LGBTQ+ Forum for staff Link established between regional staff forum and WHSCT staff forum representative. EDIB Manager attended recent planning workshop to ensure an understanding of forum priorities and how to support these. |
| 15. We will promote the regional HSC LGBTQ+ network for staff across Trusts.                                                                                                | Throughout the lifetime of the plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased awareness and celebration of LGBTQ+ diversity.</li> <li>• Space provided for LGBTQ+ staff peer support.</li> <li>• Improve experience for LGBTQ+ staff by providing access to support.</li> <li>• Increased understanding of LGBTQ+ inclusion.</li> <li>• LGBTQ experiences more visible in the wider organisation.</li> </ul>                           | Links established between regional forum and WHSCT staff forum representative. Promotional communications around forum issued within Trust.                                                                                                                                    |

| <b>Informal/family carers represent a significant proportion of the working population. A growing number of people working in health and social care are trying to balance their jobs and their caring responsibilities. The entitlement to carers' leave and flexible working arrangements are two of the main support measures that can help informal/family carers to keep a balance between their work lives and caring.</b> |                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
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| <b>Actions</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <b>By when</b>                                     | <b>How will we measure success</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <b>Progress March 2025</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| 16. We will improve awareness of options for flexible working, work-life balance, special leave policies to ensure they are accessible to all our staff.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | April 2025 and throughout the lifetime of the plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish baseline on uptake of flexible working and monitor year on year staff accessing these opportunities.</li> <li>Increased awareness of flexible working, work-life balance and special leave policies.</li> <li>Monitoring reports produced twice a year on flexible working.</li> </ul> | <p>Ongoing promotion and awareness of flexible working options through HR Hub.</p> <p>A baseline for each Trust being gathered for monitoring report – requested by Trade Unions.</p> <p>Regional monitoring report nearing completion.</p>                                  |
| <b>It is important that staff who have or acquire a disability are supported in the workplace by overcoming any potential barriers to achieving their full potential. Trusts are committed to creating a safe and welcoming environment for all staff.</b>                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Actions</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <b>By when</b>                                     | <b>How will we measure success</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <b>Progress March 2025</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| 17. We will scope development of Staff Disability Forums and Networks to support regional consistency.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | March 2024                                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Effective implementation and widespread use of Disability Passport.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <p>Disability passport will be integral with the new regional policy for Supporting Attendance at Work and will be referred to as a Workplace Adjustment Plan.</p> <p>Will be progressed at a regional level and local implementation will be supported by EDIB Manager.</p> |

| Actions                                                                                                                                                                                                   | By when                             | How will we measure success                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Progress March 2025                                                                                                                                             |
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| 18. We will develop an individual plan in partnership with disabled staff members to ensure they are supported through the provision of reasonable adjustments where appropriate.                         | Throughout the lifetime of the plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better support for disabled staff to return and remain in work.</li> <li>• Record available of what has been agreed previously to support disabled staff member if changing role.</li> <li>• Guidance available for managers on how to support disabled staff member.</li> </ul>                         | The Disability passport will be integral with the new regional policy for Supporting Attendance at Work and will be referred to as a Workplace Adjustment Plan. |
| <b>Health and social care staff must have the foundation of effective policies and relevant training to support them to provide the most inclusive and compassionate health and social care services.</b> |                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 19. We will develop a regional policy framework to ensure Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) policies are reviewed in line with governance requirements.                                             | Throughout the lifetime of the plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) policies reviewed.</li> <li>• Policies reflective of up to date advice and best practice from the Equality Commission and other legislative developments.</li> <li>• Regional consistency in EDI policies and equity for all staff across the Trusts.</li> </ul> | Regional EDI, Gender Identity & Disability Policies were planned to be reviewed by regional Employment Equality Group in 2025.                                  |
| 20. We will update the regional HSC 'Making a Difference' e-                                                                                                                                              | April 2028                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regional HSC Making a Difference e-learning programme updated.</li> <li>• Updated training incorporated best practice identified.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                             | Programme and accompanying booklet to be updated, Regional Employment Equality Group will also be involved.                                                     |



| Actions                                                                                                                                            | By when                             | How will we measure success                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Progress March 2025                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
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| learning programme further to review of best practice in E-learning and EDI training.                                                              |                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Link to the Cultural Competency/Human Rights/Oliver MacGowan training to be added to the training programme.                                                                                                                                                                  |
| 21. We will work to improve uptake of equality training, which is mandatory in all Trusts.                                                         | Throughout the lifetime of the plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uptake of statutory mandatory equality training monitored.</li> <li>• Increased compliance levels with mandatory equality training.</li> <li>• Increased awareness of zero tolerance approach to racial harassment/ discrimination/ bullying and abuse at work.</li> </ul> | <p>Regular review of training compliance and Directorates with lower update contacted. Alternative delivery methods explored.</p> <p>“How to report a hate crime” resource currently being worked on within several Trusts to increase awareness for international staff.</p> |
| 22. We will identify an EDI Champion at a senior level in each Trust.                                                                              | April 2025                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identified lead on EDI at senior level.</li> <li>• EDI Champion at senior level identified in each Trust.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                       | The Trust is currently reviewing the role description for the EDI Champion and will identify a lead at senior level in 2025.                                                                                                                                                  |
| 23. We will work in partnership with trade unions to ensure that staff who experience domestic and sexual violence are supported in the workplace. | April 2026                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trust domestic and sexual violence workplace policy in place and support networks established.</li> <li>• Positive feedback from ongoing engagement from affected staff.</li> </ul>                                                                                        | <p>New Policy &amp; Staff Support Service launched in December 2024.</p> <p>Supported by additional promotion of policy in January 2025. eLearning to be made available to all staff in 2025.</p>                                                                             |

**Personal stories can really resonate and be most impactful in terms of effectively communicating key messages. We recognise that collaborating with people with lived experience enhances the training we provide and gives staff a different perspective, improving the services we provide.**

| Actions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | By when                             | How will we measure success                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Progress March 2025                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
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| 24. We will engage with external experts and representative organisations to provide specialist training for employees.                                                                                                                                             | Throughout the lifetime of the plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training sessions developed delivered and evaluated.</li> <li>• Marketing and promotional strategy to increase uptake of training across all Trusts.</li> </ul>                                | <p>Currently within WHSCT training sessions for staff include:</p> <p>Visual Awareness Training – delivered by RNIB</p> <p>Deaf Equality Awareness Training delivered by the British Deaf Association.</p> <p>Disability Awareness Training and Neurodiversity Awareness Training delivered by Employers for Disability NI.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 25. We will develop a human rights based training programme and guidance for staff providing care for people living in residential settings. We will share and actively promote these resources with Independent Sector colleagues, who may also provide this care. | April 2025                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased awareness and competence in providing person centred, person led care and what a human rights based approach.</li> <li>• Evaluation of training and associated resources.</li> </ul> | <p>To mark World Human Rights day on 10 December 2024 Trusts shared a new training resource for staff. The short animation is about delivering care and treatment using a human rights-based approach. The approach helps us all to deliver services that are compassionate and patient/service user focused; one of our core values.</p> <p>The video will be supported by a manual, Trusts are currently making arrangements to launch these including to those providing commissioned services. The Trust Care Home Support Team were encouraged to share the video with those delivering commissioned services in December 2024.</p> <p><a href="#">HSC, FRED A Animation on Vimeo</a></p> <p>Arrangements underway for full launch including to those providing commissioned services.</p> |

| We want to harness the talents of a diverse workforce and recognise that we need to take a proactive approach in improving access to health and social care employment for marginalised Section 75 groups.                     |                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
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| Actions                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | By when                             | How will we measure success                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Progress March 2025                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| 26. We will develop actions in line with legislative provision to improve access to those Section 75 groups, where there is a low representation in our workforce.                                                             | Throughout the lifetime of the plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved access to employment for marginalised Section 75 groups.</li> <li>Equality data indicating better representation.</li> </ul>                                                                               | <p>Regional discussions ongoing at Regional Employment Equality Group regarding accessibility of employment in HSC.</p> <p>Trusts continue to submit Article 55 reports annually on workforce.</p> <p>The Trust has supported our global majority staff to attend the regional and local PROGRESS programme courses. This is a development course which is facilitated by the HSCLC specifically for this staff group.</p>                                                                                                                                                                        |
| 27. We will address specific health inequalities for staff, for example provide menopause information sessions and celebrate men's health week to promote inclusion and visibility of gender specific issues in the workforce. | Throughout the lifetime of the plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Raised awareness of gender specific health inequalities for staff.</li> <li>Increased inclusion and visibility of gender specific issues.</li> <li>Better support for staff with gender specific issues.</li> </ul> | <p>WHST have developed a 'Managers Menopause Toolkit' which 'recognises the impact of menopause on the working lives of employees'. Monthly Menopause Cafes are held for staff. These are delivered using a hybrid approach and are facilitated by various subject matter experts.</p> <p>The Staff Wellbeing Team highlight and address health inequalities through the monthly staff wellbeing magazine, THRIVE and The TRUSTed Podcast. Subject matter experts within WHST have provided information on matters including, Prostate Cancer, Women's Health, Bowel Cancer and Heart Health.</p> |

| Actions                                                                                                                                       | By when                                | How will we measure success                                                                                                                  | Progress March 2025                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
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| 28. We will work collaboratively on the forthcoming gender pay gap legislation and determine appropriate methods of monitoring and reporting. | Dependant on enactment of legislation. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pay structure established that ensures fairness and equity in pay and reward arrangements.</li> </ul> | Currently DfC out for public consultation. The proposal is to include not only gender monitoring and reporting but also race and disability – similar to what happens in rest of UK. Initial Draft Regional Consultation Response drafted for submission. |

## Section 4 – Supporting informal/family carers

We know that many of us are likely to become a carer at some point in life and informal/family carers cover a great part of care needs, often called the 'invisible workforce'. Strengthening the voice and representation of informal carers is the first step to address the challenges facing informal carers. Informal care can be physically and mentally demanding, resulting in carers often feeling exhausted, lonely, and strained. Carer Co-ordinators in each Trust area work collaboratively with carers to develop an accessible carer support and short break programme. The Trusts also work with community and voluntary organisations to ensure carers can be signposted to support in their local area.

**Recognition of the key role a carer plays is essential and we must provide support when the caring role is having a negative impact on the health and well-being of the informal/family carer. It is also important to make useful information and training easily accessible and available to informal carers.**

| Actions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | By when                               | How will we measure success                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Progress March 2025                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 29. We will work collectively to ensure that carers across the region are aware that they can have access to a conversation with their named worker in relation to their caring role and needs. The conversation is carer led and encourages both staff and carers to take time to discuss the caring role. | Throughout the lifetime of the plan   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased uptake of carers' assessments.</li> <li>• Improved carer experience of the carer assessment process.</li> <li>• Carers across Northern Ireland receive the same information and know where to get help and support.</li> <li>• Increase in people who identify as carers, which will enable them to link into supports available.</li> <li>• Quarterly DoH monitoring.</li> </ul> | <p>Carers Conversations are promoted both with carers and with staff. Facilitation of ongoing Carers Assessment Training for staff ensuring that the information is reviewed and updated regularly.</p> <p>Carers are regularly informed of their right to ask for a carers assessment and help is provided to have this done. Section in WHSCT our carers handbook about carers assessments and it is also on the Trust website.</p> <p>The Trust has videos of carers talking about their experience of having a carers assessment and these have been used in training. Our Carers Support Team promote carers assessments to our Community &amp; Voluntary sector partners.</p> <p>Trust's Carer Coordinators and SPPG are looking at raising awareness around Carers Conversations – there is a regional video that requires updating.</p> |
| 30. We will hold an annual event on Carers Rights Day to highlight care and                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | November 2024 and annually thereafter | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consistent, regional approach to Carers Rights Day.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | WHSCT Carers Team held an online information session on Carers Rights and Support on Carers Rights Day. Carers UK facilitated the session and it was also offered                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |

**Recognition of the key role a carer plays is essential and we must provide support when the caring role is having a negative impact on the health and well-being of the informal/family carer. It is also important to make useful information and training easily accessible and available to informal carers.**

| <b>Actions</b>                                                                                                   | <b>By when</b> | <b>How will we measure success</b> | <b>Progress March 2025</b>                |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| caring and help informal/family carers understand their rights and find out about support that may be available. |                |                                    | out to carers in all of the other Trusts. |





Western Health  
and Social Care Trust

## **Appendix 2**

# **Disability Action Plan 2024-2029**

## **Progress Report 2024/2025**



# WHSCT Disability Action Plan 2024-2029 – Update March 2025





## Section 1 – Actions to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people

Disabled people have told us that negative attitudes are often the biggest and most common barrier they face and we believe as a large service provider and employer we have a vital role to play in shaping and modelling positive attitudes towards disabled people. Section 1 of this Plan focuses on promoting positive attitudes through an inclusive approach to the use of images and language, providing better training, guidance and support for our staff and ensuring our Disability Action Plan is easy to access.

| What you told us                                           | What we will do (Actions)                                                                                                                                                                                                         | By when                             | How will we measure success                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Update March 2025                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| There is a need for greater visibility of disabled people. | 1. We will continue to promote disability equality and the social model of disability through an inclusive approach to the use of images, which reinforce a positive attitude towards disabled people and disabled staff members. | Throughout the lifetime of the plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased visibility of disabled people and disabled staff, including those with hidden disability in Trust publications, use of social media and online presence.</li> <li>Proactive promotion and communication of our co-production with disabled people and disability-related events.</li> </ul> | Range of images continue to be used throughout the Trust. Training, policies etc. in place to support service users and staff.                                                                              |
|                                                            | 2. We will mark and celebrate allocated disability – related days to raise awareness at a local and regional level.                                                                                                               | Throughout the lifetime of the plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Co-produced calendar of events organised and publicised annually.</li> <li>Increased staff awareness of disability equality.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                               | Within WHSCT to date allocated days are promoted, calendar of events currently being developed. Training arranged around significant dates e.g. International Day of Disabled Persons 3 December each year. |

| What you told us                                                                                                                                                   | What we will do<br>(Actions)                                                                                                                                                                                                         | By when    | How will we measure success                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Update March 2025                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| That the disability legislation in Northern Ireland is very complex and there is a need to ensure our Disability Action Plan is accessible and easy to understand. | 3. We will work with disabled people and representative groups to enhance the profile and accessibility of the regional Disability Action Plan to ensure that the legislation and disabled people's rights are easier to understand. | March 2025 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased awareness of the accessible Disability Action Plan internally and externally.</li> <li>• Disability Action Plan available on Trust websites and internal intranets, including Easy Read and Signed versions</li> <li>• Proactively disseminate the Disability Action Plan to key stakeholders.</li> <li>• Co-produced resource explaining the disability duties and legislative requirements.</li> </ul> | <p>Disability Action Plan including easyread and signed version on all Trust websites.</p> <p>Action plan shared throughout the Trust and with local and regional consultees. It is also available on the Trust Website.</p> |

| What you told us                                                                                 | What we will do<br>(Actions)                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | By when                        | How will we measure success                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Update March 2025                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| All health and social care staff should be trained on disability equality and disability duties. | 4. We will review our staff training programmes and ensure that training is co-produced, reflects lived experience and includes information on disability equality and the disability duties and promotes the Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training. | March 2025 and review Annually | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluation of training completed.</li> <li>• Feedback on training gathered from staff to inform the evaluation.</li> <li>• Increased awareness of disability duties.</li> <li>• Co-production of training resources on disability equality and disability duties.</li> <li>• United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) guide for HSC staff updated.</li> </ul> | <p>Training is available for all staff via elearning module Making a difference on Learn HSCNI. This training is currently being reviewed.</p> <p>WHSCT also has additional training for staff: Visual Awareness Training – delivered by RNIB Deaf Equality Awareness Training delivered by the British Deaf Association. Disability Awareness Training and Neurodiversity Awareness Training delivered by Employers for Disability NI.</p> <p>Oliver McGowan training regionally available.</p> |

## Section 2 – Actions to encourage participation by disabled people in public life

Disabled people have told us that too often, they and their representative organisations face barriers to full and effective participation. These include inaccessible physical and online environments and inaccessible information and communication. Actions in this section focus on increasing disabled people's participation in decisions about policies and service development.

It is important to note that the Trusts do not have direct control over public life positions within health and social care, however we do have disabled people sitting on many of our user groups and forums so we have also included actions to ensure these opportunities are accessible and promoted.

As one of the largest employers in Northern Ireland, disabled people have told us that this section of the Plan must include how disabled people have the opportunity to find out about the range of jobs available in health and social care and ensure people are provided with appropriate support to enhance employability and obtain employment.

| What you told us                                                                              | What we will do (Actions)                                                                                                                                 | By when                                            | How will we measure success                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Update March 2025                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Disabled people want to be clear on how they can get involved, be heard and inform decisions. | 5. We will share opportunities for involvement to ensure the voice of disabled people is heard in developments and changes to services at an early stage. | March 2025 and throughout the lifetime of the plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of a specific database of disabled people and organisations and determine the best way for them to be involved.</li> <li>• Consultee database reviewed and updated annually.</li> <li>• Increased usage of involvement section on each Trust website and the Public Health Agency (PHA) “Engage” website and sharing of links with disabled people and representative organisations.</li> <li>• Promotion of Trust Involvement Teams and involvement opportunities with disabled people and representative groups.</li> <li>• Use of alt text in our social media.</li> </ul> | <p>Information from Trusts is available in alternative formats including easyread and written translations on request.</p> <p>In 2024/25, the Western Health and Social Care Trust shared 40 involvement opportunities with service users and carers. For those who have identified as having a disability, their preferred communication method was used to maximise accessibility and inclusion.</p> <p>The Equality Team works in partnership with the Trust Involvement Team on any consultation processes.</p> <p>The Consultee list held by the Equality Team is updated annually.</p> |

| What you told us | What we will do<br>(Actions) | By when | How will we measure success | Update March 2025                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|------------------|------------------------------|---------|-----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                  |                              |         | •                           | <p>Involvement opportunities are promoted via the Trust website, internal networks, and the Public Health Agency's "Engage" platform. The Trust Involvement Team continues to work closely with disabled people and representative organisations to identify and address barriers to participation.</p> <p>Efforts are ongoing to update the Trust's consultee database, enhance the accessibility of our digital content (including the use of alt text on social media), and raise awareness of the support available through Involvement Teams to encourage greater engagement by disabled individuals.</p> |

| What you told us | What we will do (Actions)                                                                                     | By when    | How will we measure success                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Update March 2025                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                  |                                                                                                               |            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | WHSCT have long established Sensory Support Groups, including bimonthly Deaf service user group, monthly macular degeneration group, biweekly hard of hearing groups and tinnitus groups. The Deaf user group has been successful at influencing practice throughout the Trust through care opinion and focus groups held. A PPI project from Hard of Hearing group effected better communication with audiology. |
|                  | 6. We will work in partnership with relevant key organisations and individuals to identify advocacy services. | March 2025 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development of a Directory of Advocacy and Support Services co-produced with representative organisations, published on each Trust's website (and in alternative formats) and disseminated widely - reviewed on annual basis.</li> </ul> | Trusts are working regionally to gather information for this Directory.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|                  |                                                                                                               |            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |

| What you told us | What we will do<br>(Actions)                                                                                                                               | By when                 | How will we measure success                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Update March 2025                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                  | 7. We will work with representatives from the Regional Disabled People's Forum on disability equality issues.                                              | April 2025 and annually | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual meeting with members of Regional Disabled People's Forum.</li> </ul>                                                                                                            | Regional Equality Leads Representatives attended meeting December 2024.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|                  | 8. We will review the membership of our user forums and where necessary work to increase representation of disabled people and representing organisations. | April 2025 and annually | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review of membership of forums and user groups completed.</li> <li>Gaps identified where increased representation of disabled people on user groups and forums is required.</li> </ul> | The Trust continues to promote the inclusion of individuals with lived experience of disability across its service user forums and project groups. Efforts have focused on strengthening representation by ensuring that individuals and representative organisations with relevant experience are actively recruited and supported to contribute meaningfully. |



| What you told us | What we will do<br>(Actions) | By when | How will we measure success | Update March 2025                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|------------------|------------------------------|---------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                  |                              |         | •                           | <p>Staff across the Trust receive ongoing guidance on the importance of involving people with lived experience, with particular emphasis on how their contributions shape service design and delivery. Involvement opportunities are promoted using the individual's preferred method of contact, ensuring accessibility and responsiveness to diverse needs.</p> <p>Reasonable adjustments are made to remove barriers to participation, enabling disabled individuals to contribute on an equal basis.</p> |

| What you told us                                            | What we will do<br>(Actions)                                                                                                                             | By when                                            | How will we measure success                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Update March 2025                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Consultation methods must be accessible to disabled people. | 9. We will ensure that all consultations are inclusive, targeted and use appropriate methods to ensure participation of a wide range of disabled people. | April 2025 and throughout the lifetime of the plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Checklist developed that includes standards for the accessibility of public meeting areas, the provision of information in accessible formats, and the use of new technologies suitable for disabled people.</li> <li>• Consultation processes designed to be as inclusive as possible from the outset.</li> <li>• Focused consultation with disabled participants as required.</li> <li>• Improved opportunities for disabled people to engage with and influence policy-makers.</li> </ul> <p>Methods and tools used for online involvement will allow disabled people to participate on a fair and equal basis.</p> | The Western Trust continues to implement inclusive and accessible consultation methods to ensure meaningful participation by disabled people. Information is routinely made available in a range of alternative formats, including Easy Read, large print, and signed video, to accommodate a wide variety of communication needs. Venues for events are accessible, Trusts have e.g. ensured changing places are available, various consultation methods are used including face to face, online meetings etc. |

| What you told us                                                                                                  | What we will do (Actions)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | By when                             | How will we measure success                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Update March 2025                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Trust staff are supported to apply accessibility standards consistently, ensuring that all engagement activities are planned with inclusion in mind. This approach reflects our ongoing commitment to eliminating barriers and enhancing the voice of disabled people in shaping health and social care services.    |
| It is the responsibility of HSC staff to book communication support for people who are D/deaf and Hard of Hearing | 10. We will continue the roll out of the Health and Social Care Communication Support Service for People who are d/Deaf, d/Deafblind and Hard of Hearing and improve access to Sign Video within hospitals using computers and phones accessing the Trust Wi-Fi. | Throughout the lifetime of the plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regional consistency and equity of access to communication support for people who are Deaf/deaf or have hearing loss.</li> <li>• Improved access to communication support for people who are Deaf/deaf or Hard of Hearing.</li> <li>• Increased awareness of HSC staff of need to provide communication support.</li> <li>• Reduction in complaints about lack of communication support available/provided.</li> </ul> | <p>Regular communications issued regarding sign language interpreting options and booking arrangements.</p> <p>Equality Lead reps attended SPPG meeting with Trust IT reps, Sign Language provider to discuss issues and concerns.</p> <p>Interpreting Training and Deaf Awareness Training available for staff.</p> |

| What you told us                                                                                                  | What we will do<br>(Actions)                                                                                           | By when    | How will we measure success                                                                                                                                                                                              | Update March 2025                                                                                        |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Consideration should be given to the installation of Changing Places toilets in all hospitals in Northern Ireland | 11. We will scope the availability of Changing Places and new facilities will be added in accordance with legislation. | April 2026 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scoping of all facilities completed.</li> <li>• Gaps identified in relation to relevant legislation.</li> <li>• Improved access to HSC services for disabled people.</li> </ul> | Work to be carried out with Estates/Strategic Capital Development to scope facilities and identify gaps. |

| What you told us                                                                               | What we will do (Actions)                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | By when    | How will we measure success                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Update March 2025                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Staff need to understand how to involve disabled people in decisions they make about services. | 12. We will co-produce guidance for staff on how to effectively engage with disabled people in decision making processes. These guidelines will provide practical information to support staff to address the barriers to meaningfully involvement. | April 2026 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Health and social care decision makers have access to good quality co-produced information and resources to improve participation of disabled people in decision making.</li> <li>Improved participation of disabled people in health and social care decisions.</li> </ul> | <p>Work is underway to support the co-production of practical guidance for staff on involving disabled people in decision-making processes. This will be promoted internally across the Trust in the coming year.</p> <p>The Involvement Team continues to provide tailored advice and support to staff, service users, and carers to promote inclusive engagement practices across services. This includes advising on reasonable adjustments, such as the provision of materials in alternative formats, to ensure that disabled individuals can participate fully. .</p> |

| What you told us                                                                                        | What we will do (Actions)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | By when    | How will we measure success                                                                                                                                                                                               | Update March 2025                                                                                                                                                                |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                                         | 13. We will co-produce and hold a masterclass in each Trust area for health and social care decision makers to develop a deeper understanding of how better participation with disabled people is central to the implementation of our Disability Action Plan. | April 2025 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Effective participation masterclass developed in partnership with disabled people and representative organisations.</li> <li>Masterclass held – one in each Trust area.</li> </ul> | <p>Regional Task &amp; Finish group established to co-produce a masterclass to be held in coming year.</p> <p>Disability Champions to be identified across all Directorates.</p> |
| Policies need to be kept up to date and relevant, to support disabled staff to remain in the workplace. | 14. We will review our Staff Disability Equality Policy in line with best practice to ensure it remains fit for purpose and relevant.                                                                                                                          | March 2025 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review of Disability Equality Policy completed in partnership with disabled staff.</li> <li>Revised regional policy in place.</li> </ul>                                           | Currently under review and due to be consulted with Trade Union colleagues.                                                                                                      |
|                                                                                                         | 15. We will review and update our Disability Toolkit.                                                                                                                                                                                                          | March 2025 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Updated Disability Toolkit in place.</li> <li>Policy and Toolkit reviewed and amended in partnership with disabled staff.</li> </ul>                                               | The Disability Toolkit will be reviewed in 2025/26.                                                                                                                              |

| What you told us                                                                                             | What we will do (Actions)                                                                                                                                   | By when                             | How will we measure success                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Update March 2025                                                                                                                          |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                                              | 16. We will engage with disabled staff to ensure they have a voice and influence the support we provide.                                                    | March 2025                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Method of ongoing engagement established in each Trust area.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | This will be progressed at a regional level and local implementation.                                                                      |
| There is a need for more opportunities for disabled people to gain employment within health and social care. | 17. We will work in collaboration with relevant stakeholders to review our employability schemes and placement schemes to enhance employment opportunities. | March 2026                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Opportunities and availability of our employability schemes and placement schemes scoped.</li> <li>Plans developed to enable and support employment placements and work experience for disabled people across each Trust.</li> </ul>                                                                        | Consultation with local stakeholders in coming year                                                                                        |
|                                                                                                              | 18. We will work to reduce barriers to recruitment in health and social care for disabled people.                                                           | Throughout the lifetime of the plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Barriers to recruitment in health and social care identified in partnership with disabled people and representative organisations.</li> <li>Development of actions, in line with the legislative provisions and supported by equality data, to improve access to employment for disabled people.</li> </ul> | <p>Reasonable Adjustments currently considered as required.</p> <p>Work is ongoing including regionally regarding recruitment website.</p> |

| What you told us                                                                        | What we will do (Actions)                                                                                                                              | By when                             | How will we measure success                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Update March 2025                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                         | 19. We will provide an alternative way for disabled applicants to apply for HSC jobs until the current HSC jobs website is replaced by the new system. | Throughout the lifetime of the plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Method for disabled applicants to apply for HSC jobs available.</li> <li>Better communication with disabled applicants who require adjustments or support with their application.</li> </ul> | <p>A Guide has been produced regionally re accessibility for the HSCRecruit website.</p> <p>Applications are accepted in alternative formats. Reasonable adjustments can be put in place.</p> <p>Community and Voluntary groups and applicants can liaise with HR staff.</p> |
| There is a need to improve visibility and awareness of jobs for anyone who is disabled. | 20. We will work towards Disability Positive Accreditation for all Trusts.                                                                             | March 2029                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Disability Positive Accreditation achieved.</li> <li>Increased awareness among disabled people of HSC jobs available.</li> </ul>                                                             | This will be progressed in the during the timeline of the plan.                                                                                                                                                                                                              |



| What you told us                                                      | What we will do (Actions)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | By when                             | How will we measure success                                                                                                                                                 | Update March 2025                                                                                                                           |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Better data on service users communication support needs is required. | 21. We will continue to work with ENCOMPASS to ensure that the communication support needs of service users are captured.                                                                                                                                                                   | Throughout the lifetime of the plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communication support needs are recorded on the ENCOMPASS system.</li> <li>Improved communication and access to services.</li> </ul> | <p>We continue to work with encompass and monitor service user feedback.</p> <p>SHSCT &amp; WHSCT to go live with encompass 8 May 2025.</p> |
|                                                                       | 22. We will support the involvement of disabled people and representative organisations in the roll out of ENCOMPASS. <i>(Encompass is a new Health and Social Care Northern Ireland (HSCNI) wide initiative that will introduce a digital integrated care record to Northern Ireland.)</i> | Throughout the lifetime of the plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved engagement with disabled people in the roll out of Encompass.</li> </ul>                                                    | The Trust continues to address issues of access for staff and service users, and regionally a software solution is being sought.            |



Appendix 3  
Interpreting Provision  
2024-2025

**Table 1: Total Interpreting Provision with Language Breakdown 1 April 2024 – 31 March 2025**

| Language         | Total Provision for each language |                         | Total per Language |
|------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
|                  | NIHSCIS<br>(face to face)         | Big Word<br>(telephone) |                    |
| Polish           | 1856                              | 323                     | 2179               |
| Arabic           | 1481                              | 505                     | 1986               |
| Hungarian        | 888                               | 200                     | 1088               |
| Bulgarian        | 266                               | 126                     | 392                |
| Lithuanian       | 379                               | 51                      | 430                |
| Romanian         | 163                               | 72                      | 235                |
| Russian          | 320                               | 82                      | 402                |
| Slovak           | 166                               | 25                      | 191                |
| Somali           | 185                               | 325                     | 510                |
| Ukrainian        | 346                               | 55                      | 401                |
| Mandarin         | 130                               | 59                      | 189                |
| Cantonese        | 135                               | 8                       | 143                |
| Latvian          | 106                               | 3                       | 109                |
| Farsi (Croatian) | 3                                 | 0                       | 3                  |
| Farsi (Iran)     | 58                                | 0                       | 58                 |
| Hindi            | 52                                | 15                      | 67                 |
| Urdu             | 42                                | 6                       | 48                 |
| Punjabi          | 22                                | 5                       | 27                 |
| Portuguese       | 16                                | 5                       | 21                 |
| Turkish          | 0                                 | 2                       | 2                  |
| French           | 20                                | 8                       | 28                 |
| Amharic          | 15                                | 30                      | 45                 |
| Kurdish          | 42                                | 81                      | 123                |
| Italian          | 8                                 | 0                       | 8                  |
| Pashto           | 22                                | 8                       | 30                 |
| Nepali           | 0                                 | 11                      | 11                 |
| German           | 0                                 | 3                       | 3                  |
| Spanish          | 90                                | 43                      | 133                |

|                        |             |             |             |
|------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Tamil                  | 0           | 1           | 1           |
| Vietnamese             | 44          | 148         | 192         |
| Albanian               | 4           | 14          | 28          |
| Tigrinya               | 11          | 24          | 35          |
| Czech                  | 25          | 2           | 27          |
| Malayalam              | 30          | 7           | 37          |
| Tagalog                | 5           | 5           | 10          |
| Dari                   | 43          | 0           | 43          |
| Bengali                | 11          | 8           | 19          |
| Thai                   | 7           | 3           | 10          |
| Nuer                   | 5           | 3           | 8           |
| Tatum                  | 4           | 0           | 4           |
| Croatian               | 3           | 0           | 3           |
| Farsi (Afghan)         | 3           | 30          | 33          |
| Indonesian             | 3           | 0           | 3           |
| Kurdish Kurmanji       | 3           | 0           | 3           |
| Greek                  | 2           | 0           | 2           |
| Irish                  | 1           | 0           | 1           |
| Oromo                  | 1           | 0           | 1           |
| Tamil                  | 1           | 0           | 1           |
| Farsi (Persian)        | 0           | 106         | 106         |
| Italian                | 0           | 1           | 1           |
| <b>Total Provision</b> | <b>7019</b> | <b>2403</b> | <b>9422</b> |

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

| <b>Year</b>              | <b>2024/<br/>2025</b> | <b>2023/<br/>2024</b> | <b>2022/<br/>2023</b> | <b>2021/<br/>2022</b> | <b>2020/<br/>2021</b> | <b>2019/<br/>2020</b> | <b>2018/<br/>2019</b> | <b>2017/<br/>2018</b> | <b>2016/<br/>2017</b> | <b>2015/<br/>2016</b> | <b>2014/<br/>2015</b> | <b>2013/<br/>2014</b> | <b>2012/<br/>2013</b> | <b>2011/<br/>2012</b> | <b>2010/<br/>2011</b> |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>No. of provisions</b> | 7019                  | 6924                  | 6647                  | 6076                  | 3703                  | 7058                  | 6914                  | 6,237                 | 6713                  | 5693                  | 6423                  | 6272                  | 5520                  | 5051                  | 4201                  |

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

| <b>Year</b>              | <b>2024/<br/>2025</b> | <b>2023/<br/>2024</b> | <b>2022/<br/>2023</b> | <b>2021/<br/>2022</b> | <b>2020/<br/>2021</b> | <b>2019/<br/>2020</b> | <b>2018/<br/>2019</b> | <b>2017/<br/>2018</b> | <b>2016/<br/>2017</b> | <b>2015/<br/>2016</b> | <b>2014/<br/>2015</b> | <b>2013/<br/>2014</b> | <b>2012/<br/>2013</b> | <b>2011/<br/>2012</b> | <b>2010/<br/>2011</b> |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>No. of provisions</b> | 9419                  | 8937                  | 8280                  | 7716                  | 5397                  | 8009                  | 8045                  | 8343                  | 8901                  | 7808                  | 8440                  | 8172                  | 7476                  | 6741                  | 5348                  |

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

| <b>2024/<br/>2025</b> | <b>2023/<br/>2024</b> | <b>2022/<br/>2023</b> | <b>2021/<br/>2022</b> | <b>2020/<br/>2021</b> | <b>2019/<br/>2020</b> | <b>2018/<br/>2019</b> | <b>2017/<br/>2018</b> | <b>2016/<br/>2017</b> | <b>2015/<br/>2016</b> |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Arabic                | Polish                | Polish                | Polish                | Polish                | Polish                | Polish                | Polish                | Polish                | Polish                |
| Somali                | Arabic                | Arabic                | Arabic                | Arabic                | Arabic                | Arabic                | Lithuanian            | Hungarian             | Hungarian             |
| Polish                | Hungarian             | Hungarian             | Hungarian             | Lithuanian            | Lithuanian            | Lithuanian            | Hungarian             | Cantonese             | Cantonese             |
| Hungarian             | Bulgarian             | Bulgarian             | Lithuanian            | Hungarian             | Hungarian             | Hungarian             | Mandarin              | Lithuanian            | Mandarin              |
| Vietnamese            | Lithuanian            | Lithuanian            | Romanian              | Bulgarian             | Bulgarian             | Mandarin              | Cantonese             | Arabic                | Lithuanian            |