

Strategic Equality Plan – Equality Objectives: a) Identify objectives, b) Review and assess progress against objectives prioritised in SEP during the reporting period

Organisation	Hywel Dda University Health Board	Date of Report	31 st March 2024	Report Prepared By	Strategic Partnerships, Diversity and Inclusion Team
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The Public Sector Equality Duty seeks to ensure that equality is properly considered within the organisation & influences decision making at all levels. As a listed body in Wales under the Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010), NHS organisations are required to draw up a Strategic Equality Plan (SEP) at least every 4 years which describe and document the steps being taken to tackle inequality and barriers to access to improve the health outcomes and experience of patients, their families, and carers.

The SEP should include equality objectives to meet the General Duty covering the following protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race (including ethnic or national origin, colour or nationality), religion or belief (including lack of belief), marriage and civil partnership, sex, sexual orientation.

Distinct action plans for several Protected Characteristics (PCs) have been published since 2022, these currently include the Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan (ARWAP 2022) and the LGBTQ+ Action Plan (2023). Each NHS organisation's SEP should act as a support platform for current and future plans, linking the distinct plans which have their own actions, and not override them.

Reporting Schedule: Progress is to be reported bi-annually. This form is to be submitted on:

- 16 October 2023 (covering the period 1 April 2023 to 30 September 2023)
- 15 April 2024 (covering the period 1 October 2023 to 31 March 2024)

Completed form to be returned to: hss.performance@gov.wales.

Please provide an update on the actions implemented during the current operational year. Reporting should focus on providing evidence of progress and improvement along with key risks to delivery. Please attach a copy of your organisation's SEP and Annual Equality Report.

Notes:

This Policy Assurance Assessment should be read in conjunction with a number of supporting documents which provide additional detail about Hywel Dda University Health Board's progress to implement our strategic equality plan and duties. The supporting documents are:

- *HDdUHB – Review of progress against SEP objectives Oct 2023 – March 2024*
- *ARWAP Local Plan 2024-25*
- *LGBTQ+ Local Plan 2024-25*
- *Black Asian and Minority Ethnic Advisory Group Annual Update 2023-24*
- *Annual Report 2023-24 Sensory Loss*
- *Annual Report 2023-24 Homeless and Vulnerable Groups*
- *SEP Annual Report 2022-23*
- *Welsh Language Annual Report 2022-23*

Measure	Evidence	Risks to delivery
The steps taken to fulfil your equality objectives in the SEP this period.	The Health Board has four key equality objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Leadership by all - Staff at all levels, including Board Members, actively promote and facilitate a culture of inclusion and wellbeing across the organisation.• Working Together - Working with our population, staff, stakeholders and partners, particularly those identified as having worse experiences, will shape the design and delivery of services.• Improving Health and Wellbeing for all - Our staff will be suitably skilled and experienced to develop and deliver services that are informed by local needs, improve access and reduce inequalities.	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being an employer of choice - We will offer equal opportunities for employment and career progression and support the health and well-being of our staff and volunteers within a fair and inclusive environment. <p>The SPD&I team coordinate the gathering of evidence to demonstrate progress. In addition to this being consolidated in the statutory annual report, papers are also presented and considered at a number of Health Board assurance committees. Please see attached document for examples of evidence of work undertaken between October 2023 – March 2024.</p> <p>The attached document ‘Hywel Dda University Health Board – Review of progress against strategic equality objectives: 1st October 2023 – 31st March 2024’ has been updated with examples of evidence of work undertaken between Oct 2023-March 2024 and should be read in conjunction with this document.</p> <p>The Health Boards commitment to promoting equality duties and removing disadvantage are clearly set out in the Health Boards current Strategic Equality Plan (SEP) and our revised 2024-2028 SEP which comes into effect from April 2024 and is published on the Health Board website - hduhb.nhs.wales/about-us/governance-arrangements/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/equality-diversity-and-inclusion-documents/strategic-equality-plan-2024-2028/</p> <p>The Health Board’s four overarching strategic equality objectives for the period 2024-2028 build on our previous objectives set out in our 2020-2024 SEP. The</p>	

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	<p>synergy takes account of the advice received from the Equality and Human Rights Commission that to achieve long-term fundamental change it may be necessary to maintain the same objective for a significant period.</p> <p>Our 2024-2028 SEP sets out why these objectives are important, and what outcomes we hope to achieve as a result of each objective. The Health Board's SEP also sets out a more detailed plan of the actions we intend to take during the first two-years of the plan to address each objective as well as explaining how we will measure our progress. We will carry out a mid-point review at the end of 2025, to set actions for the final two years, building on the progress that we make and any new or emerging priorities.</p>	
<p>Eliminating discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity.</p>	<p>The Health Board works to actively eliminate discrimination and promote equality of opportunity in a number of ways, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An annual programme of diversity and inclusion training. • Inclusive recruitment and training and resources for managers, to recruit inclusively. • Learning and development programmes for new and aspiring leaders and senior leaders include topics such as cultural awareness, unconscious bias training and being an inclusive leader. • Ensuring that equality impact assessments are completed. <p>Further detail on how the Health Board works to actively eliminate discrimination and promote equality of opportunity can be found on the attached 'Hywel Dda University Health Board – Review of progress</p>	<p>The Health Board continues to face a challenging financial situation and whilst decision making is supported with equality impact assessments, there is a risk that mitigating actions will be insufficient, to prevent negative impacts.</p>

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	<p>against strategic equality objectives: 1st October 2023 – 31st March 2024' document.</p>	
<p>Progress made against national action plans (ARWAP, LGBTQ etc).</p>	<p>ArWAP The Health Board has a robust governance structure for the implementation of the ArWAP and agreed local actions to address racism and the disparities it has created are based on the lived experiences of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic People. Progress includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Health Board's Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Board Advisory Group have ownership and oversight of the work to meet the requirements of the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan. • A workshop, led by the Chair of the Health Board, Maria Battle, was held to consider the best approach to developing and monitoring the local action plan and the Health Board's progress towards the overarching Anti-racist Wales Action Plan. Those invited to the workshop included Board Members, members of the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Board Advisory Group, the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Staff Network, as well as other key colleagues, including Workforce and Organisational Development, Planning and Staff Side. <p>A small group from the Task and Finish Group met on 5th September 2023 to discuss the next steps and agreed that the ArWAP Working Group would focus on one main action in relation to career progression for nurses from ethnic minority groups in Hywel Dda. The</p>	<p>Any delays in receiving guidance from Welsh Government or completion of interdependent actions such as national training and implementation of the WRES.</p> <p>Capacity constraints within the Diversity and Inclusion team (2.8 wte staff) is limited and work to support service and financial recovery has increased the need for guidance and support in Equality Impact Assessments. This has limited the capacity of the team to input or lead some aspects of work.</p>

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	<p>ArWAP Working Group identified several key actions as next steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhancing membership of the Working Group to include staff with lived experience as well as drawing on input from other teams, for example Nursing Leadership, Staff Psychological Wellbeing Service, Organisational Development Relationship Managers, ESR staff, Leadership and Talent Management, Recruitment, Research and Business Intelligence staff. • Continue work on career progression within ethnic minority nurses and in the first instance, exploring the lived experience of nurses who have worked in Hywel Dda for a particular number of years and who have not progressed in their careers especially where there has been a desire to do so. • Commence work to review the current data for those who have progressed, to consider what can be learned from their experiences which will help to identify further actions. • The Health Board has developed a local action plan and continues to work towards implementation of other key actions such as the WRES. <p>A copy of our Health Board local Action plan in response to the ArWAP is attached to provide further information.</p> <p>LGBTQ</p>	

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	<p>To ensure robust governance procedures, progress on the implementation is monitored through the Health Board's People, Organisational Development and Culture Committee.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A workshop was held with the Health Board LGBTQ+ staff network (including allies), to consider the best approach to developing and monitoring the action plan. • The Health Board has strengthened its commitment to supporting the LGBTQ+ community by signing up to Fighting with Pride and continued to progress actions against the Pride in Veterans Standard (PIVS). • In partnership with Veterans NHS Wales, the SPDI promoted the available resources/help for LGBT+ Veterans following the publication of the 'Independent Review into the service and experience of LGBT+ veterans who served prior to 2000.' https://www.fightingwithpride.org.uk/reparations/ <p>A copy of the Health Board's local LGBTQ+ Action Plans is attached to provide further information.</p>	
<p>Information obtained that demonstrates achieving the equality objectives in the SEP and what does it indicate.</p>	<p>See attached report for examples of how the strategic equality objectives are being achieved.</p> <p>Updates added to the attached 'Hywel Dda University Health Board – Review of progress against strategic equality objectives: 1st October 2023 – 31st March 2024' document with examples of evidence of work undertaken between Oct 2023-March 2024.</p>	
<p>Action to be taken as a result of the information gathered.</p>	<p>A Health Equity Steering Group has been established and meets monthly to monitor health inequalities for specific individuals and the actions being taken to</p>	

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	<p>reduce them and improve individuals' health and wellbeing. The Health Equity Group continues to meet on a regular basis and is chaired by the Deputy Director of Public Health.</p> <p>The Health Board continues to work in collaboration with our partners and stakeholders to drive continuous improvements for those who are most vulnerable and who have been most affected by the impact of external societal factors beyond their control. Additional information on the collaboration work the Health Board has been involved with can be found on the attached 'Hywel Dda University Health Board – Review of progress against strategic equality objectives: 1st October 2023 – 31st March 2024' document.</p> <p>The Health Board has established a Cost-of-Living group whose aim is to identify internal actions which could be taken to alleviate the impact of the cost of living crisis for staff.</p> <p>As gender diverse communities increase, Health Boards must adapt its services to meet the individual needs of service users. Throughout the past year, this has meant finding appropriate resolutions to some complex situations involving gender diverse patients, especially for those who are using our maternity services, breast care unit and mental health services. Providing healthcare advice and treatment to gender diverse service users has been a new concept for many of our staff over the past year and staff have been keen to learn more about how they can continue to provide</p>	

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	<p>quality healthcare services to gender diverse individuals.</p> <p>In order to help staff, the Health Board procured a series of training courses from the Welsh Gender Service who have delivered both a specialist training session to staff within the Mental Health Directorate as well as general training sessions that were available to all staff. The Health Board has GP staff within each of the three counties who have been specially trained to provide advice and support to gender diverse patients.</p> <p>The Health Board has developed a small team to promote digital inclusion for staff and service users on the use of digital technology to support healthcare provision. Several information sessions have already been held for staff and service users with future sessions planned for 2023-2024. The Health Board recognises that digital healthcare will form an essential component of healthcare service delivery now and in the future, with increasing video healthcare appointments, online healthcare support and information, healthcare apps to maintain health and aid recovery, and digital communications. In April 2023 the Digital inclusion team delivered a session to our 50+ staff network. The session was titled: Are you finding it hard to keep up with digital technology? Please join us to learn more about digital inclusion and the support available to staff. The session was well received by members of the network and has prompted further discussions around digital inclusion topics for future sessions; the SPDI team are in the process of planning future network sessions. The CDOT team attends the regional</p>	

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	<p>steering group for digital inclusion to promote translation/interpretation services.</p> <p>The Childrens Community Nursing Service has expanded with the introduction of Long-Term Conditions Nurses for Epilepsy, Cardiac Conditions, Respiratory and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). These roles ensure that children and young people with an identified long-term condition may have equal opportunities to their peers through health advice, education and health promotion. This framework should enable them to develop the skills to self-care and manage their condition, positively benefiting them to access education and hobbies whilst offering additional support to those who care for them.</p> <p>Paediatric outpatients' questionnaires and feedback have been developed, all of which have been introduced health board wide in all children's outpatient settings as a Pilot. This has helped us measure how well we interact in consultation clinics with our children and families and to identify any areas to improve. In the evaluation of the feedback, they proved a valuable source of feedback directly from patients, services users and we have been able to make changes in the environment.</p> <p>A new staff network has been established to support staff with a disability as defined by the Equality Act 2010. The RespectAbility staff network has two sub-groups: one for staff with a physical disability or long-term condition, and another for staff who are neurodivergent. The group has modelled itself on</p>	

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	<p>other established networks and is slowly increasing in membership. The network will become fully established in the forthcoming year.</p> <p>The Respectability neurodiversity group has played a key role in supporting the recent Neurodiversity celebration week with members of the network facilitating two 'Celebrating Neurodiversity' sessions. In addition to the two 'Celebrating Neurodiversity' sessions the SPDI and Respectability neurodiversity group members also shared several online sessions that Autism Wales had arranged.</p> <p>The People Development Team undertook a study during to ascertain the extent of the concerns from staff, that access to training is not equitable, and whether our workforce feel they have the opportunity to develop. Findings highlighted that 40% of the workforce do not feel they have an opportunity to develop and 41% are unable to complete mandatory training within their contracted working hours. Of those reporting that they are unable to complete mandatory training within their working hours, 79% completed training in their own time, 7% were granted additional hours to complete training and 14% did not complete mandatory training. This inequity is impacting Core Skills Training Framework compliance. The research recognised that inequity exists from a training perspective and identified a number of recommendations relating to funding, application processes and the promotion of development opportunities. In addition, it was identified that results were not consistent across all services, bands or demographics and deeper</p>	

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	<p>investigation of this data is needed, to facilitate targeted interventions.</p> <p>From April 2023 the Health Board introduced another mandatory training competency to promote equality – An Introduction to Carer Awareness. Since its introduction there has been a steady increase in compliance rates, along with other recently introduced mandatory training, including Dementia Awareness, Understanding Autism and Learning Disability Awareness. An additional new mandatory competency has been assigned to health care professionals working with pregnant women and families with children under 4 years old.</p> <p>The Paul Ridd Foundation congratulated the Health Board on its “amazing work” as the Learning Disability awareness training has been completed by 82% of staff. This shows that introduction of these mandatory subjects has been effective in increasing uptake on the courses and therefore raising awareness of these subjects. Staff compliance has risen to 87% for the Paul Ridd Learning Disability awareness training.</p> <p>We accompanied the introduction of Carer Awareness, as well as Autism Awareness, with online, tutor led, introduction sessions and this has helped to achieve the large number of access/completions. We are currently exploring options on how to support access to learning with semi facilitated sessions that would provide access to devices and facilitators in an open session where members of staff can complete required learning with learning and development support at hand. Currently 80% of staff have completed the</p>	

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	<p>autism awareness session on ESR and the Strategic Partnerships, Diversity and Inclusion (SPDI) team continue to build a library of resources that staff can access through SharePoint to further their knowledge. Autism Wales were very impressed with the Health Board's compliance levels and explained that we had the highest compliance compared to the other Health Boards and Local Authorities. 71.9% of staff have completed the Carer awareness course.</p> <p>Evidence shows that patients with sensory loss in Hywel Dda have delayed and cancelled appointments due to lack of communication support. In addition, several patients have reported that their sensory loss needs, including those needing guide dogs in health premises, are often overlooked or trivialised by staff due to lack of awareness of their communication and support needs. To address issues and promote equality of opportunity, the Health Board has started to develop a visible marker on patient's notes that will support staff in outpatients and wards to identify and provide/use the patients' preferred way of communication in a timely manner. This will help improve both staff and patients' experience in planned care. Whilst this planned work focuses on communication needs of people with sensory loss, it is expected that this mechanism will include the facility for other communication needs such as foreign language and easy read needs to be recorded. It therefore has the potential to meet the needs of patients with a range of protected characteristics.</p>	

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<p>Feedback from stakeholders of the progress made.</p>	<p>Feedback from stakeholders is received in a number of ways, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuous engagement activity • Staff network surveys • Listening Exercises • Surveys of Internationally Educated Nurses and their managers (covering all Wales) through Nursing Now Cymru • Feedback from NHS Nursing Staff Surveys • Results from the Health Board's Discovery Report • Feedback from the Chief Nursing Officer for Wales Ethnic Minority Nurses and Midwives Advisory Group • Feedback from the All-Wales International Recruitment Welcome to Wales/Croeso I Gymru Group • Consultation as part of the process to review and update the SEP objective for 2024-2028 <p>According to our population who participated in the consultation as part of the SEP review, concerns around access to care and support is worse/has worsened for approximately 50% of respondents who are disabled, have a minority ethnic background or those from the younger and older ends of the age spectrum.</p> <p>Overall health was considered to be worse/has worsened for between 40-45% of respondents who</p>	

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	<p>are disabled, have a minority ethnic background, are Transgender or older.</p> <p>Strategic Equality Plan 2024 -2028 engagement</p> <p>The Health Board undertook a multi-agency consultation exercise alongside other public sector organisations in the Dyfed Powys area. The Health Board worked collaboratively with Dyfed Powys Police, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Dyfed Powys, Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service, Local Authorities from Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion, and Pembrokeshire, Higher Education, Powys Teaching Health Board, Pembrokeshire Coast National Park and Bannau Brycheiniog National Park. During this initial multi-agency consultation, a survey, which was available in a range of formats and languages was used for online and face to face engagement, to gather the views of how people from different backgrounds have experienced major areas of life. An overview of the main themes captured from this feedback has been included on the Health Boards Strategic Equality Plan 2024-28.</p> <p>A second stage of engagement was carried out specifically to gain feedback on the Health Board’s draft strategic equality objectives. This engagement included meetings with specific community groups that reflect the protected characteristics, to ensure people we engaged with were representative of our diverse population. The information and feedback gained from these engagement activities has been used to help us develop our revised equality objectives. The feedback,</p>	

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	<p>together with information gathered from our continuous engagement activities with our staff, communities, staff networks and internal committees have helped inform the way in which we plan, develop and deliver services on an ongoing basis.</p> <p>As a result of this engagement, we were able to identify which protected characteristics were perceived to have experienced much worse/worse experiences.</p> <p>Whilst we have identified the top three groups rated as having worse experience of health and other areas of life, in comparison to the population as a whole, we realise that efforts need to be made to improve the experience of all protected groups when accessing our services.</p> <p>The Equality and Human and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) published a report called 'Is Wales Fairer 2023?' and their findings also helped us develop our refreshed strategic equality objectives. This report provided further evidence of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis.</p> <p>Further detail on the Health Boards Strategic Equality Objectives can be found in in our Strategic Equality Plan 2024-2028 which is published on our Health Board website. hduhb.nhs.wales/about-us/governance-arrangements/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/equality-diversity-and-inclusion-documents/strategic-equality-plan-2024-2028/</p>	
Equality objectives prioritised during the next reporting period.	Our current strategic equality objectives remain a priority during the remainder of the reporting period but	Capacity constraints within the Diversity and Inclusion team (2.8 wte staff) is limited and work

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<p>*The action plan within the Health Boards Strategic Equality Plan 2024-2028 clearly sets out our priorities for the next reporting period.</p>	<p>in line with statutory duties, the objectives will be refreshed and published by March 2024.</p> <p>Strategic Equality Plan 2024-2028 In April 2024 we published our refreshed Strategic Equality Plan (SEP) and Objectives 2024-2028 which set out our intended direction of travel over the next four years to advance equality, eliminate discrimination and foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. Our plan relates to our role as an employer, as well as in the way in which we provide services to patients, families, carers and our wider population.</p> <p>Our Equality objectives for the next four years, which build on our existing objectives, are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equality Objective 1 - Leadership by all • Equality Objective 2 - Working together to improve health and well-being for all • Equality Objective 3 - Embedding a person-centred approach • Equality Objective 4 - Being an employer of choice <p>Our SEP sets out the actions we will take in the first two years to demonstrate how we will progress implementing each of our four objectives. We will carry out a mid-point review at the end of 2025 and refresh our action plan for the final two years based on the progress we make and emerging priorities.</p> <p>Whilst our Strategic Equality Plan and Objectives are based around the duties of the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011, it does</p>	<p>to support service and financial recovery has increased the need for guidance and support in Equality Impact Assessments. This has limited the capacity of the team to input or lead some aspects of work.</p> <p>Previous identified risk may have been addressed with the EDI team being successful in appointing a further 1.0 WTE Senior Diversity and Inclusion Officer to the team.</p>

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	<p>not sit in isolation, but is embedded in a national, regional and local context. Our work to progress the equality agenda is inter-linked with several pieces of legislation, policy drivers and the findings of key reports including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 – National Assembly for Wales • Standards for Improving the Health and Well-being of Homeless People and Specific Vulnerable Groups – Welsh Government • All-Wales Standards for Accessible Communication and Information for People with Sensory Loss – NHS Wales • Well-being of Future Generation (Wales) Act 2015. • Learning Disability Improving Lives Programme – Welsh Government. • All Wales Dementia Care Pathway of Standards – Welsh Government/Improvement Cymru. • The Welsh Language Standards (No.8) Regulations 2022 – Welsh Government. • More than just words – Welsh Government. • The Socio-economic Duty – Welsh Government. • The Armed Forces Covenant Duty – UK Government. • Anti-racist Wales Action Plan – Welsh Government. • LGBTQ+ Action Plan – Welsh Government. • Is Wales Fairer? (2023) – Equality and Human Rights Commission. 	