

Agenda item:	9
Date of meeting:	20 May 2026
Report to the:	Trust Board
Title of report:	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report 2025-26
Report author:	Sarah Feal, Company Secretary and Freedom to Speak Up Guardian
Executive sponsor:	Anita Pisani, Chief People Officer and Deputy Chief Executive
Recommendation:	Approve
	Trust Equality Objectives for 2026–27

Assurance level:	Substantial <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reasonable <input type="checkbox"/> Partial <input type="checkbox"/> Minimal <input type="checkbox"/>
Rationale:	The Trust has an approved plan in place, which is monitored for delivery.

1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Equality Delivery System helps NHS organisations provide better services for the people in their communities and create fair, respectful workplaces for staff. It supports the NHS in meeting the Equality Act 2010, which protects people from discrimination. The Equality Delivery System was created by the NHS, for the NHS, and was launched in November 2011, building on good practice already in place.
- 1.2 This report updates the Trust Board on our performance during 2025–26 and sets out our proposed Equality Objectives for 2026–27. The results and proposed objectives have been discussed and supported by the People Participation and Equalities Committee.

2.0 How the report supports tackling Health Inequalities

- 2.1 The Equality Delivery System supports tackling health inequalities by helping NHS organisations identify where some groups may not be receiving the same quality of care as others.

- 2.2 It encourages the use of data, feedback, and community engagement to understand different needs and improve access, experiences, and outcomes for all patients. By focusing on fairness and inclusion, the Equality Delivery System helps ensure that everyone has an equal opportunity to achieve good health.

3.0 Board Assurance Framework and Trust Risk and Issue Registers

- 3.1 **3915:** There is a risk that staff morale may reduce as we work to develop and implement single support service structures, which in turn could impact on the level of service delivered to our clinical teams.
- 3.2 **3699:** There is a risk that staff morale and engagement may be adversely affected whilst we culturally align our new organisation.
- 3.3 **3916:** There is a risk of a reduction in staff wellbeing and increased staff sickness absence levels due to growing levels of demand on our services, which could impact on the delivery of patient care.

4.0 Legal and Regulatory requirements

- 4.1 The following legal and regulatory frameworks are applicable:

- Equality Act 2010
- NHS Constitution
- NHS Equality Delivery System 2022
- NHS Long Term Workforce Plan 2023
- NHS People Plan

5.0 Previous consideration by Committee or Executive

- 5.1 4 February 2026, People Participation and Equalities Committee

6.0 Report

6.1 Equality Delivery System

This report updates the Trust Board on our performance during 2025–26 and sets out our proposed Trust Equality Objectives for 2026–27. Both the performance outcomes and the proposed objectives for the coming year have been reviewed and endorsed by the People Participation and Equalities Committee.

The outcome ratings for the Group in 2025-26 were published in line with the deadline and can be viewed from this [link](#). Both Cambridgeshire Community Services NHS Trust and Norfolk Community Health and Care NHS Trust assessed themselves as **Achieving**.

The Trust Board is asked to **approve** the objectives for 2026-27.

Domain 1: Commissioned or provided services

- Gain a comprehensive understanding of patients' communication needs and their experiences of using interpretation and translation services, enabling the service to identify barriers, improve equity of access, and co-design patient-focused solutions.
- Build greater consistency in EDI practice across the Trust by understanding and addressing variation in EDI maturity, ensuring that all services are equipped to embed shared good practice and deliver equitable, personalised care that meets the health needs of every patient.
- To enhance the Trust's capability to collect, monitor, and interpret demographic data to identify who is and is not accessing our services, enabling targeted action to address health inequalities and ensure that individual patient health needs are met equitably.
- Co-produce a new, Trust-wide Learning Disability & Learning Difficulty – Inclusion and Accessibility Strategy by working collaboratively across the newly formed Trust.
- To understand whether patients with protected characteristics experience different safety outcomes by strengthening the capture, analysis, and use of demographic data within DATIX. This will enable the Trust to identify potential inequalities in incidents and harm, inform targeted service improvements, and support the delivery of equitable, harm free care for all service users.
- To enhance the Trust's ability to use patient feedback as a meaningful driver of service improvement by strengthening how feedback is collected, analysed, and acted upon. This includes understanding the experiences of diverse patient groups, identifying themes and inequalities, and ensuring insights directly inform changes that improve the quality, accessibility, and experience of care.

Domain 2: Workforce health and well-being

- To integrate the staff networks into a single cohesive provision that is fit for the future needs of the new organisation and its people.
- To continually improve and extend the Workplace Adjustment Passport and processes.
- To reduce discrimination in our employment practices by ensuring fairness, improving inclusivity and boosting diversity in the workplace.
- To recognise and celebrate the diversity of our people with them.
- To improve awareness of key events in our communities.

- To improve our candidate experience, foster diversity and reduce unconscious bias in our recruitment and selection processes.
- When at work, staff are provided with support to manage obesity, diabetes, asthma, COPD and mental health conditions.
- When at work, staff are free from abuse, harassment, bullying and physical violence from any source.
- Staff have access to independent support and advice when suffering from stress, abuse, bullying harassment and physical violence from any source.
- Staff recommend the organisation as a place to work and receive treatment.

Domain 3: Inclusive Leadership

- To improve leaders' confidence and competence to effectively involve and engage diverse communities.
- To improve accessibility to trust policies.
- Service plans to continue to identify their contributions towards addressing health inequalities.
- To maintain all existing equality, diversity and inclusion accreditations currently in place in both predecessor organisations post April 2026.
- Trust Board and senior leaders to continue to take a leading role in the delivery of the trust's ambitions in inclusive leadership.
- During 2026 and 2027, roll out to all leaders (team lead and above), our approach to Leading with Cultural Intelligence.
- All Board Members to commit to a personal inclusion pledge.
- To strengthen our diversity mentoring and coaching offer to all staff.

6.2 Anti-Racism Plan Year-3

The Trust continues to raise individual and collective awareness of racism and what it means to be anti-racist and will in due course, develop a comprehensive inclusion plan. Outstanding actions from the Year 3 Anti-Racism Plan will be incorporated into this broader framework.

A draft **Inclusion Plan** will be presented to the People Participation and Equalities Committee in July 2026 to allow for formal review and informed feedback.

In October 2025 the Board had a development session focused on equality, diversity and inclusion and all Board members agreed to make an individual personal pledge in relation to inclusion.

The Trust Board is asked to **note** the progress update is provided in **Appendix A**.

6.3 **Workforce Race Equality Standard (WRES)**

The Workforce Race Equality Standard is a national NHS programme that helps organisations understand and address differences in the experiences of staff from ethnically diverse backgrounds compared to White staff. It uses a set of standard measures to review areas such as recruitment, career progression, staff experience, and disciplinary processes. By identifying where inequalities exist and taking action to address them, WRES supports the Trust in creating a more inclusive, fair, and supportive workplace for all staff.

6.4 **Workforce Disability Equality Standard (WDES)**

The Workforce Disability Equality Standard is a national NHS framework that helps organisations understand and improve the experiences of staff with disabilities. It uses a set of measures to assess areas such as recruitment, career development, workplace adjustments, and staff wellbeing. By highlighting where disabled staff may face barriers or unequal treatment, WDES supports the Trust in taking targeted action to create a more inclusive, supportive, and accessible working environment for everyone.

6.5 **NHS Pay Gap**

NHS Pay Gap reports help organisations understand differences in average pay between different groups of staff, such as by gender, ethnicity, or disability. They look at factors like pay levels, bonuses, and representation across pay bands. By identifying where gaps exist, these reports support the Trust in taking action to promote fair pay, improve career progression, and ensure all staff are rewarded equally for work of equal value.

The Trust Board is asked to **note** the outcome ratings for the Group in 2025-26, for **WRES**, **WDES** and **Pay Gap** were published in line with the deadlines, and can be viewed from this [link](#).

Action plans for these are monitored by the People Participation and Equalities Committee. Improvement actions for the coming year are currently being developed.

6.6 **Schemes and Initiatives**

The Trust is proud to be accredited to the following schemes:

- ✓ Armed Forces Covenant
- ✓ Carer Friendly Tick

- ✓ Disability Confident
- ✓ Hidden Disabilities
- ✓ Mindful Employer
- ✓ Onvero Tide

6.7 Staff Networks

A staff network is a voluntary group of employees who come together based on a shared identity, experience, or interest. These networks provide a space for staff to support one another, share experiences, and have their voices heard within the organisation. They help organisations better understand staff needs, raise awareness of key issues, and contribute to improving policies, workplace culture, and staff experience.

The 2024 NHS Staff Survey results were shared and discussed with our different staff networks.

In May 2025, we marked National Staff Network Day by joining colleagues from across the Group to celebrate the achievements of our staff networks and promote their benefits to staff who have not yet joined.

We also supported Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Week in May, which is an annual opportunity for organisations to promote fairness, inclusion, and respect for all staff and patients, while raising awareness of equality and human rights in everyday practice. It highlights the importance of treating people with dignity, addressing inequalities, and ensuring care and workplaces are free from discrimination, supporting continuous improvement across the NHS.

National Inclusion Week in the UK takes place each September and provides an opportunity for organisations to promote inclusion, celebrate diversity, and take practical action to build workplaces where everyone feels valued and able to contribute. We also celebrated Black History Month, South Asian Heritage month and PRIDE month during this year.

The Trust has the following staff networks:

- ✓ Armed Forces Community
- ✓ Caring Responsibilities Community
- ✓ Cultural Diversity / Diverse Heritage
- ✓ Diverse Abilities / Long Term Conditions and Disabilities
- ✓ Freedom To Speak Up Champions
- ✓ Health and Wellbeing Champions
- ✓ Menopause Wellbeing Group
- ✓ Pride + Community

A Staff Experience and Wellbeing Festival is planned for June 2026, and our staff networks have been aligned from April 2026 for our new organisation.

6.8 **Open Space Sessions**

Open conversations have continued to support culturally diverse staff during periods of heightened racial tension arising from national and international events. Sessions were available for all staff to attend and were held throughout 2025-26 on 14 and 15 August, 26 September, 3 October, 19 December, 19 January, 17 February and 19 March.

Positive feedback was received from both culturally diverse members of staff and from those that attended as allies.

Appendices

Appendix A: Anti-Racism Action Plan Update

Patient Experience	
Objective	Progress Update
To place the voices of patients and carers at the core of planning, implementation, and learning, with a focus on engaging with individuals who reflect our diverse communities using an up-to-date evidence-base, to improve patient pathways.	This is the business-as-usual work of the co-production team who routinely request the demographics of the people they are working with. Example for this work carried out between April and June: Work has begun for maximising End of Life Care access for Asian and Pakistani families in Luton.
To develop preventative care oral hygiene communication materials for patients in different languages.	<p>People who use our services are directed to the Trust's internet site where they can access Recite me, our dedicated easy read and translation tool.</p> <p>Staff have access to a variety of preventative oral hygiene communication material in different languages and Easy Read formats, primarily provided by UK health bodies like the NHS, Public Health England (via GOV.UK), and professional organisations like the British Society of Paediatric Dentistry (BSPD) and the Oral Health Foundation. For example, British Society of Paediatric Dentistry (BSPD) offer several key resources translated into numerous languages, focusing on children's oral health. These resources can be downloaded from the patient information area of the BSPD website.</p> <p>Staff teams have access to our interpretation and translation provider, Language Line, which can translate documents into any language. However, due to cost considerations, information on preventative oral hygiene care has not routinely been produced in multiple languages. Translation is provided where appropriate to ensure accessibility.</p>
Use patient demographic data to better understand and improve the experience for culturally diverse patients, ensuring the highest quality of care for all. Work closely with relevant teams to identify and address areas for improvement where experiences are reported as poor or very poor.	Work continues to improve the amount and quality of demographic data collected and recorded. Reports on progress are being provided to services leads and reporting will continue to come to the Trust Wide Working Together Group and will be picked up via the Data Quality Meeting.

Workforce	
Objective	Progress Update
To arrange a meeting at least annually to explore working interculturally across all staff networks.	The network advocates met and jointly planned the celebrations of the national staff networks day which took place on 14 May 2025. They have combined to build on this co- production and both advocates and network members attend and contribute to other network meetings promoting intersectionality. In addition, networks are beginning to work together with their counterparts across the two Trusts, to plan how they will come together in the new organisation post April 2026.
To evaluate the effectiveness of culturally diverse recruitment panels and further implement actions to make recruitment inclusive.	We continue rolling out the sharing of interview questions prior to interviews. The impact of such innovations is not always easy to measure as this is a culture shift supporting applicants to recognise Cambridgeshire Community Services NHS Trust as an inclusive employer even if they are not successful at interview, as well as removing possible opportunities for unconscious bias and levelling the playing field for applicants. However, to date this is being received well by both interviewers and applicants.
To promote the role of the Cultural Diversity Staff Network through allyship, volunteers and involvement partners.	The network continues to be promoted to all new staff during induction and should be discussed at management supervision and has steady attendance from Allies.
To evaluate the effectiveness of the Diversity Mentoring Scheme.	We receive positive feedback from both mentors and mentees. We will be widening the offer and number of culturally diverse mentors we have so this offer can be more widely accessed in the new organisation.

Inclusive Leadership	
Objective	Progress Update
To develop a Cultural Intelligence Workshop, as part of the Chrysalis Leadership Development Programme to cultivate inclusive leaders.	Cultural intelligence is part of the Chrysalis Development Programme – workshop 5. It has been agreed to adopt an updated version of Chrysalis as the Leadership Programme in the new organisation and to roll out leading with cultural intelligence development to all leaders in the new organisation over a 12–24-month period. An in-house trainer has undertaken training and will use this learning in the programme.
To continue to build a network of diversity mentors to enable Diversity Mentoring to be rolled out to more staff members.	We will be widening the offer and number of culturally diverse mentors we have so this offer can be more widely accessed in the new organisation.
Staff with a Diversity Mentor to feedback to their mentor, how their cultural intelligence mentoring has improved their inclusive leadership.	Ongoing.