



Equality Outcome Progress Report



April 2025

Contents

1. Introduction	3
Equality Outcome	3
2. Equality Outcomes Summary of Progress	4
2.1 Equality Outcome 1 -	4
2.2 Equality Outcome 2 -	6
2.3 Equality Outcome 3 -	6
2.4 Equality Outcome 4 -	8
2.6 Equality Outcome 6 -	11
2.7 Equality Outcome 7 -	13
3. Summary.....	16
Appendix 1: Equality Outcomes	17

1. Introduction

Equality Outcome

An Equality Outcome is a result which an authority aims to achieve to further one or more of the three needs of the general equality duty (Equality Act 2010), to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.¹ We are required to publish a set of Equality Outcomes at least every four years and publish a progress report every two years.

We published the following Equality Outcomes 2021-2025 which focus on our staff delivering our services. These were based on data and evidence available at the time and a reflection of the inequalities emerging as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Equality outcome 7 applies both to workforce and service delivery.

The Equality Outcomes for 2021-25:

1. To improve the health and wellbeing of staff
2. To improve the experience of staff going through the case management process
3. To develop a staff Ethnic minority network
4. To implement a variety of methods to deliver equality and inclusion training
5. To develop a resource framework and funding for the NSS staff equality networks
6. To increase the number of staff who provide equality data
7. To implement national equality action plans to address race and disability equality

The internally facing Equality Outcomes were developed with our staff, the Equality Staff Network groups, the NSS Equality and Diversity steering group and Joint Trade Unions (JTUs) with a focus on all the protected characteristics. We are maintaining a range of activities and actions to address inequality across our service areas with an external focus which is reported in our latest Mainstreaming Equality Report 2025.

¹ [Public Sector Equality Duty: specific duties in Scotland | EHRC](#)

This report provides an update on the progress we have made against these Equality Outcomes. The outcomes are closely aligned to complement our Great Place to Work Plan². The tables detailing the activities, outputs, equality outcomes and the General Duty requirements can be found in appendix 1 on page 14.

2. Equality Outcomes Summary of Progress

2.1 Equality Outcome 1 -

To improve the health and wellbeing of staff

We appointed a senior wellbeing champion who has the responsibility to represent NSS at the national wellbeing group and to ensure all staff in NSS have access to appropriate resources to maintain positive health and wellbeing. We appointed a senior executive lead for health and wellbeing and established a NSS wellbeing group. The wellbeing group is chaired by our associate director of HR and meets on a quarterly basis with representation from all directorates and JTUs. The head of equality, engagement and experience is a member of the group with responsibility to represent the staff equality networks on the group and to provide guidance to the group on equality and diversity matters. The group reports to the NSS Occupational Health and Safety Advisory Committee (OHSAC). The wellbeing group is responsible for the implementation and oversight of the NSS Wellbeing Framework. The priorities from the Wellbeing Framework were agreed as:

1. Social Wellbeing
2. Physical and Mental Wellbeing
3. Digital Wellbeing

These priorities were agreed following a gap analysis carried out by HR and reviewed by the members of the wellbeing group.

The NSS Wellbeing HUB was established providing access to a range of resources, guidance and support for all NSS staff. The HUB has engaged with over 1,100 staff with the financial wellbeing and mental health resources being accessed the most. The HUB provides direct links for staff to the Mental Health first aiders and the

² [Great Place to Work Plan](#)

Confidential Contact Service and the HELP Employee Assistance Service. The HUB also provides a direct link to the National Wellbeing HUB³ and resources.

A range of activities have been implemented across our directorates including Yoga sessions provided online; online and in-person mental health sessions; newsletters; a focus on wellbeing at directorate townhall meetings and local partnership forum meetings. There are examples of staff adapting to different ways of working including maintaining working relationships and team building in a digital working environment.

We have a number of established staff equality networks in place to support all staff with a range of equality and inclusion matters. This is to ensure that staff have the facility and forums to share their experience on a range of areas relating to their workplace. The staff networks available are:

1. LGBTQ+ Staff Network
2. Disability Staff Network
3. Menopause Network
4. Armed Forces Veterans, Champions and Friends Network
5. Ethnic, Cultural Diversity and Friends Network

There is more information about our networks later on in this report.

We have highlighted the digital tools to staff including Viva Insights which can automatically protect time in work calendars to allow staff to focus and prevent too many meetings being scheduled in one day, to support the digital wellbeing of staff.

A wellbeing seminar will be held in August 2025 to include the NSS Staff Governance Committee and members of the wellbeing group.

The wellbeing group continues to meet quarterly and will continue to focus on the three key priorities in 2025.

We offer a range of learning and development opportunities for all our staff which includes mentally healthy workplace training; Neurodiversity; Mental Fitness; Managing Burnout; a range of modules on the online platform TURAS⁴; and a range of webinars and sessions.

³ [Home - National Wellbeing Hub](#)

⁴ [Home | Turas | Learn](#)

We recognise that our staff work in different environments with a mix working in our offices, laboratories, in our communities, home working and hybrid working so we continue to develop a variety of ways to ensure equity of access to the learning and development opportunities available. We also reflect these different working arrangements into our wellbeing plan.

We have implemented a Reasonable Adjustment Passport (RAP) recognising the importance of working with individuals to agree what mechanisms and strategies we can put in place to ensure they have the appropriate adjustments to ensure equity of access in the workplace. A review of the RAP and a consultation exercise was carried out in 2024 and a revised suite of tools and guidance will be implemented in 2025 to reflect the analysis of the data of the review and consultation.

The revised tools and guidance have been designed with staff, Trade Unions (TUs), the disability staff network and colleagues from HR and Occupational Health Services. We have worked collaboratively with NHSScotland boards to share good practice and learn from wider public body organisations and with the Business Disability Forum and 3rd sector equality organisations.

2.2 Equality Outcome 2 -

To improve the case management experience for staff

This equality outcome was designed from analysis of qualitative data from staff.

We continue to work with the staff equality networks, HR colleagues and JTU colleagues to progress with this outcome and will include this as an outcome to carry forward for 2025-29. We will report on our progress in 2027.

2.3 Equality Outcome 3 -

To develop an ethnic minority staff network

The NSS Ethnic Minority Staff Network was established and launched in 2022. This has been renamed the Ethnic, Cultural Diversity and Friends Network following feedback from members of the group that this better reflected the change in the

landscape in relation to this area of equality and was more inclusive to those who wanted to join as allies and friends in support to the work of the network.

There is a steering group which aims to support the wider Ethnic, Cultural Diversity and Friends Network in planning and delivering its business and activities. These plans and activities support the objective of the NSS Ethnic, Cultural Diversity and Friends Network towards eliminating discrimination, improving equality of opportunity, fostering a diverse inclusive working and learning environment that encourages a culture of respect and equality for everyone regardless of their ethnicity and for their voice to be heard.

The network itself has over 45 members from across a range of directorates across our organisation and is chaired by a volunteer who is a senior manager and supported by administrative input, again on a voluntary basis.

The network meets every two months and reviews any available baseline data to inform their workplan and to help design equality outcomes for ethnic minority staff.

The network chair and members of the network have informed the NSS anti-racism action plan.

The network chair and vice chair represent NSS at the National Ethnic Minority Forum (EMF). All outputs from these meetings are shared with the NSS Network members.

The chair of the network is a member of the NSS equality and diversity steering group and the NSS anti-racism short life working group. Their role is to ensure that the network is represented, involved and influences the work of these groups to reflect the experience of both our ethnic minority staff and our ethnic minority service users.

The chair and the network members are provided with one to one meetings with the head of equality, engagement and experience as well as peer meetings with the chairs of the other staff equality networks.

The network chairs presented an overview of their work and priorities to the NSS Partnership Forum in 2024 and will be taking part in an NSS Staff Governance Committee seminar in late 2025. This work promotes the awareness and visibility of the staff networks as well as an opportunity to evoke the wider support of the

partnership and committee chairs and members. The staff equality networks are provided with an annual budget of £3,500.

2.4 Equality Outcome 4 -

Implement different ways of delivering equality and inclusion training

The aim of this outcome is to ensure that everyone has an opportunity to learn in a working environment without disadvantage.

We increased the number of sessions accessible to staff on subjects including how to carry out an equality impact assessment; implementing the reasonable adjustment passport; race equality; gender based violence; unconscious bias; neurodiversity.

We have opened our learning centres in recognition that some of our staff do not work with digital equipment or have access to a laptop on a daily basis and the learning centres provide the facility to learn in work time.

Our directorates provide protected time and space for learning and alternative methods are put in place for those who need this.

Our Learning and Development service facilitated 19 events in 2023-24 with 648 staff attending.

Our Central Legal Services provide a range of training to NHS Boards across Scotland which includes client specific training as well as subject areas covering Transgender Equality; the Equality Act and Disability Equality.

Our training and events calendar is fully accessible.

Most training is delivered in a digital first approach. The learning centres provide the protected space for staff to access any training that they need to access in this way.

Materials and resources for sessions are provided in advance and alternative formats are made available.

2.5 Equality Outcome 5 - Develop a framework to build resource, funding and resilience for all NSS staff networks

This equality outcome ensures those participating in the networks have equal, fair and proportionate access to employment and representation at all levels, grades and occupation types in the workforce and experience fewer labour market, workplace and income inequalities. We have established a number of equality staff networks as referenced earlier in the report. ⁵

A member of staff chairs each staff network⁶ who has agreed to carry out this role on a voluntary basis with one to one support provided by the Head of Equality, Engagement and Experience and monthly peer meetings bringing all chairs together to share good practice and provide a peer support model for resilience.

The networks work with national organisations to share good and promising practice and continue to work with third sector organisations to inform the work of NSS and our Equality Impact Assessment work.

The networks are each at a different stage in their development with the LGBTQ+ network being the most established. The membership across the networks has grown to over 500 utilising MS Teams as one method to keep connected and to communicate their work and planned events and meetings.

Each network has a terms of reference and annual workplans considering other competing priorities and demands on the time of the chairs and members.

The staff networks receive an annual budget of £3,500 to support their activities and workplans. This funding supported the attendance of network members at events celebrating achievements in equality; attendance at equality leadership programme; materials and resources for key equality and diversity events.

The chairs of each network are members of the NSS equality and diversity steering group representing the voices of those participating in the work of the networks to influence policy and processes across NSS.

⁵ [NSS Staff Networks](#)

⁶ The NSS organisational development team and healthy working lives colleagues facilitate the menopause network

In 2024 Martin Bell and Craig Murney, the chairs of the armed forces veterans, champions and friends network were both recognised for their achievements at the Scottish Veterans 2024 awards⁷. Martin was awarded gold in the lifetime achievement category and Craig was awarded the silver in the leader of the year category.



Martin Bell receiving his gold award 2024.



Craig Murney receiving his silver award in 2024.

⁷ [Welcome to our Winners at this year's Scottish Veterans Awards 2024! - The Veterans Awards](#)

2.6 Equality Outcome 6 -

To increase the number of staff who provide equality data

The Equality Act 2010 public sector specific duties⁸ states that we must take steps to gather information about the protected characteristics of our employees. We must also gather annual information on the recruitment, development and retention of staff with relevant protected characteristics.

We must use this information to improve our organisation's performance of the general duty and include an annual breakdown of the information gathered and details of the progress on equality that you have made by gathering and using this information in our mainstreaming report.⁹

Our workforce is integral to implementing Scotland's vision for delivering a whole system approach to improving health and wellbeing outcomes. At every stage of the journey, we need appropriately skilled staff who can provide the national solutions that NHS National Services Scotland (NSS) deliver to help improve the health and wellbeing of the people of Scotland.

The NSS Workforce Plan¹⁰ is aligned to the National Workforce Strategy for Health and Social Care in Scotland (2022), Scottish Government's Care and Wellbeing Portfolio and the NHS Recovery Plan 2021- 2026. It supports our vision of being integral to Scotland's health and care service and incorporates our strategic aims of enabling health and care transformation, underpinning NHSScotland services and assisting more widely in health and care. Importantly, the plan ensures we continue to support NHSScotland as it seeks to stabilise, reform and transform.

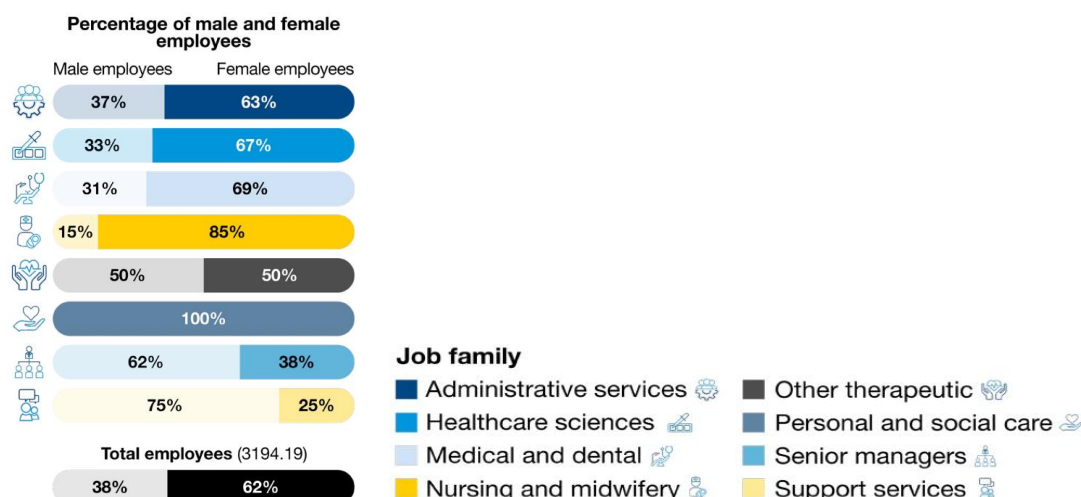
We had a total workforce of 3,194.19 Whole Time Equivalents (WTE) as at 31 March 2024, (this excludes bank and agency employees), with the majority of our employees situated within the administrative services job family. Our employees in most of these job families are largely female, apart from support services, senior managers and "Other categories" who are predominately male, these tend to be associated with our procurement and logistics services. Overall, 62% are female and 38% male. 99% of our employees' home base is in Scotland, with 20.5% of our

⁸ [Public Sector Equality Duty: specific duties in Scotland | EHRC](#)

⁹ [NSS Equality Mainstream Report 2023 Version 1 | National Services Scotland](#)

¹⁰ [NSS Workforce Plan 2024-27](#)

employees residing in Edinburgh, 11.3% in Glasgow and South Lanarkshire the third most populated with 10.3%. Two thirds of our employees now work remotely or at home which has enabled us further opportunities to expand recruitment beyond Scotland to deliver our services. We now have approximately 0.82% of employees based in England and 0.18% in Northern Ireland. The following diagram provides a snapshot of our workforce in relation to the percentage of male and female employees across the NHS job families.



Summary of completion rates NSS employees 2021-22 and 2023-24

The Equality and Diversity completion rate for 2021-22 (this includes choosing the option "Prefer Not to Say):

91.04% completed the gender reassignment question

92.32% completed their ethnic group

90.81% provided their sexual orientation

92.72% disclosed if they had a medical condition/disability or not

This meant the average completion rate from staff for this period was 91.72%.

The Equality and Diversity completion rate 1 April 2024 – 31 December 2024 (this includes choosing the option "Prefer Not to Say):

89.88% completed the gender reassignment question

91.84% completed their ethnic group

90.46% provided their sexual orientation

91.6% disclosed if they had a medical condition/disability or not

This meant the average completion rate from staff for this period was 90.95%.

We know that when comparing to other Boards in Scotland NSS is considered average in terms of total data completeness, which is the overall proportion of staff completing data compared to other boards in Scotland.

2.7 Equality Outcome 7 -

To implement the national strategies and plans to address disability and race inequality

We progressed this outcome with a range of national programmes of work which were implemented to address inequalities.

In this section we describe the work of our services which are delivered across Scotland which contributes to the national strategies and plans to address disability and race inequality.

Scottish National Blood Transfusion Service (SNBTS)

We have included information of the work of our SNBTS services in the Mainstream Equality Report in relation to the work to address health inequalities for ethnic minority people in Scotland.

Marc Turner Director of SNBTS explains:

“The current diversity target for Dexamethasone Suppression Test (DST) is 2% of donor base to self-identify as ethnically diverse (African, Arab, Asian, Caribbean, Mixed/multiple). This is in order to best represent the Scottish population, and to help meet the needs of certain patient groups such as those with Sickle Cell Disorder. From the February DST targets, this currently exceeds target at 2.8%. For 25/26, a stationary or very gradual increase in target would be recommended. This is to allow SNBTS to fully implement MAT with donation – a successful pilot has been undertaken in Edinburgh Donor Centre in Autumn 2024, and plans are being developed for National Roll Out in the next financial year. As there is a correlation between ethnicity, and those requiring MAT tests upon first or returning donation, facilitating the donor to give a full donation, whilst simultaneously undergoing MAT test, is important for donor recruitment and retention. DS&T colleagues will focus on Monocyte Activation Test (MAT) test roll out, then pro-actively recruit to increased

Diversity targets in 27/28 and beyond. This will be facilitated by certain faith based blood collection sessions (initial pre-requisite work is underway to facilitate a Mosque session for example). Faith and Community leaders will be engaged with and SNBTS will build on the strong foundations currently in place with organisations such as The Scottish Ahlul Bayt Society.”

Assist

Assist helps to make connections and facilitates conversations with public sector and wider third party and independent organisations, encouraging joint-working and partnerships, through bringing together the right people, at the right time and at the right place to improve health and social care outcomes for the people of Scotland.

[NSS Assist Annual Report 2023-24 | National Services Scotland](#)

Flexible health and wellbeing with Connect Me

The Connect Me programme, delivered in partnership with Scottish Government, focused on helping those with high blood pressure, asthma and diabetes to self-manage their conditions through remote monitoring. This was introduced to 13 health boards and is being expanded to other services including stroke cardiology and neurology. So far, almost 30,000 individuals have accessed these services, with an additional 1,000 patients joining each month.

Supporting screening uptake in Scotland's communities

Data shows people living in disadvantaged communities are less likely to take up bowel and cervical screening services that help detect and treat cancer early. We worked with health and social care partnerships to allow social care professionals to access relevant local screening data. This helped improve the planning and engagement of preventative health programmes in their local communities.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Police Scotland

We signed a two-year MoU with Police Scotland to further strengthen our partnership. The MoU enables us to explore opportunities for intelligence and data sharing in areas such as custody healthcare and interventions and mental health.

Anchor institution

We developed our approach as an anchor institution. As a national board supporting NHSScotland, we have the potential to make a positive impact on Scotland's economic recovery, as well as supporting national outcomes that improve health and wellbeing, increase opportunities, and reduce inequalities for the people of Scotland.

National Procurement

In April 2018, the Fairer Scotland Duty, which is Part 1 of the Equality Act 2010, was implemented in Scotland. This legislation places an obligation on public authorities to consider how they can address inequalities arising from socio-economic disadvantages in their strategic decision-making processes. As part of our compliance with this duty, we have actively prioritised equality throughout our tender processes in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 and the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012. In 2023-24 we demonstrated our commitment to the duty by diligently conducting an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) for all regulated procurement activities. This comprehensive approach has significantly contributed to the integration of equality considerations within our contracts.

Further information on the work of National Procurement can be found here:

[NHS NSS Annual Procurement Report 2024](#)

Glasgow Centre for Inclusive Living (GCIL) - NHS Graduate Scheme

We have supported the appointment of three disabled graduates by working with the GCIL, into roles in our Strategy Performance and Service Transformation (SPST) directorate.

NSS Workforce Plan - Attracting more candidates to apply to work with us

As part of our application process, we utilised a candidate led portal within the current Job Train system, as a Once for Scotland approach. This has helped to streamline elements of the application process. We have also put in place a lead recruiter with each vacancy that arises, who acts as a dedicated point of contact for both candidates and hiring managers providing advice and guidance as they go through the recruitment journey and making this as accessible as possible.

We continue to work with our armed forces partners to support veterans into our roles and promote equity of opportunity.

We don't have standalone Disability strategies, actions to progress disability equality are integrated into our workforce plans, our Great Place to Work Plan and our work on equality impact assessments ensures that we assess the impact of our services on disability.

The NSS Anti -Racism plan will build on our progress race equality.

3. Summary

Our staff networks have grown from strength to strength, breaking down barriers in our recruitment process, addressing health inequalities in our blood services to ensuring our equality impact assessment process is embedded across all our services.

In summary we have made good progress against the actions to achieve positive outcomes for our service users, donors and staff.

Appendix 1: Equality Outcomes

Equality Outcome 1

Activities	Outputs	Equality Outcomes	General Duty
<p>Collaborative approach between directorates, staff, JTUs, NSS equality and diversity steering group and NSS staff equality networks</p> <p>Link to the NSS great place to work plan and NSS health and wellbeing plan</p>	<p>Reduced work absenteeism</p> <p>Improved performance at work</p> <p>Reduced staff turnover</p> <p>Remove the stigma of gender-based violence and recognise that survivors of gender-based violence may have attendance and performance issues at work</p> <p>Provide supportive contacts in NSS</p>	<p>Improvements to infrastructure and consistent approach in NSS providing equity of access</p> <p>Improved working environment for staff</p> <p>Staff able to access the right resources at the right time</p>	<p>Eliminate unlawful discrimination and advance equality of opportunity</p>

Equality Outcome 3

Activities	Outputs	Equality Outcomes	General Duty
<p>Staff engagement with minority ethnic staff to scope the appetite for a staff network</p> <p>Work with national race equality lead to share good and promising practice</p> <p>Continue to work with third sector race equality organisations to inform NSS work and EQIA's</p> <p>Continue to work with NSS staff networks to share good practice, resources and approaches</p>	<p>Established minority ethnic staff network with protected funding</p> <p>NSS wide activities to ensure equity of access</p> <p>Shared staff network activity with NHSS boards</p>	<p>Ensure minority ethnic people have equal, fair and proportionate access to employment and representation at all levels, grades and occupation types in the workforce and experience fewer labour market, workplace and income inequalities</p>	<p>Eliminate unlawful discrimination and advance equality of opportunity</p> <p>Foster good relations between different groups</p>

Equality Outcome 4

Activities	Outputs	Equality Outcomes	General Duty
<p>Increase webinar activity with subjects to include:</p> <p>Unconscious Bias</p> <p>How to carry out EQIAs</p> <p>How to implement the reasonable adjustment passport</p> <p>Race Equality</p> <p>Gender Based Violence</p>	<p>Staff will have an improved knowledge and awareness of equality and inclusion and what this means in the workplace</p>	<p>Everyone has an opportunity to learn in an inclusive environment without disadvantage</p>	<p>Eliminate unlawful discrimination and advance equality of opportunity</p> <p>Foster good relations between different groups</p>

Equality Outcome 5

Activities	Outputs	Equality Outcomes	General Duty
<p>Work with national organisations to share good and promising practice</p> <p>Continue to work with third sector organisations to inform NSS work and EQIA's</p> <p>Continue to work collaboratively with all NSS staff networks to share good practice, resources and approaches</p>	<p>NSS wide activities to ensure equity of access</p> <p>Shared staff network activity with NHSS boards</p>	<p>Ensure those participating in the networks have equal, fair and proportionate access to employment and representation at all levels, grades and occupation types in the workforce and experience fewer labour market, workplace and income inequalities</p>	<p>Foster good relations between different groups</p> <p>Eliminate unlawful discrimination and advance equality of opportunity</p>