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WALES

Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol  
Aneurin Bevan  
University Health Board



# Draft Strategic Equality Plan 2024/28

Aneurin Bevan University Health Board's  
Equality Objectives: 3 P's for Inclusion



# Introduction

It's critical that organisations ensure diversity – diversity of backgrounds, cultures, ages, genders, abilities, religions, and other characteristics, as well as diversity of thought processes and perspectives. But diversity is not enough. **Inclusion is where the real work comes in.**

In our efforts to create a truly inclusive organisation, 3 Objectives (what we call the 3Ps of inclusion) will form the basis of our proposed Strategic Equality Plan for 2024-2028.

They are: **Patients, People and Population.**





This strategy sets out our vision, aims and objectives to create a fair, just and equal culture across Aneurin Bevan University Health Board over the next four years.

Since the publication of our last Plan in 2020, the world we live in has changed, and so too has the way our NHS operates.







Alongside the 'Black Lives Matter' and 'Me Too' movements, the global COVID-19 pandemic magnified and focused attention on the impact of socio-economic inequality, health inequalities, racism and other discriminatory behaviours and actions on our NHS staff, our key workers more widely, and our diverse communities.

We know from our own data monitoring, survey results, and engagement activities, that there are differential outcomes and experiences for patients and our workforce from different backgrounds.





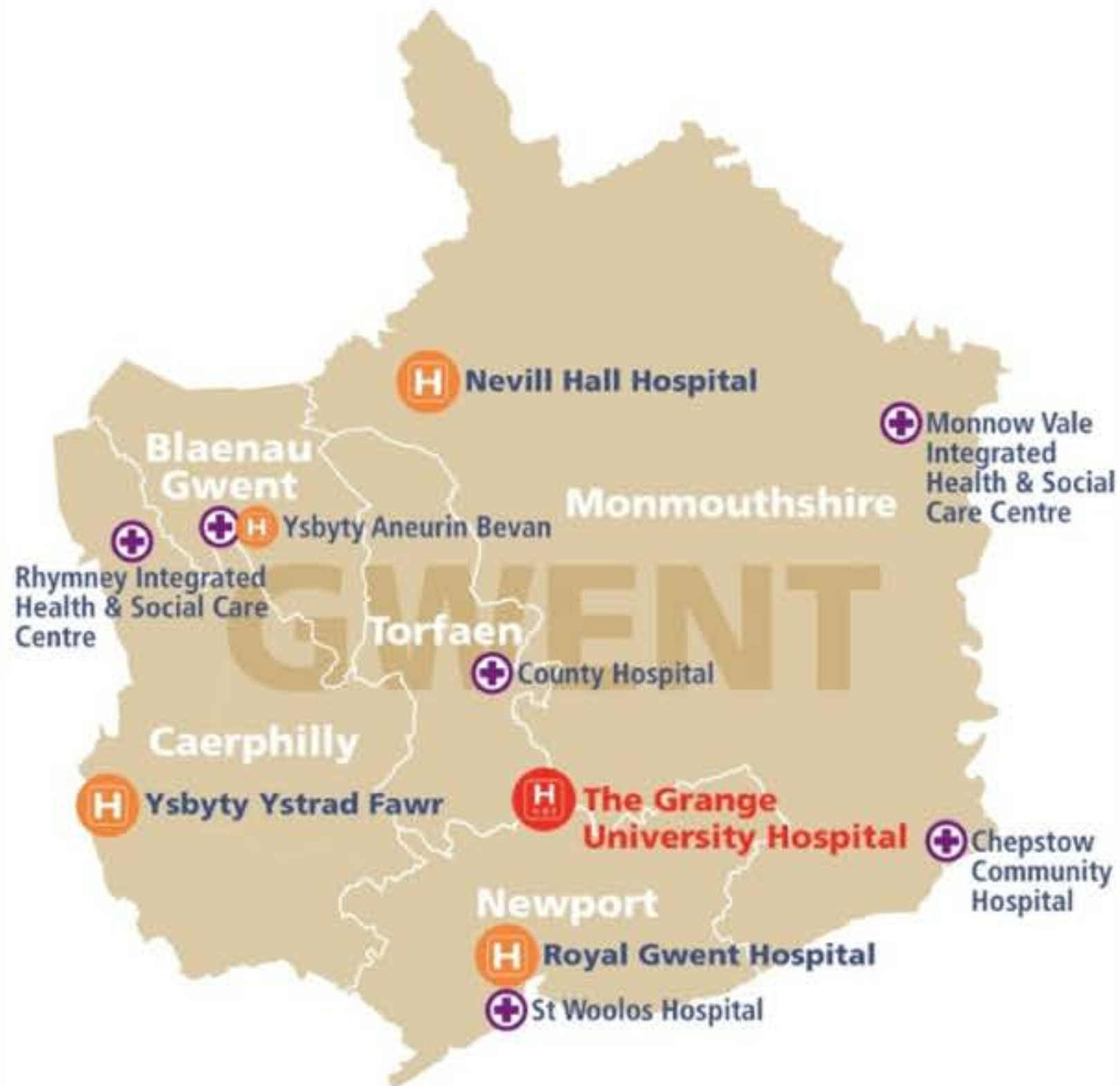
## **Beyond Compliance, Towards Change**

To address these differential outcomes, we need to move beyond legal compliance and utilise the power of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion to transform the culture of our organisation.

To support this, we have undertaken a range of engagement activities to understand what we can do to make the required improvements over time to move beyond compliance to a place where everyone is treated fairly, as part of our cultural change journey.



# About Us



Aneurin Bevan University Health Board is the operational name of Aneurin Bevan University Local Health Board. The Health Board was established on the 1st of October 2009, and provides healthcare services and support via a wide range of primary, community and acute hospital care settings, covering the areas of Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Monmouthshire, Newport, Torfaen and South Powys.

The Health Board is led by the Chair, non-executive directors, the Chief Executive and other executive directors. The Board is supported by the Senior Management Team.



The Health Board employs over 14,000 staff, two-thirds of whom are involved in direct patient care. There are more than 250 consultants in a total of over 1000 hospital and general practice doctors, 6,000 nurses, midwives, allied professionals and community workers.

The Health Board is responsible for the delivery of health care services to a resident population of an estimated 588,303 (Stats Wales 2023).





# Why a Strategic Equality Plan?



## **IT'S THE RIGHT THING TO DO**

We want to be an inclusive employer and service provider and recognise that we have improvements to make. Equality, diversity, and inclusion are the right things to pursue. They impact wellbeing, feelings of value and belonging and if we get it right, we can boost morale and confidence.

## **IT MAKES GOOD BUSINESS SENSE**

Improving and celebrating the diversity of our workforce and ensuring that the Health Board is an inclusive place to work will enable our people to work with less stress and help enable the psychological safety required for innovative ideas to flourish. This ultimately leads to better patient care.



# We have legal duties

The Equality Act 2010: the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) requires all public bodies to consider all individuals when carrying out their day-to-day work in shaping policy, in delivering services and in relation to their own employees. We must demonstrate 'due regard' to the three aims of the general duty of the Equality Act 2010 which are:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share protected characteristics and people who do not share them;
- Foster good relations between people who share protected characteristics and people who do not share them.



# The Equality Act 2010 protects anyone who falls into a 'protected characteristic':



- Age
- Disability
- Ethnicity
- Gender Reassignment
- Marriage & Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy & Maternity
- Religion/Belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation

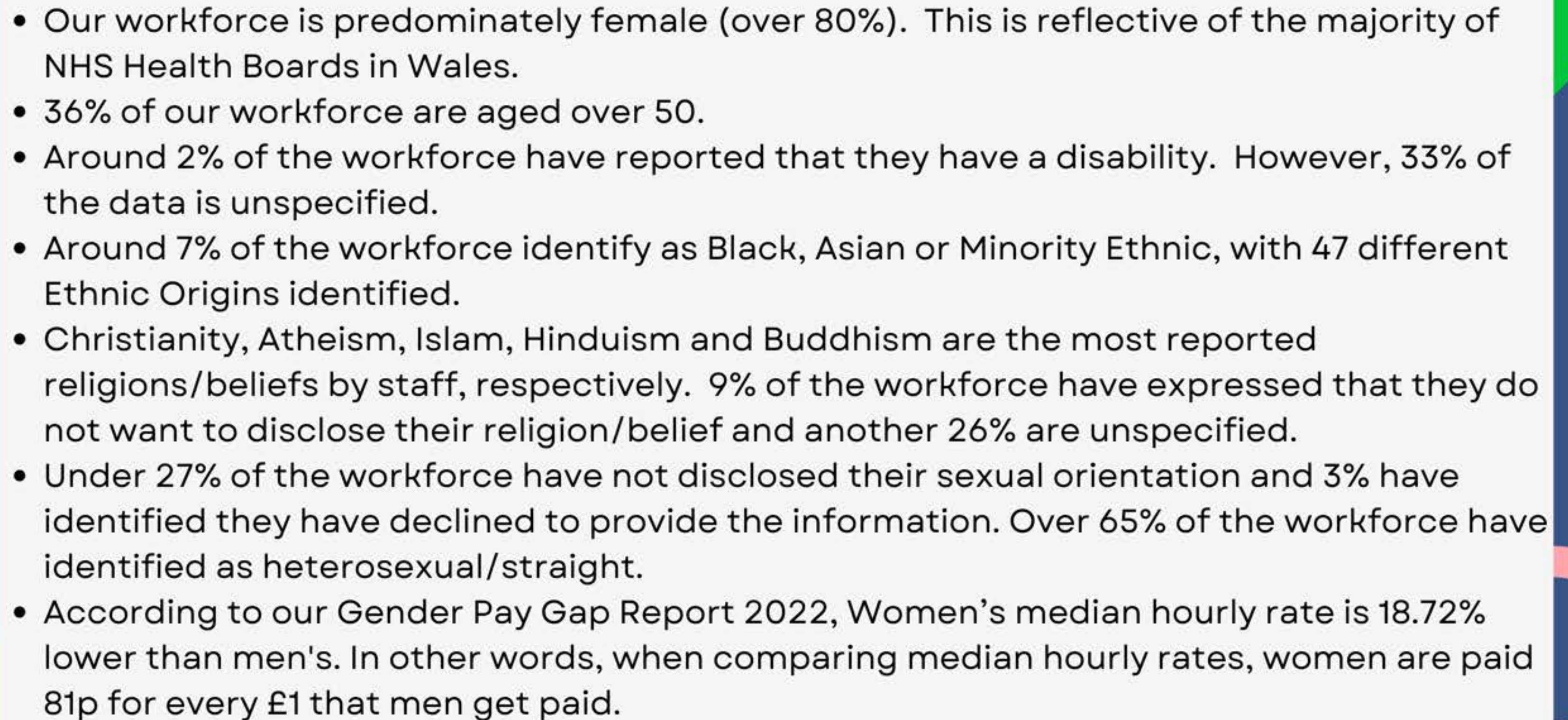


# Headline statistics evidence the case for change



- The poorest children in Gwent start school 10 months behind those from more affluent families. Inequalities in health and wellbeing that begin at school age are likely to persist and influence health at all ages.
- Improvements in life expectancy have stalled across large parts of Gwent.
- There is a 20-year inequality gap in healthy life expectancy for women and a 13-year gap for men. These are among the widest inequality gaps in Wales.
- In Newport and Blaenau Gwent, populations of those aged 65+ are declining, either due to population decline or falling life expectancy. Healthy life expectancy in Blaenau Gwent, Newport, Torfaen and Caerphilly is also lower than the Welsh average for both women and men.



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- Our workforce is predominately female (over 80%). This is reflective of the majority of NHS Health Boards in Wales.
  - 36% of our workforce are aged over 50.
  - Around 2% of the workforce have reported that they have a disability. However, 33% of the data is unspecified.
  - Around 7% of the workforce identify as Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic, with 47 different Ethnic Origins identified.
  - Christianity, Atheism, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism are the most reported religions/beliefs by staff, respectively. 9% of the workforce have expressed that they do not want to disclose their religion/belief and another 26% are unspecified.
  - Under 27% of the workforce have not disclosed their sexual orientation and 3% have identified they have declined to provide the information. Over 65% of the workforce have identified as heterosexual/straight.
  - According to our Gender Pay Gap Report 2022, Women's median hourly rate is 18.72% lower than men's. In other words, when comparing median hourly rates, women are paid 81p for every £1 that men get paid.



# Strategy Development Process



A consultation and engagement framework was developed in April 2023 to enable us to gather thoughts, feedback and ideas from key internal and external stakeholders on our proposed strategy themes and aims. A consultation period will be undertaken during December 2023, as we want our strategy to reflect the priorities of our colleagues and patients, as well as align with our local and national people and service priorities (the Welsh Government's Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan, LGBTQ+ Action Plan, etc).



# Pre-consultation Engagement Activities



Equality Staff Survey



Feedback from External  
Stakeholders



Equality Chat Cafes for staff



Feedback from Staff Networks



Divisional Team Meetings



Focus Groups with Llais  
citizen panels



# Our Equality Objectives: 3 P's for Inclusion

As a Health Board, we aim to provide safe, high-quality care and improve the health and wellbeing of the population we serve. However, the data tells us that it is getting harder, not easier for people in communities across Gwent to live healthy, fulfilled lives (Building a Fairer Gwent, 2023). This Plan, therefore, supports the Building a Healthier Gwent ambition, to ensure that the places where we live, work, learn and play make it easier for people in our communities to live healthy, fulfilled lives.

We recognise that delivering great care starts with great people. According to Gallup, “Psychologically committed, or engaged, employees are the key to improving patient satisfaction and loyalty.” Focusing on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion within an organisation can improve Employee Experience (Deloitte, 2023). We know that truly understanding and valuing our People is key to unlocking their potential.





## PATIENTS

Positively engage and actively listen to our patients and embed the principles of co-production and co-design

## PEOPLE

Create an inclusive and supportive culture based on building and maintaining relationships

## POPULATION

Make better use of data to understand and to proactively and systematically work to reduce health inequalities



# Our approach

## Culture

Develop a culture of kindness, civility and inclusion: Placing the voice of people at the heart of everything we do.

## Co-design

Ensuring people and families, including those who are less frequently heard, are involved in developing our services to meet their needs.

## Competency

Embedding cultural awareness and co-production as core competencies for staff. Ensuring that staff have access to high-quality inclusion and health inequalities training.

## Processes

Developing our data collection and analysis capabilities around inequalities. Building strong partnerships with community groups and leaders.



# Objective 1 - Our Patients



**Our Pledge:** By 2028, we will take action to positively engage and actively listen to our service users and embed the principles of co-production and co-design.

We want to ensure our services are accessible to all our patients and carers who require care, treatment and support.

We want to ensure the information we provide can be adapted to meet individual needs.

Living our Health Board's values, we will strive to provide personalised and compassionate care while respecting different people's needs, aspirations and priorities. We will aim to ensure service users and carers have a positive experience of our services and are not disadvantaged in any way. This requires a renewed commitment to actively listening to our patients, carers, and the public, and amplifying the voices of seldom-heard communities, to inform a process of continuous improvement and innovation.



# We will achieve this by

What we plan to do	How it will be achieved
<b>Improve access to our hospitals and services for people who have known inequalities in accessing healthcare.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review the effectiveness of our Interpretation and Translation tools (including British Sign Language) and increase our workforce awareness of accessing them.</li><li>• Create communication passports which enable people to share their communication needs.</li><li>• Ensure new estate plans have the involvement of patients and the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Team to ensure the patient voice is at the centre of all change.</li><li>• Build accessibility considerations into current audits and frameworks for assessing the environment.</li><li>• Collaboratively engage with patients and carers when completing service change and design.</li><li>• Undertake quality assurance of Equality Impact Assessments.</li></ul>



# We will achieve this by

What we plan to do	How it will be achieved
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Develop service-level equality checklists to create awareness around the impact of health inequalities.</li><li>• Develop Inclusion Champions network to operate across our services, actively supporting the identification and sharing of best practices, skills and knowledge around inclusion and health inequalities at service level.</li><li>• Continue to monitor the protected characteristics of people who have concerns/complaints about our services and ensure any trends are escalated accordingly.</li><li>• Introduce Cultural Intelligence training for staff, co-produced with 'Experts by Experience'.</li><li>• Further embed the <u>Duty of Quality</u> in our work in line with the Health and Care Quality Standards.</li><li>• Align service plans with emerging national and organisational strategic drivers (e.g. Anti-racist Wales Plan; LGBTQ+ Action Plan, Disability Action plan, Code of Practice for Delivery of Autism Services).</li></ul>



# We will achieve this by

What we plan to do	How it will be achieved
<b>Meaningfully engage with the diverse communities that we serve to develop impactful relationships with community partners ensuring all voices are heard and care is designed around individual needs.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Develop a Co-production and Co-design Framework.</li><li>• Introduce Self Assessment Tools for services to assess how well providers and local systems meaningfully engage with diverse communities.</li><li>• Work collaboratively with partners (e.g., Local Authorities, Colleges and Universities, Third-Sector organisations, etc) to maximise on engagement and consultation opportunities across Gwent.</li><li>• Develop service-level engagement strategies that have a grassroots approach and ensure that practices respond to patient feedback and feature co-design principles.</li><li>• Reach out to people whose voices and experiences we don't often hear: people who are the most disadvantaged in our society, have had distressing or traumatic experiences, and those who are more likely to experience poor outcomes and inequalities.</li></ul>



# We will achieve this by

What we plan to do	How it will be achieved
<b>Communicate with patients, carers, and the public in a way that meets their needs.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Develop and roll out an Accessible Information Standards policy.</li><li>• Provide service users and carers who may have specific communication needs, information in an easy and accessible format.</li><li>• Develop innovations to improve the recording of communication needs. Where an individual has stated their communication needs, we will communicate in the format that is more meaningful to them, for example, Easy Read, large print, by telephone, electronically, etc.</li><li>• Work with local communities to make the most of existing sources of feedback so people don't have to repeat themselves.</li></ul>



# We will achieve this by

What we plan to do	How it will be achieved
<p><b>Encourage providers and services to actively seek out, listen and respond to people who are most likely to have difficulty accessing their care or a poorer experience or outcomes from care</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Embed Equality Impact Assessments into frameworks and provide local teams with tools to help them assess how well providers and services are complying with their equality duties.</li><li>• Make more use of the contractual levers at our disposal to assure ourselves that providers are complying with their equality duties and responsibilities to tackle health inequalities.</li><li>• Periodically review the Equality Impact Assessment process and provide updates to appropriate committees.</li><li>• Ensure learning from Equality Impact Assessments is shared widely.</li><li>• Learn from national enquiries and research to improve outcomes for our patients.</li><li>• In line with the Quality Patient Safety Improvement Framework, encourage an improvement culture including equality and health inequality themes.</li></ul>



## By delivering this Objective, we will achieve the following outcomes:



Embed innovation  
and good practice  
that can help  
reduce  
inequalities

- We're driven by people's experience of care.
- Our ways of working meet people's needs because they are developed in partnership with them.
- We have influenced others to reduce inequalities in people's access, experiences and outcomes when using our services.
- It is easy for patients to exchange relevant information with us, and the information we provide is accessible, relevant, and useful.



# Objective 2 - Our People



**Our Pledge: By 2028, we will take action to create an inclusive and supportive culture based on building and maintaining relationships**

Developing an inclusive and diverse workforce is a key strand within our People Plan. We want to create an environment that embraces diversity and promotes inclusion. We recognise the importance of providing a safe and caring environment for staff where they can be themselves at work. Ensuring we develop an inclusive organisation with a diverse workforce representative of the communities we serve is critical to achieving this ambition.

Analysis of our current workforce demonstrates there are areas of under-representation within certain groups of our staff. These include lower numbers of staff aged 25 and under, LGBTQ+ staff, and staff from various religions/beliefs compared to the local population. There are also lower numbers of male staff as a proportion of the overall workforce and lower numbers of ethnic minority staff in senior roles. We will monitor the data and investigate gaps to ensure everyone has equity of access and opportunity.



# We will achieve this by

What we plan to do	How it will be achieved
<p><b>Positive action is embedded in our Talent Management Strategy and processes/initiatives are in place that enhances equal opportunities for career progression for under-represented groups.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Further develop our Talent Management Strategy to ensure increased opportunities for underrepresented groups.</li><li>• Improve mechanisms to capture equality data to provide targeted interventions.</li><li>• Strengthen recruitment practices to ensure greater diverse recruitment panel membership and selection training.</li><li>• Attain best practice accreditation e.g., Disability Confident, Stonewall Workplace Equality Index.</li><li>• Explore less traditional recruitment practices to enable us to attract and appoint candidates from a diverse range of backgrounds.</li><li>• Targeted leadership and development support for ethnic minority, disabled and female staff to increase the number of staff within middle and senior manager roles.</li><li>• Embed career conversations as part of the annual Performance Appraisal process.</li></ul>



# We will achieve this by

What we plan to do	How it will be achieved
<p><b>Develop compassionate leaders who play close attention to the people they lead, understand the situations they face, respond empathetically and take thoughtful and appropriate action to help.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review our leadership programmes to embed the skills and knowledge required to promote an inclusive workplace and to recognise and value diversity.</li><li>• Engage all our leaders with our leadership programmes: clinical and corporate; junior and senior; aspiring and established.</li><li>• Develop and roll out a Reverse Mentorship Programme.</li><li>• Add equality objectives to Executive performance metrics and leadership performance appraisals.</li><li>• Support leaders at all levels to demonstrate their commitment to tackling workplace inequalities.</li><li>• Ensure our Talent Management Strategy increases opportunities for underrepresented groups to access leadership development.</li></ul>



# We will achieve this by

What we plan to do	How it will be achieved
<b>Build a culture where staff feel a sense of belonging and allyship.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Develop high-performing staff networks and Advisory Groups embedded in governance structures up to Board level.</li><li>• Introduce and develop new staff networks so that all groups have a recognised voice.</li><li>• Put in place mechanisms so that staff networks are consulted with when processes and initiatives are being developed or reviewed.</li><li>• Celebrate the diversity of our internationally educated colleagues and ensure they receive appropriate guidance and support.</li><li>• As part of NHS Equality Week, we will promote an annual programme of staff engagement events and awareness raising around inclusion and protected characteristics.</li><li>• Strengthen our Equality training offer for managers and staff to increase awareness and provide knowledge and strategies to help build a positive inclusive work environment.</li></ul>



# We will achieve this by

What we plan to do	How it will be achieved
<b>Cultivate an organisation that is inclusive; free from discrimination with all able to fulfil their potential.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Identify contributing factors to our gender, ethnicity and disability pay gaps and provide positive action for groups who are experiencing a pay gap, e.g., coaching, mentoring, role model profiles and talent development programmes.</li><li>• Investigate whether we are hearing from colleagues from all backgrounds when we go out with surveys and if not, explore ways to improve this.</li><li>• Ensure that flexible/agile working policies are clear and that managers have confidence to use them well for the benefit of their colleagues and their service.</li><li>• Support the implementation of the Speaking up Safely framework for the NHS in Wales.</li><li>• Review our HR policies to ensure they are inclusive, underpinned by Equality Impact Assessments.</li><li>• Align workforce plans with emerging national and organisational strategic drivers (e.g., Anti-racist Wales Plan; LGBTQ+ Action Plan, Disability Action plan, Code of Practice for Delivery of Autism Services),</li></ul>



# We will achieve this by

What we plan to do	How it will be achieved
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Monitor Performance Appraisal and Development Review compliance data and ensure compliance is consistent across colleague groups.</li><li>• Further promote awareness of the need to record protected characteristics on individual's Electronic Staff Record (ESR)</li><li>• Implement technologies that are easy to use and help our people to do their jobs more easily (e.g., assistive technologies, physical accessibility improvements, etc).</li><li>• Identify and roll out training to support staff in challenging behaviours such as discrimination, prejudice and microaggressions.</li><li>• Establish a centralised procedure to record, monitor and evaluate reasonable adjustments.</li><li>• Deliver manager training in reasonable adjustment awareness in collaboration with Occupational Health and Experts by Experience.</li></ul>



## By delivering this Objective, we will achieve the following outcomes:



Cultivate and sustain happy, productive and engaged staff

- We are well-led with compassion.
- We're driven by employee experience.
- Our people have the right skills and understanding to deliver culturally competent care.
- Our policies and procedures meet people's needs because they are developed in partnership with them.
- We have influenced others to promote equal opportunities in recruitment, progression and development.



# Objective 3 - Our Population



**Our Pledge: By 2028, we will make better use of data to understand and to proactively and systematically work to reduce health inequalities.**

As a Health Board, we aim to provide safe, high-quality care and improve the health and wellbeing of the population we serve. However, the data tells us that it is getting harder, not easier for people in communities across Gwent to live healthy, fulfilled lives (Building a Fairer Gwent, 2023). This Plan, therefore, supports the Building a Healthier Gwent ambition, to ensure that the places where we live, work, learn and play make it easier for people in our communities to live healthy, fulfilled lives.

As we benchmark our equality data against our local population, we also monitor the equality data of our patients through local and national surveys. This allows us to monitor any disproportionate impacts which may be identified and put actionable steps in place to resolve inequalities.

To ensure that all groups are able to access our feedback methods we will build on and improve our accessibility of feedback tools and work with our community partners to share this across the Gwent region.



# We will achieve this by

What we plan to do	How it will be achieved
<p><b>Ensure our services are delivered in relation to local health needs and there are systems in place to support this.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Implement the recommendations of the <u>Building a Fairer Gwent</u> Report.</li><li>• Embed learning from Marmot Principles and ways of working locally.</li><li>• Strengthen links with other local work on digital inclusion in communities.</li><li>• Encourage and support innovation across the system to reduce health inequalities.</li><li>• Accelerate co-production with our communities within our work to reduce inequalities, creating honest and realistic conversations that result in positive relationships.</li><li>• Provide advice and guidance to support increased understanding of health inequalities across our services and staff teams.</li><li>• Work collaboratively with Public Health to identify areas of opportunity for prevention across our system linked to inequalities.</li></ul>



# We will achieve this by

What we plan to do	How it will be achieved
<b>Analyse patient equality data against local intelligence to identify inequalities.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Drive the use of research evidence for quality improvement and evidence-based practice.</li><li>• Establish close alignment with data and digital colleagues to capitalise on opportunities to strengthen the evidence base.</li><li>• Align the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and Public Health agendas to bring together data from the wider determinants of health datasets with the equality data, to dig deeper into the root causes of ill-health.</li><li>• Analyse wait list data to highlight if inequalities are identified and report on actions to address them.</li><li>• Monitor equality data against incidents and complaints and report on actions to address them.</li><li>• Launch a communication campaign with our patients and service users to improve equality monitoring.</li></ul>



## By delivering this Objective, we will achieve the following outcomes:



Work seamlessly  
with our partners  
to improve lives

- We have accelerated improvements in the equity of care.
- We have contributed to an improvement in people receiving joined-up care.
- We provide an up-to-date and accurate picture of health inequalities.
- We adopt an effective, proportionate, targeted approach to addressing health inequalities.
- We have influenced others to reduce inequalities in people's outcomes when using health services.



# Measures of Success



The Plan and its supporting programmes will be monitored and measured by the Health Board through a range of appropriate metrics; including where possible, qualitative information. Progress will be published annually in our Annual Equality Report.

The actions within the strategy provide a number of proposed and illustrative measurements, some of which are already routinely monitored and others not yet established. We will develop an assurance framework through a phased approach and will encompass both delivery and developmental metrics. The focus will be on both current and historical performance (where available) and will aim to identify patterns and changes including evidence of improvement in reducing inequalities and increasing equal opportunities.





# Contact Us

If you have any questions about this Plan or would like it in a different format, please contact us at:

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

[abb.edi@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:abb.edi@wales.nhs.uk)