



GIG  
CYMRU  
NHS  
WALES

Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol  
Betsi Cadwaladr  
University Health Board

# Equality Annual Report

## 2023/24



## Accessibility Statement

This report and any supporting documents are available in Welsh, and can be made available in other languages and formats on request.

For other formats, please contact: Patient Advice and Liaison Service

Tel 03000 851234

[BCU.PALS@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:BCU.PALS@wales.nhs.uk)



To contact the Equality Team at BCUHB email: [BCU.Equality@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:BCU.Equality@wales.nhs.uk)

## Contents

Accessibility Statement

Foreword

Executive Summary

Section 1: Introduction

Section 2: Background / Context

Section 3: Review of the Year 2023/24

Section 4: Priorities for the Year Ahead 2024/25

Section 5: Conclusion

Acknowledgements

Appendices

Attachments

## Foreword

Welcome to Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board's (BCUHB) Annual Equality Report covering the period April 2023 – March 2024. This report summarises some of the work the Health Board has undertaken to demonstrate our commitment to advancing equality and human rights.

As you can imagine in a Health Board of this size, it would be difficult to capture all the work, projects and services that deliver inclusive patient focused services, so this report holds a spotlight on some of those areas of work.

April 2023 – March 2024 has been a time of significant change and challenge. In February 2023, the Health Board was placed under Special Measures and one of the key challenges has been in embedding equality within the five outcome measures identified as well as within strategic documents, such as the Health Board's Annual Plan for 2023 and three-year plan for 2024-2027. I feel that although the Health Board has robust procedures and processes in place for us consider equality in our decision making, there is further work needed to embed equality into Health Board strategic planning and to raise the profile of equality and inclusion across the senior management teams including The Board.

The reporting period April 2023 – March 2024 is the final year of our Strategic Equality Plan (SEP) 2020-2024. The plan aimed to inform the delivery of inclusive services and provide a workplace free from discrimination by embedding and strengthening equality and human rights principles and practices across all functions of the Health Board. This annual report reflects on that last year of the 2020-24 SEP and the work that has been undertaken during that year to engage with our stakeholders and develop the priorities for the next four years in preparation for the Strategic Equality Plan (SEP) 2024-2028.

Significant work has been underway across NHS Wales to deliver against the actions contained within the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan and the LGBTQ+ Action Plan for Wales. These provide a significant part of the backdrop for improving experiences for everyone in our community and for our workforce.

We are confident that this report demonstrates our organisational commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion, and the progress made during 2023- 2024.



Jason Brannan - Deputy Director of People, Workforce and Organisational Development

## Executive Summary

This Equality Annual report provides information on equality activities and achievements undertaken within the Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board during the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024. This report examines how the Health Board has met its legal duties and progress made against its Strategic Equality Action Plan 2020-2024.

It is not an exhaustive list of activities but a snapshot highlighting the work undertaken to meet our Public Sector Equality Duty and actions identified in the Welsh Government Action Plans.

### Main points

- Governance and Leadership
  - Impact of Special Measures – recognising the changes to the Board and the impact that has made on progressing some of the actions within the Strategic Equality Plan and National Plans.
- Partnership working and Engagement
  - Proving examples of partnership and engagement work over the past 12 months and the impact that has made to service delivery, equality visibility and staff and patient experiences.
- Inclusive Services
  - Defining what inclusive services look like, providing case study examples of both best practice and where learning has been made.
- Training and Awareness
  - The expansion of training provision within the Health Board, both internally and via partnerships, community groups and external organisations should be highlighted.
- Staff Support and resources
  - Building staff networks and resources and ensuring this is communicated widely throughout the Health Board.

### Progress Made

Significant progress has been made to embed equality within strategies and ensure Equality Impact Assessments and Socio-economic risks assessments are undertaken. The re-establishment of the EQIA Scrutiny group provides another level of scrutiny and quality control of key assessments. More areas of the Health Board have signed up to complete the Cultural Competence Certification Scheme and there has been more visibility of the Equality Teams work through newsletters, intranet, public engagement activities and partnership events.

## **Barriers and Risks**

As with many areas, a shortage of resources to meet the actions within the plan will remain a risk. Such as the training demands for 20,000 staff above and beyond the Treat Me Fairly e-learning resource. The need for further Board Equality Development to ensure that they understand the demands within the National Action Plans and their responsibility to meet their duties.

## **Conclusion**

The focus for this period is to build visibility of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion into all aspects of the Health Board's workforce and service delivery. Improve inclusive services, embed equality into existing strategies and meet our legal requirements under the Equality Act 2010, building on the positive work that has taken place, and take that forward into the next four-year Equality Plan.

## Section 1: Introduction

### 1.1 Structure of this report

Promoting equality, inclusion and valuing diversity are all fundamental to accessing health care and addressing better health outcomes. The following report is divided into different sections, providing information and evidence demonstrating how we have discharged our equality duty.

This evidence includes:

- Delivering on the Equality Duty – Public Sector Equality Duty and Socio-economic Duty
- Reporting progress on our Strategic Equality Objectives - Year 4 Plan
- Strategic Equality Objectives and Plan 2024-28 – Developing our objectives

### 1.2 Special Measures

In February 2023, the Health Board was placed back into Special Measures. The Health Board recognises that there is significant progress to be made in the leadership and culture of our organisation, and equality and inclusion alongside compassionate leadership will be at the heart of these improvements. It also recognises the impact that has on our workforce and public reputation.

The Health Board have had to adapt our services and move to work with our community, its public services partners, our volunteers and our employees to ensure Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board provides a high standard of care and services ensuring we meet our commitments to deliver quality, care and excellence.

As a response to being placed in Special Measures the Health Board have identified its five core outcomes.

Outcome 1: Be a well-functioning Board.

Outcome 2: Have a clear, deliverable plan for 2023/24.

Outcome 3: Have stronger leadership and engagement.

Outcome 4: Have improved access, outcomes and experience for citizens.

Outcome 5: Be a learning, self-improving organisation.

As part of the Health Boards improvement plans under Special Measures, there are also a number of specific service areas of focus. These are:

- Planned care, including ophthalmology and services for cancer (oncology)
- Urgent and emergency care, including ambulance waiting times
- Mental Health, including services in the community, for children and adolescents and neurodiversity
- Vascular
- Urology

The Health Board’s response to addressing special measure concerns raised was approved at the BCU Health Board meeting on the 25<sup>th</sup> May 2023. The Health Board agreed it would take a “stabilisation to sustainability” approach broken down into three 90-day cycles towards each of the five outcomes. Progress is regularly reported to Welsh Government.

### 1.3 Alignment to the Three-Year Plan 24-27

During 2023-24 the Health Board has continued to progress through its objectives against the Special Measures Framework. As the year progressed this agreement has been reached in around five main areas where improvement was most necessary. Recognising the need to prioritise improvements in the areas that led to Special Measures, the core of the Health Board 2024-27 Plan builds further upon those five objective areas outlined below.

These objective areas are linked to each strategic equality objective throughout the plan.

#### 1. Building an Effective Organisation

Objective area 1 recognises the importance of governance and effective procedures and decision making in high functioning Healthcare organisations. This will better ensure that decisions are made in a timely way, using appropriate information, and that the right people have been involved to ensure the right decisions are made first time.

#### 2. Developing strategy and long-lasting change

Objective area 2 draws upon the need for the Health Board to be clear about population needs in North Wales and that services are configured in a way to get the highest value from the resources available to us. In this way the Health Board can provide services that are reliable, more cost-effective, and that make the best use of healthcare professionals.

#### 3. Creating compassionate culture, leadership and engagement

Objective area 3 capitalises upon the huge body of evidence that demonstrates how culture, leadership and engagement with residents, staff, communities and partners significantly impact upon the quality of services and patient experience provided. The Health Board has identified opportunities to make improvements in these areas that would then in turn lead to better outcomes.

#### 4. Improving quality, outcomes and experience

Objective area 4 covers a large thematic area where improvements are required to improve clinical performance across a number of key areas. The Health Board wishes to build further upon good work commenced that takes a pathway focused approach to this.

#### 5. Establishing an effective environment for learning

Objective area 5 provides opportunity to learn when things don’t go as planned, to teach, and to widely use the many sources of information available to us in order to support decision making and knowledge.



## 1.4 #TheBetsiWay

Launched within the Health Board in April 2023, #TheBetsiWay is an Improvement System and range of methodologies to support understanding and effective solutions to improve the processes of delivering high quality services and care across the health board.

The Betsi Way Improvement System includes an improvement toolkit which has been designed to help staff and offers a suite of bespoke tools rooted in science and specifically designed and chosen for use in Betsi.

“The Betsi Way”, based on the best improvement methodologies, cuts through the jargon and provides an easy-to-understand guide as to how to approach, understand and solve problems of any scale.

## 1.5 Population

North Wales has a resident population of 686,909 persons (on census day 2021), living across an area of approximately 2,500 square miles. It is bordered by Irish Sea to the North and west, Ceredigion and Powys to the south, and England to the east.

The region is defined by coastland, rural areas particularly in the west, and more urban areas in the east predominantly in and around Wrexham and Deeside. The majority of settlements are along the coast, including resorts popular with tourists such as Rhyl, Llandudno, Pwllheli, Prestatyn and Tywyn. It is mountainous and is home to Eryri National Park, and the mix of natural features is a strong draw for tourists and visitors.

Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board is the largest health organisation in Wales, and is responsible for providing primary care, community care, mental health and acute hospital services for the population of North Wales. Further demographic information is provided within Appendix A.

## Section 2: Background / Context

### 2.1 Anchor Institution

We are an 'anchor institution', which means that we are a large organisation, and our long-term sustainability is tied into the wellbeing of the populations we serve. Our responsibilities are both as a health provider and employer.

### 2.2 Our Strategic Equality Plan

For the reporting period of this annual report, we will be providing progress on the [Strategic Equality Plan](#) (SEP) for the period 2020-2024.

As a listed body in Wales under the Equality Act 2010, we are required to draw up a Strategic Equality Plan at least every 4 years. The Plan documents the steps that BCUHB is taking to fulfil its duty.

Our Equality Objectives and related year 4 action plan was informed by gathering and analysing information from national and local sources, evidence, and from impact assessments undertaken as well as from ongoing engagement with staff and service users. The planned work during 2023-2024 was developed using principles of co-design with our Equality Stakeholders and Staff Networks.

### 2.3 Our Equality Objectives 2020-2024

1	We will prioritise action to help identify and mitigate the impact of poverty for recipients of healthcare at risk of or actually living in low-income households in North Wales.
2	We will prioritise action to reduce health inequalities and increase the accessibility of healthcare for people sharing different protected characteristics in North Wales.
3	We will prioritise action to respond to key policy and legal developments in healthcare for people sharing different protected characteristics in North Wales.
4	We will prioritise action to advance gender equality in North Wales.
5	We will prioritise action to address personal security for people sharing different protected characteristics accessing health services in North Wales.
6	We will increase engagement with individuals and groups sharing different protected characteristics in North Wales.
7	We will prioritise action to increase participation for people sharing different protected characteristics in health services across North Wales.
8	We will prioritise action to develop an inclusive culture where leaders routinely demonstrate their commitment to promoting equality within BCUHB and beyond and enable a fair and inclusive workforce.
9	We will prioritise action to advance race equality in North Wales.
10	We will prioritise action to deliver the Public Sector Equality Duty.

## 2.4 Governance arrangements

During 2023-2024, work has been ongoing to ensure that the equality duty is part of all new governance arrangements within the Health Board. This also includes citing equality considerations with new terms of reference for all governance meetings and where appropriate having a representative from the Equality team.

During the year 2023-2024, work has continued to advance equality through the delivery of the final year of this current Strategic Equality Plan. The Health Board's focus during this year is the co-production work to identify the Strategic Equality Objectives for the next four years.

## 2.5 Statutory reporting

In line with our statutory duty, we have published the following:

### 2.5.1 Strategic Equality Plan

The Equality Objectives set out to deliver in our 4 - year Strategic Equality Plan sets the foundation for advancing equality across the Health Board. Our Strategic Equality Plan (SEP) for the period 2020-2024 was agreed and published in March 2020. The four-year plan is aligned to Regulations 14 and 15 within the Public Sector Equality Duty.

### 2.5.2 Equality Annual Reports

This report will join our latest and past Equality Annual Reports, which are published on our website in line with regulation 16 of public sector equality duty: Wales.

[Equality and Human Rights Reports - Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board](#)

These reports provide progress statements that arise from complying with the specific duties within the permitted timelines set by the Equality and Human Rights Commission. In line with regulation 16, our annual reports include:

- The steps taken to identify and collect relevant information
- How the Health Board has used relevant information it holds in complying with the general duty and the specific duties
- The progress made in order to fulfil each equality objective
- A statement of the effectiveness of:
  - Arrangements for identifying and collecting relevant information, and
  - Steps taken in order to fulfil each equality objective
  - Employment information that the listed authority has collected

### 2.5.3 BCUHB Statutory Employment – data report

Attached to this report is our Annual Monitoring Equality Data Report. This provides comprehensive data on our staff, including recruitment, leavers and disciplinary / grievance data sets.

#### **2.5.4 Gender Pay Gap reporting**

Also attached is our Gender Pay Gap for this reporting period. This provides information on regulations 2017 within the Equality Act, which requires organisations with more than 250 employees to calculate and publish gender pay gap information. All figures are based upon data taken from the NHS ESR (Electronic Staff Record) payroll systems as at the latest snapshot date (31st March 2023).

The report contains the following:

- Average and Median Hourly Rates and Pay Gaps
- Average and Median Bonus and Pay Gaps
- Proportion of staff receiving a bonus
- The number and percentage of males and females are divided into four groups (Pay Quartile) ordered from lowest to highest pay

#### **2.5.5 Race Pay Gap reporting**

We have included a Race Pay Gap report for the first time for this period. This supports our commitment to the Welsh Government Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan and provides us with data and intelligence within the Health Board to see where there are gaps experienced by our current and potential staff, looking at recruitment data, progression and training data where available as well as the information model of the Gender Pay Audit reporting.

#### **2.5.6 Disability Pay Gap reporting**

More work and development is needed to ensure that staff members have the confidence to update their ESR data regarding disability and impairments. We believe there is currently an under-reporting of staff information about disability and impairments, and therefore, a Disability Pay Gap report would not provide the insights needed. One of our future actions, alongside implementing future Welsh Government Disability Action Plans, would be to improve the data and enable us to complete our first Disability Pay Gap report.

## Section 3: Review of the Year 2024/25

Section 3 of our report outlines our progress in the final year of our current Strategic Equality Plan.

This report section will spotlight actions from year 4 of the 2020-24 plan.

We have linked the work in each area to the corresponding number for the strategic Equality Objective and will indicate its connection with the National Plans.

### 3.1 Focus on National Plans - linked to objectives

**This area of work aligns to:**

- Anti- Racist Wales Action Plan
- LGBTQ+ Wales Action Plan
- Code of Practice for Autism

**It also aligns with the strategic objectives 2,3,6,7,8,9 and 10, as well as Three Year plan objective 2**

#### 3.1.1 Welsh Government Anti-racism action plan and progress

The Welsh Government Anti-racist Action Plan was published in June 2022 and we have developed a comprehensive plan to address the health actions and continue to engage with our stakeholders to implement the plan. We have:

- Developed a BCUHB plan to implement the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan with governance in place
- Commissioned Diverse Cymru to deliver cultural competency courses
- Commenced engagement with external stakeholders
- Appointed an Executive Race Equality Champion
- Undertaken an Equality Impact Assessment for the plan
- International Staff Guide and Support
- The published plan is on a page – [link here](#)
- Prepared for Welsh Workforce Race Equality Standards Reporting
- Diverse Cymru Accreditation scheme to more areas
- Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Health Needs Assessment



### 3.1.2 Welsh Government – LGBTQ+ Action Plan

In February 2023, the Welsh Government published the LGBTQ+ Action Plan for Wales. A BCUHB action plan to implement the health-related actions is in place and we have:-

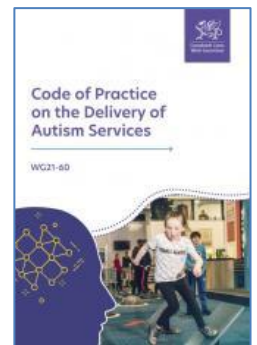
- Promoted the plan internally
- Held a listening event for staff
- Attended Community and Pride events
- Undertaken research into LGBTQ+ Older Carers
- Led on the development of a Community Quilt Project for HIV and AIDS Awareness



### 3.1.3 Code of Practice on the Delivery of Autism Services

We have launched a co-produced Steering Group to move the Health Board towards compliance with the Code of Practice. We have agreed to work to a set of co-production principles and to self-assess on an annual basis.

- Establishment of Code of Practice Task and Finish Group.
- Development of Action Plan to support the Code of Practice implementation.



### 3.1.4 All Wales Standards for Accessible Communication

A Sensory Loss and Accessible Health Care information hub was established for staff, which contains sensory loss toolkit guides for Primary Care, Community Services and Secondary Care. During the next 18 months the standards will be reviewed and updated as well as their scope widened to cover more areas of accessible communication. See appendix B for information on the All-Wales Standard for Accessible Communication.

## 3.2 Focus on Engagement - linked to objectives

**This area of work aligns to:**

- Anti- Racist Wales Action Plan
- LGBTQ+ Wales Action Plan
- Code of Practice for Autism

**It also aligns with the strategic objectives 6,7,8,9 and 10, as well as Three Year plan Objective 3**

Over 2023-24, our Engagement Team has continued to collaborate and work with partners to deliver shared engagement opportunities, reduce duplication of effort and deliver on shared outcomes. The Health Board has created opportunities to engage and involve communities in decisions by developing and creating new relationships.

To support engagement, the public engagement team developed toolkits and guidance documents. The Health Boards Internet page also has a dedicated section for the public, where they can find out about engagement opportunities, take part in surveys. [Have your say - engagement opportunities - Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board.](#)

Engagement with communities across North Wales is continuing through maintaining and developing networks and channels of engagement that services can use to involve and listen to the public and partners.

Within the Health Board's Engagement team, we have dedicated Engagement Officers for East, West and Central areas as well as a dedicated engagement officer for underserved communities.

In addition to this support for the public, the team have developed an intranet page of resources for staff engagement.

### **3.2.1 Example of Targeted Intervention**

Feedback from Welsh Government has been very positive in terms of engagement and progression across the engagement domain. From a public engagement perspective, our focus has been on supporting the embedding of engagement across the organisation.

During 2023-2024, the Health Board have undertaken a wide-ranging engagement on a range of strategies including the Health Board's Clinical Services Strategy, which used a range of engagement tools and approaches.

### **3.2.2 Bite-Size health events**

The Health Board continue to offer Bite-Size health events. These events strengthen our engagement with businesses to provide health advice and guidance direct to North Wales residents in their place of work. It is a collaboration between the Public Engagement Team, BCUHB services, and our partner organisations, working together to improve access to information. Bite-Size health sessions provide a range of support and health information including:

- Blood pressure checks
- Mental health and wellbeing
- Health screening
- Smoking cessation
- Alcohol and substance misuse
- Carer's information
- Active lifestyle
- Healthy eating
- Diabetes

The events can support people to:

- Improve their health and wellbeing.
- Identify opportunities to take steps before health problems worsen, or by preventing health problems from occurring in the first place.
- Talk to people who don't usually engage with health services about their health.
- Find out about ways to reduce levels of depression and anxiety which may help employers reduce days lost to sickness.

### **3.2.3 Engagement with our Diverse Communities**

One of the priorities for 2023-2024 has been to expand the membership of our Equality Stakeholder meetings, this has included extending invitations to BAWSO, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Wales, North Wales Chinese Women's Society and African Society, North Wales Trans, Non- binary and Intersex Network.

Engagement work has been undertaken with:

- North Wales Ethnic Multicultural Association - Health and wellness session Ecole
- Attendance to Eid Celebrations
- Menopause session with North Wales Deaf community via Centre of Sign Sight Sound (COS)
- Betsi Bollywood Night
- Learning Disability Conference
- Diverse Cymru Audit of All Wales NHS Workforce Policies
- North Wales African Society Children's book launch
- Wrexham Multicultural Hub events
- Pride Events across North Wales
- Community Quilting sessions
- North Wales Interfaith



### 3.2.4 Equality Stakeholders Group

Equality stakeholders are a group of people that represent different parts of the North Wales population and meet regularly to discuss health care services. Over the past year, meetings of the Equality Stakeholder Group continue to raise issues and barriers faced by patients and carers. One of the areas we have been successful is to increase the membership of this group to be more representative of the diversity we have in North Wales and include more community groups.



### 3.3 Focus on Patient and Carer Experience - linked to objectives:

**This area of work aligns to:**

- Anti- Racist Wales Action Plan
- LGBTQ+ Wales Action Plan
- Code of Practice for Autism

**It also aligns with the strategic objectives 6,7,8,9 and 10 as well as Three Year plan objective 4**

Our Patient and Carer Experience Team provide comprehensive support to gather patient experience, which is used to inform service planning and delivery.

Every day, we collect the views of our service users so that we can really understand what matters to them, especially when people are at their most vulnerable. With permission, we then share the feedback with the relevant managers via the Patient Safety and Experience Team in order to both learn, and to identify areas where we need to improve. Patient and Liaison Service (PALS) are working directly with the Medical



Examiner Office to ensure families have an opportunity to have any unanswered questions answered around the loss of a loved one and to share their experiences.

### **3.3.1 Developing Patient stories**

One of the key roles of the patient and carer experience team is to work closely with patients, carers and their families, and with their permission record patient stories. These are stories of individuals from their own perspective regarding a health care setting, or the care they have received. The short videos are put together to share the impact this had on the patient and or family and aims to find learning and improve the experiences of others through that learning. Patient stories have been identified as a powerful tool to understand their lived experience and improve future care. One experience that was shared in a patient story was:

#### **Robyn's Story – Trans Voice Service Patient Story:**

This story focused on the support Robyn had received at BCUHB via the new Trans and Diverse Voice and Communication Therapy, how Robyn had shared how this service had given them support and empowered them to find their true voice. It highlighted the use of video group clinics to support patients and was shared as an awareness and learning tool thought out the Health Board as why inclusive care matters.

### **3.3.2 BCUHB Patient Information Readers Panel:**

The BCUHB Patient Information Readers Panel reviews all patient information leaflets across the Health Board. It has recently updated its Patient Information guidance and checklists to ensure that all BCUHB Patient Information documents meet a standardised set of criteria prior to review by the Patient Information Readers Panel. This is to ensure that they meet our Health Board standards for patient information and that they are fully accessible to a variety of users. The Readers Panel includes representation from the Equalities Team to ensure that it encompass important equalities feedback on all leaflets passing through panel.

### **3.3.3 Staff Neurodiversity Stories Group**

The Patient Experience Team have also been working with the newly formed Neurodivergent (ND) staff network as part of the ND Stories Group, supporting from a Patient Stories perspective with toolkits, documents, guidance and advice to support the collection of Neurodiversity Staff Stories sharing the experiences of Neurodiverse staff across BCUHB and how these can be used to inform and guide change within the organisation. This has been led by the network chair and Equality Team and has been co-produced with staff.

### 3.3.4 Patient and Carer Champions

The Patient and Carer Champion role allows members of staff to personally support the Patient and Carer Experience Team to drive change and understand patient feedback. The role of a Patient and Carer Champion is to:

- Liaise with the patient experience team and actively promote the collection of patient experience feedback
- Signpost patients, service users and their carers to supportive services
- Ensure that ward/area patient experience information is up to date
- Ensure that the needs of carers are identified and supported
- Escalate any patient experience problems to both the service and the Patient and Carer Experience Team

Staff who are Patient and Carer Champions meet monthly. Over the past year, 16 guest speakers attended these meetings to deliver signposting and awareness training representing the following topics:

- Age Cymru - HOPE Advocacy Project
- BCUHB Equality training
- Welsh Interpretation and Translation Service training
- Domestic Abuse Safety Unit

### 3.3.5 Interpretation and Translation Services

To support patients and staff with Interpretation and Translation Services the Health Board had launched a digital roll out of 24-hour access to interpreters. Digital equipment called 'Interpreter on Wheels' are placed in Emergency Departments, and Outpatients and Women's Services. During 2023-2024 training and awareness has been undertaken to promote this new service. This will enable more patients to access Interpretation and Translation services and minimise delays in accessing care.

### 3.4 Inclusive decision-making - linked to objectives

**This area of work aligns to:**

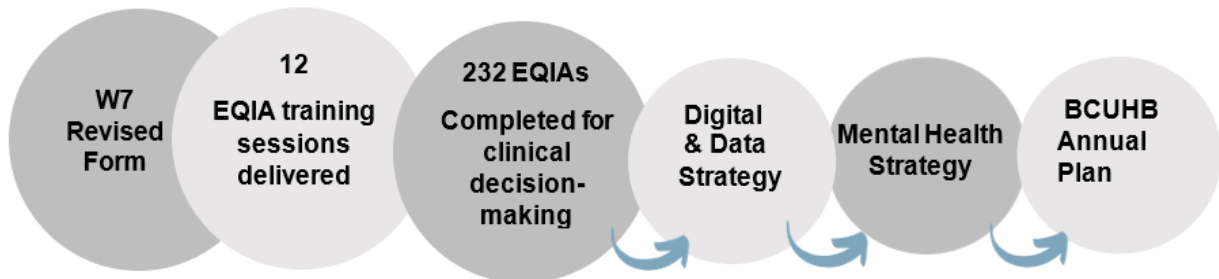
- Anti- Racist Wales Action Plan
- LGBTQ+ Wales Action Plan
- Code of Practice for Autism

**It also aligns with the strategic objectives 2,3,7 and 10 as well as Three Year plan objective 1**

#### 3.4.1 Equality Impact Assessments and Socio-economic Impact Assessments

During 2023/24 the previous process for Equality Impact Assessments (EQIA) and Socio-economic Impact Assessments (SEIA) were revised to be incorporated into one template for useability, with an increased focus on equality risk, alignment with the Socio-economic Duty and intersectionality. The Health Board values and current Strategic Equality Objectives were also included, so that those completing the forms had a better understanding of where Equality and Socio-economic factors fit into the bigger picture of service delivery and decision making.

As a result, further training was provided to support those completing assessments as well as the re-introduction of the EQIA Scrutiny group. The group includes internal and external membership and is an additional governance layer to spot check and review the quality and content of completed assessments. During 2023-24 this has included the Mental Health Strategy, Digital and Data Strategy and the Health Boards annual Plan.



The Assessments procedures are in place for ensuring we meet our statutory duties. Internal audit of board papers indicated that all strategies and major planning decisions had undergone EQIA. Procedures are in place for clinical policies to ensure that all clinical policies have EQIA completed. A range of training, advice and guidance is in place to support staff undertaking assessments.

### 3.4.2 Socio-economic Duty progress

The Health Board has completed the Welsh Government progress tracker to monitor compliance. The progress tracker indicates that there has been progress during year one and two in the following areas:

- Considering socio-economic disadvantage and reducing inequality in decision-making/policy development
- Tracking and reporting on impact
- Engagement, involvement and consultation

The duty is now included within governance procedures and SEIAs are completed for the majority of strategic decisions during the decision-making process rather than retrospectively.



### 3.5 Public Sector Partnerships – linked to objectives

**This area of work aligns to:**

- Anti- Racist Wales Action Plan
- LGBTQ+ Wales Action Plan
- Code of Practice for Autism

**It also aligns with the strategic objectives 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9 and 10 as well as Three Year plan objective 3**

#### 3.5.1 All Wales approaches – Equality Leadership Group

We have continued to work with the NHS Wales Equality Leadership Group to share good practice and identify areas of work where we can adopt a “Once for Wales” approach. We have contributed significantly through the Equality Leadership Group to national work including consultations and engagement sessions on the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan, the LGBTQ+ Action Plan, the Locked-Out report, the ‘Is Wales Fairer’ Report and the “3Ps” Planned Care Improvement Programme.

#### 3.5.2 North Wales Public Sector Equality Network- NWPSN

We have continued to work with our public sector partners which include North Wales Local Authorities, North Wales Police, North Wales Fire and Rescue Service, North Wales Police and Crime Commissioner, Eryri National Park Authorities, and North Wales Housing Association. During 2023-2024, the network has:

- Promoted and hosted events during Hate Crime week
- Worked in partnership to develop shared strategic Equality Objectives for the 2024-28 plans
- Focused on shared learning on Barrier to Employment

## 3.6 Focus on our workforce - linked to objectives

### This area of work aligns to:

- Anti- Racist Wales Action Plan
- LGBTQ+ Wales Action Plan
- Code of Practice for Autism

It also aligns with the strategic objectives 1,5,6,8 and 9 as well as Three Year plan objective 3

### 3.6.1 Staff Equality Networks

During 2023-24, we reflected on the effectiveness of the current Staff networks. In January 2024, we launched our fifth staff network, the ND Network, which focuses on supporting neurodivergent staff.

Over the past 18 months the Equality team had seen an increase in requests for support from both managers and staff members who were looking for advice and support.

The Network is an informal safe space to get peer-to-peer support, highlight issues, celebrate wins, share knowledge and ideas, make connections across the health board and work with the Equalities Team to have a positive impact on Neurodivergent equality, inclusion, diversity and belonging in BCUHB!

Since launching there are over 250 staff who have become members and got involved. The network is continuing to grow and have a schedule of activities planned over the next year, including network speaker events, development of resources and staff wellbeing activities.

Our staff networks have continued to provide peer support and act as collective voices for colleagues and groups that have been traditionally under-represented or who have experienced discrimination within the workplace. The networks have been an integral part of the engagement undertaken in developing the Strategic Equality Objectives and Action plan for the next four years as well as getting involved in awareness events throughout the year such as Pride, International Women's Day, Learning Disability Week and Black History Month.

### 3.6.2 Staff Wellbeing Support Service

The Staff Wellbeing Support Service (SWSS) provides a range of support to staff. This year the service has co-ordinated various projects including:

- Awareness campaigns to promote available resources
- Menopause support and resource service 'Menopause Matters'
- Cost of Living Support Group – see section 10 for further information



- Speak Out Safely
- Guidance for Staff in Crisis
- Trauma Risk Management Service

We monitor the take up of the SWSS by protected characteristic group to identify any perceived or actual barriers to access or differential outcomes.

### 3.6.3 Speak Out Safely

Codi Llais Yn Ddiogel - Speak Out Safely is BCUHB's approach to supporting staff to raise concerns when going through formal routes to raise their concern may not be an option for the staff member concerned. The approach offers an independent and anonymous web-based platform called 'Work in Confidence', which supports anonymous two-way conversation between staff and one of the Speak Out Safely Team. This can be in person, virtually, by phone or by e-mail. Speak Out Safely has been introduced to ensure that all staff, students, contractors and volunteers working within the Health Board have opportunities to have their concerns heard and taken seriously. During this year there have been an increase in the team providing support, aiming to be more representative and visible for staff to feel confident to contact and get support.



### 3.6.4 Supporting our International Workers

A project to develop a support pack, which began last year in collaboration with the International Nursing Practice Development Management Team (East), the Corporate Equality Team, and the BCUnity Ethnic Minority and Overseas staff network, has been shared wider in the NHS in Wales and helped develop the content of an All-Wales App being developed.

The document and future finalised app will help colleagues settle well in Wales as they relocate to join our own or other Health Boards. The information pack is designed to assist colleagues in their transition to working in the United Kingdom.

The welcome pack provides information on the many questions international colleagues may have prior to travelling, and includes information on a broad range of areas, from banking and grocery shopping to policing and education and steps to follow upon arrival in the UK, including useful information and tips compiled by recently arrived colleagues. We aim to support our international colleagues as much as possible to prepare for their time in north Wales and in the Health Board.

### 3.6.5 Focus on Step into Work and Supporting Employment Programmes

**This area of work aligns to:**

- Anti- Racist Wales Action Plan
- LGBTQ+ Wales Action Plan
- Code of Practice for Autism

**It also aligns with the strategic objectives 1,2,6,7,8 and 10 as well as Three Year plan objective 5**

Step into work is one of the employment programmes that includes Project SEARCH as well as others, that BCUHB is proud to be involved in, the Step into Work Adult Volunteer Work Placement Programme provides opportunities for a range of people with barriers to recruitment in line with the Welsh Government BCUHB targets and the tackling poverty agenda and helps participants develop their confidence by participating in activities and supports them to access training, qualifications and work experience or volunteering. Placements will be for groups including Workless Households, Long Term Unemployed (LIFT), Communities First Projects, Agoriad, Scope, North Wales Regional Equalities Network (NWREN), Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEETS), Higher Education Students (HE), Further Education (FE) Students, evacuees, those on benefits and In Work Poverty.

To date over 440 job opportunities have been secured from our programmes including permanent, fixed term, apprentices and bank.

Participants are supported by peer mentors, who draw on their own experiences to help others. Peer mentors work with the participants on activities to help overcome barriers to education, training or employment. Participants will receive support in areas such as developing interpersonal skills, budgeting, accessing housing, medical care and financial support.

#### **Central IHC Facilities department – promoting equality and diversity**

The Facilities department has exhibited unparalleled dedication to fostering an environment where everyone feels valued, respected and empowered, resulting in transformative impacts across various spheres.

Successfully supporting individuals from the Step into Work Programmes with learning disabilities and or neurodiversity through Project SEARCH, other individuals with barriers to recruitment, such as those furthest from the labour market, Black and Minority Ethnic groups, Refugees, long-term unemployment, Veterans and people experiencing in-work poverty. The department proudly now has employees from the programmes incorporating permanent bank staff and the first in North Wales Supported Shared Apprenticeship Porter (SSA). SSA to support individuals who cannot partake in a mainstream apprenticeship because of disadvantages.

The Facilities team is committed to promoting personal outcomes by taking time to mentor, buddy and train. Each team member empowers individuals to lead fulfilling lives and achieve their goals, regardless of their circumstances or background, upholding the principles outlined in the Equality Act 2010. The support provided is life-changing and



beyond their everyday working daily tasks, and staff should be recognised on a broader scale for their effort and dedication.

Through our unwavering dedication to diversity and inclusion, the Facilities Department has significantly enhanced the health and well-being of its diverse workforce population. Embracing cultural difference and providing tailored support, ensures equitable access to work for all, regardless of background or identity. This approach has improved health outcomes and fostered trust and confidence among marginalised communities, leading to increased engagement with healthcare services.

The Facilities Department positively influences communities across North Wales, actively engaging with local stakeholders, implementing culturally sensitive outreach programmes, the team has promoted health literacy, reduced disparities and strengthened community resilience. Through these initiatives focused on removing barriers to recruitment we have become a trusted partner in fostering vibrant and thriving communities.

Recognising the vital role of families in promoting health and wellbeing, the Facilities Department has implemented inclusive practices that support families. Feedback from families is powerful and insightful. Prioritising person centred support, providing resources for caregivers the service ensure that families feel supported and empowered throughout the journey, one quoted:

*‘ I cannot thank you for everything you have done and all the support, you have changed our lives. A never came out of his room and we were unable to leave him alone, now he speaks about his day, goes out into the community and we have even bought a business in St Martins. This is something we never thought possible’.*

This improves patient outcomes and fosters a sense of belonging and solidarity among families from diverse backgrounds. Demonstrating a steadfast dedication to investing in our staff, future employees and community partnerships in line with the ‘Healthier Wales Plan’ Socio-Economic Duty and BCU values.

## Project Search

Project SEARCH is a 12-month internship for young education leavers with learning disabilities or autism, aimed at developing the skills to support them into employment. The initiative is a four-way partnership between Coleg Llandrillo, BCUHB, Agoriad supported employment agency and Project SEARCH.

Glan Clwyd is the host providing a fully immersive experience of working in a hospital environment. Coleg Llandrillo’s Independent Living Skills department provides the education aspect and looks after student welfare, while Agoriad provides job coaching, teaching learners the skills needed for particular roles and supporting them while in those roles.



The learners praised the scheme in a YouTube video which you can [watch here](#).

## A Step Into Management (ASIM) –

A Step Into Management is part of BCUHB's in house management development programme for those that are currently in supervisory, team leader and manager roles as well as those that aspire to be. In the period 2023-2024, 119 members of staff successfully completing their leadership and management journey.



### 3.7 Focus on increased understanding and awareness - linked to objectives

**This area of work aligns to:**

- Anti- Racist Wales Action Plan
- LGBTQ+ Wales Action Plan
- Code of Practice for Autism

**It also aligns with the strategic objectives 2,6,7 and 10 as well as Three Year plan objective 3**

During the year, we have increased our promotional work both externally and internally to continue to build understanding of equality and inclusion and our role in reducing inequality. The promotion of key events has brought many people together to share good practice and insights into lived experience for a range of equality campaigns. These have been promoted through a network of over 80 Equality Champions across all areas of the Health Board. Here are some examples of the work undertaken during this period.

#### 3.7.1 NHS Wales Equality Week

Equality Week 15<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> May 2023 was promoted across all NHS staff in Wales. The week was coordinated by the Chair of the All Wales NHS Equality Leadership Group with support from NHS organisations in Wales. BSL interpretation was provided for all of these sessions. Lunchtime learning sessions took place for:

- How to better support our international staff
- The Challenges of engaging with the unengaged
- Mental Health support in the Showman and wider Roma, Gypsy Traveller community
- Inequality in health for those in the justice service

- Health Inequalities of the impact of waiting lists

Over 1500 staff across NHS Wales attended during the lunchtime sessions, with the sessions recorded and shared on the Health Boards intranet pages for further dissemination.

### 3.7.2 Pride Events

Over the past few years, the number of Pride events across Wales and in North Wales has grown. During 2023-2024, the Equality team joined our sexual health, public health, and engagement colleagues to attend three Pride events across North Wales and support a local school event.

We spoke to members of the public to raise awareness of the Sexual Health Service and the work of the Equality Team, as well as encouraging people to come forward and share their experiences of the healthcare system with us to inform our forthcoming action plans and Strategic Equality Plan and LGBTQ+ Actions.



### 3.7.3 Monthly Equality Children's Book Competition

Our monthly Equality Children's Book Competitions was launched in early 2023 to promote equality and inclusion across a range of topics. Each book links to a theme such as Disability History Month, South Asian Heritage Month, International Women's Day and Autism Acceptance. The competitions promote an understanding of equality issues and inclusive healthcare.

Aimed at health board staff, since the launch, over 400 staff have registered into the competitions. These are promoted bi-lingually and Welsh language versions are included.

## June- Staff Book Competition

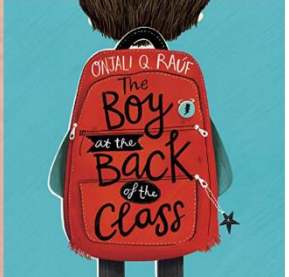
### The Boy at the Back of the Class


by Onjali Q. Raufy

The Boy at the Back of the Class is a child's perspective on the refugee crisis, highlighting the importance of friendship and kindness in a world that doesn't always make sense.

There used to be an empty chair at the back of my class, but now a new boy called Ahmet is sitting in it.

Closing date - 30th June





Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol  
Betsi Cadwaladr  
University Health Board

TO ENTER: EMAIL  
[BCU.Equality@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:BCU.Equality@wales.nhs.uk)

### 3.7.4 Equality Staff Competitions

In addition to the children’s books competition the equality team offered further opportunities for staff to win equality themed competitions and find out about exciting diverse events happening across North Wales.



### 3.7.5 Menopause and Menstrual Health

Previously a Menopause Matters group had been established to identify support needed for all staff that may be affected by the peri-menopause, menopause and post-menopause, including andropause sometimes referred to as the male menopause.

Occupation Health has been working closely with the Equality team to build on the Menopause Awareness sessions and Menopause Champions to develop resources for staff. The first BCUHB Staff Menopause Café was held in June 2023 with over 300 staff taking part in the first 6 months. The sessions are held monthly online, with face-to-face sessions offered at East, West and Central areas on a rolling schedule.



The Equality team have also been supporting awareness campaigns around menstrual health, with information available in the Equality Briefings and at stalls at our hospitals.

### 3.7.6 Ramadan Support and Iftar events

In March 2023, for the first time the Health Board welcomed staff to attend 3 Iftar events, supported by the Equality team and Chaplaincy service. In addition to the Quran Cube blue tooth speakers introduced earlier in the year, this is part of a suite of resources and celebrations open to all staff, Muslim and non-Muslim to gain a better understanding of the faith and impact of Ramadan on both staff and patients and how we can better support them.



### 3.7.7 Mental Health Awareness Week

Staff across the Health Board wore green this week to raise awareness of the impact of anxiety on people's mental health. The Mental Health Foundation made anxiety the theme of Mental Health Awareness Week this year, highlighting that nearly three-quarters of the population (73%) had felt anxious at least sometimes in the previous two weeks, with one in five people (20%) anxious most or all of the time. BCUHB shared the video below on social media to highlight the importance of acknowledging the impact of anxiety, the importance of mental health, the prevalence of mental health problems and some of the support available through BCUHB. To see the video, click here: [Mental Health Awareness Week 2023](#)



### 3.7.8 Diwali Event

In 2023 the Health Board was able to share with staff two Diwali events happening across North Wales. Working in partnership with Bangor India Friends Association (BIFA) and providing 40 free spaces for their Diwali celebration. The Chair Dyfed Edwards took part in the lamp lighting ceremony at the start of the event and enjoyed the community meal with over 200 members of the community attending. The event raised £1000 that was donated to Awyr Las for equality initiatives.

### 3.7.9 Busy Bags

One of the projects to benefit from the funding raised at the Diwali event was the commissioning of Busy Bags. The idea for this initiative came from an Emergency Department Staff Nurse, Emma Eccles, who recognised there was a need to create resources to help support autistic children visiting the hospital.

Over time, Emma noticed that autistic children were struggling with the environment of an Emergency Department, bright lights, loud noises and different smells make the area unsettling for those with autism.



Busy Bags started off being small bags with items such as fidget spinners in, until she realised more was needed. Emma worked with the Equality Team to secure £500 of funding from Awyr Las: The North Wales NHS Charity which then went onto purchase 100 Busy Bags from Autistic UK to support children across the whole of BCUHB.

The Busy Bags contain a light wand, bubble bracelet, activity book, notepad, squeeze toy, ear plugs, colouring pages and crayons, along with a bilingual My Health Passport document so medical staff are aware of a child's individual needs and how to support them.

Talking about the project, Emma said: "I noticed that when an autistic child visited the Emergency Department, they were finding the environment unsettling. There are so many bright lights and different sounds and smells, the department can be really overwhelming."

"I decided to try and help these children and offered fidget spinners to them, until I spoke with Ceri in the Equality Team who helped me secure some funding from Awyr Las. The Busy Bags will make such a huge difference to children coming into the department."

The 100 bags have been distributed between the Emergency Departments at the three acute hospitals.

### 3.7.10 Focus on HIV/AIDS Strategy

One of the priority actions identified in the Welsh Government's LGBTQ+ Action plan is the development of a HIV Action Plan for Wales. This was published in March 2023. In the action plan it looks to support Fast Track Health Boards to be established. On the 6<sup>th</sup> December representatives from the Equality Team, Sexual Health and Public Health team came together with Local Government, Fast Track Wales and the President of Fast Track Europe to sign the Paris Declaration on Fast Track Cities. This means that Fast Track North Wales is official and will be working with the health board and communities to raise awareness of treatments and support for HIV/AIDS, work to remove stigma and meet the Fast Track Europe and Welsh Government goals to see no new cases of HIV/AIDS by 2030.



### 3.7.11 World AIDS Day and Launch of Community Quilt Session

As part of the work of the strategy on the 1<sup>st</sup> December 2023, the Health Board marked World AIDS Day and launched its community quilt project. Whereby over the next 12 months it will hold community quilting sessions inviting staff, patients, community groups and the wider public to join the sessions to design and make a quilting square that will form part of three quilts that will be put on display at the sexual health clinics across North Wales, supported by an exhibition in 2025 in libraries across North Wales to continue to share the awareness messages of support and prevention to meet the goal of zero new transmissions by 2030.





### 3.7.12 Other events promoted during 2023-2024

- Black History Month
- International Women's Day & International Men's Day
- Launched Here and Proud – LGBTQ+ awareness
- Hate Crime Week
- International Nurses Day
- Carers Rights Week and Social Model of Disability sessions
- Cynnig Cymraeg Week
- South Asian Heritage month
- Learning Disability Week
- Trans Day of remembrance vigil
- Refugee Week
- Race Equality Week
- LGBTQ+ History Month
- Sensory Loss Awareness Month
- Disability Pride

This is just a snapshot and not an exhaustive list.

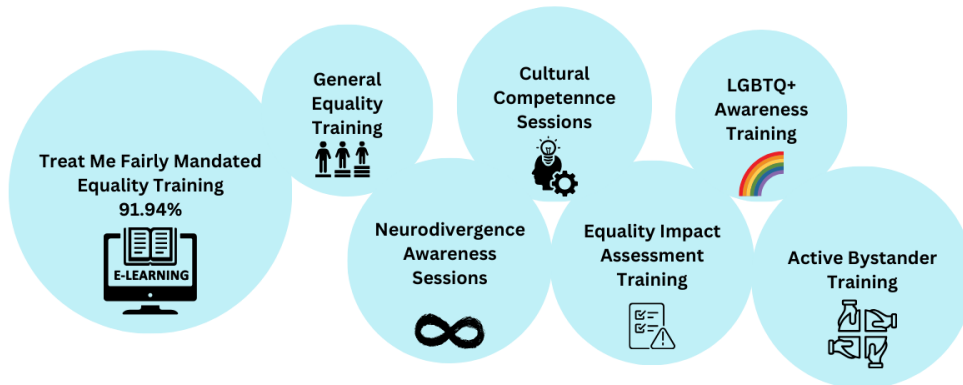
### 3.8 Focus on training and development – linked to objectives

#### **This area of work aligns to:**

- Anti- Racist Wales Action Plan
- LGBTQ+ Wales Action Plan
- Code of Practice for Autism

**It also aligns with the strategic objectives 1,2,3,5,8,9 and 10 as well as Three Year plan objective 5**





### 3.8.1 Treat Me Fairly Mandatory Training

All staff are required to undertake mandated Equality Training – called Treat Me Fairly. At the end of March 2024, our compliance rate across the Health Board was 91.94%.

### 3.8.2 General Equality Training

General Equality Training has been delivered to Patient and Carer Champions as well as across GP practices on request. External training events are also promoted. During 2023/24 Equality training was provided to 1<sup>st</sup> year nurses at Bangor and Wrexham University.

### 3.8.3 Cultural Competence Training

Diverse Cymru has delivered Cultural Competency training resulting in greater awareness of culturally sensitive care and greater recognition of the diversity across Wales and beyond. This training has been promoted as part of the Anti-racist Action Plan and offered directly to departments and service areas as part of their Cultural Competence Certification Scheme.

### 3.8.4 LGBTQ+ Training

As part of our commitment to the Welsh Governments LGBTQ+ Action Plan we have developed an inhouse LGBTQ+ training support which we have delivered to departments and divisions across the health board. As part of this work, we have also supported the Sexual Health Team and Wales Gender Services to deliver Trans Inclusive Sexual Health Care as well as develop resources in partnership with Unique and other North Wales based LGBTQ+ organisations such as our 'It's Just Good Care' guide, 'Gender Inclusive Language Toolkit'.

### 3.8.5 Neurodivergence Awareness Sessions

This year we have also developed a session on Neurodivergence, to gain a better understanding of the support needs and resources that are already available to support Neurodivergent staff, patients and their families.

### 3.8.6 Equality Impact Assessment and Socio-economic Impact Assessment

## Training

There has been a range of face to face and online equality related training delivered during the year 2023-2024. Training sessions on Equality Impact and Socio-economic Assessments have carried out with Public Health, Mental Health and Learning Disability team, Transformation and Planning Team, the Student Nurse Forum and the COVID-19 Vaccination Team.

### 3.8.7 Case study: Embedding Cultural Competence

The Therapeutic Support Service has worked hard to undertake Cultural Competence Accreditation through the Diverse Cymru scheme. This ongoing work has been beneficial to patients, families, and staff.

They have fully committed to the principles of cultural competence. Posters that reflect the diverse range of languages spoken in our community are now displayed around the premises. Their new “diversity board” in the staffroom is regularly updated – anyone can pin any news or articles that reflect the diversity of our community.

There are visual examples of the work of the department in every room which reflects the diversity of our community. This includes posters, room signs and our diversity board within our staff room.

In place from November 2023, they have installed a world map with photographs and artwork from our various cultural events which decorates our environments and enhances the feeling of diversity and inclusion within the department.



The department have been building up a library of resources within our environments which reflect the diversity of our community such as world cookbooks, multi faith resources, and items such as lights for Diwali celebrations.

They have also held discussions in clinical supervision with other professionals including Psychology and Behaviour Analysts) regarding new research and a scoping review looking at ethnic disparities in the use of restrictive practices in adult mental health inpatient settings.

## 3.9 Focus on Public Health - linked to objectives

### This area of work aligns to:

- Anti- Racist Wales Action Plan
- LGBTQ+ Wales Action Plan
- Code of Practice for Autism

It also aligns with the strategic objectives 2,3,6,7,8,9 and 10 as well as Three Year plan [objective 4](#)

Reducing health inequality is at the heart of our Public Health work. Our Public Health Team plays an active role in the Equality and Human Rights Strategic Forum, the delivery

of the Strategic Equality Plan Implementation Plan and the development and delivery of our Anti-racist Action Plan.

### 3.9.1 Knowing Our Patch

The Public Health Team in partnership with the Equality Team have supported the production of our “Knowing Our Patch” document. This document presents collated demographic information of Protected Characteristics and socio-economic circumstances, and is designed to support inclusive service design and delivery.

### 3.9.2 Well North Wales

The Health Board’s health inequalities programme is Well North Wales, which is a regional programme focusing on working with the most disadvantaged populations in North Wales. More recently, the Well North Wales programme has been supplemented by the development of the Inverse Care Law programme and the Community Support Hubs programme.

Well North Wales has evolved to focus on supporting four key themes:

- **Infrastructure:**  
Develop health and Wellbeing hubs in Penygroes and Bangor. These hubs will foster new ways of working and enable prevention activities alongside more traditional interventions. By involving the voluntary and community sector and focusing on social prescribing to address non-clinical issues, health outcomes for people living in poverty can be improved.
- **Food poverty:**  
Active support for a network of initiatives across the region, ensuring that some of the most disadvantaged populations have:
  - Accessed affordable, nutritious food
  - Enhanced their cooking skills
  - Made healthier lifestyle choices.
- **Homelessness and vulnerable groups:**  
Working with local authorities and the housing sector to promote wellbeing services.
- **Social prescribing:**  
Enabling individuals to have access to social prescribing programmes that will allow them to participate in activities that help improve their health and well-being.

### 3.10 Focus on support for Armed Forces community – Linked to objectives

**This area of work aligns to:**

- LGBTQ+ Wales Action Plan

**It also aligns with the strategic objectives 3,7, and 8 as well as Three Year plan objective 3**

We have implemented the new Armed Forces Act 2021 requirements to enshrine the Armed Forces Covenant. Further information is available in Appendix B of the Armed

Forces Act. During 2023-2024, this work has included:

- Further developing the Veterans' staff network
- Further developing the Armed Forces Community Intranet site including information for Reservists
- Improved the Health Boards' external website related to support available to the Armed Forces community members for both staff and patients
- Promoting the Poppy veteran identification programme
- The Poppy programme is set to be implemented across all acute admission areas across the Health Board
- Remembrance Services held 10th November 2023 across the three main sites
- Support the Fighting with Pride Military Charity and campaigns

### 3.11 Focus on Spiritual Care - linked to objectives

**This area of work aligns to:**

- Anti- Racist Wales Action Plan
- LGBTQ+ Wales Action Plan

**It also aligns with the strategic objectives 2,3,5,6,7,8,9 and 10 as well as Three Year plan objective 3**

All our staff are expected to provide a level of spiritual support appropriate for their role and are supported by our Chaplaincy Service, which represents faith communities across North Wales.

#### 3.11.1 Chaplaincy support

Our support to patients, carers, families and staff includes:

- A listening ear and pastoral care in difficult times – including 24-hour urgent pastoral care
- Religious care
- Contact with different faith communities
- Supporting last rites for patients
- Support at times of bereavement
- Resources – multi-faith trolleys and access to chapels

#### 3.11.2 Qu'ran cubes

To mark the end of Ramadan we received a donation of Qur'an Cubes, which are small Bluetooth speakers, which recite the verses of the Qu'ran in 24 different languages. These were kindly donated by the charity Quran for Hospitals and are available for both patients and staff.

### 3.11.3 Multi-faith celebrations

During 2023-2024, we have acknowledged a wide range of faiths and celebrations which were included within our Equality@BCU social media posts.

Examples of faith calendar dates include Ramadan, Eid, Passover, Easter Blessing, Diwali event in Bangor, Mosque open day – at Wrexham Islamic Cultural Centre, and Happy Vaisakhi.



The Equality Team is also a member of the North Wales Interfaith Network which mean quarterly online and face to face to share a deeper understanding of faith and non-faith and what brings us together.

### 3.12 Focus on Pledges and Charters - linked to Objectives

**This area of work aligns to:**

- Anti- Racist Wales Action Plan
- LGBTQ+ Wales Action Plan
- Code of Practice for Autism

**It also aligns with the strategic objectives 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9 and 10 as well as Three Year plan objective 2**

These are our pledges, charters and accredited schemes for 2023-2024. These schemes enable us to adopt best practice and share a wide range of resources across other organisations.

- Disability Confident
- Hate Crime Charter
- Stonewall Diversity Champion: We renewed our membership as a diversity champion for 2023-2024
- Zero Racism Wales: The health board pledged to Zero Racism – 2022
- Dementia Friendly: Dementia friendly services since 2019
- Breastfeeding Friendly: Ongoing membership to the Breastfeeding Welcome scheme.
- Children's Charter

## Section 4: Priorities for the Year Ahead 2025/26

### 4.1 How did we develop our Strategic Equality Objectives for 2024 – 2028?

The Equality Objectives for 2024-2028 have been co-designed, recognising that focusing on health alone will not meet the diverse needs of our population. Taking a whole system approach and working in partnership with a range of people and organisations across the public, private and third sectors is the most effective and inclusive way to understand our population's experiences, views and needs, and how we can appropriately respond to them. In June 2023, the Health Board launched a public survey, inviting public sector organisations, businesses, community groups, patients, carers and the broader population of North Wales to complete. This was available online, and several face-to-face engagement sessions occurred across North Wales.

The Equality team attended community group meetings and events to meet as many members of different communities across North Wales as possible. The results of the engagement work were analysed by the Equality Team and an initial 17 themes emerged. From these, six overarching objectives were identified. These give the framework for the development of the action plan. This information alongside who took part can be found in Appendix 3. Additional engagement work has been undertaken as part of the Anti-racist Action Plan and the LGBTQ+ Action plan. Further engagement was undertaken by North Wales Public Sector Equality Network that has led to the development of Shared Actions. The can all be found in our published SEP. [BCUHB Strategic Equality Objectives and Action Plan 2024-2028](#)

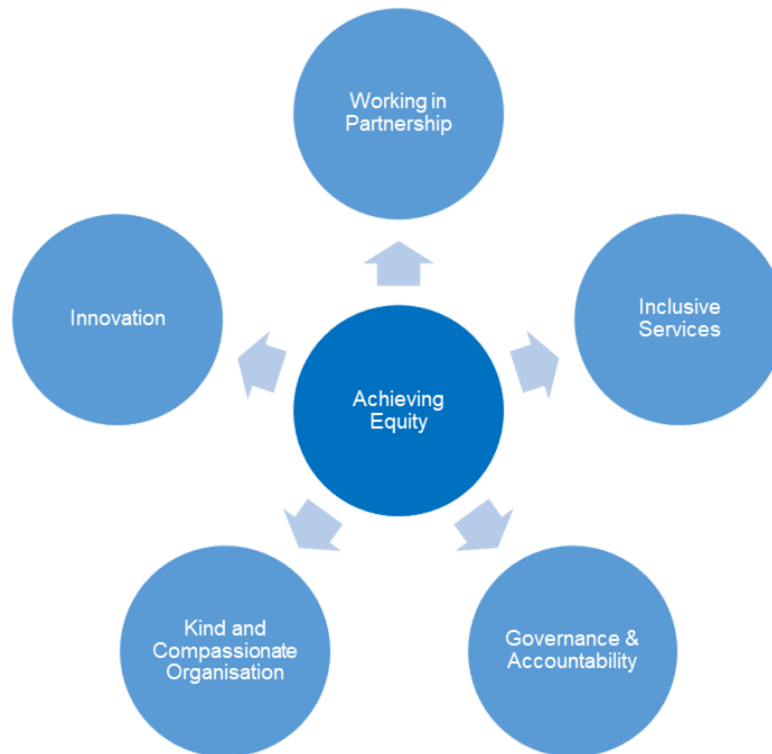
We undertook extensive analysis of our strategic drivers, legislative requirements and local intelligence to ensure these are reflected in the plan while also aligned to the Integrated Medium-Term Plan.

A total of 28 actions have been identified that will be the focus of the first year of the action plan. Some of these actions such as the national plans will continue for the timeline of the action plan, while other have a more focused timeline.

The progress on the action plan will be reported quarterly to the Equality and Human Rights Strategic Forum within the Health Board, as well as to People and Culture Committee, the Board and Bi-annually to Welsh Government. The annual report will continue to be published and provide details of progress against the 28 actions identified as well as future actions.



## Our Strategic Equality Objectives for 2024-20



**Objective A: Achieving equity by working in partnership – ‘nothing about you without you’**

**Objective B: Achieving equity by providing high quality inclusive services**

**Objective C: Achieving equity through Governance and Accountability**

**Objective D: Achieving equity by being a kind and compassionate organisation**

**Objective E: Achieving equity by innovation**

## Section 5: Conclusion

This Equality Annual Report highlights some areas of key work that we have undertaken across teams and individuals and by working in partnership to advance equality, promote human rights and tackle health inequalities.

The publication of the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan and the LGBTQ+ Action Plan for Wales has required us as a Health Board to address discrimination and provide equitable access to our services. These plans involve actively identifying and changing the policies, behaviours, and beliefs that perpetuate discrimination and inequality. As a result, these have been included as priorities in the new Strategic Equality Objectives and Action Plan. This will ensure that the actions are embedded in services and Health Board plans.

Our People Strategy drives a range of actions to improve recruitment, retention, and development opportunities for staff. We have significantly improved monitoring data and aligning this work with our Equality Strategy. We strive to be an employer of choice, one that is free from discrimination, harassment, and victimisation and led by compassionate leadership.

In February 2023, our Health Board was placed into Special Measures. We recognise that significant progress needs to be made in our organisation's leadership and culture, and equality and inclusion alongside compassionate leadership will be at the heart of these improvements. As a result of Special Measures, we have seen a focus on the organisation's Culture and Values, with dedicated plans to develop a more inclusive and supportive organisation. This should be better reflected in the following annual report as work in these areas progresses.

The Equality Impact Assessment and Socio-economic Impact Assessment procedures are embedded in all key changes to our services, Health Board plans, policy reviews, and strategies to ensure inclusive decision-making.

The appointment of an Executive Champion for Equality has been a positive step towards having direct executive participation in our equality agenda. More is to be done, but this is a start to get greater accountability for key areas such as the Welsh Government Anti-racist Plan and LGBTQ+ Action Plan.

External Equality Stakeholders have been fundamental in the progress made on our Strategic Equality Plan and in holding us accountable. Their role has helped us deliver a range of guidance based on lived experience insight. We thank our Stakeholders for their time, supportive challenge, and ongoing scrutiny of how we demonstrate our commitment to equality and human rights. Our external equality stakeholders will have a stronger representative voice in the coming years.

Examples of our day-to-day activities within the Health Board are enriched by embedding an ethos of inclusion and diversity. The example of embedding cultural competence in the work of our Therapeutic Support Service highlights the benefits and impacts of participation and acknowledgement of diversity.

Our engagement team's work highlights our partnerships with various organisations and communities across North Wales. Engagement work reaches out to different communities



to ensure that voices from all communities can be heard about the decisions that affect them.

All people across North Wales have the right to accessible health care. We acknowledge that occasionally, patients or carers may not always have a positive experience accessing and receiving care. Our Patient and Carer team works hard to ensure that we constantly learn from patient and carer feedback and that we make it as easy as possible for our service users, their carers, and their families to share their views with us.

Changes in how people access translation and interpretation services have improved during 2023-2024, and digital access now provides timely access for staff to arrange an interpreter. Face-to-face interpretation remains an option for patients where required.

As we begin our new 4-year Strategic Equality Plan, we have much work to do to ensure people across North Wales and our staff are welcomed into inclusive and accessible services that meet their needs. We are committed to our new 4-year Strategic Equality Plan 2024-2028, which will continue to be delivered in partnership with our equality stakeholders to represent views across North Wales.

## Acknowledgements

**We are always grateful for all the support that we receive from all of our stakeholders who represent a diverse and inclusive range of organisations and people, including:**

Autistic UK

North Wales Independent Advocacy Service

Unique Transgender Network

Community Health Council (now Llais)

North Wales Regional Equality Network

Wheelieability

Arfon Access Group

FDF Centre for Independent Living

Fair Treatment for Women in Wales

Centre for Sign Sight Sound

Victim Support

EYST

BAWSO

Race Council Cymru

Race Equality First

North Wales Africa Society Disability Wales

Bangor Indian Friends Association

North Wales Ethnic Multicultural Association

**We would also like to acknowledge the support of every member of our staff networks:** Celtic Pride, BCUnity and International Staff network, RespectAbility, The Gender Equality Network, ND Network and Veterans Staff Network.

**We would also like to acknowledge the support of each of our Equality Champions.**

**Finally thank you to all those staff, of whom there are too many to mention, who have made a positive contribution to advancing Equality and Human Rights this year.**

## **Appendices**

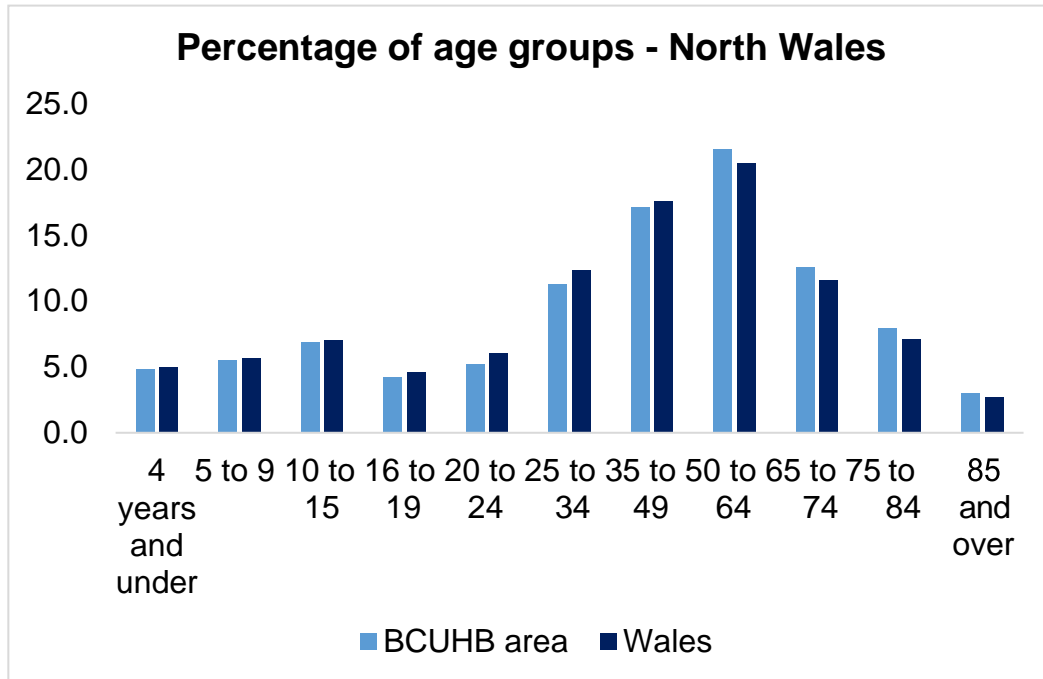
**Appendix A: Population information**

**Appendix B: Equality legislation and Strategic Context**

**Appendix C: BCUHB Vision, Values and Purpose**

## Appendix A: Population information

A snap shot about North Wales: Source: Nomis 2022



Across North Wales, Flintshire has the largest population (156,100) followed by Wrexham (135,957). Anglesey has the smallest population at 70,043.

Flintshire and Wrexham also have a younger population with 19% of the population aged 15 years and under, and Anglesey and Conwy have an older population with 26% and 28% respectively aged 65 and over. Conwy also has the greatest percentage of people aged 85 and over at 4% of the population.

Cymraeg

Welsh speakers:

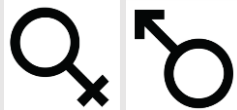
North Wales is home to more Welsh-language speakers than elsewhere in Wales. The highest percentages of people (across Wales) aged three years or older able to speak Welsh were in North-West Wales, with 64.4% in Gwynedd, and 55.8% in Anglesey.

**A snapshot of our demographics**

**Sex / Gender**

Male 48.9%

Female 50.1%



**Religion**

Christian –	49.8%
Muslim -	0.8%
Hindu -	0.2%
Sikh -	0% - 248
Jewish -	0% - 311
Buddhist -	0.3%
Other -	0.5%
No religion -	47.1%



**Sexual Orientation**

Gay or Lesbian	1.3%
Bisexual	1.0%
Pansexual	0.1%
Asexual	0% (269)
Queer	0% (88)
Other	0% (59)
No answer	8.1%
Heterosexual	89.4%



**Gender identity**

Trans	- 703 people
Non Binary	- 254 people
Not answered	- 39,253 people



Caution should be taken with LGBTQ+ census data as this is considered as significantly under estimated.



## Disability / long term conditions and impairments

72,235 people  
10.5% as defined under the Equality Act  
**Carers** 10.3%  
>19 hours of care per week



## Ethnicity

White – 96.8% compared to Wales 93.8%

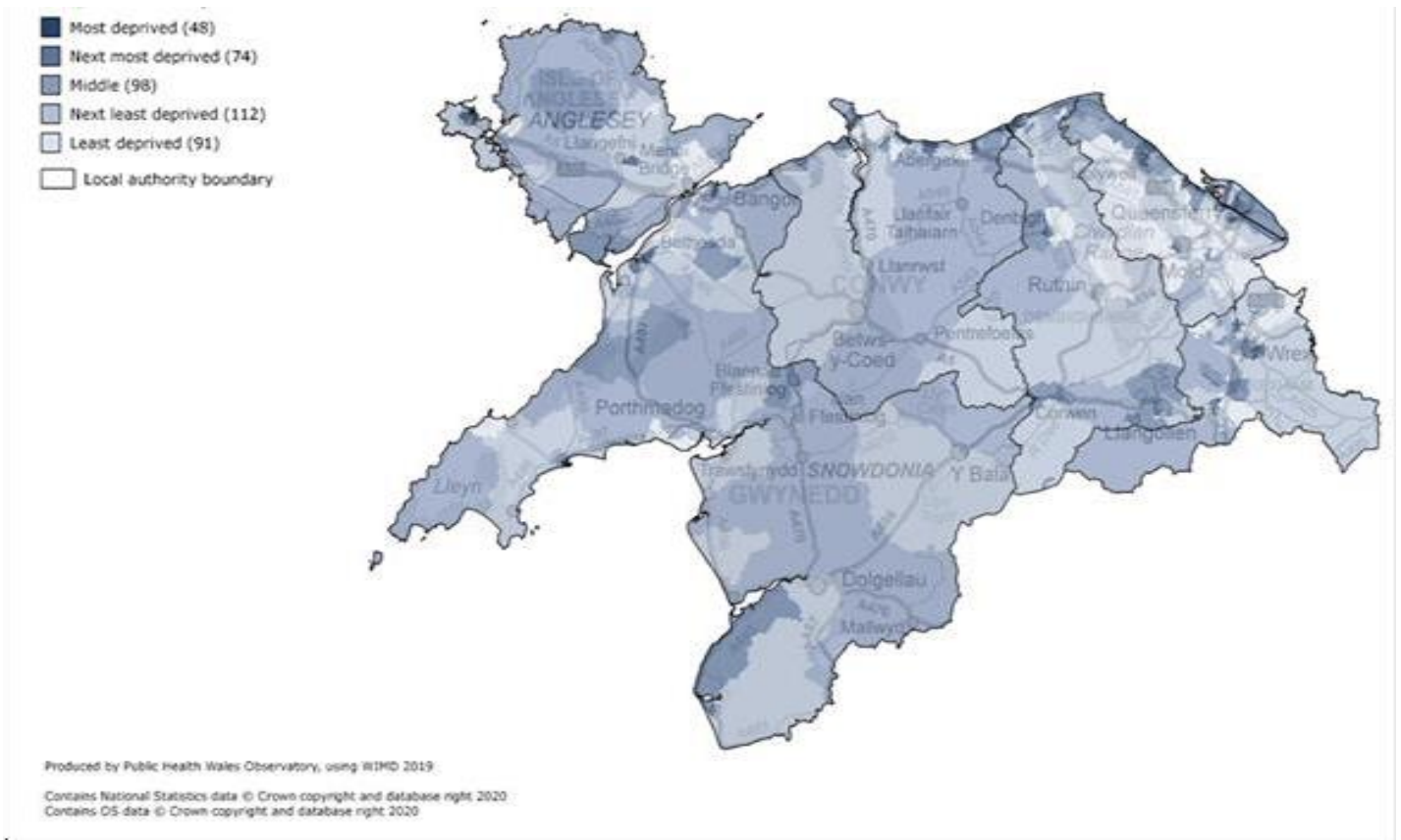
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh – 1.4% compared to Wales 2.9%

Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African – 0.3% compared to Wales 0.9%

Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups – 1.1% compared to Wales 1.6%

Other ethnic group – 0.4% compared to Wales 0.9%

### Map showing Lower Super Output Areas by fifths of deprivation, Overall Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation, North Wales, 2019<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Source: [WIMD - Explore \(gov.wales\)](https://www.gov.wales/wimd-explorer)

## Appendix B: Equality Legislation and Strategic Context

### The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 protects people and groups from unfavourable treatment and makes it unlawful to discriminate, harass or victimise people because of a reason related to their protected characteristic.

### The Public Sector Equality Duty

Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 requires us to demonstrate compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), which places a statutory duty on the Health Board to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not
- Foster good relations between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not

Our Health Board also has a specific duty under the PSED to undertake the following actions:

- Publish information to demonstrate compliance with the Equality Duties, at least annually
- Set equality objectives, at least every 4 years



## **The Socio-economic Duty**

The Socio-economic Duty was introduced by the Welsh Government on 31st March 2021, implementing a previously dormant section of the Equality Act (2010). Its aim is to deliver better outcomes for those who experience socio-economic disadvantage. It further enhances current equality legislation and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. The Socio-economic Duty places a requirement on the Health Board that when taking strategic decisions, the Health Board has due regard for the need to reduce inequalities of outcome that result from socio-economic disadvantage.

## **The Human Rights Act 1998**

The Human Rights Act 1998 sets out universal standards to ensure that a person's basic needs are recognised and met. Public Bodies have a mandated duty to ensure they have arrangements in place to comply with the Human Rights Act 1998. It is unlawful for a healthcare organisation to act in any way that is incompatible with the Human Rights Act 1998. In practice, this means we must treat individuals with Fairness, Respect, Equality, Dignity and Autonomy. These are known as the FREDA principles.

## **All Wales Standard for Accessible Communication**

An All Wales Standard for Accessible Communication and Information for People with Sensory Loss produced by Welsh Government (2013) sets out the level of service people with sensory loss should expect to be met when they access health care. These standards apply to adults, young people and children.

## **Armed Forces Act 2021**

The covenant aims to prevent service personnel and veterans and their families being disadvantaged when accessing public services. This introduced a statutory duty to have "due regard" to the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant.

## **Welsh Government - Anti-racist Wales Action Plan**

In June 2022, the Welsh Government published the "[Anti-racist Wales Action Plan](#)". The Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan places a responsibility on public bodies to report demonstrable progress in areas detailed in specific actions. Health is one of the component parts of the plan, and BCUHB will be undertaking the actions contained within the five Health priority action areas:

1. Leadership
2. Workforce.
3. Data.
4. Access to services.
5. Health Inequalities.

## Welsh Government – LGBTQ+ Action Plan

On the 7<sup>th</sup> February 2023, the Welsh Government published the LGBTQ+ Action Plan. The Welsh Government has said that it “wants to make Wales the most LGBTQ+ friendly nation in Europe” with the stated aim “to show our clear commitment to respecting, protecting, and fulfilling the human rights of all LGBTQ+ people in Wales”. Health is one of the component parts of the plan.

The Welsh Government wants to make Wales the most LGBTQ+ friendly nation in Europe. It is an ambitious goal, but we believe we can support all LGBTQ+ people in Wales to live their fullest life: to be healthy, to be happy, and to feel safe. This LGBTQ+ Action Plan for Wales has been established to help coordinate action by the Welsh Government and other agencies. The plan sets out an overarching vision to improve the lives of and outcomes for, LGBTQ+ people. It includes a wide range of policy-specific actions relating to human rights, education, improving safety, housing, health and social care, sport, culture, and promoting community cohesion.

Health is one of the component parts of the plan, and BCUHB will be undertaking the actions contained within the health related actions:

- Understand and improve the experience of LGBTQ+ people in the health and social care sectors
- Ensure maternity and fertility services are accessible and straightforward to use for LGBTQ+ people
- Ensure the development of the new mental health strategy takes account of LGBTQ+ people
- Publish and act on a new HIV Action Plan and overcome barriers to LGBTQ+ people accessing sexual health services
- Review the Gender Identity Development pathway for young people in Wales
- Continue to develop the Wales Gender Service
- Improve the data recording and change processes for maintaining trans, non-binary and intersex people’s medical records

## BCUHB Strategic Equality Plan

Our [Strategic Equality Plan](#) (SEP) for the period 2020-2024 was agreed and published in March 2020. As a listed body in Wales under the Equality Act 2010, we are required to draw up a Strategic Equality Plan at least every 4 years. The purpose of the Strategic Equality Plan is to document the steps that BCUHB is taking to fulfil its duty. During 2023-24 we have engaged widely to develop the SEP for the next 4 years. This was published on the 28<sup>th</sup> March 2023.

[bcuhb.nhs.wales/use-of-site/publication-scheme/class-five-our-policies-and-procedures/equality-and-human-rights/strategic-equality-plans/strategic-equality-plans/strategic-equality-plan-2024-28/](https://bcuhb.nhs.wales/use-of-site/publication-scheme/class-five-our-policies-and-procedures/equality-and-human-rights/strategic-equality-plans/strategic-equality-plans/strategic-equality-plan-2024-28/)

## Appendix C: BCUHB Vision, Values and Purpose

For more information visit: [About the Health Board.](#)

### Our Vision

We will improve the health of the population, with particular focus upon the most vulnerable in our society.  
We will do this by developing an integrated health service which provides excellent care delivered in partnership with the public and other statutory and third sector organisations.  
We will develop our workforce so that it has the right skills and operates in a research-rich learning culture.

### Our Values

Put patients first.  
Work together.  
Value and respect each other.  
Learn and innovate.  
Communicate openly and honestly.

### The Health Board's Strategic goals

Improve health and well-being for all and reduce health inequalities.  
Work in partnership to design and deliver more care closer to home.  
Improve the safety and outcomes of care to match the NHS's best.  
Respect individuals and maintain dignity and care.  
Listen to and learn from the experiences of individuals.  
Support, train and develop our staff to excel.  
Use resources wisely, transforming services through innovation and research.

### Our Purpose

To improve health and deliver excellent care.

For more information visit: [About the Health Board.](#)