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Cardiff & Vale University Health Board

Annual Equality Report 2024–2025 and Strategic Equality Plan (2024–2028) Annual Progress Report

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This document is available in Welsh and on request in a range of accessible formats and languages. Please email EquityAnd.Inclusion@wales.nhs.uk

01. Foreword

At Cardiff and Vale University Health Board, our commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) is central to who we are and how we serve our communities. As one of the largest and most diverse health boards in Wales, we have the privilege and responsibility of providing care to nearly half a million people. Their experiences, cultures, identities, languages and stories shape the fabric of our organisation – and they deserve a healthcare system that recognises, values and responds to that diversity with compassion, dignity and fairness.

This Annual Equality Report 2024–2025, integrated with our Strategic Equality Plan Progress Report, reflects our first full year of delivery against the [Strategic Equality Plan 2024–2028: Shaping Our Inclusive Culture](#). This new plan has set a refreshed direction for our organisation – one that elevates inclusion as a shared responsibility, strengthens our commitment to the Welsh language, promotes accessible and person-centred communication, and ensures that equity and respect underpin every decision we make.

During this reporting year, we have made meaningful strides. We have:

- Strengthened awareness and educational initiatives that help staff understand and practise inclusive behaviours.
- Enhanced our communication and engagement approaches, listening more actively to underserved communities and working collaboratively to understand and remove barriers.
- Continued to advance our Welsh language services and workforce skills, recognising the importance of the

Welsh language to identity, wellbeing and safe care.

- Improved the way we gather and use equality data to inform decision-making, strengthen accountability and highlight where more targeted action is needed.
- Expanded our partnerships – locally, regionally and nationally – ensuring that we contribute to and learn from all-Wales efforts to tackle systemic inequalities, including through the Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan, the LGBTQ+ Action Plan for Wales, and the development of the All-Wales Accessible Communication and Information Standards.

The evidence in this report demonstrates progress – but it also highlights the scale of the work ahead. We continue to see inequities in experience, representation and outcomes. Our staff survey tells us that colleagues still experience discrimination, harassment or barriers in career progression. Community voices remind us that for some, navigating healthcare services remains challenging due to disability, language, culture or socio-economic factors.

We are determined to change this.

The year ahead will see us strengthen the structures, tools and insights that allow us to act with intention and impact. This includes further embedding the Workforce Race Equality Standard (WRES), expanding Welsh language learning pathways, enhancing support for staff networks, and continuing to adopt a project-managed approach to implementing our Strategic Equality Objectives.

Most importantly, we will continue to listen – to our patients, our communities, our partners and our staff. Their lived experiences guide us toward a future

where care is equitable, workplaces are inclusive, and every individual feels they belong within our Health Board. Thank you to all staff, networks, volunteers, community groups and organisational partners who have contributed to this work over the past year. Your passion and dedication continue to shape a more compassionate, inclusive and fair health system for everyone we serve.

Together, we are shaping our inclusive culture – one grounded in respect, strengthened by diversity, and driven by our shared purpose to put people first.

Signed,

Rachel Gidman

**Executive Director of People & Culture
Cardiff and Vale University Health Board
Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol Caerdydd a'r Fro**



02. Executive Summary

This Annual Equality Report and Strategic Equality Plan (SEP) Progress Report outlines Cardiff and Vale University Health Board's first full year of delivery against the 2024–2028 plan, Shaping Our Inclusive Culture. Between April 2024 and March 2025, we advanced a wide programme of work to eliminate discrimination, advance equality, strengthen bilingual services, and embed inclusive, data-driven practice. Our progress reflects strong alignment to our four SEP objectives, Respect, Communication & Engagement, Accessibility, and Data, underpinned by our organisational values, the People & Culture Plan, the 3I Framework, and Welsh Language Standards.

Key achievements include:

- **Building a Culture of Respect:** Expanded leadership and education programmes, increased visibility of inclusion through the Inclusion Calendar, and strengthened compassionate leadership and local inclusive initiatives across Clinical Boards.
- **Improving Communication & Engagement:** Deeper engagement with underserved communities, strengthened Welsh language compliance, improved content governance, and enhanced staff engagement through Viva Engage.
- **Enhancing Accessibility:** Progress on Welsh Language Standards, wider access to training, bilingual service improvements, and local actions to ensure more accessible and flexible care.
- **Strengthening Data:** Improved equality and Welsh language

monitoring on the Electronic Staff Record (ESR), enhanced workforce data quality, and progress on WRES governance and analysis. Work continues to improve patient equality data through wider adoption of the 3I Framework.

- **Welsh Language Progress:** Notable developments include over 1.4 million words translated, growth of Rhwyd-Iaith, expanded language learning programmes, and improved governance of bilingual content—supporting safer, person-centred bilingual care.
- **Advancing Equity & Opportunity:** Continued delivery of widening access initiatives, partnerships with community organisations, and more inclusive recruitment practices have expanded opportunities for underrepresented groups.
- **National Alignment:** We contributed to Wales-wide priorities including the Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan, More Than Just Words, and the development of the All-Wales Accessible Communication and Information Standards.

Challenges remain, including staff capacity, data confidence, culture change in pressured environments, representation gaps, and inconsistent patient data systems. These are mitigated through strengthened governance, clearer accountability, and dedicated support roles.

Our Commitment: We remain steadfast in our ambition to create an organisation where everyone feels respected, valued and represented. Equity, diversity and inclusion are fundamental to safe, high-quality care—and will continue to shape our work in 2025–2026.

03. Introduction And Organisational Context

3.1 About Cardiff and Vale University Health Board

Cardiff and Vale University Health Board (CAVUHB) is one of the largest and most complex healthcare organisations in the United Kingdom. Established in 2009, the Health Board serves a resident population of nearly 500,000 people across Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan, while also delivering a wide range of regional and tertiary services to communities across South Wales and beyond. We are proud to serve some of the most ethnically and culturally diverse communities in Wales, and our population continues to grow and evolve year on year.

We employ approximately 17,000 staff, representing a wide range of professions, skills, cultures, languages, identities and lived experiences. As a major public sector employer, we recognise our responsibility not only to deliver excellent healthcare, but to ensure our workplaces are inclusive, respectful, and representative of the population we serve.

Our services span primary care, community health, mental health, specialist services, acute and emergency care, maternal and child health, and multi-disciplinary clinical board structures that work collaboratively to improve patient outcomes, safety and experience. Detailed information about our services can be found on our website under [Our Services](#).

3.2 Our Organisational Values

Our work is rooted in four core values that guide how we deliver care and how we treat one another:

- Kind and caring
- Respectful
- Trust and integrity
- Personal responsibility

These values form the foundation of our culture and shape our commitment to equity, dignity and fairness. They reinforce our ambition to be a great place to train, work and live, and to provide outstanding care through meaningful relationships with patients, families, carers, partners and colleagues.

3.3 Strategic Context

Shaping Our Future Wellbeing (SOFW)
Our Strategic Equality Plan aligns closely with our overarching strategic vision, Shaping Our Future Wellbeing, which places people and communities at the heart of our long-term ambitions. This vision emphasises:

- reducing inequalities in health outcomes
- improving access and experience
- enhancing prevention and early intervention
- strengthening local partnerships
- developing sustainable, value-based services

The SEP sits at the intersection of these priorities, ensuring fairness and inclusion shape every decision and every interaction.

People and Culture Plan

Equity, diversity and inclusion are central to our People and Culture Plan, which embeds staff wellbeing, leadership development, belonging, Welsh language, inclusion and compassionate culture across all workforce programmes. The

SEP's four objectives integrate directly with this plan, reinforcing the belief that an inclusive workplace is foundational to delivering high-quality care.

The 3I Framework

The Health Board's Equity, Equality, Experience and Patient Safety Action Plan – commonly referred to as the 3I Framework – guides our approach to identifying, understanding and addressing inequities across services and communities. This framework supports the systematic use of data to identify intersectional inequities in access, outcomes and experience.

3.4 Our Strategic Equality Plan (2024–2028)

Published in April 2024, our SEP sets out four strategic equality objectives that provide a clear direction for our work:

1. Respect
2. Communication and Engagement
3. Accessibility
4. Data

Rather than focusing on prescriptive actions, this SEP uses a workstream-based approach to create flexibility, enabling us to respond to emerging needs, Welsh Government priorities, community engagement findings and organisational pressures.

These workstreams are designed to:

- encourage collaboration
- enable local innovation
- strengthen accountability
- build a shared understanding of equity and inclusion
- reflect intersectional needs across protected and non-protected groups

This approach has been well received both internally and across the wider public sector equality network.

3.5 Governance and Accountability

Internal Governance

Delivery of our SEP is overseen through a whole-organisation approach, with clear lines of accountability:

- The Board holds ultimate responsibility for progress against our equality objectives.
- The People and Culture Committee receives regular updates and assurance.
- The Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Team provides leadership, coordination and subject-matter expertise.
- Clinical Boards and corporate directorates are required to lead and report on actions within their areas.
- Staff networks play a critical role in informing, shaping and challenging decisions.

3.6 Equality Health Impact Assessment (EHIA)

Our governance is strengthened by the use of Equality Health Impact Assessments (EHIA), which ensure that policies, decisions and service changes consider potential impacts on:

- protected characteristic
- group socio-economic status
- Welsh language
- human rights

EHIA help us mitigate risk, identify unintended consequences and improve inclusivity.

3.7 Partnerships and External Context

Our work is informed by and contributes to Welsh Government policy, national frameworks and collaborative networks including:

- Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan (ARWAP)
- LGBTQ+ Action Plan for Wales
- More Than Just Words / Mwy Na Geiriau
- All Wales Standards for Accessible Communication and Information for People with Sensory Loss
- Workforce Race Equality Standard (WRES)
- Public Sector Equality Network (PSEN)
- Regional and local partnerships with local authorities, Llais, schools, voluntary organisations and community groups

These connections amplify our impact and help us align local action with national ambition.

3.8 Embedding Welsh Language and Cultural Identity

As required under the Welsh Language Measure (2011) and supporting Welsh Language Standards, we are committed to delivering services that respect language rights. We recognise the importance of bilingual care for safety, dignity and belonging, for our Welsh speaking communities within Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan.

Through structured learning pathways, translation capacity, Rhwyd-laith network engagement, and improvements to bilingual digital content, we continue strengthening our ability to deliver bilingual services.

3.9 Why Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Matter

Equity, diversity and inclusion are fundamental to:

- providing safe, person-centred and culturally competent care
- building trust with communities
- addressing health inequalities
- improving patient experience and outcomes
- supporting staff to thrive and be themselves at work
- strengthening the sustainability and resilience of our workforce

Our SEP commits every staff member – regardless of role – to be part of shaping an inclusive culture. Equity and inclusion are not the responsibility of a single team; they belong to us all.

04. Legislative & Policy Framework

4.1 Introduction

Cardiff and Vale University Health Board's commitment to advancing equality, eliminating discrimination, and promoting inclusive, person-centred healthcare is grounded in a strong legislative and policy foundation. This section outlines the statutory duties, Welsh Government regulations, and national strategic frameworks that shape and guide our work. These requirements inform every aspect of our Strategic Equality Plan (SEP) 2024–2028 and the activity delivered during the 2024–2025 reporting year.

4.2 Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)

The Equality Act 2010 provides the overarching legal framework for equality in Wales. Under the Act, public bodies – including NHS Wales organisations – must have due regard to the need to:

1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation,
2. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share protected characteristics and those who do not, and
3. Foster good relations between groups.

The nine protected characteristics under the Act are: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, marriage and civil partnership, sex, and sexual orientation.

Our policies, service redesigns, workforce decisions, governance arrangements, and engagement activity must consistently evidence compliance with the PSED. This duty underpins all four of our SEP objectives.

4.3 Wales-Specific Equality Duties

In Wales, the PSED is strengthened through the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011, which set out specific duties for devolved public bodies. These duties require us to:

- Publish a Strategic Equality Plan every four years
- Set and publish equality objectives
- Engage with people who share protected characteristics
- Assess the impact of policies and decisions
- Publish an Annual Equality Report
- Collect, analyse and publish equality data
- Promote staff awareness and training
- Ensure procurement and contracting promotes equality

These duties are central to the rationale and structure of this report. They also shape our governance processes, such as Equality Health Impact Assessments (EHIAAs) used across service and policy development.

4.4 Socio-economic Duty (Wales)

Since March 2021, the Socio-economic Duty requires public bodies in Wales to consider how decisions could help reduce inequalities experienced by people who are socio-economically disadvantaged. This is particularly relevant to Cardiff and Vale, given the diversity in levels of deprivation across our communities.

Our SEP integrates socio-economic considerations across its objectives, workstreams and EIAs, ensuring decisions promote fairness in outcomes, experience and access, particularly for communities facing the greatest barriers.

4.5 Welsh Language Legislation and Standards

Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011
This Measure established the legal right for individuals to receive services in Welsh and introduced the position of the Welsh Language Commissioner.

Welsh Language Standards (No. 8 Regulations)

Cardiff and Vale UHB must comply with a comprehensive set of statutory Welsh Language Standards. These standards require us to:

- Provide services in Welsh, including patient-facing services
- Ensure visibility and availability of the Welsh language across communications
- Promote Welsh within the workplace
- Support and develop staff Welsh language skills

- Ensure bilingual signage, documentation and public information
- Report annually on compliance and progress

Our Welsh Language Annual Report 2024–2025 provides detailed evidence of our compliance and the progress made this reporting year.

4.6 Human Rights Frameworks

The following human rights instruments provide additional statutory and ethical requirements for delivering services and creating inclusive environments:

- Human Rights Act 1998
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)
- UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)
- UN Principles for Older Persons

These frameworks require us to ensure services are delivered with dignity, fairness and respect – reinforcing our organisational values and SEP ambitions.

4.7 Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

This landmark legislation places a legal duty on public bodies to act in service of long-term well-being. The Act requires us to work toward seven national well-being goals, including:

- A More Equal Wales
- A Wales of Cohesive Communities
- A Healthier Wales

Our work on equality, diversity and inclusion contributes directly to these goals through:

- more equitable outcomes
- reduced inequalities in access and experience
- inclusive community engagement
- stronger cultural and linguistic identity
- embedding sustainable, value-based approaches

4.8 Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014

This Act reinforces the need for:

- person-centred, strengths-based care
- safeguarding people’s rights
- promoting well-being across all service areas
- ensuring accessible and inclusive communication

The Act intersects with the SEP through its focus on early intervention, holistic assessment and equality of access.

4.9 All Wales Standards for Accessible Communication and Information for People with Sensory Loss

These standards require NHS organisations to ensure that individuals with sensory loss:

- receive accessible, appropriate, and timely information
- can communicate effectively with healthcare teams
- experience equitable access to services

In 2024–2025, Cardiff and Vale UHB actively contributed to Welsh Government’s work on the proposed All-Wales Accessible Communication and Information Standards



4.10 National Equality, Inclusion and Anti-Discrimination Action Plans

Cardiff and Vale UHB contributes to and is shaped by the following all-Wales strategies:

Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan (ARWAP)

We engaged with Welsh Government on WRES findings, strengthened senior alignment to the plan, and advanced anti-racism training.

LGBTQ+ Action Plan for Wales

We progressed the development the LGBTQ+ Action Plan through a task-and-finish group aligned to national themes.

More Than Just Words / Mwy Na Geiriau

We continued to deliver Welsh language service improvements and workforce development in line with this strategic framework.

All-Wales NHS Accessible Communication and Information Standards (in development)

We contributed to national development work, preparing for future implementation. These plans work alongside our SEP to promote inclusion across local, regional and national systems.

4.11 Health Board Policies and Internal Frameworks

A number of internal policies support and operationalise equality duties, including:

- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Welsh Language Policy and guidance
- Dignity at Work, Respect and Resolution, and Raising Concerns procedures
- Recruitment and selection policies, embedding inclusive processes

- Annual training and statutory/mandatory modules

These policies reinforce our values and provide the structural support necessary for consistent, inclusive practice.

Procurement and contracting

Cardiff and Vale UHB integrates equality, Welsh language and accessibility requirements into procurement and contracting processes. Where relevant, tender specifications and evaluation criteria include expectations on inclusive communication, accessibility, workforce equality and non-discriminatory practice. Contract management arrangements support ongoing monitoring of compliance, including responding to concerns and ensuring services meet the needs of diverse communities and protected characteristic groups.

4.12 Summary

This legislative and policy framework provides the structure within which the Health Board delivers its SEP. It ensures that:

- equality and human rights are central to governance, decision-making and service delivery
- we consistently meet statutory requirements
- we contribute meaningfully to all-Wales equality ambitions
- we take a proactive, evidence-based approach to improving equity, access and experience

This framework forms the foundation of all progress described throughout this report.

Together, the teams ensured that messaging consistently reflected the organisation's values and strategic equality ambitions.

05. Progress

Against Objective

1: Respect

Foster an inclusive culture of respect through awareness campaigns and education, ensuring all individuals, including staff, patients and service users, feel valued and dignified.

5.1 Introduction to Objective

We are committed to creating a culture where everyone – staff, patients and service users – is treated with dignity and respect. Through strengthened education and awareness, we aim to build understanding, promote compassionate leadership, and empower our communities to engage confidently in an inclusive environment. Our inclusion calendar, values and behaviours framework, staff networks and clear routes for raising concerns all work together to nurture a respectful, supportive culture across the Health Board.

5.2 Strengthening Knowledge, Skills and Inclusive Behaviours

Across 2024–2025, the Equity & Inclusion Team contributed directly to the Leadership and Management programmes and corporate induction, supporting modules designed to strengthen respectful behaviour, compassionate leadership and inclusive decision-making:

- First Steps to Management: 72 members of staff
- Essential Management Skills: 86 members of staff
- Corporate Induction Marketplace: 195 members of staff

By September 2024, 86.05% of staff had completed mandatory eLearning – above the 85% target – increasing slightly to 86.74% by March 2025. The Paul Ridd eLearning module reached 75.17% completion by March, demonstrating progress in disability and learning disability awareness.

A major development was the launch of the new Equity & Inclusion SharePoint resource hub, which has been viewed over 750 times across the year. Educational factsheets covered anti-racist practice, unconscious bias, micro-aggressions, and LGBTQ+ inclusion, helping build staff confidence in understanding discrimination and respectful behaviour.

5.3 Visibility of Inclusion through Awareness Campaigns

Awareness-raising was consistently strong and evidence-based. During 2024–2025, the Health Board marked:

- Autism Acceptance Week
- Ramadan
- Polish Heritage Day
- NHS Wales Equality Week
- International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia (IDAHOBIT)
- LGBTQ+ Pride Month
- Disability History Month
- Learning Disability Week
- Black History Month
- South Asian Heritage Month
- Pride Cymru (as part of the NHS Wales contingent)

Campaigns highlighted diverse role models and promoted visibility of equity and inclusion issues across the workforce.

Clinical Boards reinforced this work locally. Primary, Community and Intermediate Care (PCIC) introduced flexible working support, prayer spaces, and raised equity and inclusion concerns



through local governance meetings. Clinical Diagnostics & Therapies (CD&T) ran regular equality and inclusion newsletter features, strengthened bilingual branding, and embedded equity and inclusion as a standing item at the Quality Safety and Experience Sub-Committee.

5.4 Respect through Welsh Language, Culture and Identity

Respect for Welsh language identity was further strengthened through visible advancements in Welsh language practice.

The Health Board delivered three Welsh learning pathways supported by Dysgu Cymraeg Caerdydd and the National Centre for Learning Welsh:

- Cwrs Croeso / Welcome Course
- Cwrs Codi Hyder / Building Confidence Course
- Cwrs Blasau / Taster Course

Welsh language skills recording increased significantly – by 14.76% during 2024-2025 –demonstrating growing engagement.

A turning point in embedding respect was the June 2024 Ask Suzanne session on the Welsh language, after which all Ask Suzanne sessions included simultaneous Welsh translation, demonstrating a clear cultural commitment across the organisation.

Clinical Boards mirrored this; CD&T monitored Welsh language skills fortnightly, incorporated bilingual branding, and promoted first-contact staff participation in greetings training.

5.5 Respect in Leadership, Governance and Workforce Experience

Leadership development increasingly aligned with respectful and inclusive practice. Managers engaged in compassionate leadership training, were supported to address discrimination, and benefitted from reinforced HR policies such as Respect & Resolution and Raising Concerns.

However, evidence also highlights concerning staff experiences. Staff Survey responses indicate:

- 7–10% of staff experienced discrimination (depending on survey cycle)
- 11% felt the organisation does not respect individual difference
- 19% did not believe career progression is fair
- Harassment from patients/public reached 16%, with 10–13% reporting harassment from managers or colleagues

This data confirms that although structural improvements have begun, some staff continue to face negative experiences. The CEO-chaired CAVUHB Staff Survey Open Forums were established to better understand the experiences of our staff and ensure they played an active role in shaping organisational culture.

5.6 Clinical Board Contributions

The Primary Community and Intermediate Care clinical board (PCIC) fostered compassionate leadership, EDI discussions in huddles, flexible working adjustments, and safer working environments for culturally diverse teams. CD&T sustained Inclusion Ambassador meetings, delivered EDI newsletter sections, strengthened bilingual signage, and embedded EDI into directorate governance structures.

Both Clinical Boards emphasised culturally sensitive service provision, such as:

- private spaces for religious or cultural needs,
- translation services,
- hearing loops,
- inclusive waiting areas,
- and tailored outreach for vulnerable groups.

5.7 Summary

Across 2024–2025, Cardiff and Vale UHB made demonstrable progress in building a culture of respect, supported by quantitative improvement in training uptake, increased visibility of inclusion, strengthened bilingual practice, and consistent engagement from Clinical Boards. Staff survey insights and discrimination data indicate that cultural change remains ongoing and requires continued focus.

However, structures implemented this year increased educational reach, enhanced translation provision, and strengthened leadership development – provide a strong platform for sustained progress.

Impact – These actions strengthened staff capability to practise inclusive behaviours, although staff survey findings confirm that discrimination, harassment and perceived unfairness in progression remain key areas requiring sustained focus.

06. Progress Against Objective 2: Communication & Engagement

Enhance communication channels and strategies to make information accessible to everyone, fostering inclusive engagement.

6.1 Introduction to Objective

We are committed to improving the way we communicate and engage with our staff, patients and communities by making information accessible, relevant and easy to understand. By strengthening feedback mechanisms and listening to diverse voices, we ensure our communication channels reflect the needs and experiences of the people we serve. Through collaboration and co-production with local communities and partners, our engagement approaches become more culturally sensitive, inclusive and aligned with our Shaping Our Future Wellbeing strategy. Together, these efforts help us build meaningful relationships, support equitable access to information, and foster a more engaged and empowered community.

6.2 Improving Communication Channels and Digital Accessibility

Across the year, the Health Board played a sustained role in supporting Welsh Government's development of the All-Wales NHS Accessible Communication and Information Standards.

Internally, the Health Board strengthened its communication systems:

- Viva Engage was embraced as a core staff engagement platform.
 - Membership on the LGBTQ+ Staff Network grew to 66 (March 2025).
 - Rhwyd-laith had 48 staff as part of the Viva Engage Group.
- A new approval process was introduced for publishing digital content, ensuring accessibility standards were met.
- The Communications Team created a dedicated Viva Engage accessibility channel for website editors, promoting best practice and strengthening organisational capability.

These developments significantly improved the quality and consistency of internal and public-facing communication.

6.3 Collaborative Communication and Campaign Alignment

The Equity & Inclusion Team and Communications & Engagement Team continued to meet regularly throughout the year, coordinating key awareness campaigns, engagement events, and bilingual messaging.

This collaboration:

- strengthened accuracy and inclusivity of organisational messaging
- improved timely visibility of events linked to the Inclusion Calendar
- increased workforce awareness of equality and Welsh Language Standards
- aligned communication around national action plans (ARWAP, LGBTQ+ Action Plan, Accessible Communication and Information Standards)

Together, the teams ensured that messaging consistently reflected the organisation's values and strategic equality ambitions.

6.4 Engagement with Communities

Evidence of community engagement strengthened significantly across the reporting period.

The Health Board's participation in the Socio-Economic and Well-Being of the Somali Community Stakeholders Group marked an important milestone.

The Health Board committed to co-producing an action plan with the community, marking an important step in building respectful, meaningful engagement.

Membership in the Cardiff Public Sector Equality Network, refreshed in 2024, deepened cross-sector collaboration on community engagement and aligned communication approaches with local authorities and partner organisations.

Clinical Boards contributed heavily to community engagement:

- PCIC delivered outreach through Mass Immunisations, Sexual Health, and teams supporting asylum seekers and homeless communities
- CD&T engaged through Patient-Reported Experience Measures (PREMs) development, bilingual patient information design, and improved accessibility of specialist communication (e.g., radiology, therapies)

6.5 Strengthening Staff Communication and Engagement

Viva Engage proved to be a key enabler of internal communication and connection, particularly for staff networks and Welsh language communities. Staff used the platform to share resources, stories, and initiatives, increasing visibility of equality activity.

The Equity & Inclusion Team improved messaging around the “why” of equity and inclusion. This was reinforced through campaigns explaining the purpose of equality monitoring, data governance, and Welsh language skills recording.

Internal communication was further strengthened by Ask Suzanne sessions, which became bilingual from June 2024 onwards. These sessions modelled open, transparent communication and allowed staff across the workforce to raise concerns directly with the CEO.

6.6 Summary

Across 2024–2025, Cardiff and Vale UHB made substantial progress in strengthening communication and engagement. The organisation improved digital accessibility, expanded bilingual communication, deepened relationships with communities experiencing inequalities, and invested in staff engagement platforms. Clinical Boards contributed actively, helping ensure that communication improvements translated into better experiences on the front line.

While challenges remain – particularly around consistency, capacity and cultural sensitivity – the foundation laid this year positions the Health Board well for further progress next year.

Impact – These actions improved the consistency and accessibility of our communication and strengthened engagement with underserved communities through more structured partnership working.

07. Progress Against Objective 3: Accessibility

Improve accessibility of our health services and facilities, creating a more inclusive healthcare and working environment for everyone

7.1 Introduction to Objective

We are committed to improving the accessibility of our health services and workplaces so that everyone can receive care and support that meets their needs. By enhancing communication methods, embracing digital tools, and ensuring our sites and facilities are physically accessible, we aim to remove barriers for all patients, service users and staff. Our focus on delivering bilingual services in line with Welsh Language Standards – supported by the More than just words strategy and Cymraeg 2050 – strengthens inclusivity across our organisation. Alongside this, ongoing staff education ensures our workforce is equipped to provide culturally sensitive, language-appropriate care and to help people navigate our services with confidence. Together, these efforts help us build a more inclusive and responsive healthcare environment for everyone.

7.2 Advancing Accessible Communication Standards and Inclusive Information

A central strand of accessibility work has been the Health Board’s continued contribution to the development of the proposed All-Wales Accessible Communication and Information Standards. The Health Board provided support to the Welsh Government in

developing these standards. Efforts included offering feedback on practical implementation issues and ensuring that internal processes were aligned in preparation for future statutory obligations.

The Communications & Engagement Team introduced a formal approval process for all website content, ensuring that digitally published information meets the All-Wales Standards for Accessible Communication and Information for People with Sensory Loss. This process improved the quality and clarity of patient-facing communication and ensured that accessibility considerations were embedded from the outset.

To further support implementation, the Communications Team established a dedicated Viva Engage accessibility channel for website editors, enabling colleagues to:

- ask questions about best practice
- share updates on accessibility improvements
- access guidance on inclusive content

This network-based approach strengthened internal capability to deliver the current standards.

Medical Illustration played a critical role in ensuring accessibility of patient information. Evidence from Clinical Boards shows the team delivered inclusive design services, including bilingual and multi-language materials and documents tailored for people with sensory impairments, cognitive needs or learning disabilities.

7.3 Strengthening Welsh Language Accessibility

The Health Board is dedicated to improving Welsh language accessibility throughout the organisation. Significant advancements are documented in the

Health Board's Welsh Language Annual Report 2024–2025. For an in-depth summary of these accomplishments and current projects, please consult the referenced report.

7.4 Digital and Information Accessibility

Accessibility was also strengthened through digital systems. The Communications & Engagement Team's website governance system ensured that newly published materials are accessible, bilingual and compliant with evolving national standards.

Clinically, Cedar contributed to accessible communication through development of PREMs surveys incorporating questions on preferred language and communication needs. This supports system-wide monitoring of accessibility across Wales and strengthens the Health Board's understanding of patient experience.

7.5 Summary

Objective 3 saw significant, demonstrable progress during 2024–2025. The Health Board strengthened accessibility across linguistic, digital, sensory and cultural domains; contributed actively to the development of national standards; and enhanced bilingual capability across the workforce.

The Health Board is entering 2025–2026 with stronger language skills, clearer governance, improved accessibility practices, and a deeper organisational understanding of the barriers experienced by patients and communities.

Impact – These actions improved the accessibility and clarity of patient information and strengthened readiness to meet diverse communication, language and sensory needs.

08. Progress Against Objective 4: Data

Enhance the accuracy of data collection and analysis to identify and address inequity in both health outcomes and staff experience.

8.1 Introduction to Objective

We are committed to strengthening the accuracy and use of data to better understand and address inequities in both health outcomes and staff experience. By improving how we collect, analyse and interpret data, we can identify gaps in representation, highlight disparities, and shape targeted actions that promote fairness across our organisation. Effective workforce planning, informed by reliable demographic and Welsh language skills data, ensures that our staff profile and skillset reflect the communities we serve. Transparent pay gap reporting further supports accountability and drives progress toward equitable employment practices.

By continuously refining data collection—guided by frameworks that consider inequality, intersectionality and inequity—we build a robust evidence base that informs decision-making and supports meaningful, lasting change.

8.2 A year focused on strengthening our evidence base

To make genuine, lasting progress on equity and inclusion, it remains essential to have a clear and accurate

understanding of our workforce, those we serve, and where inequalities continue. Over the last year, the Health Board made some modest improvements in the accuracy and usefulness of our equality data. While these changes have helped us to describe inequality a little more clearly and consider what contributes to it, there is still much work to do before we can fully understand or address the underlying causes.

2024–2025 was a year in which we began to move beyond simply “collecting data” and took initial steps towards using data as a tool for incremental improvement.

8.3 Strengthening the equality monitoring dataset

Enhancing the completeness of staff equality information continued to be a priority, and 2024/25 saw some improvements compared to previous reporting cycles.

As of 1 April 2024, 30.39% of staff had provided information for all equality monitoring fields. By 31 March 2025, this proportion had risen by 4.07% to 34.46%. These incremental gains are important. With each improvement in the equality monitoring dataset, we are able to identify patterns in recruitment, retention and progression with slightly greater accuracy. This in turn helps us to begin challenging assumptions, highlighting areas of under-representation at an earlier stage, and directing development and support where it is most needed.

Although there remains considerable work ahead to achieve a fully comprehensive dataset, the advances made this year suggest that careful communication and reassurance around data use can help address longstanding concerns about disclosure.

8.4 Welsh language data as a planning tool

The Health Board saw an improvement in the registering of Welsh Language Skills data. Nearly 15% more colleagues updated their Welsh language ability on ESR, supported by the expansion of Welsh learning programmes and clearer signposting of opportunities.

This isn't only a compliance measure – it is a significant operational tool. Accurate skills data enables teams to plan confidently for bilingual service provision, allocate Welsh-speaking staff where they are most needed, and strengthen pathways to providing safe, culturally sensitive care. This year's growth demonstrates a maturing appreciation across the workforce of the role Welsh language data plays in shaping patient experience and meeting national standards.

8.5 Gender Pay Gap insights:

understanding the structural picture

Our Gender Pay Gap (GPG) Report 2025 provided a detailed and transparent analysis of pay by gender across our workforce. The gender pay gap remains a structural challenge – with a mean pay gap of 16.73% – but the narrative behind the numbers is clearer than ever.

The report showed that:

- Women make up over 75% of our workforce, yet
- Men remain proportionally over-represented in senior Agenda for Change bands and in Medical & Dental roles, which attract higher salaries nationally.

This structural pattern – common across the NHS – explains why our median gap is close to zero, but the mean gap persists. It also helps pinpoint exactly where we need to focus efforts:

increasing progression opportunities for women at senior levels, supporting development pathways, and ensuring that recruitment and promotion processes are consistently equitable.

The analysis of bonus payments also highlighted gendered patterns in consultant awards, reinforcing the need for continued scrutiny and proportionate representation in recognition schemes.

Crucially, the report doesn't just describe the gap – it sets out a plan. Monitoring recruitment patterns, strengthening flexible working, improving the inclusivity of job adverts and interview processes, and reviewing progression pathways are all now embedded into our strategic agenda. The Gender Pay Gap is no longer an isolated statistical exercise; it is informing real organisational change.

8.6 Workforce Race Equality Standard: embedding governance and accountability

Alongside gender-disaggregated data, 2024/25 marked a step change in how we use race-related workforce data. The publication of the Workforce Race Equality Standard (WRES) report led to deeper organisational reflection, including discussions at senior leadership level about representation, progression and everyday working experiences for ethnically diverse colleagues.

By establishing a dedicated task and finish group and aligning this work with our Anti-Racist Wales commitments, we have moved WRES from a compliance requirement into a governed improvement programme.

8.7 Patient equality data: a long-term challenge

While our workforce datasets have become more complete, our patient equality data remains a more complex challenge. Multiple patient administration systems make it difficult to capture consistent information on ethnicity, disability, communication needs and Welsh language preference.

Despite this, progress has been made. The expansion of PREMs and Patient Reported Outcome Measures (PROMs) activity, including questions on language and communication needs, is helping us build a clearer picture of patient experience. Strengthening the 3I Framework across clinical teams will also help ensure that inequities in access, experience and outcomes are identified more systematically.

Improving patient equality data will continue to require sustained focus and system-level planning. However, the advances we have made in 2024/25 – particularly in experience-based data – mean we are better equipped to identify inequity even where structural barriers remain.

8.8 What our data tells us about culture and experience

Data alone is not enough – it needs to be interpreted alongside what staff tell us. The 2024 NHS Wales staff survey responses provided a sobering but essential insight into lived experience:

- Some staff still face discrimination and harassment.
- Not all colleagues feel respected or believe career progression is fair.
- Confidence to speak up remains inconsistent across teams.

These are powerful reminders that while our systems and datasets are improving, cultural change requires sustained, organisation-wide effort. By bringing together survey insights, workforce data, WRES findings and GPG analysis, we now have a fuller and more honest understanding of where inequities persist and what they look like.

8.9 A stronger data spine for the future

2024–2025 has been a foundational year for Objective 4. The improvements we have made in equality monitoring, Welsh language data, race equality analysis and GPG reporting have strengthened our ability to diagnose inequity and design interventions that are targeted, evidence-based and accountable.

As we move into 2025–2026, we will:

- continue improving data completeness and confidence;
- integrate GPG and WRES insights more deeply into workforce planning; and
- use data to connect everyday decision-making with the aims of our Strategic Equality Plan.

We now have a clearer, more reliable and more strategic evidence base – one capable of guiding meaningful improvement in equity, representation, experience and outcomes across Cardiff and Vale UHB.

Impact – These improvements strengthened our ability to identify and target inequities in workforce experience and progression, while patient equality data limitations remain a key system challenge.

09. Eliminating Discrimination And Promoting Equality Of Opportunity

9.1 Introduction

Cardiff and Vale University Health Board is committed to creating a workplace and healthcare environment where discrimination is actively challenged, diversity is valued, and all individuals – staff, patients and service users – are supported to thrive. This section outlines the progress made during 1 April 2024 – 31 March 2025 to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity, and foster good relations in line with the Public Sector Equality Duty, Wales Specific Equality Duties, and our Strategic Equality Plan 2024–2028.

9.2 Strengthening an Anti-Discriminatory Culture Leadership and Organisational Commitment

Throughout 2024–2025, senior leaders reinforced the importance of an anti-discriminatory culture through visible engagement, including:

- Integration of equality and inclusion messages in staff forums (e.g., Ask Suzanne), communications, and leadership briefings.
- Increased leadership focus on the lived experiences of staff with protected characteristics, and recognition of disparities highlighted in the NHS Wales Staff Survey.
- Continued endorsement of national equality priorities, including the

Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan, LGBTQ+ Action Plan for Wales, and wider WRES implementation.

These efforts helped improve organisational confidence and transparency around equity and inclusion issues.

9.3 Tackling Inequalities Through Inclusive Programmes Widening Access Framework

The Health Board continued to deliver an ambitious and impactful Widening Access Framework, widening employment pathways for underrepresented, excluded, or vulnerable groups.

Achievements in 2024/25 include:

- Funding secured for the Care Leavers Project, enabling care-experienced young people to gain nursing placements and access long-term opportunities.
- Partnerships with Llamau and other homelessness-focused organisations, resulting in individuals securing both employment and temporary accommodation.
- Continued collaboration with Parc Prison, Cardiff Prison, and the Probation Service, providing ex-offenders with supported placements that promote rehabilitation and long-term employability.
- Engagement with ethnically diverse communities through career fairs, school outreach, and employability events – reaching over 15,000 students across Cardiff and the Vale.
- Recruitment of 71 apprentices through inclusive, accessible recruitment processes, including fast-tracked applications and simplified forms.

This programme meaningfully reduces employment barriers and advances opportunities for people facing disadvantage or under-representation.

9.4 Embedded EDI Education and Mandatory Training

The Health Board strengthened EDI education this year through: Continued rollout of statutory and mandatory training, including Equality, Diversity & Human Rights modules.

- High completion rates across Clinical Boards, with CD&T reporting 90.58% compliance.
- Integration of discussions on discrimination within leadership development and induction programmes.

These educational efforts reinforce values-based practice and improve staff understanding of the impacts of inequality on patient safety, staff experience and clinical outcomes.

9.5 Strengthening Staff Networks and Lived-Experience Voice

Staff networks continued to play a vital role in shaping inclusive practice and decision-making. Key developments include:

- Progress toward restructuring staff networks to enhance their governance, visibility, and ability to influence decisions.
- Exploration of protected time for network chairs and committee members to undertake network duties.
- Continued support for:
 - AccessAbility Staff Network
 - Rhwyd-laith (Welsh language network)
 - LGBTQ+ Staff Network
 - One Voice Staff Network

These networks strengthen the organisation's understanding of lived experience and help ensure inclusive decision-making.

9.6 Eliminating Discrimination in Patient Access and Experience

Clinical Boards contributed significantly to advancing equitable access to care by:

- Providing culturally sensitive communication within outreach services (e.g., sexual health triage, mass immunisation community engagement).
- Offering walk-in services for under-18s, accessible consultation spaces, and adjustments for religious, sensory and mobility needs.
- Ensuring bilingual or multilingual materials were available and implementing translation support where necessary.
- Developing inclusive patient information materials and ensuring EDI considerations form part of quality and safety governance structures.
- These examples demonstrate how equality is embedded in everyday service delivery.

9.7 Public Sector Collaboration and Community Engagement

To improve equality of opportunity, Cardiff and Vale UHB strengthened its partnerships with regional organisations, including:

- Cardiff's Public Sector Equality Network, working collaboratively on issues affecting multiple public bodies.
- Schools, youth organisations, and local authority services to promote health careers and Welsh language opportunities.
- Third sector organisations supporting people affected by homelessness, disability, inequality and social exclusion.

These partnerships amplify our impact and ensure our actions are informed by community need.

9.8 Summary

During 2024–2025, Cardiff and Vale UHB made significant progress in eliminating discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity. Through strengthened leadership commitment, inclusive recruitment practice, widening access initiatives, anti-racist action, expanded education, staff network development and community partnerships, we have laid strong foundations for continued progress.

Despite improvements, challenges remain – particularly in data quality, confidence in reporting discrimination, representation across leadership roles and ensuring consistent inclusive practice under operational pressures. These areas will continue to be prioritised in 2025–2026, with clear governance, staff engagement and accountability mechanisms in place.

10. Priorities for 2025–2026

As we move into the second year of delivering our Strategic Equality Plan 2024–2028, the Health Board will continue to focus on embedding inclusive practice, strengthening cultural competence, and ensuring equitable access and experience for all. Our priorities for 2025–2026 build on the foundations established in 2024/25 and respond to the needs and expectations of our staff, patients, communities and partners.

10.1 Our Key Priorities

1. Advance Anti-Racist and Inclusive Cultures

Deepen implementation of anti-racist practice, progress WRES actions, and build organisational confidence in recognising and addressing discrimination.

2. Strengthen Welsh Language Delivery

Develop a More than just words Action Plan, continue to expand workforce Welsh language skills, and enhance bilingual access across services.

3. Improve Equity Data Across the Workforce

Increase equality and Welsh language data completeness, improve data confidence, and use insights to inform targeted action.

4. Support and Grow Staff Networks

Enhance governance, visibility and sustainability of lived-experience networks, ensuring they continue to shape organisational decisions.

5. Enhance Accessible Communication

Prepare for the introduction of the All-Wales Accessible Communication and Information Standards and improve accessibility across all communication channels.

6. Broaden Inclusive Recruitment and Widening Access

Continue removing barriers to employment and expand opportunities for underrepresented groups through inclusive recruitment and outreach.

7. Strengthen Leadership Capability

Embed inclusive leadership behaviours and ensure managers are equipped to support fair, respectful and psychologically safe workplaces.

8. Deepen Community Partnerships

Strengthen engagement with communities experiencing inequalities and ensure their voices influence service design and improvement.

Vision for 2025–2026

In 2025–2026, our vision is to strengthen the Health Board as a place where every person — whether they work here or receive care here — feels respected, valued and represented.

We will work towards:

- A more equitable workforce, confident and capable in delivering inclusive, bilingual care.
- Accessible services shaped by lived experience and community voice.
- A workplace culture where diversity is embraced, discrimination is challenged, and staff can thrive authentically.
- A healthcare system that removes barriers, reduces inequalities and ensures that fairness, dignity and compassion are embedded in everything we do.

Together, we will continue shaping an inclusive culture that reflects the communities we serve and delivers outstanding care for all.

