

Velindre University NHS Trust

Strategic Equality Plan 2024 - 2028

Introduction

As a public body we are required to publish a Strategic Equality Plan which sets out our equality objectives and explains how we will achieve these objectives. We are guided by the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty, which call on us to think ahead so we can better meet the needs of the people we work with. The Trust publishes an annual report with information about our progress, together with equality information about our workforce each Spring.

There are three overall aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty:

1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation (and other conduct prohibited by the Act).
2. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.
3. Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Under the Equality Act, there are **9 protected characteristics**, they are:

Age	Disability	Gender Reassignment
Religion & Belief	Sex (Gender)	Race
Sexual Orientation	Pregnancy & Maternity	Marriage / Civil Partnership

Developing our Objectives for 2024 – 2028

We consulted and engaged with patients, staff, partners, equality organisations and other stakeholders in partnership with Wales Public Body Equality Partnership. We asked these stakeholders what they thought the equality priorities should be for the Trust and what they thought should be done to improve equality. We also identified what research and information was already available to help in the development of the objectives. We surveyed patients, staff, partners, equality and third sector organisations and other people as to whether our previously set objectives should be kept as they are, changed or whether we needed to add new ones.

In light of the understanding of our legal obligations, our strategic intentions and stakeholder feedback, we have established our Vision for Equality and four Strategic Equality Objectives for 2024 – 2028. We have also described the broad areas of work that will enable us to achieve our vision.

Our Vision for Equality

Our vision for equality is that our values of Caring, Respectful and Accountable are evident in **everything** we do, thereby improving the lives of all our stakeholders, irrespective of their background. We will use this Strategic Equality Plan to put patients, donors and staff at the heart of everything we do. The lens of equality will allow us to challenge the status quo and ask questions so that we can design our organisation and systems around people, taking heed of individuals' views, requirements and aspirations.

Our overarching ambition is to ensure that there is enhanced collaboration between the members of the Leadership and management teams and the people we employ. There will be an improved relationship between staff and patients, and we will strive to eliminate barriers to care. Teams throughout Velindre Cancer Service, the Welsh Blood Service and Trust wide Services will reduce working in silos and will have an improved knowledge of other departments' working strategies and aims. There will be increased engagement throughout the Trust which will in turn develop relationships and knowledge sharing. Patients and Donors will be invited to networks to listen to their feedback which will then improve services delivered in Cancer and Blood services and we will develop strategies to reduce barriers to care and service delivery. A positive working environment will be fostered with clear channels of staff feedback, tackling each equality issue raised.

Bringing the objectives to life

We have four clear objectives and have outlined the key areas of work over the next four years that will enable us to achieve our vision for equality.

1 Increase workforce diversity and inclusion and eliminate Pay Gaps

We would like the workforce to better reflect the diverse nature of the communities that we serve and also to ensure that there is no systemic pay disparity between people of different genders, races or disability.

Actions

- Check that our approaches to recruitment and selection are open and fair.
- Acknowledge that our workforce profile is changing, and our teams need to develop to meet this change, for example our teams are becoming more diverse as a result of successful recruitment of Doctors and Nurses from India and Hong Kong.
- Build on our links with schools, colleges and the community to introduce people from across the whole community into roles and careers in healthcare.
- Support women to thrive in STEM professions.
- Create a positive working environment in all areas so that the Trust is regarded as an employer of choice where people want to stay.
- Utilise reasonable adjustments from first contact with applicants throughout their employment with the Trust.
- Prioritise professional development for all.

- Embed staff engagement and diversity forums in day-to-day life, including consideration of the impact of intersectionality.
- Implement the Trust Anti-racist Action Plan and the Workforce Race Equality Standard.
- Build on our status as a Disability Confident employer, achieving Leader Level.
- Develop our reporting of pay gaps and feed the recommendations into annual work plans.

2 **Engage with the community**

In order to ensure that we are providing services that our patients and donors want and need, it is important that we understand them and ask them about what things they want from us and how we might be able to do to that in better ways.

Actions

- Create opportunities for staff, patients and donors to engage with communities, for example Pride, Sign Language Week, Disability Equality Week, Black History Month to allow everyone to learn, experience and connect with different communities and cultures.
- Establish a regular system of capturing feedback from stakeholders to understand how people feel about our services and organisation.
- Further develop our stakeholder engagement for Cancer and Blood services by engaging with diverse groups and communities.

3. **Communicate with people in ways that meet their requirements.**

We have a variety of ways that we stay in contact with the people of Wales; letters, phone calls, social media; it is important that we are doing this in way that people can easily understand and in their first, or preferred, language.

Actions

- To continue to improve collection of language information and communicate effectively with patients, donors, their carers and families, in the language of their choice.
- Improve access to our services for BSL users to allow Deaf people to be able to communicate with, access, engage and provide feedback/ concerns to the system in a way that fully meets their needs.
- Truly implement the Active Offer for Welsh speakers and comply with the Welsh Language Standards Framework

4. **Ensure service delivery reflects individual requirements.**

We provide specialist cancer services to the population of south east Wales at a time when people are particularly vulnerable. We are also indebted to our donors who volunteer to give blood or tissue for the benefit of others. We want all these individuals to be able to access what they require as simply as possible.

Actions

- Apply the Equality Impact Assessment methodology to any projects on redesigning patient pathways, including a consideration of the impact of age.
- Improve the accessibility of our services by innovating, in light of patient and donor feedback, including a regular review of disability or adjustments.
- Improve the recording and transfer of patient data so that patients identified by other services as being disadvantaged receive the appropriate support when they come to us.
- Support the development of a single, unified approach towards Equality Impact Assessments across all NHS Wales.
- Support managers in undertaking Equality Impact Assessments to create positive change
- Educate staff on the needs of other people across all protected characteristics.

Checking our progress

Progress with the Strategic Equality Plan will be monitored within the Healthy and Engaged Steering Group. A full progress report is presented with the Annual Equality Report, in line with the Trust's reporting cycle.

The measures that demonstrate progress will be:

1. Workforce data showing a broadening of the employee profile over time, both in relation to year-on-year change and in relation to comparison with the 2021 Census figures.
2. Improved scores shown in the NHS Staff Survey for equality and diversity measures.
3. Improved scores shown in the Workforce Race Equality Standard report.
4. Increase in numbers of staff involved in engagement events, training and Diversity Forums.
5. Increase in numbers of patients and donors offering feedback and participating in engagement events.
6. Comprehensive use of Equality Impact Assessments where required and improvements in the quality of recommendations and actions resulting from the analysis.