

NHS Ayrshire & Arran



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| Meeting: | Ayrshire and Arran NHS Board |
| Meeting date: | Monday 8 June 2026 |
| Title: | Corporate Equalities Committee Annual Report for 2025/26 |
| Responsible Director: | Sarah Leslie, Director of People, Safety and Culture |
| Report Author: | Elaine Savory, Equality and Inclusion Manager |

1. Purpose

This is presented to the Board for:

- Awareness

This paper relates to:

- Government policy/directive
- Local policy

This aligns to the following NHSScotland quality ambition(s):

- Safe
- Effective
- Person Centred

This supports the following Corporate Objectives:

- **Better Value** – Delivering innovative and sustainable services for everyone
- **Better Health** – Supporting you to live a healthier life
- **Better Workplace** – Creating a great place for us to work
- **Better Care** – Improving your experience of care

2. Report summary

2.1 Situation

The Board agreed to receive an annual report on the activities of the Corporate Equalities Structure (Corporate Equalities Committee and Equalities Implementation Group) during 2025 -2026 including details of Committee membership and meeting attendance. The report provides assurance that the Corporate Equalities Structure has discharged its role as set out in the agreed Terms of Reference.

2.2 Background

In February 2021, the Board approved the establishment of a new Corporate Equalities Structure to ensure NHS Ayrshire & Arran were meeting their statutory

obligations but moreover to further mainstream equalities into the function of the Board. An annual report to outline progress was agreed as part of this new structure.

2.3 Assessment

Embedding equalities into the functions of NHS Ayrshire & Arran is a legal obligation, and it is the moral thing to do to ensure we meet the needs of the population of Ayrshire and Arran. The report provides assurance that work to embed equality is being driven forward across the organisation.

Key Messages

The Corporate Equalities structure over the last year has undertaken the following key actions:

- Anti-racism Plan
- Reasonable Adjustment Passport
- New Translation and Interpretation process
- Staff Networks
- Membership of Equalities Implementation Group

2.3.1 Quality/patient care

Driving forward the equalities agenda across the organisation will ensure the health and care provision provided to our citizens is safe, effective and person-centred and will support positive patient experience.

2.3.2 Workforce

The work to drive forward the equalities agenda will be met from within existing staff resources.

2.3.3 Financial

The work to drive forward the equalities agenda will be met from within existing resources.

2.3.4 Risk assessment/management

Failure to embed equalities into practices and functions of the Board could result in NHS Ayrshire & Arran failing to meet their legislative requirements. The Corporate Equalities Committee will oversee the delivery of the equality outcomes and associated equalities work, and provide assurance through the annual report to the Board.

2.3.5 Equality and diversity, including health inequalities

The content of this paper provides an account of NHS Ayrshire & Arran's equalities work during the period 2025-2026. An impact assessment has not been completed because the attached information is an account of some of the work which was undertaken to promote equalities within NHS Ayrshire & Arran and any of those areas requiring an equality impact assessment would have been completed separately.

2.3.6 Best value

This paper support Best Value across the following themes.

- Vision and Leadership
- Effective Partnerships
- Governance and accountability

- Use of resources
- Performance management

2.3.7 Other impacts

The annual report highlights the development of new equality outcomes. The outcome of this work should have a positive impact on staff and citizens covered under the protected characteristics outlined in the Equality Act 2010.

2.3.8 Communication, involvement, engagement and consultation

The content of this paper provides an account of NHS Ayrshire & Arran's equalities work during the period 2025-2026. The paper itself requires no engagement with stakeholders. Any engagement and consultation was undertaken where necessary as part of the equalities work.

2.3.9 Route to the meeting

This has been previously considered by the following groups as part of its development. The groups have either supported the content, or their feedback has informed the development of the content presented in this report.

- Corporate Equalities Committee on 2 April 2026

2.4 Recommendation

For awareness. Board Members are asked to receive the report and note the progress of the Corporate Equalities Structure in 2025-2026.

- **Awareness** – For Members' information only.

3. List of appendices

The following appendices are included with this report:

- Appendix 1 – Corporate Equalities Structure Annual Report for 2025-2026

NHS Ayrshire & Arran Corporate Equalities Committee

Annual Report for 2025/26

1. Summary

- 1.1 The report provides information on the activities of the Corporate Equalities Structure (Corporate Equalities Committee and Equalities Implementation Group) during 2025-2026 and details the Committee membership and meeting attendance. The report provides assurance that the Corporate Equalities Structure has discharged its role as set out in the agreed Terms of Reference.

The Corporate Equalities Structure was approved in February 2021, to further strengthen our commitment to the equalities agenda and provide governance of our reporting duties under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

1.2 Key Messages

The Corporate Equalities structure over the last year has undertaken the following key actions:

- Anti-racism Plan
- Reasonable Adjustment Passport
- New Translation and Interpretation process
- Staff Networks
- Membership of Equalities Implementation Group

2. Remit

- 2.1 The Corporate Equalities structure remit, as agreed in the Terms of Reference:

- The Corporate Equalities Committee is to provide assurance to the NHS Board that the organisation is compliant with our requirements in line with the Equality Act 2010 Public Sector Equality Duty and duties under the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012.
- The Equalities Implementation Group is to oversee the implementation of the actions to deliver on our equality outcomes relevant to the public or staff, and any other actions to ensure compliance with equalities and associated legislation, including the Fairer Scotland Duty.

3. Membership

3.1 The Corporate Equalities structure membership during the reporting period was as follows:

Corporate Equalities Committee

- Non-Executive Board Member (Chair)
- Employee Director
- Equality and Inclusion Manager
- Executive Nurse Director
- Human Resources Director
- Senior representative from Acute Services
- Senior representative from Infrastructure and Support Services
- Senior representatives from the three Health and Social Care Partnerships
- Senior representative from Medicine
- Senior representative from Mental Health Services
- Senior representative from Nursing Directorate
- Senior representative from Organisation and Human Resource Development
- Senior representative from Public Health
- Senior representative from Transformation and Sustainability
- Senior representative from Women and Children's Service

Equalities Implementation Group

- Senior representative from Acute Services
- Senior representative from Infrastructure and Support Services
- Senior representatives from the three Health and Social Care Partnerships
- Senior representative from Medicine
- Senior representative from Mental Health Services
- Senior representative from Nursing
- Senior representative from Organisation and Human Resource Development
- Senior representative from Pharmacy
- Senior representative from Primary Care
- Senior representative from Public Health
- Senior representative from Transformation and Sustainability
- Senior representative from Women's and Children's Services
- Staff Side representative
- Equality and Inclusion Manager

4. Meeting

4.1 The Corporate Equalities Committee has a remit to meet twice yearly between 1 April and 31 March. The Committee met on 14 April 2025 and 11 November 2025.

4.2 The Equalities Implementation Group has a remit to meet quarterly and met on four occasions between 1 April 2025 and 31 March 2026.

5. Corporate Equalities Activities

5.1 Anti-Racism Plan

Scottish Government guidance was received in September 2024 asking Health Boards to make more progress in tackling the impacts of racism on colleagues, service users and on health outcomes. In response to this, NHS A&A has aligned the development and delivery of the anti-racism plan to our new set of equality outcomes to ensure we have a strong focus on becoming an anti-racist organisation.

Year one of our equality outcome on anti-racism was to ensure robust engagement and consultation on the plan both with staff and service users, as outlined in the DL Guidance. This engagement included surveys and focus groups and the feedback has shaped and informed the content of the plan. Years two to four of the outcome will focus on implementation and mainstreaming into NHS Ayrshire & Arran business functions.

The plan has been presented to many groups and committees across the organisation and will be presented to the NHS Board meeting in June for final approval.

To support the delivery and publication of the Anti-Racism Plan and to strengthen the Board's ongoing commitment to racial equality, the forthcoming objective-setting cycle will require all Directors to have explicit ownership, defined actions, and clear accountability for delivering the Board's corporate racial equality commitments.

5.2 Reasonable Adjustment Passport

One of the actions contained within our equality outcomes was to develop a Reasonable Adjustment Passport (RAP). The RAP provides a consistent, person-centred approach to identifying, agreeing and recording reasonable adjustments for staff with a disability, health condition or impairment. It supports the organisation to meet its legal duties under the Equality Act 2010 by ensuring that reasonable adjustments are considered proactively, implemented in a timely manner, and reviewed regularly, rather than relying on ad-hoc or informal arrangements.

The passport aims to reduce the need for staff to repeatedly disclose personal information or renegotiate adjustments when changing roles or line managers. As a transferable, employee-owned record, it supports continuity, reduces delays, and helps protect staff wellbeing, attendance, performance and retention.

By clarifying roles and responsibilities, the passport also supports constructive conversations between staff and managers and embeds reasonable adjustments as a routine part of good people management. Overall, it strengthens organisational consistency, supports an inclusive workplace culture, and reinforces the organisation's commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion.

A working group was established in 2025, including representatives from our Disability Staff Network, and a collaborative approach was taken to develop the RAP. The group also developed guidance for managers, as

well as a document outlining examples of reasonable adjustments. The RAP will go forward for approval to relevant groups/committees for approval with a view to rolling out across the organisation.

5.3 **New Translation and Interpretation process**

NHS Ayrshire & Arran has updated its translation and interpretation process to improve consistency, access and governance across the organisation. The revised approach strengthens compliance with equality and human rights duties, clarifies routes for requesting translation and interpretation support, and promotes the appropriate use of professional services to ensure accuracy, confidentiality and patient safety.

By embedding a single, standardised process for requesting and approving translation and interpretation support, the revised approach reduces variation in practice across sites and services. This promotes fairness and consistency, ensuring that patients with similar needs receive comparable levels of support regardless of where or how they access services.

The changes also support more timely access to support, better use of available resources, and a more sustainable and equitable service model for an increasingly diverse population.

Implementing the new process also aims to support more effective management of translation and interpretation spend through clearer controls, earlier planning and greater use of appropriate remote solutions where clinically suitable. This provides assurance that resources are being used proportionately and efficiently, balancing financial sustainability with the requirement to maintain high quality, safe and effective provision.

5.4 **Staff Networks**

Work continues to progress through the staff networks ensuring staff experience is considered and the staff voice is listened to. The networks also offer peer support, as well as opportunity for individuals to seek guidance and support.

Some highlights from the networks are outlined below.

- Ethnic Minority Staff Network members participated in consultations to ensure the voice of ethnic minority staff was included.
- Members of the LGBTQ+ Staff Network were involved in the Pride event in Glasgow in July 2025 joining with other emergency service colleagues to show a united front.
- Colleagues from the LGBTQ+ Staff Network supported the organisation with trans training to support the work around the Supreme Court Ruling in April 2025.
- Disability Staff Network members were involvement in the development of a reasonable adjustment passport for staff.
- All networks engaged with the consultation work in the development of the anti-racism plan.

5.5 **Supreme Court Ruling**

In April 2025, the UK Supreme Court issued a landmark judgment clarifying the interpretation of “sex” and “woman” within the Equality Act 2010. The Court ruled that, for the purposes of the Act, “sex” refers to biological sex, defined at birth.

The ruling has significant implications for public bodies, including NHS Ayrshire & Arran, in relation to the lawful application of sex-based rights and protections. In response, the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) is updating its statutory Code of Practice to reflect the Court’s interpretation and issued interim guidance in May 2025 to support public bodies to remain compliant with the Equality Act 2010 and wider human rights legislation while appropriately balancing all protected characteristics.

NHS Ayrshire & Arran, under the direction of the Director of Public Health, has been actively considering the implications of the Supreme Court Ruling to ensure organisational policies, practices, and guidance remain lawful, proportionate, and aligned with national direction. The organisation is taking a measured and evidence-led approach, monitoring updates from the EHRC, NHS Scotland, and the Scottish Government.

Work is being progressed through wider organisational engagement, including contributions from individuals participating on a voluntary basis, and incorporates an audit of facilities and staff communications, alongside the establishment of targeted sub-groups to progress specific areas of work. Throughout this process, NHS Ayrshire & Arran remains clear that discrimination, harassment, and victimisation of any group is unacceptable and unlawful, and that inclusive care and respectful workplaces remain fundamental to the organisation’s values and culture.

5.6 **Membership of Equalities Implementation Group**

The Equalities Implementation Group (EIG) membership was extended in 2025/26 to include those leading on the new equality outcome actions. This will ensure a clear focus on progress of the outcomes and 6-monthly updates are provided to the EIG. Due to staff changes, the Terms of Reference and membership of the EIG are being reviewed and updated.

6. **Priorities for 2026/27**

- 6.1 A key priority will be the implementation of the anti-racism plan and overseeing delivery of the actions contained within the plan to ensure NHS Ayrshire & Arran becomes an anti-racist organisation. This links with our equality outcomes as well as the wider culture work.
- 6.2 Another key priority for 2026-2027 will be to provide assurance to the NHS Board that the organisation is compliant with the duties outlined through the Equality Act 2010 Public Sector Equality Duty and Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012 in particular through publication of progress on our equality outcomes 2025-2029, mainstreaming report, workforce data and occupational segregation and equal pay analysis report.

- 6.3 In 2023, NHS Ayrshire & Arran achieved accreditation in Equally Safe at Work programme. This innovative and world leading employer accreditation programme, supports the local implementation of Equally Safe, Scotland's national strategy to prevent and eradicate violence against women and girls.

The programme aims to ensure gender equality within our practices and processes, and demonstrating our commitment to preventing violence against women while offering support to those who experience it.

Due to the change in leadership, another key priority for 2026-2027 will be reviewing and updating our current status with a view to progressing to the next tier.

7. Executive Leads' Comments

- 7.1 I would like to thank all members for their contribution to progressing the work of the Corporate Equalities Structure during 2025 and 2026.

In particular, I appreciate the support from all members of the Committee for their input in the development of and contribution to the agenda and for the considerable work undertaken during the course of the year. During a difficult and challenging time, the group has worked hard to develop actions to provide equity to, not only our service users, but also our staff.

I would also like to thank our staff who have engaged in our staff networks and our network chairs who have created opportunities for staff to share experiences and help us improve staff experience. We acknowledge that there is much to do to give a voice to all our staff and for us to improve our awareness and understanding of equalities and address the gaps which still prevail in our NHS and impact on staff with protected characteristics.

Dr Sukhomoy Das
Chair – Corporate Equalities Committee
02/04/2026