

NHS Highland



Meeting: Board Meeting
Meeting date: 25 March 2025
Title: NHS Highland Equalities Outcomes & Mainstreaming Progress Report 2021-2025
Responsible Executive/Non-Executive: Gareth Adkins, Director of People and Culture
Report Author: Gayle Macrae, EDI Lead - Workforce

Report Recommendation:

The Board are asked to

- **Note** – The content of the report.
- **Assurance** – Take **Moderate Assurance** the content of the report provides confidence of compliance with legislation, policy and Board objectives.
- **Approve** – The Equalities Outcomes and Mainstreaming report prior to submission and publication to meet the legal requirement.

1 Purpose

This is presented to the Board for:

- Decision
- Assurance

This report relates to a:

- Legal Requirement
- 5 Year Strategy, Together We Care, with you, for you

This report will align to the following NHSScotland quality ambition(s):

Safe, Effective and Person Centred

This report relates to the following Strategic Outcome(s)

Start Well		Thrive Well		Stay Well		Anchor Well	
Grow Well	X	Listen Well		Nurture Well	X	Plan Well	X
Care Well		Live Well		Respond Well		Treat Well	
Journey Well		Age Well		End Well		Value Well	
Perform well		Progress well		All Well Themes			

2 Report summary

2.1 Situation

NHS Highland published its last set of equality outcomes in April 2021 for the four-year period to 2025. A progress report was published in April 2023. These reports can be found on [NHS Highland's website](#).

The outcomes set for the four year period were –

- Outcome 1 - In Highland, people from identified groups, including young people, will have improved access to the resources needed to support their mental health and wellbeing.
- Outcome 2 - In Highland, all individuals are equally safe and respected, and women and girls live free from all forms of violence and abuse and the attitudes that perpetuate it.
- Outcome 3 - In Highland, people from identified groups will have more control over the care and services they receive.

The progress report 2021-2025 (Appendix 1) describes the progress made against the 3 outcomes, as well as progress towards mainstreaming of equality within NHS Highland.

Mainstreaming is the incorporation of the general equality duties within the functions of an organisation. NHS Highland must take equality into account in everything that it does as an employer, provider and commissioner of services.

The report also includes initiatives undertaken to create an inclusive environment for our colleagues. Information regarding these areas was provided by members of our People and Culture Team.

2.2 Background

The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) came into force in May 2012. These specific duties are designed to help public sector organisations meet the general equality duty effectively. The key legal duties that NHS Highland must meet include –

- Report on mainstreaming the equality duty
- Publish equality outcomes and report progress

- Assess and review policies and practices
- Gather and use employee information
- Publish gender gap pay information
- Publish statements on equal pay
- Consider award criteria and conditions in relation to public procurement

As well as meeting our obligations in regard to the Specific Duties Act, the work contained within the report also links into the Nurture Well outcome within the Together We Care Strategy and the Annual Delivery Plan 2024-25.

A short life working group was formed to gather information to compile the Highland Equality Mainstreaming and Outcomes Report for the NHS Highland Board. This group linked in with the NHS Highland Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Oversight group to collaborate on the production of the report.

2.3 Assessment

The full report is included as an appendix to this paper. Some key highlights from the report include:

- NHS Highland Working Carers Network established to support staff who undertake the role of Unpaid Carer. The network meets online, on the last Thursday of every month, providing peer support and the opportunity to access additional support and advice. It has also been a useful way to involve Unpaid Carers in the development of the Carer's Strategy and related policies.
- Launch of a new mandatory training module for all staff, "Introduction to Equality, Diversity and Human Rights". Developed by NHS Education for Scotland, this module aims to educate staff in how to Identify discrimination, harassment and inappropriate behaviour in the workplace and identify actions that can be taken to challenge and prevent it
- An Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Workforce Strategy for 2025-2028 was developed in the latter half of 2024. Its launch is anticipated for April 2025, to coincide with the launch of the next set of Equality Outcomes.
- The NHS Scotland Pride badge promotes inclusion for LGBTQ+ people and makes a statement that there's no place for discrimination or harassment of any kind in NHS Scotland. Since the launch in 2021 over 800 NHS Highland staff members have signed up to the scheme.
- Launch and promotion of a new "Cultural Humility" training module in November 2023 for all staff. Developed by NHS Education for Scotland, this module aims to educate staff in the concepts that underpin cultural humility, and behaviours to develop an inclusive workplace.

2.4 Proposed level of Assurance

Substantial	<input type="checkbox"/>	Moderate	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Limited	<input type="checkbox"/>	None	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comment on the level of assurance

Some actions were not achieved within the 2021-2025 cycle and these have been carried forward into the 2025-2029 Equality Outcomes.

3 Impact Analysis

3.1 Quality/ Patient Care

The report provides information on the equalities progress for the population within NHS Highland. The interventions identified in the report should have positive impacts for those protected under the Equality (Scotland) Act 2010 in accessing early intervention, prevention, information and services. This report will raise awareness of NHS Highland’s commitment to equalities.

3.2 Workforce

The report provides information of the progress within NHS Highland’s policy and practise to improve on the equalities provision which should provide a positive impact for all the workforce, particularly those protected under the Equality (Scotland) Act 2010. This report will raise awareness of NHS Highland’s commitment to equalities.

3.3 Financial

No financial impact identified.

3.4 Risk Assessment/Management

If the information contained within the report is not used to further the 3 needs as set out in the General Equality Duty, then the organisation risks not meeting its legal obligations in respect of Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 (the public sector equality duty).

3.5 Data Protection

Personally identifiable information has not been included in the interim report.

3.6 Equality and Diversity, including health inequalities

Publishing the interim report is a legal duty of the Equality Act 2010 and states the progress made by NHS Highland against the Mainstreaming and Board’s equality outcomes.

The report describes interventions that support the Fairer Scotland Duty, under Part 1 of the Equality Act 2010 that aim to reduce inequalities of outcome, caused by socioeconomic disadvantage.

An impact assessment has not been completed because it is not required for reporting for the progress report.

3.7 Other impacts

No other impacts identified.

3.8 Communication, involvement, engagement and consultation

A working group was formed, made up of representatives from various disciplines in NHS Highland. The group collaborated to produce the report and will continue to work closely together to realise the ambitions contained within the Nurture Well strategic outcome.

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.

- People and Culture Portfolio Board 27th January 2025
- Population Health Programme Board 29th January 2025
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Oversight Group 31st January 2025
- Area Partnership Forum 14th February 2025
- Staff Governance Committee 4th March 2025

4.1 List of appendices

The following appendices are included with this report:

- NHS Highland Equality Outcome and Mainstreaming Progress Report 2021-2025

Equality Outcomes and Mainstreaming Equalities Report 2021-2025

Progress towards outcomes – 2021-2025

NHS Highland published its last set of equality outcomes in April 2021, with a progress report published in April 2023, for the four-year period to 2025. These reports can be found on [NHS Highland's website](#). By looking at the available evidence and in consultation with key partners, three outcomes were identified as priority areas for improvement over the four-year reporting period. The specific duties require us to review progress in meeting our equalities outcomes every two years. Following on from our progress report published in 2023, we can share a final update on progress towards mainstreaming equalities outcomes from 2021-2025 below.

The outcomes set for the four-year period were:

Outcome 1: In Highland, people from identified groups, including young people, will have improved access to the resources needed to support their mental health and wellbeing.

Outcome 2: In Highland, all individuals are equally safe and respected, and women and girls live free from all forms of violence and abuse and the attitudes that perpetuate it

Outcome 3: In Highland, people from identified groups will have more control over the care and services they receive.

In the process of reviewing previous outcomes and gathering information about our achievements towards them, we have learned some key lessons we intend to take forward in mainstreaming equalities work. Looking back, it's clear there is some great success in many areas towards mainstreaming equality. However, where we have not succeeded, themes of staffing changes, COVID redeployment and recovery, a lack of identified responsible person or lack of awareness of the outcomes have been barriers to successfully taking actions.

We would like to thank all those who contributed to the mainstreaming of equalities in their actions, and in the reporting of these actions for this document.

Outcome 1

In Highland, people from identified groups, including young people, will have improved access to the resources needed to support their mental health and wellbeing.

Key Achievements

Planet Youth

Highland is a part of the national pilot of [Planet Youth](#) in Scotland and NHS Highland have supported with establishing Planet Youth community groups in 5 schools. Most schools in the pilot areas have engaged with the program, and all have viewed their school reports. Work is being progressed on how to effectively use the data.

Improving the Mental Health and Resilience of Young People is one of the actions identified by each group. The Planet Youth team are working closely with local young people's support services [Mikeysline](#), Change MH and [Kooth](#). The team are engaging in discussions to support Mikeysline with a resilience training programme within schools, and to support Change MH with the roll out of Parent and child 4-week resilience programme, previously piloted by CAMHS.

The Planet Youth team is also working with young people who do not attend school at Airport House in Wick. The Planet Youth team have recognised that young people, in particular non-binary students, are more affected by bullying and poor mental health, and are establishing links with the Highland Educational Psychology team to see how they can support delivering training in this area.

The Planet Youth team conduct a survey every 2 years asking young people about their experiences, with their [2023 results](#) highlighting the impact of mental health and bullying on young people. The team delivered a [Bullying webinar](#) incorporating Planet Youth bullying and Mental Health data. This was co-hosted with Safe, Strong and Free on 30th October 2024 - 101 people registered, 65 people attended on the day and the webinar has been uploaded onto Vimeo and shared in both the newsletter and on social media.

Planet Youth supported Highland Youth Parliament (HYP) conference in 2024, giving young people a chance to get together to talk about issues important to them and discuss ways they can make changes in these areas. The Health Improvement Smoking Cessation team, supported by Planet Youth, ran a session on Vaping, and Health impacts, peer pressure and choices young people make were discussed.

The Promise

In 2020, Scotland made a promise to care experienced children and young people: that they would grow up safe, loved and respected. In 2024, the UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act came into force. NHS Highland have progressed outcome 1 through it's children's rights work and work to #keepthepromise by:

- Making a commitment to collaborative working to #keepthepromise under the Thrive Well outcome in the Together We Care Strategy (2022-2027)

- NHSH representation on the Highland Council Promise Board, which has undertaken an extensive range of work to raise awareness, support workforce development and facilitate the participation of care experienced children and young people in decision making
- Including additional considerations of children's UNCRC rights added to Impact Assessments templates in 2024
- Participation in the Northern Collaborative and NHS Promise Network facilitated by Promise Scotland to strengthen and support NHS contribution to achieving Plan 24-30
- Information on the Promise and what health staff can do to #keepthepromise circulated in Chief Executive cascade, with managers asked to convey information to staff
- New Children's Rights section added to NHSH intranet with reference to The Promise
- Work is currently being progressed to develop an NHSH Promise improvement plan that will align and compliment HSCP plans and activity.
- NHSH UNCRC improvement plan has been developed to complement HSCP's plans and will be supported by a communications plan (in development).
- Incorporation of UNCRC has been supported by promotion of the relevant TURAS module and uptake of national NES awareness raising sessions along with bespoke local sessions tailored to staff teams working in children and some adult services. Progressing a rights-based approach is central to the realisation of children's rights with all resources underpinned by a commitment to children's empowerment as a means to greater; equality, fairness, opportunities to achieve their potential and being able to live lives free from fear, harassment, violence and discrimination.

Perinatal and Infant Mental Health Service

The Infant Mental Health service has been established as part of a wider Perinatal Mental Health Team. The team consists of:

- Clinical Psychologists - x 2 WTE
- Perinatal Mental Health Nurses - x 2 WTE
- Specialist Midwife - x 1 WTE
- Parent-infant therapist - x 0.8 WTE

The team fulfils the functions of Community Perinatal Mental Health, Maternity & Neonatal Psychological Interventions, and Infant Mental Health.

Within the context of Infant Mental Health, the team is currently unable to deliver direct interventions with infants and families but has been able to enhance the capacity of other NHS, Local Authority and Third Sector colleagues to deliver this work via several different interventions including reflective practice sessions, CPD & consultation. Significant development work has been undertaken, with key projects detailed below.

- Working with Public Health to design Trauma training that includes Infant Mental Health for all public services.
- Working with The Promise Highland to deliver Infant Mental Health training across public services in one rural area (Lochaber). This will build on intensive IMH training, supported by reflective practise in groups mixed professionals of services. Services

identified will include Police, Social services (Care and Learning), Education, 2x Third Sector organisations, Health Visiting and Midwifery. Delivery is planned for February 2025.

- Beginning in January 2025, Infant Mental Health training will be delivered to Prison Officers who support prisoner family contact, with the aim of moving to reflective practice.
- Working with the Third Scots Battalion Welfare Office to collate needs for staff/Armed Forces families around gaps in the support for families with infants.
- Supported a funding bid for the Highland Children’s Unit to fund an artist in residence to work with and support the well-being for Families (including those with infants) on the Highland Children’s Unit, Raigmore Hospital, for six months.
- Working with Care and Protection (Social Services) to include the needs of infants into their Whole Family Well-being assessments.
- Within Argyll & Bute, a Parent-Infant Therapist offers direct Infant Mental Health interventions, and this remains operationally distinct from the Highland Health & Social Care Partnership.

Infant Mental Health Collaborative work:

- Setting up joint Infant Consultation with Early Years Educational Psychologist and Lead for Primary Mental health Worker Service.
- Working with the University of the Highlands and Islands, and Glasgow Caledonian University to deliver Infant Mental Health introductory training as part of HV courses.
- Working with Paediatric Liaison Service within Child & Adolescent Mental Health to deliver collaborative Mental Health training and support (including IMH) to paediatric nurses on Highland Children’s Unit.

Training:

NHS Highland currently offers training that aligns to the NES Perinatal Mental Health Training Plan. This has been widely promoted to relevant NHS staff, other statutory partners, third sector and a schedule of training for 2025 has been developed.

	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Introduction to Perinatal Infant Health Service (A&B)	N/A	N/A	141
Introduction to Infant Mental Health	26	71	44
Impact of Family Violence on the Infant	N/A	N/A	17
Bonding with Baby	N/A	N/A	12 (parents)

Alcohol and Drugs Partnership work with Midwifery and Women’s health

Guidance Updates: Updating the guidance on Substance use, Domestic Abuse and FGM ensures that midwives are equipped with the knowledge to identify and support women from vulnerable groups. This directly enhances access to mental health resources.

Antenatal Alcohol Brief Interventions (ABI): Delivering ABI training to all Community Midwifery Teams ensures that women receive timely support regarding substance use, which is crucial for their mental health and wellbeing.

Drug and Alcohol Awareness Sessions: Regular training sessions on the impact of drugs and alcohol use during pregnancy and breastfeeding empowers midwives with the latest evidence and information, enabling them to provide high-quality care and resources to women.

Streamlined Care Pathways: new care pathways have been developed resulting in improved communication between Obstetric/ Maternity Services and other teams, including the Perinatal & Infant Mental Health Team and the MAT Implementation Group.

Lived/ Living Experience Group: Representatives from the group are currently undertaking revision the current information leaflets and are involved in a trauma-informed walk-through of the Maternity Unit at Raigmore Hospital.

MAT Standards: The Medication Assisted Treatment Standards state that “All people with co-occurring drug use and mental health difficulties can receive mental health care at the point of MAT delivery”.

We have developed an interface protocol designed to give a clear framework where all NHS Highland Substance Use Services, Mental Health Services, LD and Adult Social Care Services can operate consistently regarding the provision of comprehensive services to individuals with Co-occurring Mental Health and Substance Use Disorders.

There is a workshop planned for February 2025 where case scenarios will be discussed bringing services together.

Outcome 2:

In Highland, all individuals are equally safe and respected, and women and girls live free from all forms of violence and abuse and the attitudes that perpetuate it

Key Achievements

This outcome was the responsibility of the Highland Violence Against Women Partnership (HVAWP), which is a group of statutory, non-statutory and third sector partners working together to achieve equality for and prevent all forms of violence against women and girls in Highland. The HVAWP reports to the Highland Public Protection Chief Officers Group (HPPCOG) as one of five public protection areas which are:

- Child Protection
- Alcohol, Drugs, and other Substance Use
- Adult Support & Protection
- Violence Against Women including Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC)
- MAPPA (Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements for the management of sexual and/or violent offenders)

In reviewing the achievements towards the previous equality outcomes, the work of key individuals has been the mainstay of success towards achieving a Highland where women and girls live free from violence, abuse and attitudes that perpetuate it.

For the past eight years, NHS Highland has worked towards the same equality objective focused on a long-term goal of tackling violence against women. Considering the increased violence against women and girls globally and the importance of setting effective and achievable goals, the focus for the 2024 – 2027 period will focus on Women's Health and gender equality. We are taking forward the action to achieve the Equally Safe accreditation which was not progressed in this cycle due to a lack of identified lead.

Myra Ross, Health Improvement Specialist, was recently recognised for her “outstanding contribution” to the Highland community by Emma Roddick MSP during the 25th Anniversary of the Scottish Parliament. Myra was chosen for her dedication to tackling gender-based violence and was celebrated as a Local Hero. Myra Ross has also been nominated for The National 16 Days Campaign for best campaign at the Scottish Public Service Awards. Improvement Services have said “Since the Imagine poem and resources were so impactful last year and this year, I think this is definitely a recognition of your work!”

Since 2022, a comprehensive suite of training has been developed and delivered, both face-to-face and online via TURAS. Myra Ross has created bespoke, trauma-informed training which has been recognised at a national level, including the highly regarded ‘Spider in the Glass’ course. This training function has now been incorporated into NHS Highland's Health Improvement Team, thus ensuring the ongoing sustainability and delivery of this function.

The HVAWP Strategic Plan for 2024-2027 draft has been finalised pending ratification, linking to the Scottish Government's [Equally Safe Strategy](#), the [Council of Europe Istanbul Convention](#) and the Highland Outcome Improvement Plan.

- VAWP held a Development Day in September 2024 – the morning session was delivered by Sarah Griffin, Senior Public Health Intelligence Specialist, who

presented on the significant piece of work she had undertaken to scope data for the HVAWP (more detail below). This was followed by discussion on what the priorities should be, and gaps identified. The afternoon session was led by James Martin from Highlife Highland and focused on how to raise the profile of the work of the HVAWP.

- Highland Data Scoping: violence against women and girls – a report was commissioned by the HVAWP and NHS Highland Health Improvement Team, to scope available data on violence against women and girls (VAWG) for the Highland Council area. The aim was to enable better use of quantitative data, increasing awareness of the available information and to identify any long-term or emerging trends. The collated information will inform service planning to prevent VAWG, and to direct support to those affected by VAWG. Gaps in data availability have also been identified and highlighted.
- Implementing Equally Safe strategy locally (as directed by SG/COSLA) across Highland in partnership with The Highland Council.
- In February 2024, Emma Roddick MSP, Minister for Equalities visited Larch House, Inverness. She met with HVAWP staff, Lorna Stanger and Myra Ross, and Myra delivered a session on the training materials she had developed.
- The new Highland Violence Against Women Partnership website was launched in November 2024 and a social media campaign has been rolled out to improve awareness of Gender Based Violence (GBV), signposting to support agencies where possible.

16 Days of Activism:

- In November 2023 and 2024, HVAWP engaged in the Improvement Services '16 Days of Activism' campaign to support local events and promote national events, making use of resources to help maximise the campaign. Highlights included:
 - 'Reclaim the Night' march (Inverness) – 25th November 2023
 - 'Imagine' Campaign – based on Myra Ross' poem, this was created in collaboration between NHS Highland Communication & Engagement Team and HVAWP Learning, Development and Prevention Group. The campaign was adopted and rolled out nationally, including screenings in cinemas, displayed onto buildings and distributed by COSLA to all Local Authority Chief Executives.
 - 'Imagine' Campaign Video shown and referenced by the Minister for Justice at the national launch of the Equally Safe Strategy in Edinburgh.
 - Lorna Stanger, survivor of GBV, ran sixteen marathons in sixteen days to raise funds for RASASH and awareness of Gender-Based Violence. She wore a different verse of 'Imagine' emblazoned across her running shirt every day. On Day 13, Lorna ran to the Scottish Parliament, where she and Myra Ross visited the Parliament, speaking to MSPs and the First Minister.
 - Social Media campaign ('Do I Not Count?') and wide-spread distribution of posters across NHS Highland.
- Under the VAW Partnership, there are 5 Delivery Groups - Addressing Perpetrators; MARAC; Service Provision; Learning, Development and Prevention; Safe and Together. These were formed to achieve aims of the VAWP 2021-24 strategic plan – with membership changing throughout the year to bring in new skills and experiences

- Routine Enquiries on Domestic Abuse is regularly undertaken within priority settings, with 100% of female Community Mental Health and Substance Misuse patients being asked about Domestic Abuse.

A new Gender-Based Violence Policy (Once for Scotland) is to be launched imminently. To align with this, a Level 1 training schedule for Managers (front-line to senior management) has been developed and will be delivered throughout January and February 2025. This will be face-to-face training and will incorporate the Spider in the Glass training developed by Myra Ross.

Alcohol and Drugs Partnership work:

- Evidence suggesting women experiencing more harm from drugs and alcohol than in previous years – planning in place & national collaborative checklist against human rights will be applied.
- Drug & Alcohol specialist Midwives ran a 'Mocktails for mums' event in Sept 2024 to align with FASD awareness day
- **Conversation Tools:** The development of conversation tools using the Offer, Offer, Ask, Offer approach fosters a respectful dialogue between midwives and women. This approach helps create a safe environment for discussing sensitive issues like substance use and domestic abuse.
- **Collaboration with Mental Health Teams:** Working closely with the perinatal and infant mental health team ensures that women have access to comprehensive support services, reinforcing their safety and respect within the healthcare system.
- **Engagement:** Engaging with universal, specialist and 3rd sector services that provide support to women and families affected by substance use to raise awareness about available resources helps combat the stigma surrounding domestic abuse and substance use, promoting a culture of safety and respect.

Outcome 3:

In Highland, people from identified groups will have more control over the care and services they receive.

Key Achievements

Establishing Highland Directory of Support Services

The Highland Directory of Support Services helps people living and working in the Highlands to find out about groups, activities and organisations that support health and well-being. Development of the directory has been funded to support the Community Link Worker Service which is delivered in GP practices. The directory will support Community Link workers to offer social prescribing opportunities to patients.

There was a recognition that the Directory would be useful for anyone needing support for their health and well-being, and is available to anyone looking for information and support. The Directory includes both local and national organisations and information relating to community services that promote mental health and physical well-being. Listed within the Directory are helplines, support groups and activities to suit individual circumstances which link into protected characteristics.

Communications and Engagement

- Developing the Communications and Engagement strategy 24-27
- Setting up the Highland 100 panel and completion of first Survey. This enabled a database of groups, representatives and networks to be developed for consultation about services and for patients voices to be heard in matters affecting them.
- New software for consultation, Engagement HQ, purchased and piloted to better reach remote, rural patient populations. Collaborative platform for patient engagement and consultation.
- Conducting a health needs assessment to build trust with Highland Gypsy Traveller community. Increased understanding of barriers and discrimination faced by the Gypsy Traveller community
- Senior Health Improvement specialist Claire Derwin won the Annual Public Health conference Poster presentation for her Gypsy Traveller health service improvement work.
- The development of NHS Highlands Engagement Framework supports colleagues to develop meaningful relationships and engagement activities to inform our work and helps to ensure we meet our statutory duties. Testing the Framework, NHS Highland undertook extensive engagement on a population wide basis to develop the Together we Care strategy. The ethos of the Framework was used to support the coproduction of the Mental Health and Learning Disability Strategy, where wide ranging engagement took place from the start and led to the formation of a diverse network made up of colleagues, partners, community groups and carers, who continue to support and inform developments within these services.

Carers

- NHS Highland Working Carers Network established to support staff who undertake the role of Unpaid Carer. The network meets online, on the last Thursday of every month, providing peer support and the opportunity to access additional support and advice. It has also been a useful way to involve Unpaid Carers in the development of the Carer's Strategy and related policies.
- The Carers Strategy is under development and will be launched in early 2025. Outreach has been taking place to ensure that the voices of unpaid Adult Carers are heard and shape the development of the Strategy.
- NHS Highland has ongoing contracts with Third Sector organisations to help us implement the requirements of the Carers (Scotland) Act (2016):
 - Connecting Carers – to offer all adult Unpaid Carers the opportunity to complete an outcome-focused Carer's Support plan and to access additional advice and support when undertaking the role of an unpaid carer.
 - Partners in Advocacy – to provide unpaid carers, living in the Highland Council area, with professional, independent advocacy. Many of the issues involved in the independent advocacy role are complex and involve longer term relationships with Carers. Some Carers may also feel vulnerable and therefore require a greater degree of support from an independent advocate. All Carers are supported on an issue-by-issue basis and their relationship with the service is continually reviewed at weekly team meetings in terms of dependency and what can be done to help empower them as individuals.
 - 'Mobilise' – an online service has been commissioned which provides access to advice and information for carers.
- In addition to the above contracted services, project funding totalling £250k per annum has been awarded to Third Sector projects delivering services and support for carers in local areas including a befriending service, creative arts projects and carer support at home.
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Highland Area	Number of Carers with completed Adult Carer's Support Plan (May 2024)
Badenoch & Strathspey	163
Caithness	253
Lochaber	241
Nairn & Nairnshire	233
Skye & Lochalsh	85
Sutherland	153
Inverness	1111
Ross-shire (East & West)	755
Out of area	37
TOTAL:	3031

- Funding for short-breaks and respite has continued, with £3.5 million awarded to carers in Highland since 2021. There have been 6,000 applications involving 2,000 carers

Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT)

The MAT standards define what is needed for the consistent delivery of safe and accessible drug treatment and support in Scotland. The standards apply to all services and

organisations responsible for the delivery of care in a recovery orientated system. The purpose of the standards is to improve access and retention in MAT, enable people to make an informed choice about care, include family members or nominated person(s) wherever appropriate, and to strengthen accountability and leadership so that the necessary governance and resource is in place to implement them effectively.

Within NHS Highland we are using the method for improvement to guide our improvements. To demonstrate if changes are really improvement, we need the ability to test changes and measure the impact successfully. This is essential for areas we want to continuously improve safety. To do this we need a few specific measures linked to clear objectives to demonstrate that changes are going in the right direction.

We conduct interviews with patients, carers and staff to gather feedback and inform areas for improvement going forward

People who use Drugs & Alcohol

The Alcohol and Drugs Partnership team have established a Lived Experience panel, who have provided essential feedback around need for reducing stigma in A&E, and supported with the development and engagement with a Health Needs Assessment which includes questions about stigma and discrimination. The results are pending Feb 2025.

Training and Resources: By providing midwives with updated training and resources, you empower them to offer personalised care that meets the specific needs of women, giving them more control over their healthcare decisions.

Feedback Mechanism: Implementing a feedback system allows women to voice their experiences and preferences regarding care, ensuring that services are tailored to their needs and enhancing their sense of control.

Interactive Workshops: The awareness training sessions include interactive elements that encourage midwives to use a trauma informed approach that supports and enables women to share their concerns and preferences, promoting involvement in their care.

Other Progress:

In doing the work to mainstream equalities across NHS Highland, there are other examples of best practice and notable work towards equalities going beyond the 2021-2025 outcomes, which we would like to acknowledge and highlight.

Workforce Equalities:

Launch of a new mandatory training module for all staff, "Introduction to Equality, Diversity and Human Rights". Developed by NHS Education for Scotland, this module aims to educate staff in how to identify discrimination, harassment and inappropriate behaviour in the workplace and identify actions that can be taken to challenge and prevent it. As at 31st December 2024, 68% of the organisation had completed this module.

An Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Oversight Group was established in May 2024 to progress workforce related EDI actions. This group comprises of senior managers in the organisation, persons with lived experience and staff representatives, and reports into the Area Partnership Forum.

An Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Workforce Strategy for 2025-2028 was developed in the latter half of 2024. Its launch is anticipated for April 2025, to coincide with the launch of the next set of Equality Outcomes.

Investment in a dedicated Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Workforce Lead post within the People and Culture Directorate. This is a brand new role to NHS Highland and will be key in driving forward the organisations commitment to creating an inclusive workplace.

LGBT:

All staff consultation on 'Supporting Transgender and Non-binary staff in the workplace' and revised guidance published with EQIA

Pride campaign ran throughout the month of June in 2023. This included a mixture of online and in-person events, hosted in conjunction with third party organisations including LGBT Youth Scotland and Out and About Highlands.

The NHS Scotland Pride badge promotes inclusion for LGBTQ+ people and makes a statement that there's no place for discrimination or harassment of any kind in NHS Scotland. Since the launch in 2021 over 800 NHS Highland staff members have signed up to the scheme.

Disability:

NHSH contributed to national resource in Healthy Respect's easier to understand sexual health information for people with learning disabilities [<https://www.healthyrespect.co.uk/etu/>]

Alcohol and Drugs Partnership team have run a Language Matters campaign on Moray Forth Radio to reduce stigmatising language use. This campaign includes:

- ADP partner pledge in non-discrimination launched
- Press releases with focus on non-discrimination and stigma reduction

Race and Ethnicity:

- Launch and promotion of a new "Cultural Humility" training module in November 2023 for all staff. Developed by NHS Education for Scotland, this module aims to educate staff in the concepts that underpin cultural humility, and behaviours to develop an inclusive workplace.
- Series of Black History Month content in all-staff newsletter emails throughout October 2024 celebrating Black historical figures on the 'reclaiming the narrative' theme
- Online Black History Month Celebration event was held for staff, including key speakers from National Education For Scotland and the international nursing community.

Equalities & the environment:

Involvement in One Health Breakthrough Partnership

The Highland Green Health Partnership was established in 2018 and is one of four initiatives in Scotland stemming from Our Natural Health Service which aims to show how Scotland's natural environment is a resource that can help tackle key health issues. The partnership is chaired by NHS Highland, and also includes High Life Highland, Highland Council, the Highland Third Sector Interface, Nature Scot, Paths for All, Highland Environment Forum, Highland Adapts, Highlands and Islands Climate Hub, the University of the Highlands and Islands, and Forestry and Land Scotland.

The partnerships aims include:

- To support more people to use the outdoor environment and more regularly
- To contribute to reducing health inequalities by targeting activity at those who are most in need
- To co-ordinate partnership efforts on use of the outdoor environment for health
- To identify existing assets, make links between them, and identify gaps in provision

We are including examples below in recognition of the intersections between protected characteristics and partnership working with Highland Green Health.

Examples include:

Through the distribution of four successive small grant schemes, we have supported 80 community groups to deliver nature-based activities focused on tackling inequalities through –

- projects which provide support for refugees, mental health and disability groups, the elderly, young carers, women's groups, LGBTQ people and parents
- targeted work to address income deprivation and rural isolation, and
- consultation work with user groups to increase access to greenspace.

Collaboration with the Cairngorms National Park Authority on their National Lottery Heritage Fund 'Cairngorms 2030' programme securing funds to employ two part-time, community-based green health link workers, as well as supporting a specialist Outdoor Dementia Resource Centre by Alzheimers Scotland at Badaguish Outdoor Centre.

We have supported and enabled the appointment of a health walk coordinator for rural Highland, the development of a cycling bothy in Golspie and an Advancing Active Journeys project in Skye & Lochalsh, Arts in Nature and Velocity Active Health project. All projects are aimed at getting those that do not currently engage, or are unable to engage with nature, outside in a supported environment.

Working with GPs Mental Health Support Services, Occupational Therapists and Community Link Workers on the training and distribution of resources to help facilitate nature connection including the development of online training module and Nature Prescriptions Calendar.

We have worked with our community planning partners producing guidance on the links between inequalities, climate, nature and health and integrated principals into community action groups and place plans. [Health Inequalities & Natural Solutions \(youtube.com\)](#)

We have published a variety of tools and guidance to support those working in nature-based health and wellbeing initiatives to understand and address inequalities and carried out training programmes. We have worked in partnership with a number of research institutes to better understand the impacts of prescribing nature including the University of Aberdeen, University of Stirling, UHI and the Public Health Interventions Research Studies Team (PHIRST). Lastly, we have worked to integrate our green health principles into 26 Highland programmes, plans and strategies.

Alcohol and Drugs Partnership – Reducing Stigma

Highland Alcohol and Drugs Partnership (HADP) are committed to addressing stigma and discrimination experienced by people with drug and alcohol problems, and their families. One way we can all reduce stigma is by using People First language. This means we focus on the person first, rather than behaviour.

We have developed a [Language Matters Guide](#) to highlight this easy way to support people with drug and alcohol problems.

HADP try to share this message whenever we have a platform, here are some recent press examples: [Drug deaths in Highlands fell in 2023, according to new figures from National Records of Scotland \(inverness-courier.co.uk\)](#) and [HEALTH MATTERS: We can all help in the battle against drink and drugs harm \(inverness-courier.co.uk\)](#)

In addition, HADP shares messages on Moray Firth Radio (MFR) at significant points in the year; over the summer in the run up to Recovery Month in September, and over the festive period. One of the messages is about Language Matters and Stigma. During the summer 2024 campaign, over 14,500 people listened to the Language Matters message. HADP have a People First Language Matters Partnership Pledge, an initiative to help reduce the stigma experienced by people; who have drug and alcohol problem(s), people in recovery and family members affected by problem drug and alcohol use. Details are on the main page of [HADP's website](#).