



Report Title	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Action Plan 2024/27 Progress Update (Year 2)
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Accountable Director	Mandy Wilcock, Director of People and Organisational Development
Previous committees/groups	Diversity and Inclusion Group (16 March 2026) People Committee (17 March 2026) People and Culture Group (scheduled 27 March 2026)
Recommended action(s) (assurance, approval, information)	Information and Assurance.
Purpose of the paper	To report progress against the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Action Plan 2024-27 year 2 objectives and set out the prioritised plan for 2026/27.
Executive Summary	
<p>Overall progress has been made across all agreed 2025/26 objectives, with delivery impacted in some areas by capacity constraints, with mitigating actions in place where original timescales have not been achieved.</p> <p>Key achievements include externally validated improvements in Equality, Diversity and Inclusion maturity through the award of Gold TIDE mark status and the Veterans Aware Silver Award, strengthened support for internationally recruited colleagues, and the introduction of disability leave provision within the Special Leave Policy. Statutory and assurance requirements have been met, with improvements reported in Workforce Race and Disability Equality Standard metrics and pay gap reporting on track for publication within agreed timescales.</p> <p>Priority programmes remain active, including the Inclusive Recruitment and Selection review, development of an Active Bystander to Upstander Programme, and an Anti-Racism Charter and rollout of cultural awareness training.</p> <p>Proposed 2026/27 objectives have been refined to ensure deliverability and alignment with emerging national and sector priorities, with appropriate partners identified and outcome measures under development.</p>	
Recommendation(s)	<p>The Trust Board is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Note the progress made against the 2025/26 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan objectives. Endorse the proposed 2026/27 objectives.
Link to Board Assurance Framework Risks (board and level 2 committees only)	<p>6. Develop and sustain an open and positive workplace culture.</p> <p>8. Deliver and sustain improvements in recruitment and retention.</p> <p>11. Collaborate effectively to improve population health and reduce health inequalities.</p>

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Action Plan 2024-27 Progress Update (Year 2)

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This paper provides information and assurance of progress towards the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) 2024/27 year 2 priorities and associated improvement projects and sets out a prioritised plan for 2026/27.
- 1.2 The plan supports 'Our People' bold ambition to be a "diverse and inclusive organisation with a culture of continuous improvement, where everyone feels valued, included, proud to work and can thrive". It aligns to the Association of Ambulance Chief Executive (AACE) Ambulance sector high impact actions and the 'Everyone Together' YAS Together pillar. Monitoring and reporting to via the Diversity and Inclusion Steering Group and the People and Culture Group.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The adoption of a 3-year Trust-wide EDI Action Plan supports a clear plan of action to progress cultural change over a sustained period. This Trust Board approved plan was developed collaboratively with stakeholders representing all service lines and Equality Support Networks and is available on the YAS website and Pulse Intranet.
- 2.2 The 'Our People' bold ambition aims to "Value difference and improve EDI of our people at all levels of the organisation, to reflect the population we serve" and "Improve our progress towards Workforce Race and Disability Equality Standards and eliminating our Gender Pay Gap".
- 2.3 Alongside the delivery of this EDI Plan, the Trust must meet its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 Public Sector Duty. This includes the reporting of pay gap data (gender, ethnicity and disability) and action plans, the workforce equality standards for ethnicity and disability, and assessment and publication of the Equality Delivery System.
- 2.4 In 2025/26, the Trust demonstrated strong external validation of its EDI maturity through the achievement of nationally recognised awards. YAS was awarded the Gold TIDE mark (Talent Inclusion and Diversity Evaluation) by Onvero (previously the Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion) representing year-on-year improvements and the Veterans Aware Silver Award, recognising the strength of its commitment to the Armed Forces community.
- 2.5 An EDI Maturity Matrix self-assessment has been completed against the seven national EDI objectives and submitted to the National Ambulance Diversity and Inclusion Forum for sector analysis. The results indicate that YAS is largely operating at a 'developing' level of maturity, which is consistent with the wider sector results. The Trust Board commitment to EDI is strong, reflecting clear leadership focus and the embedding of EDI considerations within governance processes. Workforce representation was identified as an area requiring further focus, highlighting that YAS does not yet fully reflect the diversity of the communities it serves. Local priorities will be sense checked against the sector-wide implementation plan for 2026/27 on publication.

3.0 YEAR 2, 2025/26 PROGRESS

3.1 The table below shows the 2025/26 EDI Action Plan objectives with a RAG rating of progress. A summary of each objective with next steps is also included. The NHS Staff Survey benchmarked results, released on 12 March 2026, provide a measure of progress and therefore impact data will be available in May. All 2025/26 objectives have progressed but due to limitations in team capacity, not all have progressed to the original timescales.

Theme	Objective	Status
Inclusive Recruitment & Selection	Phase 2; Review application and shortlisting stage to ensure support for those coming in and progressing through YAS.	Amber
	Phase 3; Review interview and selection process to facilitate fair and equal opportunities for all applicants.	NYS
	Ensure international recruits receive clear communication, guidance and support around their conditions of employment and development.	Achieved
Inclusive & Compassionate Culture	Develop and launch an Active Bystander to Upstander Programme to build on Allyship for all protected characteristics	Amber
Staff Voice & Engagement	Develop and adopt a disability leave policy based on good practice models available from NHS Employers website	Achieved
	Develop a “root out racism” campaign to raise awareness of racial discrimination within the workplace	Amber
Accurate data	Statutory and Assurance Activity	On track

3.2 Inclusive Recruitment & Selection Review

- Phase 1 (Advertising, Attraction, Application and Shortlisting) report and action plan signed off by the YAS Together Programme Group for Ambulance Support Workers, Emergency MEquality, Diversity and Inclusional Dispatchers and Ambulance Vehicle Preparation roles. Inconsistent advertising, inaccessible applications, technical job descriptions, and non-inclusive marketing issues were identified with improvement recommendations made. The Associate Chief Operating Officer for Remote Patient Care is the Senior Responsible Owner for implementing the recommended actions.
- Phase 2 (Interview, Selection, Outcome and Offer) is in early development where stakeholders have been identified for the initial scoping work. Progress has been delayed due to winter pressures and team capacity.

Next Steps:

- Support and monitor implementation of Phase 1 improvement recommendations.
- Establish Phase 2 project group and workplan.
- Revisit proposed timescales for Phases 3 & 4 with key stakeholders.

3.3 International Recruits support and development

- Support provided to Recruitment and Pastoral Support Leads for both Nurses and ParamEquality, Diversity and Inclusioncs recruited internationally with the provision of enhanced induction and signposting to resources and opportunities.
- Specific support provided in collaboration with Equality Support Networks, for example, drop-in sessions and individualised support.

Next Steps:

- Continued support for colleagues recruited internationally.
- No further international recruitment planned.

3.4 Active Bystander to Upstander Programme

- Project group established building on the Behavioural Framework (living and leading our values) and Allyship to ensure joined up approach with all key stakeholders.
- Good practice from other NHS Trusts and public sector organisations (e.g. West Yorkshire Police) reviewed in conjunction with Corporate Communications to develop key messages and concept for the campaign, 'See something wrong, Do something right'.

Next Steps:

- Test and refine the 'See something wrong, Do something right' campaign concept with frontline colleagues.
- Co-design the approach, resources and content with alignment to existing awareness and training offers, e.g. cultural awareness and Say Yes to Respect.

3.5 Disability Leave Policy

- Disability leave provision included in the Special Leave Policy and Guidance (June 2025) providing 3 days paid disability leave (pro-rata) in a 12-month rolling allowance.
- NHS Employers guidance was issued in May 2025 designed to build disability inclusive workplaces. This includes the use of Health or Disability Passports to record health conditions including any workplace adjustments; YAS uses Health Passports. The guidance advocates for disability related absence to be agreed on an annual basis subject to individual needs.

Next Steps:

- Work with the Disability Support Network to actively promote use of the Health Passport and the disability related absence provision in the Special Leave Policy.
- Work with the Disability Support Network to review the NHS Employers good practice guidance to inform future policy reviews and practice improvements.

3.6 "Root out Racism" campaign

- The YAS Anti-Discrimination Statement was published in September 2025. An Anti-Racism Charter has been drafted, taking the learning from the successful Sexual Safety Charter.
- Learning from the Anti-Racism Framework pilot in South Yorkshire is being collated to inform next steps and wider rollout.

Next Steps:

- Engage in NHS Confederation Anti-Racism Leadership Conference on 28 April to inform the YAS approach.
- Work with the Race Equality Network to form a working group to finalise the Anti-Racism Charter and supporting resources ready for rollout.

3.7 Statutory and Assurance Activity

- Workforce Race Equality Standard and Workforce Disability Equality Standard data and reports collated, presented and published to meet statutory timescales. WRES saw improvement in 5 of 9 metrics with WDES improving in 9 out of 10 metrics.

- Pay gap reporting for Gender, Ethnicity and Disability on track for publication by the end of March 2026 following collation and engagement with stakeholder groups to review the data and agree areas for focus for improvement. The mean pay gaps for both Gender and Disability have reduced to 8.45% in favour of male staff (9.78% in 2024) and 1.43% in favour of Non-Disabled staff (1.52% in 2024) and has widened for the Ethnicity pay gap to 7.76% in favour of White staff (6.53% in 2024).
- The 'Count me in' campaign has been successful in encouraging YAS staff to update their diversity data on ESR with quarterly posters, e-banners and notifications in ESR. Representation of staff with protected characteristics has improved for gender (57.62% females from 55.50% in 2024), ethnicity (9.32% BME staff from 6.5% in 2024) and disability (9.60% disabled staff from 8.80% in 2024). Progression to the higher banded roles still remains an area for improvement.
- A revised approach to the Equality Delivery System (EDS) assessment has been adopted following the withdrawal of ICB support and moderation, where the evidence submission for previously assessed areas will be reviewed and confirmed by the end of March 2026. For Domain 1, commissioned or provider services, an 'observation in practice' model is being adopted for Patient Transport Services and is scheduled to take place in Q1 2026/27.

Next Steps:

- Present pay gaps data to People & Culture Group on 27 March and publish results and improvement priorities on Trust website.
- Finalise EDS assessment and conduct observation of practice in collation with Patient Transport Services.

4.0 ENABLING NETWORKS AND PROJECTS

- 4.1 The action plan is enabled by the five Equality Support Networks as key stakeholders providing lived experience and representing the voice of their members. The networks have seen some leadership changes across the year as tenure roles come to natural end and as the Executive Sponsors and Non-Executive Champion roles have been refreshed due to the executive leadership changes in Q4.
- 4.2 The networks are at varying stages of maturity dependent on the stability of the leadership roles. Support has been provided to put the core building blocks of a successful network in place whilst respecting that all networks need to operate in a way appropriate to their member needs. The Disability Support Network has been strengthened with the establishment of a steering group, and this approach is currently in progress for the Pride@YAS network.
- 4.3 Strong joint and collaborative working across the networks is increasingly evident including joint promotion of allyship, sharing of network objectives to identify common themes (e.g. progression, 'count me in' data), and joint noticeboards in stations to promote the networks.
- 4.4 The revised approach to Network budgets has been well received, in that networks can utilise budget funds appropriate to their aim and objectives without sign-off from the Non-Pay Panel. A joint network approach has been adopted with the purchasing of allyship merchandise for use in the promotion of the networks particularly in the engagement of frontline staff which continues to be a challenge. A proactive and early identification of budget spend is being adopted for 2026/27 monies.

- 4.5 The Trust has invested in Community Membership of Onvero (previously Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion) which provides access to a relevant resources, webinars and training, and five hours of consultancy per quarter. This community membership will be actively promoted in 2026/27, with membership numbers and a workplan monitored to ensure maximum benefit of membership and consultancy hours.
- 4.6 Following an internal audit of the Equality Impact Assessment processes, a robust improvement plan has been initiated. A quality improvement had already been adopted, and the audit findings were used to reinforce and inform this developmental work. This includes refreshed guidance, early conversations with policy/process owners to consider equity and inclusion in their development/review of their policy/process engaging with the right stakeholders, clarification of the process, refreshed forms and tracking processes with a new set of performance measures. Positive impact of the revised approach is evident with an emphasis on quality outcomes as well as timescales being met.

5.0 YEAR 3, 2026/27 OBJECTIVES

- 5.1 In light of the resourcing challenges across 2025/26, the objectives and timescales for 2026/27 are currently being reviewed with relevant stakeholders to ensure they are achievable. They also reflect some recent initiatives and publications:
- The Neurodiversity Pledge co-designed by the National Ambulance Disability Network (NADN) and the Association of Ambulance Chief Executives (AACE) providing a structured framework for embedding neuro-inclusion as a core organisational priority.
 - A sector-wide approach to accelerating female progression in operational leadership including using a data baseline to inform the priorities and toolkit and set of key performance indicators to be published imminently by AACE.
- 5.2 The 2026/27 EDI 2024/27 Action Plan objectives, delivered in partnership, are summarised as:

Theme	Objective	Partners
Inclusive Recruitment & Selection	Phase 2; Review application and shortlisting stage to ensure support for those coming in and progressing through YAS.	People Services
	Re-scope Phase 3 (Interview and selection) and Phase 4 (Outcome and Offer).	People Services
	Improve representation of application numbers and subsequent appointments to aim to reflect the communities we serve.	Community Engagement People Services YAS Academy
Inclusive & Compassionate Culture	Use available data on bullying, harassment and abuse to identify themes and where a focused Culture Development Approach may be needed to work collaboratively to make improvements.	Leadership & OD FTSU YAS Together
	Develop and launch an Active Bystander to Upstander Programme to build on Allyship for all protected characteristics.	Leadership & OD Communications
Staff Voice & Engagement	Publish Anti-Racism Charter and supporting resources.	Equality Support Networks

Theme	Objective	Partners
		Communications
	Commit to the AACE Neurodiversity Pledge including co-design of a Neurodiversity Pledge Plan with representative stakeholders.	Equality Support Networks Enabling Staff Working Group
	Identify and work towards a suitable framework to ensure YAS is a LGBT+ friendly workplace (e.g. Rainbow accreditation, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion)	Equality Support Networks
	Co-develop a Women in Operational Leadership Plan using the AACE Toolkit and Key Performance Indicators, informed by the YAS data trends.	Equality Support Networks 999 Operations

- 5.3 Work on relevant YAS Together culture development initiatives (e.g. inclusive talent development and leadership behaviours) and supporting our Equality Network Chairs and Deputies to access and be supported by the Executive Sponsors and Non-Executive Director Champions, will continue as business as usual. Board and Executive Leaders will continue to have equality, diversity & inclusion embedded as a core part of work/personal development objectives.
- 5.4 All initiatives will be developed in partnership with relevant stakeholders including trade unions and our Equality Support Network members.
- 5.5 Discussions have taken place with the Quality Improvement Team to identify appropriate outcome metrics, in addition to those listed in the 3-year EDI Plan, to measure and be able to evidence the impact of these objectives.

6.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 6.1 The Trust Board is asked to:
- Note the progress made against the 2025/26 EDI Action Plan objectives.
 - Endorse the proposed 2026/27 objectives.