

NHS Ayrshire & Arran



Meeting:	Ayrshire and Arran NHS Board
Meeting date:	Monday 23 May 2022
Title:	Corporate Equalities Committee Annual Report for 2021/22
Responsible Director:	Jennifer Wilson, Nurse Director and Sarah Leslie, Human Resource Director
Report Author:	Elaine Savory, Equality and Diversity Adviser

1. Purpose

This is presented to the Committee for:

- Awareness

This paper relates to:

- Government policy/directive
- Local policy

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

- Safe
- Effective
- Person Centred

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 2021-2022 and details of Committee membership and meeting attendance. The report at Appendix 1 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; moreover 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:

- Establishment of the Corporate Equalities Committee
- Establishment of the Equalities Implementation Group
- Development and sign off of an Equalities Work Plan
- Due to changes in Chair of this Committee, for this report the Executive Leads have provided comments and authorised the report. A new Chair will take up post on 1 May 2022.

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 improved patient experience of our services.

2.3.2 Workforce

It is expected that the work to drive forward the equalities agenda will be met from within existing staff resources. Continuing to drive forward the equalities agenda will ensure staff are better able to provide safe and person-centred care to their patients, thus supporting improved staff experience.

2.3.3 Financial

It is expected that the work to drive forward the equalities agenda will be met from within existing resources.

2.3.4 Risk assessment/management

By not embedding equalities into practices and functions of the Board could result in NHS Ayrshire & Arran failing to meet their legislative requirements which could result in the organisation being prosecuted for failure to comply with legislation. The Corporate Equalities Committee will oversee the new corporate equalities work plan 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 2021-2022. 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 Other impacts

The annual report highlights the development of an equalities work plan. The outcome of this work should have a positive impact on all staff and citizens covered under the protected characteristics outlined in the Equality Act 2010. This includes all the following areas of impact:

- Best value
- Vision and Leadership
- Effective Partnerships
- Governance and accountability
- Use of resources

Compliant with the corporate objectives specifically:

- Deliver services that are clinically effective, safe, efficient and patient-centred;
- Promote and embed the Caring, Safe, Respectful culture and support all staff to demonstrate the required behaviours and appropriately challenge when this does not happen.

2.3.7 Communication, involvement, engagement and consultation

This paper requires no engagement with external stakeholders.

2.3.8 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.

- Equalities Implementation Group on 4 March 2022.
- Corporate Management Team, virtually, on 22 April 2022
- Corporate Equalities Committee on 10 May 2022

2.4 Recommendation

For awareness. Board Members are asked to receive the report and be assured of progress of the Corporate Equalities Structure in 2021-2022.

3. List of appendices

Appendix 1 - Corporate Equalities Structure Annual Report for 2021-2022.

NHS Ayrshire & Arran Corporate Equalities Committee Annual Report for 2021/22

1. Summary

- 1.1 The report provides information on the activities of the Corporate Equalities Structure (Corporate Equalities Committee and Equalities Implementation Group) during 2021-2022 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:

- Establishment of the Corporate Equalities Committee
- Establishment of the Equalities Implementation Group
- Development and sign off of an Equalities Work Plan

2. Remit

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

- 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.
- 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)
- Area Partnership Forum Representative

- Nurse Director / Deputy Chief Executive
- Human Resource Director
- Equality and Diversity Adviser
- Senior representative Acute Services
- Senior representative Infrastructure and Support Services
- Senior representatives from the three Health and Social Care Partnerships
- Senior representative Mental Health Services
- Senior representative Nursing Directorate
- Senior representative Organisation and Human Resource Development
- Senior representative Public Health
- Senior representative Transformation and Sustainability
- Senior representative 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 Diversity Adviser

4. Meeting

- 4.1 The Corporate Equalities Committee has a remit to meet twice yearly but the Chair agreed in the initial year to meeting quarterly to support the group's establishment. The Committee met on 3 occasions between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022, however, due to service pressures was only quorate for 2 of the meetings.
- 4.2 The Equalities Implementation Group has a remit to meet quarterly and met on four occasions between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022.

5. Corporate Equalities Activities

5.1 Meeting the Public Sector Equality Duties

During the period 2021/2022, NHS Ayrshire & Arran were required to develop and publish reports in line with our Scottish Specific Duties. These were approved at the NHS Board meeting and published by the end of April in line with the legal timeframes. The reports can be found at this [link](#).

5.2 Equalities Action Plan

An equalities action plan has been developed to drive forward work to integrate equalities into how NHS Ayrshire & Arran and the HSCPs conduct our functions. The work stream areas covered within the plan are:

- Leadership and Governance
- Access to Services
- Early Years and Child Health
- Mental Health
- Digital Inclusion
- Developing the Workforce
- Communications
- Engagement and Participation
- Estates

5.3 **Gathering Ethnicity Data**

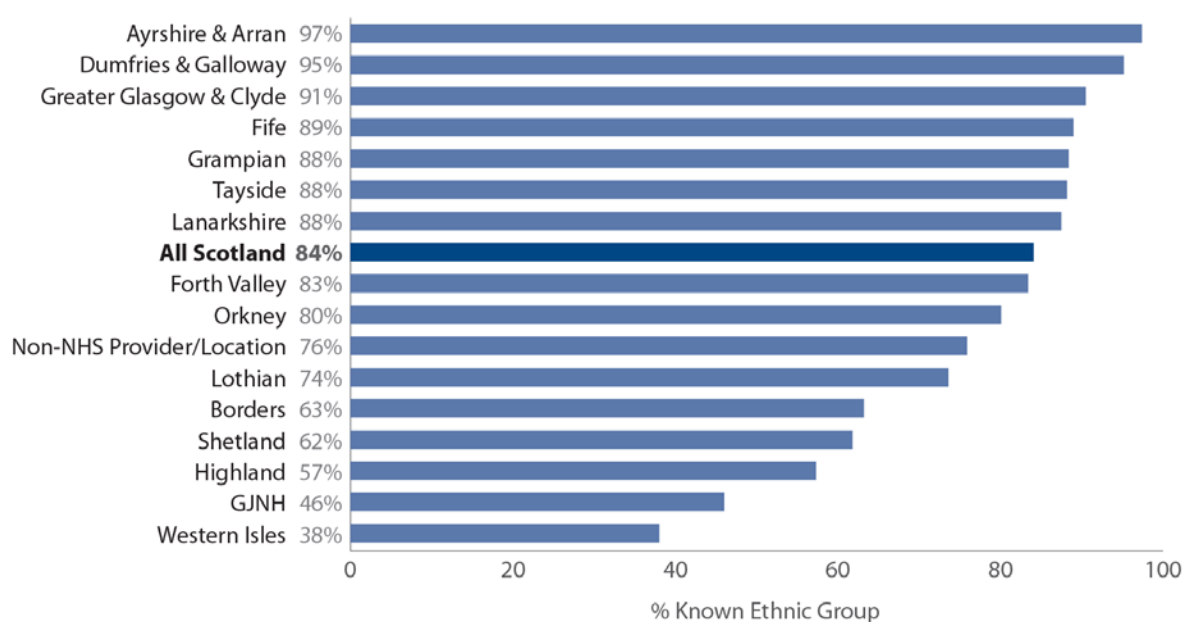
The UK Government's Equality Act requires public authorities such as NHS Boards to collect equality characteristics such as ethnicity to demonstrate that they are meeting the public sector equality duty. The NHSScotland Quality Strategy commits the NHS in Scotland to 'understanding the needs of different communities, eliminating discrimination, reducing inequality, protecting human rights and building good relations by breaking down barriers that may be preventing people from accessing the care and services that they need.

Coupled with the fact that, the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic was not spread evenly and those from ethnic minority communities suffered disproportionately higher impacts, gathering data and understanding our local population is more important than ever to ensure everyone can achieve the best possible care.

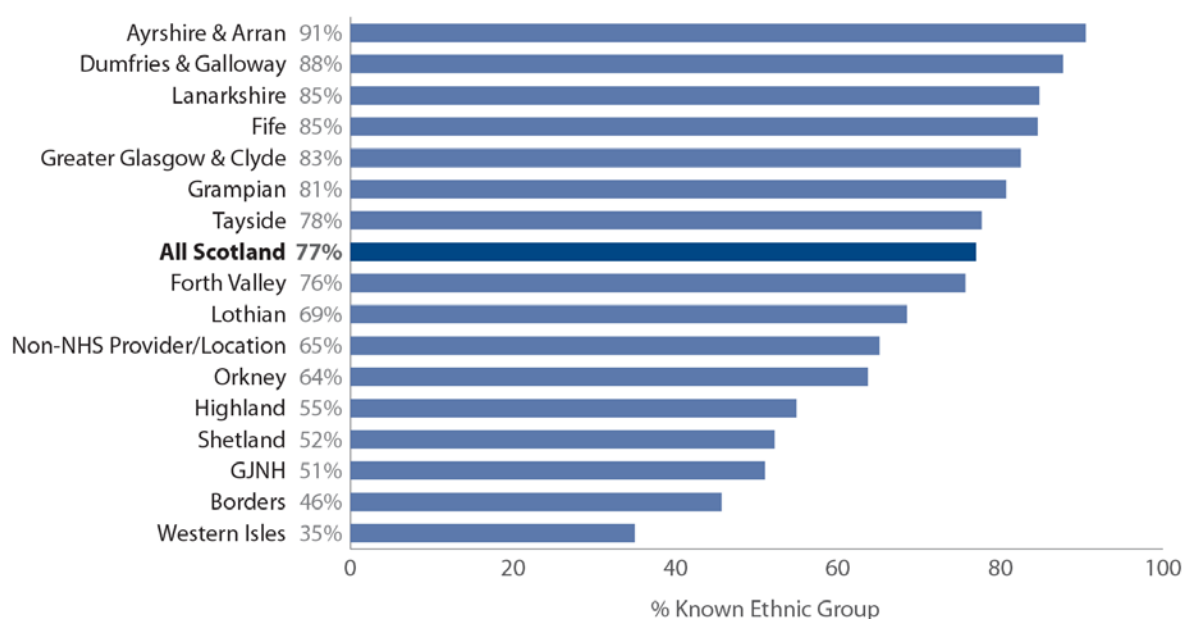
The charts below show the completeness of ethnic group recording in acute inpatient and day case records (SMR01 – Table 1) and new outpatient appointment records (SMR00 – Table 2) by NHS Board. The figures, for Scotland and by NHS Board, are based on the number of records with a known ethnic group as a percentage of the total number of records. The total number of records includes those where ethnic group was recorded as 'Not Known', 'Refused/Not Provided by the Patient' or was not recorded. As can be seen in the charts, NHS Ayrshire & Arran are above the Scottish average for this data collection and completion and we will continue to work towards increasing this rate as we remobilise our services further.

Table 1**Percentage of acute inpatient and day case records with a known ethnic group**

by NHS Board of treatment: quarter ending 31 December 2021

**Table 2****Percentage of new outpatient appointment records with a known ethnic group**

by NHS Board of treatment: quarter ending 31 December 2021

**5.4 Improved Access to Communication Support**

As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, NHS Ayrshire & Arran sought to explore new ways of providing interpretation support for those whose first language is not English. Whilst we have always provided this support, minimising the risk of spread of Covid brought additional challenges. NHS Ayrshire & Arran implemented a system of remote video interpretation for both community languages and also British Sign Language (BSL).

Through the provision of iPads to all in-patient settings, from Healthcare Improvement Scotland to support patients when in hospital settings, access to remote face to face interpretation was expanded with the links to community languages and BSL being

installed on the 130+ iPads and rolled out across inpatient and other areas. Devices have also been procured, via Endowment Funds, for our two Emergency Departments for quick access to interpretation support.

This will minimise person to person contact but provide the necessary communication channels for those whose first language is not English.

5.5 Establishment of Staff Networks

In July 2020, a letter was received from Gillian Russell, Director, Health Workforce, Leadership & Service Reform Directorate, Scottish Government outlining the need for staff networks to be established, with the initial focus to engage Black and Minority Ethnic staff. However, the letter outlined the aspiration that Boards should ‘...establish a network of champions, including at senior and executive team levels on race, disability and LBGQT with the involvement of staff networks, trade unions and professional organisations’. At that time NHS Ayrshire & Arran embarked on a journey to establish 4 Staff Networks, including HSCP staff:

- Black and Minority Ethnic Staff Network
- LGBT+ Staff Network
- Disability Staff Network
- Carers Staff Network

Since then two of the networks have been established (Ethnic Minority Staff Network and LGBT+ Staff Network) and are meeting quarterly. Both Networks have elected Chairs and Vice Chairs and are now seeking to produce an action plan with identified key areas of work to support improve staff experience and help shape and inform policy and practice.

5.6 Long Covid Project

The aim of this project is to establish baseline data of the number of staff working in NHS Ayrshire & Arran who are experiencing long Covid and to understand what impact that has had on their wellbeing and day to day abilities, as well as the impact on staff’s ability to continue in their roles and what supports may be required.

It is important NHS Ayrshire & Arran understands the longer term impact of Covid-19 on staff and their support needs. Some of the symptoms of long Covid (fatigue, “brain fog”, joint pain, depression and anxiety) are similar to other long-term health conditions such as multiple sclerosis, fibromyalgia, and other autoimmune conditions. Therefore, it is expected that the results of this project could assist in understanding how to better support our staff living with other long-term health conditions.

The results of this work are expected later in 2022.

6. Priorities for 2022/23

- 6.1 A key priority for the Corporate Equalities structure through 2022-2023 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 through development and publication of the various reports by end of April 2023.

- 6.2 A second key priority will be the implementation of the actions contained within the Equalities Work Plan to support NHS Ayrshire & Arran and the HSCPs to better meet the 3 aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty.
- 6.3 Another key priority will be the establishment of the two remaining Staff Networks – Disability and Carers. In particular, the impact on staff who have / have had long Covid has shown the importance of having a Staff Network with a safe space for staff to discuss the impact and what the organisation could consider to support staff.
- 6.4 The Corporate Equalities structure will continue to have a focus on ensuring equality impact assessments (EQIAs) are carried out for service and policy changes in line with the ambitions of Caring for Ayrshire, as well as any other areas of work as necessary.

7. Executive Leads' Comments

- 7.1 Due to changes in Chair of this Committee, for this report the Executive Leads have provided comments and authorised the report. A new Chair will take up post on 1 May 2022.

We want to thank all members for their contribution to the work of the Corporate Equalities Structure during 2021 and 2022 over the last year. In particular, we would also like to thank group members for their flexibility and commitment to support the development of the Equalities Work Plan which sets out the key areas of focus for the coming years to embed equalities in the culture and practices of NHS Ayrshire & Arran and HSCPs.

We would like to thank our staff who have engaged in our staff networks and our BAME and LGBT 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 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.

The members have been active in their role to strengthen our response to equalities and in particular those disproportionate impacts as a result of the pandemic. 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.

We can confirm that in the first year of the Corporate Equalities Structure, it has fulfilled its remit and we would like to note our thanks to all the staff who have supported the work in this inaugural year. We very much look forward to the implementation stage of the work plan and any associated work to improve the inclusiveness of the organisation, for both staff and service users.

**Jennifer Wilson/Sarah Leslie
Co-Chairs – Equalities Implementation Group
05/04/2022**

**Approved by Corporate Equalities Committee
10/05/2022**