

Anti-Racism Action Plan

2025-2026



**“Not everything that is faced
can be changed, but nothing
can be changed until it
is faced.”**

James Baldwin, unfinished manuscript
‘Remember This House’

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As we continue our efforts on anti-racism and deliver the NES Anti-racism Action Plan for 2025–2026, it's important to recognise how vital this is to building a fairer and more inclusive health and social care system.

As a national NHS Board, we're committed to playing our part in improving care and support for racialised minority communities in Scotland — both for the people who use services, for our people and for those learning within them.

Our action plan is built upon the foundational work initiated in 2023, responding to the recommendations from the Expert Reference Group on Covid and Ethnicity and aligning with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). It is designed to proactively tackle racism, improve racial equity, and enhance the quality of care, experiences, and outcomes for racialised minorities in Scotland.

The plan is structured around five key themes: Leadership and Accountability, Culture, Data, Equity of Opportunity, and Addressing Concerns.

Each theme is supported by specific actions and outcomes aimed at fostering an inclusive and diverse workplace culture, addressing racialised health inequalities, promoting racial inclusion, and ensuring long-term commitment and accountability.

Driving this cultural and attitudinal change will take collective leadership and we are committed to providing the necessary training and resources to our staff, to ensure that our commitment to anti-racism is visible and reinforced throughout our organisation. We will also continue to support and engage with our Underrepresented Ethnic Minority Staff Network, recognising the importance of their voices in shaping our policies and practices. Our Staff Network exists to advocate for, support, and amplify the voices of our underrepresented colleagues.

We hope this plan strengthens our efforts, and builds a culture where everyone feels seen, heard, and valued regardless of background. We will measure our progress through regular reporting and open communication. Our goal is to create a safe and supportive environment where all of us feel valued and respected. We invite you to join us in this important work to make sure that equality, diversity, and inclusion are at the heart of everything we do.

Christina Bichan, Director of Planning, Performance and Transformation and Executive Lead for the NES Anti-Racism Plan *and* **Ameet Bellad**, Chair of the NES Underrepresented Ethnic Minority Staff Network

Taking action to address racism is vital if NES is to achieve its vision and deliver on our purpose* as a national NHS Board.

We set out in our equality, diversity and inclusion strategy our plan to be an inclusive organisation for our staff, our learners and our partners and to meet our Public Sector Equality Duty through our functions.

This plan sets out our organisational commitment and strategy on anti-racism. It builds on work started in 2023, which responds to recommendations from the Expert Reference Group on Covid and Ethnicity and work to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED).

* <https://newsletters.nes.digital/corporate-strategies/corporate-strategy-2023-26>

Note: Race and ethnicity are social constructs; neither term describes fixed biological or genetic characteristics of a population. However, the health consequences of living in a racially stratified society are illustrated by a myriad of health outcomes that systematically occur along racial and ethnic lines. NES are following the Scottish Government guidance and using the collective term ‘race and ethnicity’ to include subcategories of race and subcategories of ethnicity.



Our anti-racism vision

Enabling improved rights-based quality care, experiences and outcomes for racialised minorities in Scotland through an informed, skilled and compassionate health and social care workforce.



Our anti-racism mission

We will proactively tackle institutional and systemic racism to improve racial equity for our people and our learners, which will contribute to addressing racialised health and social care inequalities in Scotland.

Structural racism drives health inequalities

Directly through:



increased stress



poor mental health



cardiovascular disease



discrepancies with diagnoses

Indirectly through:



employment



housing



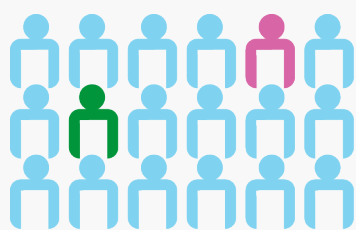
education



other factors

In 2025, there is still

A lack of ethnic diversity in leadership positions



An attainment gap between doctors from Black and Minority backgrounds and White doctors



Racialised minorities in the health and social care workforce experience racism

from

colleagues

the public



03

How we developed our plan

The Scottish Government's Race Equality Framework (2016-2030) (<https://www.gov.scot/publications/race-equality-framework-scotland-2016-2030/pages/3>) includes these public health related goals to which our anti-racism action plan will contribute:



Goal 26: Minority ethnic communities and individuals experience better health and wellbeing outcomes.



Goal 27: Minority ethnic communities and individuals experience improved access to health and social care services at a local and national level to support their needs.



Goal 28: Scotland's health and social care workers are better able to tackle racism and promote equality and community cohesion in delivery of health and social care services.



Goal 29: Scotland's health and social care workforce better reflects the diversity of its communities.

Our plan has been guided by the Framework for Action in the Scottish Government's guidance to NHS Boards on developing anti-racism plans. The Framework reflects the areas of focus from the Expert Reference Group on Covid-19 and Ethnicity and the evidence on race inequalities. We have reviewed the Equally Safe at Work anti-racism guidance and other anti-racism plans from public bodies.

Developing this plan has been a process of research, consultation and iteration. Input from those with lived experience has been vital. We have consulted with our Underrepresented Ethnic Minority staff network and with our wider community by offering four specific feedback sessions which gave employees and resident doctors the opportunity to share their experiences and thoughts on our Action Plan. We also shared the draft plan with all employees and resident doctors to provide an alternative way to offer feedback, and circulated surveys to allow for anonymous feedback.

Through this outreach, we have been informed by NES employees and by doctors in training across Scotland (both those employed by NES and those employed by other Boards). We shared our plan with the national Ethnic Minority Forum executive team for their input and we have also been informed by peer review, consultation with colleagues in other Boards and relevant research.

Throughout these consultations we asked the question "who else should we be engaging with", to try to reach as many people as possible.



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What's in our Action Plan?

04 What's in our Action Plan?

Our action plan has five key and connected themes with accompanying actions and outcomes. We have set this out as an action plan for 2025-2026 while recognising that many of the outcomes we are seeking to achieve will take place over a longer timeframe. You can read more about [NES's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2025-2029](https://www.nes.scot.nhs.uk/media/bgqbcapv/ned1995_edi_strategy_final.pdf) (https://www.nes.scot.nhs.uk/media/bgqbcapv/ned1995_edi_strategy_final.pdf).

Our five key themes

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Leadership and accountability



Leaders play a key role in driving cultural and attitudinal change to make progress in equality and create inclusive and diverse workplace cultures. Leaders can also play a significant role in fostering racial inclusion efforts due to their power and influence on an organisation's culture and values. Long-term commitment and sustained action against stated targets and outcomes are needed to demonstrate accountability to our staff, learners and partners. This Plan and the associated Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy is NES's organisational commitment to anti-racism and tackling all forms of discrimination and harassment. Staff, learners and NES's partners should recognise NES's commitment to anti-racism, equality, diversity and inclusion.

Culture



The overall purpose of NES is to be a collaborative, innovative and inclusive learning organisation providing high quality education, training, workforce development, workforce data and technology for Scotland's health and social care workforce. The [NHS Scotland 2024 Improving Wellbeing and Working Cultures vision](https://www.gov.scot/publications/improving-wellbeing-working-cultures-2/) (https://www.gov.scot/publications/improving-wellbeing-working-cultures-2/) identifies three interlinked pillars which underpin a positive workplace culture: wellbeing, leadership and equality.

Equity of opportunity



Equity is a key goal for our anti-racism plan. We want to contribute to an equitable health and care system in Scotland, where:

- people have an equal opportunity to join and progress a career in health and social care based on their knowledge, skills and experience;
- trainees have equity in opportunity to progress through their training;
- learners have equity in access to the training and development they need for their role development and;
- racialised health inequalities are addressed.

The Scottish Government, based on recommendations from the Expert Reference Group on Ethnicity and Health, has identified perinatal care, mental health and Type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease prevention as priorities for NHS Scotland to address racialised health inequalities.

Addressing concerns

An EHRC Inquiry gathered substantial evidence of the poor treatment of Black and minority ethnic people in health and social care workplaces. Many workers felt that others were treating them in a negative or unfavourable way because of their race or nationality. Some staff feel they have been treated unfavourably compared to their White colleagues, some have experienced racism by colleagues or patients and have felt unsupported by managers and existing processes for highlighting incidents and concerns.

Data

Data is important to measure progress with this action plan and identify areas of inequality for action and for transparency. We gather and analyse employment data as part of our Public Sector Equality Duty and publish an annual workforce equality and diversity report on our website. This includes data on what our workforce looks like, recruitment and progression, development and who leaves the organisation. We also publish our Ethnicity Pay Gap. As a provider of education and training to health and social care, we want to understand the diversity of learners who access and use our products and services.



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Our Action Plan

05 Our Action Plan



Action	Measures	Outcome	Timeframe
1 In addition to introductory anti-racism training for all staff, further training will be developed for line managers, senior leaders and educators.	% of NES managers and educators who have completed additional anti-racism training.	NES managers and educators are confident in contributing to an anti-racism approach in NES and in supporting staff and learners who experience racism.	March 2027
2 Progress on the anti-racism action plan is reported bi-annually to the Equality and Human Rights Steering Group, Executive Team, Partnership Forum, Staff Networks, Board Committees and the Board. Progress is included as part of the Board's Annual Delivery Plan to the Scottish Government.	Bi-annual progress report produced on the action plan.	Transparency on progress with the action plan to our people, the Board, our learners and the public.	Annually
3 NES's commitment to anti-racism is clearly visible on our corporate website and reinforced in corporate induction, recruitment packs and the line manager handbook.	Consistent text to reflect the NES Equality, diversity and inclusion strategy has been updated in corporate publications, staff communications and on the NES website.	Staff, learners, trainers, partners and the public can see NES's commitment to equality, diversity, inclusion and anti-racism.	March 2026
4 NES will appoint a senior sponsor for the Underrepresented Ethnic Minority Staff Network.	A senior member of NES has been identified to support.	Support for the staff network is provided at a senior level in NES.	September 2025

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Action	Measures	Outcome	Timeframe
5 A Diverse Leaders programme, to help increase diversity at senior levels across health, social work and social care, will be delivered as part of the Scottish Government Leading to Change (https://leadingtochange.scot/about) Programme.	Website visits and engagement will be tracked and session attendance monitored for accompanying “Leadership Insight” sessions.	Resources, events and programmes are collated in one place and organised into Leadership “Pathways” for aspiring, evolving and senior leaders who are interested in inclusive leadership.	March 2026
6 All staff will participate in introductory anti-racism training as part of continuous professional development.	No of staff who have attended anti-racism training or accessed digital resources.	Staff have an awareness about what anti-racism is and NES’s commitment to anti-racism	March 2026
7 The Underrepresented Ethnic Minority Staff Network will continue be supported to provide a safe space for peer support, allyship, community and raising awareness of cultural diversity and inequalities.	Meetings arranged for the full year. Staff engagement with network meetings. No. of areas staff networks are engaged in making change to support NES as an inclusive and diverse organisation.	Staff have the opportunity for peer support and influence through an active staff network structure in NES.	Monthly network meetings Quarterly staff network chairs meetings.
8 We will participate in and promote Race Equality week (https://raceequalitymatters.com/race-equality-week) and identify other opportunities to celebrate cultural diversity, including Black History Month.	Promotion of Race Equality Week Events and Learning Resources	Staff are aware of Race Equality Week and NES’s commitment to anti-racism.	February 2025 October 2025



05 Our Action Plan

Action	Measures	Outcome	Timeframe
9 We will reflect NHS Scotland's commitment to anti-racism and gather examples of anti-racism practice and diverse representation of the workforce on the NHS Scotland Careers website (https://www.careers.nhs.scot).	Stories about careers in NHS Scotland reflect people from a range of ethnic backgrounds.	NHS Scotland Careers Website reflects a diverse workforce and NHS Scotland's commitment to anti-racism.	Website updated to reflect NHS Scotland's anti-racism commitment by June 2025. Annually
10 We will continue to actively promote and measure engagement with the Cultural Humility (https://learn.nes.nhs.scot/Scorm/Launch/72557) module, which was designed to support the development of positive cultural humility values, attitudes and behaviours in the health and social care workforce.	Plans identified to support learning on cultural humility. Number of sessions where learning has been facilitated on cultural humility.	Learning and education is available to health and social care staff on cultural humility to support positive attitudes and behaviours.	March 2026
 11 NES will work with our partners in health and social care to promote and support the delivery of anti-racism training resources to support NHS Boards anti-racism action plans.	No of health boards NES has worked with to support anti-racism training.	By March 2029, NES will have contributed to improving the knowledge and skills of the health and social care workforce on anti-racism, equality, diversity and inclusion by developing learning resources.	March 2026

05 Our Action Plan

Action	Measures	Outcome	Timeframe
12 Our support for career progression will be reviewed to make recommendations for improved recruitment and retention of ethnic minority applicants.	Review undertaken. Recommendations identified for implementation.	By March 2029, the NES workforce will be more representative of people from a minority ethnic background, to reflect the diversity of the health and social care workforce and the Scottish population.	April 2029
13 NES will take action to increase the representation of ethnic minorities as applicants and participants in our leadership development programmes.	Developing Diversity in Leadership website is launched. Engagement with the NHS Scotland Ethnic Minority Forum on leadership development opportunities.	Increase representation of ethnic minorities applying and participating in leadership development programmes.	March 2026
14 NES will contribute towards reducing the UK-wide attainment gap for medical and pharmacy trainees from Black and Minority Ethnic backgrounds and International Medical Graduates by designing, delivering and monitoring evidence-informed activities.	Action plan and steering group to monitor progress. General Medical Council submission and feedback.	By March 2029, NES will have contributed towards reducing the UK-wide attainment gap for medical and pharmacy trainees from Black and Minority Ethnic backgrounds and International Medical Graduates.	Annually

05 Our Action Plan

Action	Measures	Outcome	Timeframe
15 The NES/SG (2023) “The Matrix: A Guide for delivering evidence based Psychological Therapies and Interventions in Scotland” will be updated to reflect content on sharing best practice on how to reduce barriers to engagement with psychological therapies and interventions for people from minority ethnic groups.	Updated matrix produced.	The workforce has access to up to date and evidence informed practice to address racialised health inequalities.	March 2026
16 NES will gather and review what information is in the core mental health curricula in relation to racialised health inequalities to identify if there are any gaps or areas that need strengthened to address racialised mental health inequalities.	Gaps or areas that need strengthened on racialised health inequalities in relation to the mental health core curricula have been identified.	The core mental health curricula are up to date to reflect racialised health inequalities to contribute to the education of the mental health workforce on racism and impact on mental health.	March 2026
17 NES will continue to increase awareness and uptake of the NHS Essential Perinatal and Infant Mental Health “Stigma” module, which supports staff to work in a culturally competent way with families and has helpful resources to address the impact of stigma and discrimination in the perinatal period.	Number of staff who have accessed the module.	NES is contributing to staff working in a culturally aware way with families to reduce stigma and discrimination in the perinatal period.	March 2029 Annual data on module uptake

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Action	Measures	Outcome	Timeframe
18 NES will establish a trusted, anonymous incident reporting mechanism for staff to investigate and take action to address incidents of discrimination and racism.	Communication to staff about the reporting mechanism.	Mechanism in place for staff to report incidents of discrimination and racism.	March 2026
19 NES will support the implementation of the NHS Scotland Racism Guide and other resources to support managers on how to address racist incidents in the workplace and support staff who experience or witness it.	Reference to guidance is included in NES training on equality issues. Communication and awareness raising to NES line managers and educators.	NES Managers and Educators are equipped to support staff and learners who experience or witness racism in the workplace or in an education and training setting.	October 2026
20 NES will continue consultation and communication with Resident Doctors across Scotland on the delivery of this plan and future priorities, sharing feedback with the Scotland Deanery.	Feedback and consultation sessions held with trainees each year on progress with this strategy and plan.	Trainees are involved in measuring progress with NES's strategy and action plan.	Annually

05 Our Action Plan



Action	Measures	Outcome	Timeframe
21 NES will gather and analyse workforce data on ethnicity as part of our annual workforce employment equality report.	Annual workforce monitoring report with actions identified published.	NES has information about the profile of its workforce to meet its goal of being a diverse and inclusive organisation.	Annually
22 NES will continue to publish NES's ethnicity pay gap annually as a Strategic Key Performance Indicator to the Board and it will be included in our annual workforce equality monitoring report.	Strategic Performance Indicators are reported to Staff Governance Committee and the Board annually.	The ethnicity pay gap is reduced.	Annually
23 NES will encourage staff and trainees to update their equality and diversity data, to improve the quality of NES's Workforce Monitoring and to identify priorities for action to progress race equality from the data.	Increase in staff reporting equality and diversity information on eESS.	NES has information about the profile of its workforce in order to meet its goal of being a diverse and inclusive organisation.	Annually
24 We will annually review the findings and determine actions from the Scottish Trainee Survey (issued to all doctors in training) which includes questions on experiences of discrimination, inclusion in the workplace and equitable access to development opportunities.	Survey issued and annual report produced.	NES learns about the experiences of trainees across Scotland and uses this data to support a positive training environment.	Annually



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Progress

Since 2023, NES has made progress towards becoming an anti-racist organisation in these areas:

Leadership and accountability



- Corporate responsibility for equality, diversity and inclusion has been identified in the Executive Team, with a related objective for the Executive Team.
- Created and delivered virtual “Anti Racism for Line Managers” training and delivered this to two thirds of line managers across NES.
- Delivered a session on Anti-Racism and the role of the Board to the Board in 2023.
- Supported the development of the Leading to Change Diversity in Leadership Programme.

Culture



- All staff have had an annual corporate learning objective to undertake a learning activity on anti-racism, equality, diversity and inclusion since 2023.
- Created a series of videos to provide Anti-Racism Learning Resources.
- Supported and shared learning materials connected to anti-racism.
- Participated in Race Equality Week in February 2024 and 2025 as well as Black History Month in 2023 and 2024.
- Established the NES Underrepresented Ethnic Minority Staff Network.
- Supported and shared the development of the Leading to Change Allyship Hub, to provide a toolkit for health, social care and social work colleagues.
- Appointed a Specialist Lead for health inequalities to support the NES workforce.
- Started work towards achieving Equally Safe at Work Accreditation, recognising that racial and gender inequality combine to create additional barriers.
- Contributed to NHS Scotland’s Ethnic Minority Forum as a place to influence policy and change for Minority Ethnic NHS Staff.



Equity of opportunity

- ❑ Progressed work to contribute to reducing the attainment gap for medical trainees from Black and Minority Ethnic backgrounds and International Medical Graduates.
- ❑ Development and promotion of a digital cultural humility resource to support positive behaviours in the workplace.
- ❑ Over 1000 international Nursing, Midwifery and Allied Health Professionals have been supported into careers in NHS Scotland and 40 people have been supported into adult social care roles in Scotland.



Addressing concerns

- ❑ Highlighted how to report experiences of racism, discrimination and harassment as part of NES's 'Speak Up' Week in 2024.
- ❑ Promoted NES's Confidential Contacts in as part of NES's 'Speak Up' Week in 2024.



Data

- ❑ Gathered and analysed NES workforce data on ethnicity and published it annually.
- ❑ Reported to our Board on the % of staff from a Minority Ethnic Background as one of the Strategic Key Performance Indicators and provided a narrative on trends.
- ❑ Published an Ethnicity Pay Gap to the Board as one of our Strategic KPIs.
- ❑ Explored gaps in data on who is accessing NES learning and education products as part of the NES Learning and Education Strategy, to consider improvements.

This resource may be made available, in full or summary form, in alternative formats and community languages. Please contact us on 0131 656 3200 or email altformats@nes.scot.nhs.uk to discuss how we can best meet your requirements.



NHS Education for Scotland
Westport 102
West Port
Edinburgh
EH3 9DN

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