

Equality Impact Assessment Report SMMDP

Title: Scottish Multi-professional Maternity Development Programme (SMMDP)

NES directorate or department: NMAHP WCYPF

Report Completed: August 2024

Reviewed: January 2026

Introduction

Equality Impact Assessment is a process that helps us to consider how our work will meet the 3 parts of the Public Sector Equality Duty. It is an important way to mainstream equality into our work at NES and to help us:

- Take effective action on equality
- Develop better policy, technology, education and learning and workforce planning solutions for health, social care and a wide range of our partners, stakeholders and employees
- Demonstrate how we have considered equality in making our decisions.

The Scottish Multiprofessional Development Programme (SMMDP) is a Scottish Government subsidised national training programme within NES. Courses are delivered alongside multi-professional partners, subject matter experts and clinical experts to provide multi-professional learning experiences which are predominantly skills-based but also includes a range of other perinatal education delivered face to face or in a hybrid format. The programme is directed at a wide range of learners from the obstetric and maternity workforce, and to any other health care professional who supports maternity and neonatal care in Scotland.

The SMMDP was formed in 2003 to fill educational gaps identified by the [Expert Group for Maternity Services \(EGAMS\)](#). The programme has continually developed in response to the changing educational needs of maternity and neonatal services in Scotland and responded to the recommendations identified in two national reports, the [A Refreshed Framework for Maternity Care in Scotland: The Maternity Services Action Group - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#) and, more recently the [The best start: five-year plan for maternity and neonatal care - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#).

SMMDP learning is aimed at improving safety in maternity and neonatal care in Scotland through enhanced knowledge, skills, confidence and competence to enhance the standards of care provided by the Scottish NHS workforce. The primary outcome is to improve the clinical and public health outcomes for women, birthing people and their families who access maternity and neonatal care within Scotland, ensuring that the best care possible is provided by a well-trained and educated workforce.

The programme incorporates a robust infrastructure that supports a wide range of learners and learning in different practice contexts, thus creating a learning culture that is nurturing, inclusive and safe for all involved. SMMDP provides professional leadership and co-ordination in the provision of core mandatory and desirable learning resources and works closely with stakeholders to enable the delivery of education in line with NES strategic aims and relevant to the NES Equality Outcomes.

This is outlined for each of the outcomes listed below:

Outcome 1: Health inequalities are mitigated and where possible reduced or prevented through the provision of opportunities for healthcare staff to enhance relevant skills and knowledge.

- To address geographic health inequalities across Scotland, SMMDP is a Scotland-wide programme where courses are offered nationally reaching both urban and remote and rural practitioners and communities.
- SMMDP support continuous professional development by utilising evidence-based educational resources and interventions in a range of formats. These resources support the workforce across both health and social care. They ensure that women, birthing people and their families get the best care possible from a well-trained and educated workforce. We use educational materials that are relevant to staff from every group within health, and to staff working across the wider social care sector.

- SMMDP resources incorporate learning to improve knowledge and skills on maternal mental health and wellbeing. The development of skills and knowledge within the learner of perinatal mental health is demonstrated by ensuring all courses are delivered through a lens of trauma informed practice.
- SMMDP education, for instructors and candidates (learners), is underpinned by the [NHS Scotland Cores Values](#), the [NES mission statement](#) and the NES vision. This ensures that all are treated non-discriminately, fairly and consistently. This ethos is enshrined in all the SMMDP resources and courses.
- Content of all SMMDP learning resources endeavour to raise awareness and capabilities of professionals to address health inequalities and health literacy. This includes:
 - Evidence from [MBRRACE-UK: Mothers and Babies: Reducing Risk through Audits and Confidential Enquiries across the UK | MBRRACE-UK | NPEU \(ox.ac.uk\)](#) considering health and social inequalities in relation to why women and babies come to harm and die. These reports are continuously updated and discussed throughout all SMMDP resources within our introduction presentation and scenario-based learning.
 - Courses are delivered using [Trauma – national trauma transformation programme | NHS Education \(scot.nhs.uk\)](#). SMMDP courses and resources refer to and signpost to the wider NES learning materials available, raising awareness of these for candidates attending the courses. Courses are designed and delivered following the principles of trauma informed practice. Embedding Trauma informed principles within SMMDP courses and facilitation ensures a psychologically safe learning environment for our learners.
 - Course scenarios are designed to consider caring for women who are from Black and minority ethnic or socio-economically disadvantaged communities. Learners are challenged to think about inequalities and how they relate to clinical and public health outcomes, and how these negative outcomes can be mitigated through education and relationship building with access to appropriate services. [Cultural Humility](#) resources have been referenced and used to inform the design and delivery of SMMDP courses.

- The programme encourages the learner to consider how they can reduce health inequalities for vulnerable children and families through promoting the understanding of the [Children and Young People \(Scotland\) Act 2014](#) and [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child \(Incorporation\) \(Scotland\) Act 2024 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)
- The SMMDP programme can support health professionals recruited from overseas to prepare them for employment in NHS Scotland. The SMMDP actively supported the development of NMC OSCE material for internationally recruited midwives in Scotland.
- SMMDP is part of a programme of work and sits within the Nursing Midwifery and Allied Health Professionals (NMAHP) Directorate of NHS Education for Scotland. As such we are committed to ensuring that we meet our obligations as a part of the wider Board. NHS Education for Scotland has responsibility as a “corporate parent” and must be alert to matters which might adversely affect a child or young person's wellbeing. This includes ensuring that maternal health, physical and mental is optimised through ensuring staff are well trained in caring for women during their pregnancy, birth and postnatal period. SMMDP delivers a suite of courses and resources to NHS staff and partner agencies to ensure this commitment can be met.

Outcome 4: We will continue to enhance the inclusivity of education and training programmes for disabled learners in NHS Scotland through:

- Expanding the availability of technology enhanced learning which reflects best practice in accessibility and increases flexibility in learning opportunities.
- Ensuring resources to support Reasonable Adjustments and Accessibility are available for all learners who may require them.
- Ensure partners and stakeholders include information about Reasonable Adjustments and Accessibility as a core element of any development or preparation programme for those supporting learners in practice.

Outcome 5: The diverse development needs of our workforce and changes in the way work is being done will be our focus as we support development of digital capability and accessible and inclusive technology enhanced learning. Digital learning capability is a

complex concept incorporating elements of information literacy, digital skills and capacities for learning. Learners may also be differentially impacted by barriers to accessing appropriate digital infrastructure for learning. We will invest in core skills development for our educators and designers which will include:

- Accessibility [design, facilitation, assessment, reasonable adjustments]
- Cultural Humility and anti-racist education
- Unconscious bias in education
- Social learning and facilitating for inclusive learning

Outcome 6: Our approach to digital design considers the diverse needs of our audiences when developing our resources or learning programmes.

- This EQIA is a review of a long-standing programme of work, and its review has involved all members of the SMMDP and Business Support teams.

Outcome 7: Access to learning is improved through enabling flexible learner access on any device; delivering resources built to best practice accessibility standards; and providing appropriate and relevant digital literacies development for learners.

- Our approach to digital design considers the diverse needs of our audiences when developing our resources or learning programmes.
- Access to our course materials is offered in a variety of formats.
- Pre-course and during every course we ask for continuous user feedback on their experience to improve accessibility of digital resources.

Evidence

Evidence used to inform SMMDP courses and resources:

- Outputs from evaluations – candidate or learner wellbeing
- Engagement with stakeholders through regular programme updates and reviews of materials and courses
- Literature reviews i.e. including but not limited to: MBRRACE, Trauma Informed Practice, Perinatal Infant Mental Health, Expert Group for Maternity Services (EGAMS)
- Collaboration with subject matter experts through focus groups

Evidence used to inform our Equality Impact Assessment:

- Internal E&D champions to support the development of the EQIA
- Outputs from evaluations: i.e. post- course evaluations
- Literature reviews i.e. Including but not limited to ACAS, NHS Education for Scotland E&D policy, “Getting Ready for UNCRC”, Cultural Humility Resources, MBRRACE
- Internal reporting mechanisms through NES EQIA process
- Team collaboration

Assessment

We have considered how this work will impact on the Public Sector Equality Duty. This includes how it might affect people differently, taking account of protected characteristics and how these intersect, including with poverty and low income. This is important as a national NHS Board in our work to address health inequalities.

Potential Impact on Different Population Groups

It is impossible to determine the impact of an individual's protected characteristic on every aspect of our course delivery, resources and materials. Every effort has been made to ensure SMMDP courses are as diverse and as inclusive as possible, and when a request is made, or

we are aware of a requirement for a reasonable adjustment an assessment and actions will be undertaken on an individual basis. Participants in this section is used to describe faculty members and learners.

Population Group	Potential impact	Mitigations
Age	Low Impact	All participants are adult learners of employable age. There is low impact of potential of discrimination due to having no prior knowledge of the age of participants. Education staff should be aware of potential areas of discrimination when supporting learning opportunities, for example, digital literacy, different learning styles
Disability	Low impact	All participants are members of the NHS Scotland workforce, or enrolled healthcare students, and therefore any specific requirements are provided for on an individual basis by their employer or university. All resources are available in electronic format and able to be used alongside supportive technologies i.e. screen readers etc or can be printed. Learning resources have been developed through a trauma informed lens to embed learning through a compassionate educational style. When requests for reasonable adjustments are made, we strive to provide all candidates with equitable access to resources and learning environment. A specific example of this is that all our videos have closed captions to enhance accessibility.
Ethnicity/Race	Low impact	Impact on learners from a minority ethnic background should be considered by educators recognising that systemic racism exists. The programme intends to offer equality of opportunity for minority ethnic learners through provision of inclusive education by following the principles of https://www.nes.scot.nhs.uk/about-us/equality-diversity-and-human-rights/ . SMMDP imagery and simulation equipment available are currently diverse reflecting the population we teach.
Gender/Sex	Low impact	Predominantly female workforce in attendance at courses so when requests for reasonable adjustments are made, we strive to provide all candidates with equitable access to resources and learning environment. An example of this could be a primary care giver may need to leave a course early or not attend a course during school holidays due to childcare, we would accommodate a shortened attendance or at a rescheduled date.

		All resources have incorporated the awareness of individualising the aspect of gender within the maternity services. All resources are available to participants irrespective of gender.
Gender Reassignment	Low impact	All resources have incorporated the awareness of individualising the aspect of gender within the maternity services. All resources are available to participants irrespective of gender. When requests for reasonable adjustments are made, we strive to provide all candidates with equitable access to resources and learning environment.
Religion/Belief	Low impact	Compassionate approaches are taken towards all abortion, pregnancy loss and blood product references to consider and respect the disclosed and undisclosed religion or beliefs of all faculty and participants. When requests for reasonable adjustments are made, we strive to provide all candidates with equitable access to resources and learning environment.
Sexual Orientation	Low Impact	Courses are inclusive and open to all candidates and provide a safe learning experience. When requests for reasonable adjustments are made, we strive to provide all candidates with equitable access to resources and learning environment.
Socio-economic background	Low impact	The courses have been costed to be economical and accessible to all. Courses are provided locally to reduce travel costs and normally the NHS boards will pay to access the courses for all participants.
Digital Exclusion	Low/Moderate impact	Candidates may have limited access to digital infrastructure including reliable connectivity, IT equipment to enable full participation in learning opportunities where learning is offered as hybrid. Candidates are contacted 6 weeks prior to courses to establish if any reasonable adjustments are required. When requested, alternative modes of delivery and providing alternative formats of resources are actioned. This may include sending a candidate a printed copy of a manual rather than an electronic version.
Pregnancy and Maternity	Low impact	When requests for reasonable adjustments are made, we strive to provide all candidates with equitable access to resources and learning environment
Neurodiversity	Moderate impact	The programme intends to offer equality of opportunity for all learners through provision of inclusive education by following the principles of https://www.nes.scot.nhs.uk/about-us/equality-diversity-and-human-rights/ and

		https://www.nes.scot.nhs.uk/media/1kqcv2je/nes-inclusive-education-learning-policy-may-2023.pdf When requests for reasonable adjustments are made, we strive to provide all candidates with equitable access to resources and learning environment
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Next Steps

The Equality Impact Assessment has informed the following actions:

The SMMDP is an inclusive and accessible programme of education and resources for NHS healthcare professionals, SAS staff, and other associated healthcare professionals who may encounter women, birthing people and their families during their maternity and postnatal journey. The regular revision of courses and content ensures that social health inequalities are addressed. We continue to reference and review our Equality Impact Assessment, as we develop further resources and courses. The evidence shows there is no potential for unlawful discrimination in the SMMDP resources and courses.

The impact assessment has identified the following actions to better advance equality, progress children's rights and meet the Public Sector Equality Duty:

Issue or risk identified	Action	Responsibility	Timescale	Resource required	Progress
Reduced accessibility to resources.	Most resources are available with a transcript, and or captions or subtitles to ensure equity of access. Some remain outstanding.	SMMDP Practice Educators & BSU Team	6 weeks	https://www.gmb.org.uk/thinking-differently-at-work/neurodiversity-and-the-law.pdf Complete the recording of transcripts and captions for outstanding resources.	Completed

Issue or risk identified	Action	Responsibility	Timescale	Resource required	Progress
Potential missed opportunities to educate workforce on UNCRC	Incorporate links to modules and information on the UNCRC in the course introduction to signpost staff to the resources.	SMDP Practice Educators	6 weeks	Getting Ready for UNCRC Incorporation Framework Introduction to Children's Rights Turas Learn	Completed
Course structure may be unsuitable for candidates with a neurodiversity	Educating facilitators on the existence of policy and protocol and reasonable adjustments for candidates with a neurodiversity.	SMDP Practice Educators	3 months	https://www.gmb.org.uk/thinking-differently-at-work/neurodiversity-and-the-law.pdf https://www.nes.scot.nhs.uk/about-us/equality-diversity-and-human-rights/an-inclusive-and-diverse-workplace/ https://www.acas.org.uk/reasonable-adjustments	Completed

- Through the SMDP team reporting mechanisms, weekly huddles and information sharing sessions, we will continue to monitor the progress of the above actions. We will share updates with the wider WCYPF Team at the monthly meetings where appropriate. The EQIA will be updated to reflect the completion of these actions.
- The EQIA will be reviewed annually, or when significant legislation is updated, to ensure it is up to date.
- The EQIA will be revisited and updated for any new courses or resources developed by SMDP.
- Continue to monitor the data collection and evaluation of courses and resources to further influence the review and development of the EQIA.

Sign-off

Director: Karen Wilson

Date: 04/09/2024

Review (1): January 2026

Review (2): January 2027