

Equality, Fairer Scotland and Children's Rights Impact Assessment

Report 2025

NHS Scotland Management Training Scheme (MTS) Recruitment

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1.Introduction

NES directorate or department: People and Culture Directorate

Equality, Fairer Scotland and Children's Rights Impact Assessment help us to make good decisions. It's a process to help us think about how we can:

- Take action to advance equality;
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- Foster good relations;
- Develop better technology, education and learning and workforce planning solutions to contribute to Scotland's health and care;
- Support us to be a diverse and inclusive employer;
- Demonstrate how we have considered equality and children's rights in making our decisions.

The NHS Scotland Management Training Scheme (MTS) is managed by NHS Education for Scotland (NES) and is delivered in partnership with NHS Scotland Boards. It aims to recruit and develop graduate-level individuals with the potential to become senior leaders in NHS Scotland, contributing to a skilled, diverse and resilient health and social care workforce.

The opportunity is published at [NHSScotland Jobs](#) and [Management Training Scheme website](#); via Prospect and a number of University jobsites; and using social media, namely LinkedIn and Facebook. The MTS website is the main source for candidate information and up to date guidance and criteria, also providing a link to the Jobtrain application form.

NES is committed to progressing equality and creating an inclusive and diverse workplace across health and social care. We have a monitoring process to collect, store, and analyse data about the protected characteristics of our job applicants and employees. It helps us provide equal opportunities in recruitment and employment so that everyone feels valued and respected.

We aim to eliminate discrimination, support under-represented groups, and improve diversity and inclusivity. Gathering accurate information about our job applicants and employees is essential to achieving this.

We use the anonymised data to:

- Identify any patterns of inequality, and disadvantage and under-representation,
- inform workforce planning decisions,
- design and implement workforce policies,
- take action to achieve positive change, and
- determine which of our actions are working and which are not.

It helps us better understand our candidates and workforce, identify areas where we need to improve, and take steps to create a more inclusive and diverse workplace.

The data is kept secure and confidential and is protected by the [Data Protection Act 2018](#).

Our work contributes to NES Purpose and Vision set out in NES Strategy 2023-26: People, Partnerships, Performance:

Our Purpose

To be a collaborative, innovative and inclusive learning organisation that provides high quality education, training, workforce development, workforce data and technology for Scotland's health and social care workforce.

Our Vision

Supporting better rights-based quality care and outcomes for every person in Scotland through a skilled, capable and resilient health and social care workforce.

2. Purpose/objective of proposed work

The Impact Assessment is an important way to mainstream equality into our work at NES, and the purpose of this Impact Assessment is to help us consider MTS recruitment in context of meeting the Public Sector Equality Duty.

- **Aim:** To identify, recruit, and develop future leaders for NHS Scotland through a fair, inclusive, and accessible process.

- **Who is affected:** Graduate-level applicants (SCQF Level 10 or equivalent), including those from under-represented and disadvantaged groups.
- **Approach:** The EQIA was developed collaboratively, drawing on applicant data, stakeholder consultation, and external expert review (including the Business Disability Forum).

An MTS Review was conducted in 2022 of the purpose and construct of the Scheme and to make short- and long-term recommendations on its future in the context of the workforce and leadership challenges facing the NHS Scotland. This included taking positive Equality, Diversity and Inclusion actions which ensure that the most talented applicants are selected regardless of background and that NHS Scotland attracts and appoints the best candidates from a diverse pool of applicants.

As a part of this review process, a stakeholder consultation on inclusivity of the MTS recruitment process was conducted. The data on the diversity of the most recent applicant pools indicated that to improve the diversity of the applicant pool there was a need to focus on the initial stage of the recruitment i.e. attraction.

As the MTS website is a main source of applicant information for recruitment, a decision was made to focus on this, and stakeholder consultation was conducted. In addition, the social media marketing approach was re-visited with amendments made including to the weighing of the target marketing and imagery.

The MTS recruitment process is conducted in three stages:

Stage 1:

- Attraction, and online application via Jobtrain – The questions are listed in the NHS Scotland Careers website: [Recruiting and supporting a diverse workforce](#).
- Online psychometrics assessment – consisting of numerical, inductive and deductive reasoning tests.

This stage is provided by an external supplier, [Saville Assessment](#). The supplier was identified by the Public Contracts Scotland Tender

process: <https://www.publiccontractsscotland.gov.uk/> adhering to the current procurement legislation for public bodies [Procurement Reform \(Scotland\) Act 2014](#).

Stage 2:

- Online assessment centre – consisting of future-focused scenario interview, individual case study exercise, and group exercise.

This stage is provided by an external supplier, [Amberjack Global Assessment](#). The supplier was identified by the Public Contracts Scotland Tender

process: <https://www.publiccontractsscotland.gov.uk/> adhering to the current procurement legislation for public bodies [Procurement Reform \(Scotland\) Act 2014](#).

Stage 3:

- Online interviews via MS Teams, including a combination of values-based and leadership capability-based questions.

The applicant assessment is based on the [Leadership Capabilities](#) and the associated skills and behaviours: Collaborating and influencing; Creativity and innovation; Empowering; Motivating and inspiring; Self-Leadership and Vision. These were developed in collaboration by social care, social work and health to support and encourage people to think about how they exercise their leadership every day. The expectation is that candidates are open to challenging their own thinking and assumptions; consider different perspectives, and are able to reflect and consider what they may need to not only learn but also unlearn and relearn.

Call for interview panel members were shared via the MTS Steering Group members with an aim to establish diverse panels, including representation from different NHS Boards and MTS Alumni. An interview panel briefing session was held to clarify the process and requirements.

To help mitigate bias and prejudice in the interview process, panel members were required to familiarise themselves with the NES Values Based Recruitment toolkit and complete the Values Based Recruitment module [Being aware of our bias: guidance for interview and assessment panels](#) as a part of the preparation.

3.Evidence

Data Sources

- **Applicant EDI Data (2019–2025):** Shows persistent under-representation of disabled, LGBTQ+, and ethnic minority applicants, despite some improvements in gender balance. For 2025, 635 applications were received, with the majority identifying as female and white; declared disability and ethnic diversity remain low. Three successful candidates were recruited to the Scheme in 2025.
- **Stakeholder Feedback:** Focus groups and written submissions from organisations such as Stonewall, Business Disability Forum, Who Cares? Scotland, and others highlighted barriers and recommended changes.
- **Website Review:** The MTS website was reviewed and amended for accessibility, plain English, and inclusive imagery, with feedback from the Business Disability Forum implemented.
- **Literature Review:** Identified barriers for under-represented groups, including bias in job descriptions, lack of role models, and inaccessible recruitment processes.

Gaps

- Limited data on care-experienced applicants and socio-economic background. The data is collected on a Once for Scotland basis during the application via Job train process and is limited to the current categories.
- Lack of feedback from those who considered, but did not apply.

4.Summary

We have considered how this work will impact on the Public Sector Equality Duty (See Annex A). 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.

We have also considered children's rights, our role as a corporate parent and the Fairer Scotland Duty.

- **Positive Impacts:** The Scheme is open to all graduate-level applicants and actively encourages applications from under-represented groups. The Guaranteed Interview Scheme (GIS) for disabled applicants is in place. Website and recruitment materials have been made more accessible and inclusive.
- **Negative/Neutral Impacts:** Online-only processes may disadvantage those without digital access. The full-time structure may disadvantage carers and those with other responsibilities. Some characteristics (e.g. care experience, socio-economic status) are not fully captured in monitoring data.
- **Children's Rights:** The Scheme is not directly aimed at children, but as a public body, NES ensures no adverse impact on children's rights.

The impact assessment has led us to conclude currently that there is no potential for unlawful discrimination, and we have built in actions to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

5. Making a difference

The impact assessment has informed the following actions taken:

Issue or Risk identified	Proposed changes/action	Timescale
Under-representation of disabled and ethnic minority applicants	Website and materials reviewed for accessibility and inclusivity; Guaranteed Interview Scheme is promoted; plain English and inclusive imagery used	Complete – 2025 recruitment round
Lack of clarity on adjustments and support	Clearer information on adjustments, contact details, and support for applicants	Complete
Psychometric testing as a barrier	Review of necessity and accessibility of psychometric tests; reasonable adjustments offered	Ongoing
Limited data on care experience and socio-economic status	Explore an option to expand monitoring questions in future cycles on a Once for Scotland basis on economic status. The care experience is now included in the Jobtrain EDI questions	2026/future recruitment round
Digital exclusion	Commitment to explore support for those without digital access on a case-by-case basis	Ongoing

Issue or Risk identified	Proposed changes/action	Timescale
Carers and flexible working	Commitment to consider flexible arrangements on a case-by-case basis	Ongoing

6. Monitoring

- **Review:** The impact assessment will be reviewed after each recruitment cycle, with updates recorded as appropriate.
- **Evaluation:** Applicant diversity data, feedback from applicants and stakeholders, and website analytics will inform ongoing improvements.

7. Sign-Off

Director: Janice Gibson

Date: 15th December 2025

Annex A: Impact on equality & socio-economic disadvantage

Guide: Using the evidence you have collected, explain if your proposal could

- be discriminatory and/ or put a group of people sharing one of these characteristics at a disadvantage for a reason connected to that characteristic.
- Have a positive impact on reducing inequalities experienced by groups of people sharing these characteristics.

Note – answer yes/ no and if yes provide brief reasons.

Relevant group	Could your work result in unlawful discrimination?	Could your work put people at a disadvantage/ make their lives worse?	Can your work advance equality of opportunity [reduce disadvantage, meet needs, increase participation]	Can your work foster good relations? [reduce prejudice + increase tolerance]
People in different age groups	No	Yes. The Scheme marketing, although covers all age groups, is focussed on the younger demographics.	Yes. The Scheme is open for all graduate-level applicants.	Yes
Disabled people	No	No	Yes. NES has an established Guaranteed Interview Scheme (GIS).	Yes

Relevant group	Could your work result in unlawful discrimination?	Could your work put people at a disadvantage/ make their lives worse?	Can your work advance equality of opportunity [reduce disadvantage, meet needs, increase participation]	Can your work foster good relations? [reduce prejudice + increase tolerance]
Trans and non-binary people	No	No	Yes. Use of inclusive language, monitoring.	Yes
People who are pregnant or on maternity leave	No	No	Yes. Flexibility considered.	Yes
People from different ethnic backgrounds	No	No	Yes. Targeted outreach, inclusive imagery.	Yes
People with religious or protected beliefs	No	No	Yes	Yes
Men and women [This may include carers, because many are women.]	No	No	Yes	Yes

Relevant group	Could your work result in unlawful discrimination?	Could your work put people at a disadvantage/ make their lives worse?	Can your work advance equality of opportunity [reduce disadvantage, meet needs, increase participation]	Can your work foster good relations? [reduce prejudice + increase tolerance]
People who are heterosexual, lesbian, gay or bisexual	No	No	Yes	Yes
People who are married or in a civil partnership [only in employment situations]	No	No	Yes	Yes
Care experienced people	NOTE - there is no legal protection from discrimination on basis of care experience.	No	Yes. Monitoring to be improved.	Yes
People living in remote, rural and island communities	NOTE - there is no legal protection from discrimination on basis of living in a remote, rural or island community.	No	Yes. The current trainee placements cover all the Scotland regions.	Yes

Relevant group	Could your work result in unlawful discrimination?	Could your work put people at a disadvantage/ make their lives worse?	Can your work advance equality of opportunity [reduce disadvantage, meet needs, increase participation]	Can your work foster good relations? [reduce prejudice + increase tolerance]
People experiencing health inequalities caused by socio-economic disadvantage [This may include people living in different or difficult circumstances such as people experiencing homelessness, who are in prison or are ex-offenders, people with addictions and people involved	NOTE - there is no legal protection from discrimination on basis of socio-economic disadvantage.	Yes. Digital exclusion.	Yes. Exploring alternatives.	Yes

Relevant group	Could your work result in unlawful discrimination?	Could your work put people at a disadvantage/ make their lives worse?	Can your work advance equality of opportunity [reduce disadvantage, meet needs, increase participation]	Can your work foster good relations? [reduce prejudice + increase tolerance]
with prostitution. Note – links between socio-economic factors and education.]				
Carers	NOTE - there is no legal protection from discrimination on basis of caring responsibilities. Women continue to have the majority of caring responsibilities and can be put at a particular disadvantage in connection with this. This may be unlawful indirect sex discrimination.	Yes. The full-time structure of the Scheme.	Yes. Flexibility considered.	Yes