Healthcare Improvement Scotland

Anti-Racism Plan

April 2025 – March 2029

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1. Introduction

Healthcare Improvement Scotland is the national improvement agency for health and social care in Scotland. We lead improvement in the quality and safety of health and care for the people in Scotland using our skills and knowledge to tackle the quality challenges being faced. Our role is to be at the heart of national efforts to understand and shape the quality of health and care, and with partners, to embed quality management across the provision of health and care. Our support for the system is underpinned by a number of statutory duties and powers, including:

- to further improve the quality of health and care
- to provide information to the public about the availability and quality of NHS services
- to support and monitor public involvement
- to monitor the quality of healthcare provided or secured by the health service
- to evaluate and provide advice to the health service on the clinical and cost effectiveness of new medicines and new and existing health technologies.

We know that racism influences the life chances of people from minority ethnic[1] backgrounds and drives significant disparities in the quality of health and care for the people of Scotland. This includes inequality in access to and experience of health services and disproportionate levels of challenge in employment compared to white majority groups. The structural disadvantage and daily microaggressions that people from minority ethnic backgrounds experience, both as patients and members of the NHS Scotland workforce, is unacceptable. Healthcare Improvement Scotland committed in our 2023-2028 strategy to being an anti-racist organisation. This plan intends to deliver on that commitment, translating our words into meaningful action.

By 'anti-racism' we mean challenging racism wherever we see it, both in our workplace and as part of the work we deliver to support Scotland's health and care system. Anti-racism is an active term which requires us to interrogate and disrupt the power imbalances that maintain

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[1] When referring to 'minority ethnic' groups we mean groups that are not part of the white majority ethnic group in Scotland and who experience disadvantage on the basis of their visible or perceived racial identity.

disadvantage for people with minority ethnic identities and backgrounds (see CRER). It involves doing more than simply avoiding unfair discrimination.[2]

Specifically, we understand anti-racism as:

the active work to oppose racism and to produce racial equity–so that racial identity is no longer a factor in determining how anyone fares in life. Being anti-racist means supporting an anti-racist policy through your actions. An anti-racist policy is any measure that produces or sustains racial equity.[3]

The actions set out in our plan are to help us meet the outcome that **Healthcare Improvement Scotland staff are confident in their ability to recognise and challenge racism within our own workplace and the wider healthcare system.** This outcome is one of Healthcare Improvement Scotland's refreshed equality outcomes 2025-29.

The actions set out primarily relate to supporting our workforce, culture and wellbeing. Our contribution to equity focussed service delivery is based on ensuring minority ethnic communities influence the health and care system through community engagement, ensuring our evidence offer is scrutinised through an anti-racism lens and through our work improving perinatal care.[4]

Overall, we want anyone experiencing racism within the workplace to feel safe to speak up and confident there will be an appropriate response. We want all colleagues to be able to recognise racism, including microaggression and racial bias, when it appears in our work culture or in the resources and tools we review, produce or share. We want our people to be empowered to highlight and challenge racism within the system and to help others do the same, improving health and care for all.

The plan below covers four years of delivery. We have established an internal delivery group which will take the actions forward, make decisions about priority and timescale for delivery and review and report on progress. This will be on-going through a regular schedule of meetings, with more formal reviews of progress and membership carried out annually.

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[2] Race discrimination | EHRC
[2] Kendi (2019), and MP Associates, Centre for Assessment and Policy Development, and World Trust Educational Services (2020).
[3] See 2025-2029 equality outcomes

2. Action Plan table

Supporting workforce, culture and wellbeing		
Theme	**Actions**	**Measures**
Leadership We have a clear organisational commitment to tackling all forms of discrimination and harassment. Senior leaders visibly pursue an anti-racism culture through organisational initiatives. We are committed to promoting and including leaders from minority ethnic backgrounds, and they are visible across the organisation.	• Include our commitment to anti-racism commitment within our Strategy 2023-28. • Chief Executive, Chair and Employee Director communicate a statement of support for this plan, including how the organisation understands and will deliver on anti-racism. • Members of our Executive Team, Board and Senior Leadership Teams undertake anti-racism training. • Address under representation in senior roles (band 8 and above) by encouraging applications from people who are part of under-represented ethnic groups. • Include updates from the Race and Ethnicity Network, including in relation to this plan, at Partnership Forum meetings.	• HIS Strategy 2023-2028. • Communications data shows reach of a published statement. • Training attendance record and evaluation results showing high attendance and improved understanding and commitment. • Meeting records evidence positive staff engagement with network priorities. • Communications data shows campaign and awareness activities have reached at least two thirds of HIS staff.

	• Work collaboratively with public sector partners to exchange ideas and support. • Celebrate Black History Month and the contributions of Black and minority ethnic colleagues. • Undertake a campaign aligning anti-racism with NHS Scotland values and offering the opportunity for staff, volunteers and non-executive board members to pledge commitment to anti-racism.	
Accountability Our Executive Team and Board monitor delivery of this plan and enable its actions. We reflect on our anti-racism journey and share this publicly.	• Have an Executive Sponsor for this plan. • Ensure each member of the Executive Team has an anti-racism objective per the Scottish Government directive. • Provide regular progress updates on this plan to the Staff Governance Committee and HIS Board through reporting against our Annual Delivery Plan, Anchors Strategic Plan and equality outcomes. • Create an external webpage showcasing our anti-racism commitment and organisational support structures.	• Meeting and PDR records evidence positive engagement with anti-racism priorities. • Anti-racism commitment is visible on the HIS website.

| Recruitment and career progression

Employees with minority ethnic backgrounds are equally able to progress their career in HIS.	• Increase the number of HIS colleagues with a minority ethnic background by 5% by April 2029. • As above, address under-representation in senior roles (band 8 and above) by encouraging applications from people who are part of under-represented ethnic groups. • Establish a mutual mentoring scheme by April 2026, supporting progress to senior roles for people from under-represented ethnic groups. • Disrupt recruitment bias through a combination of bias training for managers and employing ethnically diverse recruitment panels.	• Workforce data shows the combined minority ethnic group represented 9.3% of staff. • 8 people participate in mutual mentoring by April 2027. • Non-redacted occupational segregation data for colleagues with a minority ethnic background at AFC band 8 and above can be reported.
Cultural and Attitudinal Change

We have regular learning opportunities open to all staff, which inform and challenge their views around race and ethnicity. | • Promote and deliver Turas anti-racism resources and learning opportunities via HIS Campus.

• Set an anti-racism corporate objective during 2026/27 to support staff learning.

• Create and promote resources on anti-racism allyship. | • Facilitated anti-racism training is offered to all staff by April 2027 and two thirds have engaged.

• Record of objective agreed.

• Communications data shows awareness activities have reached at least two thirds of HIS staff. |

	• Carry out awareness-raising around protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010 and intersectional discrimination.	
Involving staff with lived experience Staff have confidence in how we manage discrimination and support those who experience it. Staff have protected time to contribute to staff networks.	• Re-establish the organisational commitment to the HIS Race and Ethnicity Network, in partnership between senior managers and staff representatives. • Continue to facilitate a peer support space for staff from minority ethnic backgrounds, with direct links to governance groups and senior leadership as required. • Convene a regular meeting space for anti-racism allies. • Deliver anti-racism training to the People and Workplace Team, union stewards and Partnership Reps. • Include information about the staff networks as part of managers' induction for new staff. • Acknowledge world events that may be impacting the wellbeing of particular ethnic groups and communicate organisational support available.	• Engagement with our peer support space suggests that at least 50% of our workforce who identify as having a minority ethnic background are engaged. • Participation in the Race and Ethnicity Network general channel increases by 20% by April 2029. • Training attendance record and evaluation results showing high attendance and improved understanding and commitment. • Positive qualitative feedback from colleagues impacted.

Incident reporting		
Incident reporting Improve reporting of incidents related to racism, discrimination, bullying and harassment. Understand issues with reporting channels and ensure staff feel supported and safe to report incidents.	• Identify and establish an incident reporting system suitable for Healthcare Improvement Scotland and that can include a range of protected characteristics. • Regularly appraise data from the incident reporting system and take appropriate remedial action, including through regular review meetings by HR, Equality team and Partnership Forum reps.	• Reporting system is operational and data is collected. • Record of actions taken as appropriate.
Equity focussed service delivery		
Theme	**Actions**	**Measures**
Evidence from engagement activities carried out by HIS Minority ethnic communities influence HIS work through evidence and engagement. Links with HIS minority ethnic employees are strengthened through engagement, with the collective group influencing HIS work.	• Strengthen links with minority ethnic, including refugee, communities through HIS Community Engagement so that diverse communities better understand their rights and can influence the health and care system. • Meaningfully engage Race and Ethnicity Network peer group members in relevant HIS policies and processes. • Increase the ethnic diversity of Healthcare Improvement Scotland volunteers.	• Number and spread of organisations representing people with minority ethnic backgrounds we have actively reached out to and informed about our work and engagement opportunities. • Equality monitoring data for research and engagement activities demonstrating successful engagement of minority ethnic communities on relevant topics.

	• Collate and share intelligence gathered from minority ethnic communities through the work of His directorates, including Engagement Advisors (Community) to help influence HIS work activities.	• By April 2029, equality monitoring data for HIS volunteers (Public Partners, People's Experience Volunteers) shows at least 10% of volunteers have a minority ethnic background. • Increased number and spread of contacts from minority ethnic communities are recorded on Community Engagement CRM • Record of HIS work influenced by intelligence from minority ethnic communities
Addressing health and healthcare inequalities We support the system to deliver equitable healthcare through our work programmes and methodologies.	• Use Naicker's Anti-racism Critical Appraisal tool to decolonise the way Healthcare Improvement Scotland uses and produces knowledge and information. • Deliver a Perinatal Quality Management System with a focus on racialised healthcare inequalities. • Monitor our work programmes for future areas of focus that relate to the Scottish Government's anti-racism framework around equity focussed service delivery.	• Number of programmes the tool has been applied in. • Specific outcomes from relevant programmes can be highlighted. • See related programme plan.

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Please contact us on 0131 623 4300 or email his.equality@nhs.scot