



# Equalities Mainstreaming Report April 2023- March 2025

Our Equality Outcomes 2025-2029

25 April 2025

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You can find more information about equality and diversity within the Care Inspectorate on our website <https://www.careinspectorate.com/index.php/equality-and-diversity> . You can also get information by emailing [equalities@careinspectorate.gov.scot](mailto:equalities@careinspectorate.gov.scot). This report is available in alternative languages and formats on request.

## Introduction

Mainstreaming equality means making it an integral part of our daily work and core functions, ensuring it is a fundamental part of everything we do. This report provides:

- progress against our equality outcomes from April 2021 to March 2025 as first published in our [Equality Outcomes, Mainstreaming Report, and Action Plan](#) in April 2021
- new equality outcomes for 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2029 (appendix 1)
- workforce equality information including our pay gap information (appendix 2)
- equal pay statement (appendix 2).

## About us

The Care Inspectorate is the national agency responsible for regulating social care and social work services across the whole life cycle, for babies, infants, children, young people, adults, and older people. Our work includes inspection, registration of regulated care services, complaints, and quality improvement. We help services improve care quality by providing guidance, resources, and sharing good practice. When care falls short, we do not hesitate to take action to ensure the right standards of care are met.

Our vision: is for world-class social care and social work in Scotland, where everyone, in every community, experiences high-quality care, support and learning, tailored to their rights, needs, and wishes.

Our mission: We will provide public assurance about the quality of social care, social work, and early learning services, promote innovation, and drive continuous improvement. We will collaborate and take action where experiences and outcomes are not meeting individual needs. You can read more about us in our [corporate plan](#).

We also influence social care policy nationally and internationally, sharing our learning to drive transformation in Scotland's social care sector. We helped to develop Scotland's Health and Social Care Standards, which are central to our scrutiny and quality improvement work, focused on human rights and well-being.

### Chief Executive statement

"I am proud to present our Equalities Mainstreaming Report—a testament to our commitment to integrating equality and human rights at the heart of everything we do. This report shows the many achievements we have made as a result of the dedication and passion of all our colleagues. Further integrating equality and human rights into our day-to-day work supports the vision towards world class care and support for everyone across Scotland."



Jackie Irvine, Chief Executive, Care Inspectorate.

### Board statement

"On behalf of the Board, I am delighted to endorse the Care Inspectorate's Equalities Mainstreaming report. This report clearly shows what we as an organisation hold true as our core values and principles. I would also like to record my thanks to all our Care Inspectorate staff who uphold these principles in their daily lives and champion this important work."



Doug Moodie, Chair, Care Inspectorate Board.

## Our specific duties to mainstream equality

The Equality Act 2010, covering the nine protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation), requires us to consider equality in all aspects of our work.

The General Equality Duty (Section 149) of the Equality Act 2010, requires us, to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012 helps us to support the better performance of the General Equality Duty. The Specific Duties require us to:

- report progress on mainstreaming the equality duty
- publish equality outcomes and report on progress
- assess and review policies and practices
- gather and use employee information
- publish gender pay gap information
- publish statements on equal pay
- consider award criteria and conditions in relation to public procurement
- publish in a manner that is accessible.

We exceed legal obligations by embedding equality, diversity, and inclusion across all aspects of our work, demonstrated by:

- continuing to publish our ethnicity and disability pay gaps
- our [Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy 2021-2025](#), which places the promotion of an inclusive culture at its core.
- working towards acknowledging care experience as a protected characteristic.

## Progress in achieving our equality outcomes April 2021 – March 2025

As detailed through this report, we have made significant progress on our three equality outcomes, initially set out in our [Equality Outcomes, Mainstreaming Report, and Action Plan](#) in April 2021 and our interim report, [Equalities Mainstreaming Progress Report](#) in April 2023.

| <b>Equality outcome 1</b>  |  |   |  |   |
|--|--|---|--|---|
| <b>Issue</b>   | <b>Equality outcome 1</b>  | <b>Outputs and outcomes</b>   | <b>Activities</b>  | <b>General duty</b>                                 |
| Care experienced younger people, older people, disabled people, the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT+) community, and people from a minority ethnic community do not always experience care that meets their specific needs and wishes. | <p>We will collaborate with providers of care and other stakeholders to develop and evaluate quality illustrations* in our quality frameworks.</p> <p>These will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>include equality, diversity, and human rights</li> <li>aid discussion and understanding between inspectors and care service providers</li> <li>promote a self-evaluation process for continuous improvement.</li> <li>ensure people experience high-quality care and</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Very good and weak practice examples are developed.</li> <li>Quality illustrations that focus on equality and diversity are included in all our quality frameworks.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify individuals to develop quality illustrations.</li> <li>Promote quality illustrations.</li> <li>Train our staff (webinars).</li> <li>Review impact of quality illustrations (evaluations that measure pre- and post-learning).</li> </ul> | Foster good relations and eliminate discrimination. |

| <b>Equality outcome 1</b> |  |                             |                   |                     |
|---------------------------|--|-----------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Issue</b>              | <b>Equality outcome 1</b>  | <b>Outputs and outcomes</b> | <b>Activities</b> | <b>General duty</b> |
|                           | support that is compassionate and tailored to their rights, needs, and wishes. |                             |                   |                     |



**Equality outcome 1:** helps us to further embed equality into our scrutiny, assurance, and quality improvement work.

### Quality frameworks/ illustrations:

We have [quality frameworks](#) to evaluate the quality of care during inspections and improvement planning. The frameworks reflect the [Health and Social Care Standards: My Support, My Life](#). The standards are key in bringing human rights, equalities, diversity, and inclusion into our scrutiny assurance and quality improvement work.

\*Quality illustrations are a tool that we use to support care services to self-evaluate and are part of our external quality assurance activity. We have illustrations of what very good quality looks like, and what weak quality looks like.

- Since April 2021, we have published **12** (updated or new) regulatory [Quality Frameworks and Key Question 7s](#). Strategic inspection have published **4** frameworks.
- Continued to promote '[Proud to Care: LGBT and Dementia A Guide for Health and Social Care Providers](#)' 'The resource has been produced in partnership with LGBT Health and Wellbeing, Alzheimer Scotland, and others. Within the toolkit we provided quality illustrations to highlight good practice.

### Self-evaluation:

**8** sector-specific self-evaluation toolkits have been published. We have:

- Worked collaboratively as a member of [Restraint Reduction Scotland](#), with the [Scottish Physical Restraint Action Group \(SPRAG\)](#), including the sector and the Centre for Excellence for Children's Care and Protection (CELCIS). We have:
  - developed a [Self-evaluation tool: The use of restrictive practices](#) (published in 2022 and revised in 2024)
  - created definitions in relation to restrictive practices and used these same definitions to create a new notification about restrictive practices in 2022
  - replicated the language across our annual returns for 2022
  - reviewed our document [Records that all registered children and young people's care services must keep and guidance on notification reporting in 2021](#)
  - ensured these developments were communicated more widely across the sector by contributing to the annual Scottish Physical Restraint Action Group [SPRAG](#) at Scottish Institute for Residential Child Care [SIRCC videos](#).

- Reviewed and published new quality frameworks for self-evaluation (adult services). These frameworks embed human rights and Health and Social Care Standards throughout. They are outcome-focused, ensuring a strong emphasis on measuring and improving outcomes for people.
- Updated [A self-evaluation guide to support quality improvement for community justice in Scotland November 2023](#). This guidance was updated to include:
  - the Promise
  - a rights-based approach within the quality indicator illustrations thereby promoting the PANEL (participation, accountability, non-discrimination and equality, empowerment, and legality) principles.
- Consulting on a self-evaluation toolkit: Embedding a rights-based approach to digital social care which builds on our good practice guide: [Using technology and digital devices to make a positive impact on health and wellbeing for people experiencing care](#) which is now published.

#### **Develop new national standards:**

- Supported the Scottish Government to:
  - introduce [two new Health and Social Care Standards](#) to ensure people living in care homes can have visitors even during exceptional circumstances
  - promoted the standards and wrote guidance for the sector to support implementation.
- Published Scotland's [Bairns Hoose standards, in 2023](#), in partnership with Healthcare Improvement Scotland. This was developed alongside the voices of children and young people. The standards:
  - are underpinned by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)
  - support access to justice and recovery for children and young people who may have been victims or witnesses to abuse or violence.

#### **Training/ webinars:**

Integrated participation and equalities into the Care Home Improvement Programme (CHIP). CHIP fosters an inclusive environment that values and addresses diverse perspectives while empowering everyone to be heard. The resulting improvement journeys demonstrate meaningful progress in involving people in decisions about

their care. This places the voices and needs of individuals in care homes at the forefront by actively involving:

- people who experience care
- their families
- staff in decision-making.
- Delivered a ‘proud to care’ webinar, conversation café, and podcast to support LGBT+ inclusion for older people living with dementia and signposted to [the Proud to Care: LGBT and Dementia A Guide for Health and Social Care Providers](#)
- Facilitated a webinar on ‘Creative approaches to supporting people with advancing dementia.’
- Delivered a series of Meaningful Connections [webinars](#), including one on “A human-rights based approach, including the Health and Social Care Standards”.
- Developed personal plan guidance and associated webinar for the sector. It ensures personal plans:
  - are person-centred
  - covers areas that promote equality and participation including the use of different methods of communication to ensure people can participate in (and agree) their personal plans.
- Delivered a [Continuing Care and the Welfare Assessment Webinar](#).
- Created written guidance for inspectors, titled Key Lines of Enquiry, to support the inspection and interaction with diverse groups of people who experience care. These guidelines are:
  - firmly rooted in a human rights-based approach
  - promote best practice
  - ensure inspections are conducted in a fair, non-discriminatory manner, respecting individuals’ rights and dignity throughout the process.
- Co-delivered a webinar for local authorities, social workers, residential childcare staff, fostering services, and foster carers, April 2023. It was an open forum for queries, concerns, and sharing best practices. The webinar covered:
  - the Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) policy and National Transfer Scheme
  - available support and services

- the context of young people's arrivals in Scotland and their lived experiences.
- Held [two webinars](#) in 2022 to support the launch of the [Self-evaluation tool: The use of restrictive practices](#).
- Presented on 'Outdoor Play and Learning' at the Early Childhood Ireland conference, March 2023.
- Delivered **2** online webinars on recovery play (February and August 2023).
- Signed the [national trauma-informed pledge](#), which means:
  - **366** staff have completed 'Introduction to the National Trauma Training Programme,' which covers the disproportionate impact of trauma on marginalised groups
  - identified **10** trauma champions.
- Continued to build equalities into core training for new scrutiny and assurance staff through induction and the learning and development programme.
- Facilitated sessions for the Professional Development Award (PDA), enhancing staff awareness of diverse communities to ensure fair practices.

### Share good practice:

- Increased our sector-specific equality communications (through our newsletters, website, and the hub) to promote greater awareness of equalities and to share more examples of excellent equality practice externally.
- Created a [Dementia Hub](#).
- Developed and published resources, including posters, guidance, research, and podcasts featuring care experiences, to support meaningful connections.
- Supported Anne's Law focusing on:
  - promoting meaningful connections web page [here](#) and mailing list
  - involving communities
  - supporting visiting rights in adult and older people's care homes
  - collaborating with people who experience care and their families, particularly with **20** care homes, to advance meaningful connections.
- Published a paper on ensuring the right psychological support for people living with dementia in care homes during Covid-19 (2021). It focused on

- rights
- importance of person-centred support
- participation and care of people living with dementia.
- A Senior Improvement Adviser (Pharmacy) and an HC-One Dementia Care Manager in Scotland shared experiences on improving dementia care and reducing the inappropriate use of psychoactive medicines in care homes, through a [podcast](#).

| <b>Equality outcome 2</b>   |   |  |   |  |
|---|---|--|---|--|
| <b>Issue</b>  | <b>Equality outcome 2</b>   | <b>Outputs and outcomes</b>  | <b>Activities</b>   | <b>General duty</b>  |
| <p>People who are care experienced and younger, older, disabled or minority ethnic, and families and carers of people experiencing care can face barriers to participation and engagement. This results in reduced opportunities to share their lived experience or discuss their specific needs.</p> | <p>We will increase opportunities for people who are care-experienced and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• younger</li> <li>• older</li> <li>• disabled</li> <li>• minority ethnic</li> </ul> <p>and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• families and carers of people experiencing care</li> <li>• volunteers</li> <li>• national stakeholders</li> </ul> <p>to get involved with our work.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase our overall engagement (events, focus groups and surveys) activity by 15% from an average of 130 to 150 engagements across these groups by March 2025.</li> <li>• Rise in interest and volunteer applications from people from these communities.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Run events, focus groups and surveys with adults and older people, our new Working Together Group, and our volunteers.</li> <li>• Work with four new organisations and groups of people each year.</li> <li>• Develop different methods of volunteer recruitment and retention specifically aimed at these communities.</li> </ul> | <p>Advance equality of opportunity, eliminate discrimination and foster good relations</p> |

|  |   |  |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|--|
|  | <p>This will influence and improve what we do so that people in these communities have a better experience of care.</p> |  |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|--|

**Equality Outcome 2:** is about increasing opportunities for participation, engagement, and the sharing of lived experience, aligning with the Duty of User Focus and public sector reform principles. By prioritising inclusivity and reaching out to people with protected characteristics, we ensure our work is person-centred, responsive, and equitable.

### **Heard from people who experience care during inspection and quality improvement work:**

- A core element of this is hearing from people who experience care and those important to them. We do this by:
  - issuing questionnaires prior to inspection which guides inspection planning
  - speaking with people experiencing care
  - continuing to invest in SOFI 2 (Short Observational Framework for Inspection) to assess care quality for individuals who do not use words to communicate. This tool focuses on interactions and outcomes, ensuring everyone's experiences are included in inspections. All inspectors are trained in SOFI 2, supported by in-house trainers. This reinforces our commitment to inclusive, non-discriminatory inspection practices.
  - ensuring people who experience care codesign quality improvement and participation interventions
- Feedback from families, post-Covid-19, highlighted the benefits of remote contact methods, such as FaceTime and telephone calls. Many felt these approaches allowed them to speak more freely without the visibility of entering a room with an inspector during an on-site visit. This has fostered greater inclusivity by enabling individuals to participate in inspections without fear of being identified or excluded. We have ensured that alternative methods, such as non-digital options, remain accessible for those unable to use online methods.
- We remain active members of the Scottish Parliament's Cross-Party Group on Carers, ensuring that carers' voices and needs are represented in our work.

### **Conducted thematic reviews and inquiries to gather insights from individuals with lived experiences of care:**

We have:

- Led the [Thematic review of services for disabled CYP](#). The report presented the key messages on how well social work services contribute to ensuring disabled



children have their rights respected and receive early care and support. We considered children's experiences alongside their rights as enshrined in:

- the UNCRC
- the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD).
- Engaged with organisations that work directly with disabled children on whose behalf we were conducting the review. This allowed for those directly involved in receiving or providing services to shape our approach. Representatives from the sector included: Our scrutiny partners and lived experience groups.
- Modified our approach to hearing directly from children and young people.
  - This involved collaborating with people who had trusted relationships with children, benefiting from their expertise and skills. As a result, we were able to communicate with those individuals from whom we might not otherwise have heard.
  - A quality improvement project (2023/24) has strengthened the ways inspection feedback is provided to children and young people
- Jointly led on the [Joint review of diversion from prosecution \(careinspectorate.com\)](https://careinspectorate.com) – 2023. This included in-person interviews with people who had experience of being diverted from prosecution. The central focus was on ensuring diversion processes across Police Scotland, the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Services and Justice Social Work were not discriminatory.
- Published our [Inquiry into adult carers' experiences of social work and social care services](#) in December 2022. We engaged directly with a wide range of stakeholders, including:
  - carers
  - health and social care partnerships
  - local and national carers' organisations
  - care and support service providers across Scotland.

Our approach ensured a comprehensive understanding of carers' experiences and needs.

- Led the 2024 [Prison-based social work thematic review.](#) informed by surveys and input from people currently serving prison sentences. The report assessed equality, diversity, rights advocacy, and anti-discrimination efforts. We also produced an accessible version of our findings which was reviewed and shaped by the views of people attending education classes while in custody.

- Published a Quality Improvement Framework (QIF) to help adult support and protection partnerships conduct multi-agency self-evaluations, supporting governance, improvement, and inclusion. The QIF integrates trauma-informed practices and prioritises the voices of people with lived experience.
- Developed collaboratively with stakeholders, including Homeless Network Scotland, Addiction Recovery Group, and the National Trauma Transformation Programme.
- Enhanced internal training with input from these organisations, increasing trauma awareness and embedding it into QIF illustrations.
- Developed a Technology Enabled Care good practice guide (February 2023) entitled 'Using technology and digital devices to make a positive impact on health and wellbeing for people experiencing care'.

### **Organise events, focus groups, and surveys to gather insights from individuals with lived experiences of care.**

We have:

- Adapted how we gather views based on feedback from people experiencing care and families, this includes:
  - use of inspection volunteers
  - online, paper, and easy read questionnaires
  - face-to-face and FaceTime meetings
  - telephone calls.
- Transitioned from paper-based questionnaires to electronic surveys, revising questions to improve accessibility in 2023. This is an interim step towards a more visual and accessible feedback approach for young people.
- Resumed Joint Inspections of Adult Services in 2022, focusing on how health and social care integration is improving outcomes for adults.
- Established a rolling programme of inspections, each targeting the experiences and outcomes of specific groups. To date, this has included individuals with physical disabilities and complex needs, as well as people living with mental illness.
- Emphasised meaningful engagement with people with lived experience and their carers during our inspections. The engagement methodology used in joint adult inspections strengthens participation through diverse methods, including:

- conversations
  - focus groups
  - supported surveys
  - accessible versions of all engagement materials are provided to ensure inclusivity
  - inspection volunteers with lived experience, either as people who experience care or carers, play a vital role in the process, enriching the inspection with their unique perspectives.
- Led the [Community Justice Social Work: Throughcare Review Sep2021](#), incorporating views from people with lived experience, regardless of offence or custody recall. Surveys and interviews, with the Scottish Prison Service support for literacy needs, informed the report, which assessed justice social work services' statutory and human rights responsibilities.
  - Engaged **45** people and carers per inspection for the Quality Improvement Framework for Adult Support and Protection through pre-inspection conversations, gathering valuable insights that complement traditional scrutiny methods and inform inspection findings.
  - Collaborated on a human rights-focused group to develop Scotland's National Charter of Rights for Substance Use, centred on the voices of lived experience. The Charter, launched in December 2024, is advancing rights-based approaches nationwide.
  - Co-chaired Dementia Strategy Work subgroups by people living with dementia to ensure lived experience informs decision-making.

Our [Quality Improvement and Involvement Strategy 2022-25](#), prioritises equality outcome two by:

- Empowering volunteers of all ages to co-design core scrutiny and quality improvement activities.
- Enhancing co-design and co-production with people who experience care and their supporters.
- Collaborating with organisations representing people who experience care to improve care quality.

This is further supported by our annual Participation Plan which centres on the importance of participation, lived experience, equality impact assessments and improved data.

**Worked with new organisations to engage with under-represented groups, including:**

- Disability Equality Scotland: Participated in the June 2024 Access Panel National Conference, exploring collaboration opportunities.
- Moments of Freedom: Engaged with members at a June 2024 community event to understand the group's impact.
- Vox Scotland: Discussed collaboration opportunities in July 2024, establishing connections for future engagement.
- Scottish Dementia Working Group and National Dementia Carers Action Network: Explored collaboration opportunities in August 2024, with plans to support formal consultation processes.
- Scottish Recovery Network: Subscribed to updates and discussed potential partnerships in August 2024.
- Enable Self-Advocacy Forum: Presented at the National Forum in September and October 2024, fostering connections with forum members.
- LUNA (Learning to Understand Needs and Abilities). This is a charity run by young people with disability and lifelong illnesses whom we have worked to provide training.
- Each and Every Child to deliver training to help our workforce, reframe how we talk think and feel about care experience.
- Volunteer Scotland to advertise our volunteering opportunities with the aim of reaching a more diverse group across Scotland.

**Promoted volunteering opportunities to a more diverse range of stakeholders including:**

- Aberlour
- Carer's centres
- Guardianship Service
- Men's Sheds
- National Leadership Network
- Who Cares Scotland?

**Promoted the recruitment and retention of a diverse volunteer workforce. We have:**

- Supported a diverse cohort of Care Inspectorate volunteers, many with care experience or from protected characteristic groups. Key initiatives included:
  - removing the age limit for young inspection volunteers, allowing participation beyond age 26. Acknowledging that care experience is lifelong, supporting intergenerational work wherever possible with some of our older volunteers.
  - updating application and monitoring forms and diversifying recruitment methods to attract volunteers across age, care experience, disability, and race
  - revising the [Involvement and Equalities Charter](#) to strengthen references to inclusion, equality, and the Public Sector Equality Duty
  - completing a Participation Review in 2022, addressing the needs and well-being of young inspection volunteers
  - volunteers actively contributing to board events, staff recruitment, strategic consultations, our Professional Development Award, and organisational work.

The recent collaborations with our volunteers and Board members have been both impactful and insightful.

“I really enjoyed meeting Rona and Ronnie, it was so interesting to hear about the skills and knowledge they bring. They were both very passionate about their roles as Board members and really understood the importance of having care-experienced Board members and volunteers of all age ranges.”

Volunteers participated in a range of activities, starting with young people, and later including intergenerational volunteers for the PDA Development Day. Co-designing the event was key, as it allowed volunteers time to build relationships, confidence, and understanding.

In September, the Closed Culture Development Day featured insights from an inspector, group discussions, and the creation of a short film, which premiered at the graduation ceremony. Volunteers gained media skills, connected with peers, and deepened their understanding of closed cultures:

“Today was interesting and new, I feel that I learned a lot about what closed cultures can look like and why they happen sometimes. It was good to work with the team, practice new skills, and learn more about the PDA.” (Volunteer)

“We learned more about the risks closed cultures have...we thought we could try and help other areas in the Care Inspectorate by making films about things we are passionate about.” (Volunteer)

In October, the PDA Graduation celebrated the volunteers' contributions and the short film, sparking meaningful discussions:

"I'm proud of our film, it's important that we talk about the hard things – everyone has had that experience before... where you know something isn't right in your gut, but you don't know why." (Volunteer)

By November, the PDA Development Day highlighted intergenerational co-design efforts. Volunteers co-designed table activities, building trust and exploring ideas collaboratively over several meetings. This was a first for integrating inspection volunteers and young inspection volunteers in planning, with positive feedback:

"I appreciated all the preparation for the day...It was good to see again the closed culture film the young inspection volunteers had made: all credit to them as it was/is just excellent." (Volunteer)

### **Increased opportunities for care-experienced young people. We have:**

- Ensured that care-experienced job applicants and staff, can self-identify and be recognised during the application process or through equal opportunities monitoring, promoting tailored support and inclusivity.
- Built on the objectives of the Corporate Parenting Plan (2021 – 2024), we continued to develop and improve practices to support care-experienced individuals to be meaningfully involved across the organisation. We:
  - used positive action to recruit **2** care-experienced Business Administration apprentices, offering tailored training for managers and teams to support their success. collaborated with Skills Development Scotland, Who Cares Scotland, Police Scotland, and a Scottish Vocational Qualification (SVQ) provider
  - advertised roles via care-experienced networks and social media
  - simplified applications with clear guidance, workshops, and one-on-one support
  - focused on potential, transferable skills, and willingness to learn rather than academic qualifications
  - included mentorship, professional development, and real-world project experience.
- Partnered with Media Education and Each and Every Child to amplify diverse voices in care.

- Participated in a pilot project providing care-experienced young people with feedback through:
  - face-to-face verbal inspection feedback
  - inspector videos providing verbal feedback with visuals
  - bespoke posters summarising written feedback.
- Developed Key Question 7 guidance with volunteers, focusing on ‘what matters to children and young people.’ Their input shaped our animation, co-designed with young inspection volunteers in 2022, to amplify voices and highlight The Promise in action.
- Designed posters for [residential child care](#) and [for foster care](#) to help young people understand inspections and how to get involved. Created in response to feedback from young people in 2021, these posters are available for providers to download and display.
- Launched [Text to Complain service](#) in 2021, for children and young people to raise awareness about our complaints process. Our young volunteers participated in the design and communication of this service. This means that children and young people can make early contact with us if they have a complaint about the care they experience.
- Introduced ‘social stories’ in 2023 as standard pre-inspection information for children and young people’s services, helping young people understand inspectors’ visits. Inspectors also use tools like:
  - Boardmaker for visual symbols
  - Talking Mats for structured feedback
  - Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) for formal communication support.
- Developed a children and young people’s specific [webpage](#) in 2021, to increase accessibility of information for young people.
- Revised the inspection report format to include a 'Key Messages' summary, making it more accessible for young people. This is an interim step toward further improvements.
- Collaborated with Happy to Translate to develop a bespoke app for inspector, to support engagement with children and young people who have English as a second or foreign language. The app launched in 2022. At a recent Happy to Translate Members Event, our children and young people's regulated team were delighted to be recognised by winning the Team of the Year award.

- Partnered with COSLA (Convention of Scottish Local Authorities), the Scottish Guardianship Service, the Scottish Refugee Council, and Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Young People to understand and meet the needs and uphold the rights of asylum-seeking and refugee children and young people across Scotland. We believe that we all need to work together to make any improvements that are needed.

We have also been working to reflect our commitment to the Promise by:

- integrating the vision and commitments into our inspection frameworks
- developing inspection methods for children at risk of harm
- creating a young volunteers' handbook
- collaborating with stakeholders on thematic reviews
- enhancing feedback loops for meaningful updates to children.
- Launched an initiative in partnership with Aberlour, the Children and Young People's Commissioner, and the Electoral Commission, to inform care-experienced young people on their voting rights and the importance of voting. This was to help remove barriers to voting encountered by some care-experienced young people. We:
  - co-hosted the Welcome to your Vote webinars as part of raising awareness of the rights of young people to vote in the Scottish local council elections on 5 May 2022. The webinars supported providers to make links to the:
    - United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)
    - Health and Social Care Standards.
  - produced tailored resources to meet the specific needs of care-experienced young people, ensuring they had the necessary support to understand and exercise their voting rights.
  - delivered a myth-busting video, amplifying the voices of young care-experienced individuals, and promoting their participation in Scotland's democratic process.
- Created an intranet space dedicated to promoting our work to support care-experienced young people and the newly formed network for care-experienced colleagues. We have also supported events like Care Experienced Week and Care Experienced Day to raise awareness.



**Increased opportunities for older people who experience care. We have:**

- Worked closely with the Electoral Commission in 2024 to improve voting accessibility for older people in care homes. This initiative involved distributing essential information and resources to care home staff, empowering them to support people who live in care homes to vote. The project focused on making voting accessible, thus enhancing older residents' autonomy and promoting their participation in Scotland's democratic process.
- Reconstituted our [Care about Physical Activity \(CAPA\)](#) team in Spring/Summer of 2022, funded through Scottish Government. In-person workshops for care services have been held which have included people who experience care. The team share [good practice](#) with care services on innovative ways to get older people moving more and to involve the community in the lives of people who experience care.

| <b>Equality outcome 3</b>   |   |  |  |                                  |
|---|---|--|--|----------------------------------|
| <b>Issue</b>  | <b>Equality outcome 3</b>   | <b>Outputs and outcomes</b>  | <b>Activities</b>  | <b>General duty</b>              |
| 12% of our workforce have declared that they have a disability, and our employee engagement survey showed our inclusion scores were less positive among disabled employees. Just over 1% of our workforce is from a minority ethnic community. Employee disclosure rate is 85%. | We will seek to increase the number of Care Inspectorate disabled employees and employees from the minority ethnic community. We will increase applications by 5% for each. We will also increase the number of employees who share their equalities information with us to over 90%. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase of 5% in applications from disabled people and people from minority ethnic groups, respectively.</li> <li>• Ensure we retain this talent.</li> <li>• Achieve Disability Confident Employer (Level 2).</li> <li>• Employee disclosure rate of 90% or higher.</li> <li>• Employees from these communities may volunteer to share their lived experience with our leaders.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertake an assessment of any racism and structural barriers that potentially might exist within our organisation and integrate our ambitions into our next corporate plan.</li> <li>• Work with the Council of Ethnic Minority Voluntary Sector Organisations and BEMIS (a national ethnic and cultural minorities-led umbrella body supporting the development of the ethnic minorities voluntary sector), Disability Confident, Inclusion Scotland, and Glasgow Disability Alliance to use the Scottish Government</li> </ul> | Advance equality of opportunity. |

| <b>Equality outcome 3</b> |                           |                             |  |                     |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|--|---------------------|
| <b>Issue</b>              | <b>Equality outcome 3</b> | <b>Outputs and outcomes</b> | <b>Activities</b>  | <b>General duty</b> |
|                           |                           |                             | <p>toolkit to develop more inclusive recruitment practices.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sign up to the Business in the Community Race Charter</li> <li>• Add an equality and diversity question to our employee exit questionnaire</li> <li>• Monitor our turnover of disabled and minority ethnic staff.</li> <li>• Facilitate and support set up of any desired disabled employees' network.</li> <li>• Introduce mentoring schemes that are about sharing lived experience.</li> </ul> |                     |

**Equality outcome 3:** is to help us develop an increasingly diverse and inclusive workforce. We have a specific focus on the protected characteristics of race and disability. We are looking at how we attract and recruit new employees and how we develop, support, and listen to our existing workforce. Good data collection and workforce information are also a priority as they will provide valuable insights into our workforce and help with evidenced-based decision making.

### **Workforce profile:**

- **14.85%** of our workforce are living with a disability. This is a significant rise from our last report, where **11.68%** of our employees identified as disabled.
- **1.69%** of our workforce is from a minority ethnic group. This is a slight increase since we last reported where **1.37%** of our employees identified as minority ethnic. And a rise from **0.84%** when we set our outcomes in 2021.

### **Applications/ advertising:**

- Job applications have significantly increased from disabled people since we set equality outcome 3 in 2021 (from 5.7% applications to 12.48%.)
- Job applications have significantly increased from minority ethnic people since we set equality outcome 3 in 2021 (from 4.4% in 2021 to 9.14%.)
- Signed up to the Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework (SCQF) Inclusive Recruiter recognition scheme which uses SCQF levels in recruitment instead of specific qualifications, reducing barriers for certain groups of people including disabled and minority ethnic.
- Tailored application process continues to positively encourage applications from those under-represented in our volunteer group particularly:
  - minority ethnic communities
  - younger people
  - men
  - disabled people
  - people who are care-experienced.
- Created a recruitment infographic with diverse imagery that we use for job adverts on social media to attract a diverse pool of job applicants.
- Advertise on a wider range of job boards to attract a more diverse group of job applicants.
- Ensure a bias-free recruitment process and promote diversity at all workforce levels. Since 2021, we have:

- Updated the equal opportunities form.
- Removed personal data from application forms to prevent unconscious bias.
- Shared HR workforce equalities data at quarterly board meetings.

**Retention/ turnover rate of disabled and minority ethnic staff:** See appendix 2.

### **Disclosure:**

We ran an equalities data campaign aimed to encourage the workforce to complete their equalities data. The campaign:

- explained why gathering equality information was important, such as supporting diversity and inclusion goals, improving workplace policies, and ensuring compliance with equality legislation
- emphasised the robust measures in place to keep the data safe, including secure storage, confidentiality, and limited access to sensitive information
- provided step-by-step guidance on how employees could easily and securely enter their equality information into the system.

### **Undertake an assessment of any racism and potential structural barriers/ integrate our ambitions into our next corporate plan:**

- Our race equality plan (2022-2025) is referenced in both our corporate plan and strategic workforce plan, respectively.
- We asked all staff to help tackle potential racism in Scotland's health and social care sector by sharing their views through a survey conducted by the Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights (CRER). We will use this work to inform our plans, we will also use the findings from our:
  - Staff survey: The insights gathered will allow us to identify trends and key areas for action.
  - Focus group: In January 2025, we hosted a focus group with various stakeholders to explore and address any potential barriers within our recruitment process.
  - Benchmarking/ community engagement: This work will continue into our next equality outcome cycle to ensure sustained progress.

**Work with the Council of Ethnic Minority Voluntary Sector Organisations (CEMVO) and BEMIS, Disability Confident, Inclusion Scotland, and Glasgow Disability Alliance:**

Our partnership with CEMVO has:

- advanced our anti-racism efforts
- guided policy improvements
- supported the creation of a race equality group and our race equality in employment plan.

See equality outcome 2 for more information about our work with disability organisations. This work continues into our next reporting cycle.

**Use the Scottish Government toolkit to develop more inclusive recruitment practices:**

We are following the good practice principles set out in the [Scottish Government's Minority Ethnic Toolkit](#) that offers public sector organisations advice when looking to improve the diversity of their workforce by recruiting more people from minority ethnic backgrounds.

**Sign up to Business in the Community Race Charter:** Achieved.

**Disability Confident Employer Level 2 status:** Achieved.

**Add an equality and diversity question to our employee exit questionnaire:**

Achieved, the exit interview form guides the conversation to explore themes including 'fairness and equal treatment,' however the conversation is guided by the employee's responses.

**Facilitate and support the set-up of any desired disabled employees' network:** Achieved.

**Introduce mentoring schemes that are about sharing lived experience:**

This will be taken forward into our new reporting cycle for 2025-2029 and is part of our Strategic Workforce Plan.

**Encourage disabled employees and ethnic minority employees to share their lived experiences with our leaders:**

There are various ways we enable this, including:

- Employee networks

- Corporate equalities group
- Surveys, focus groups
- Awareness-raising days
- Involvement in inclusive communication campaigns.

### **Lessons learned**

We understand that capacity is often stretched, with competing priorities and limited time and budgets. The post-pandemic period has brought new opportunities to rethink how we attract both staff and volunteers. Pressures across the sector have highlighted the value of collaboration and innovation. The pandemic also presented opportunities to reach our stakeholders. We adapted by expanding our use of online tools, organising virtual events, and exploring innovative channels to enhance engagement.

### **Next steps**

Any continuing work from the current reporting cycle will be taken forward through existing workplans or our equality outcome action plan for April 2025 - March 2029.

## **Mainstreaming equality to meet our legal responsibilities under the Equality Act (2010)**

This outlines the progress we have made in meeting our specific legal responsibilities.

### **Equality impact assessments**

Equality impact assessments (EQIAs) are conducted to support policy and decision-making and are embedded into our governance structures.

### **Public procurement**

We prioritise making our procurement processes inclusive by partnering with diverse suppliers whenever possible. This is supported by our Procurement strategy.

### **Publishing public information in accessible formats**

We are committed to ensuring our communications are accessible and inclusive for everyone. We offer translations, alternative formats, and interpreters upon request to meet diverse needs. Our website complies with the Equality Act (2010) and features the Recite Me tool, which provides text-to-speech functionality, dyslexia support, an interactive dictionary, and translation into over **100** languages across all devices.

We are:

- working with British Sign Language (BSL) interpreters to make our online events accessible.
- upskilling colleagues to ensure they understand accessibility requirements
- supporting colleagues to ensure all internal and external communications content complies with government accessibility standards.
- considering training to upskill our team to produce high-quality easy-read versions in-house.

We use Go Vocal, an online tool that encourages consultation and participation. This allows individuals including people experiencing care, professionals, and our own employees to share their views and influence our work. So far, we have conducted **14** consultations, ensuring that diverse perspectives shape and improve the care experience.

We have significantly enhanced our engagement with stakeholders through various online channels over the past five years. For example:

- Provider updates became a key way to maintain collaboration with stakeholders, even during the lockdown.
- We introduced new formats, such as podcasts and QR codes, to reach broader audiences more effectively.

We are continually exploring ways to increase engagement with care-experienced individuals. Notable progress includes:

- Launching the Anne's Law podcast series to share impactful stories.
- Piloting new methods, such as text-to-complain services, to better connect with young care-experienced individuals.

## **Our facilities**

We prioritise accessible, inclusive, and safe workplaces and event spaces for staff, volunteers, and the public.

Our hybrid working policy provides flexibility for employees to work both remotely and on-site. This approach supports productivity, well-being, and work-life balance while fostering an inclusive work environment tailored to individual and organisational needs, post-Covid-19. We collaborated with employees and trade unions to shape the policy, complemented by Managing Hybrid Teams training for **32** managers. These sessions emphasise accommodations for individual needs, including health, disability, pregnancy, and caring responsibilities. To assess the effectiveness of hybrid working, we have partnered with an external organisation to conduct a comprehensive assessment alongside the 2024 staff survey.



Our Estate Strategy (2023 – 2029) focuses on office rationalisation, and creating efficient, sustainable, and accessible workspaces, supporting operational needs while accommodating hybrid working flexibility.

## Mainstreaming equality as a scrutiny and quality improvement body

### Scrutiny and assurance

Since 2021, we have embedded rights-based approaches, producing impactful publications, tools, and guidance. Our frameworks expand scrutiny, assurance, and quality improvement, addressing the needs and amplifying the voices of people who experience care.

### Registration and complaints

- Strengthened our risk-based approach to registrations and complaints, prioritising human rights and using the PANEL principles and FAIR (Facts, Analyse rights, Identify responsibilities, Review action) framework to guide investigations
- Improved feedback during registration processes to expedite applications prioritised registrations within areas of high delayed discharge, helping to uphold Protocol 1 Article 1 of the Human Rights Act, as far as people experiencing care can continue to enjoy peaceful enjoyment of their property in communities which are familiar to them and ensure swift resolutions, particularly in high-need areas.
- Encouraged people to complain confidentially.

### Early learning and childcare (ELC)

We have published several resources highlighting the importance of young children's rights, individual needs, and inclusion in ELC. These guides and frameworks emphasise the creation of inclusive [personal plans](#) that support high-quality, compassionate care tailored to each child's unique preferences and circumstances. These materials highlight equalities, promote non-discrimination, and uphold principles from the UNCRC. The resources include practical notes and campaigns to enhance safety, nutrition, transitions, and active play while fostering children's engagement, confidence, and [relationships](#) with staff.

Notable initiatives like the ["My Active World"](#) guide address barriers such as gender disparities and celebrate children's abilities, supporting providers to encourage [play](#) and adopt inclusive practices. Training and collaboration with families are central themes, ensuring that ELC settings are [safe](#), supportive, and equitable spaces where every child can thrive.

### Children and young people (CYP)

- Published the [Position paper - Depriving and restricting liberty for children and young people in care home, school care and secure accommodation services](#) in 2023 addressing sensitive issues while aligning with The Promise, the UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024, and the Children (Care and Justice) (Scotland) Act 2024.

- Updated restrictive practices notifications to reflect UNCRC incorporation, tackle distress caused by restraint, and ensure transparency and proper authorisation for restrictive actions.
- Revised notifications improve the evaluation of outcomes for children and young people subject to restraint or restrictive practices.
- Assessed the scale of concerns raised by the Care Review, resulting in an April 2021 notification to capture higher-quality data and increase assurance.
- Published '[Distance placements: exploration of practice, outcomes, and children's rights](#) (2022)
- Conducted a [short thematic review of children and young people placed cross border on Deprivation of Liberty Orders](#) (January 2022).
- Collaborated with key partners like Clan Childlaw and the Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland to improve guidance on emergency placements and admissions.
- Clarified expectations through the [Matching Looked After Children and Young People: Admissions Guidance for Residential Services](#) (2022).
- Developed guidance and practice notes in 2022 to support young people's transitions to adulthood under the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.
- Collaborated with Clan Childlaw and CELCIS to create resources on continuing care rights for young people.

## Adults

While this has already been reported as significant progress under equality outcome 1, it is important to emphasise the following key achievements:

- Developed and published new quality frameworks for self-evaluation. These frameworks are firmly grounded in human rights and the Health and Social Care Standards, ensuring a strong outcome-driven approach.
- Produced sector-wide human rights guidance. As part of our Meaningful Connection work, we have delivered webinars and guidance that integrates the PANEL and FAIR principles. This reinforces a rights-based approach, supporting meaningful connections and strengthening best practices across the sector.

The team has also been involved in:

- Development of two new Health and Social Care standards.
- Delivery of training and webinars to support the sector.
- Creating personal planning guidance for the sector.

- Continuing to embed SOFI observation into their practice.

### Inspection and quality improvement focus areas

- Focused 2024/2025 inspections on continuing care across most service types and on seclusion in secure accommodation services, ensuring young people's rights are upheld.
- Published safeguarding [Guidance on effective safeguarding for boards of governors in independent schools \(2022\)](#) with Education Scotland and the Registrar of Independent Schools, enhancing child protection self-evaluation in independent schools.
- Released [Guidance for the regulation of guardianship arrangements in boarding schools \(2021\)](#) to promote the safety and rights of young people.
- Published [Care Homes for Children and Young People - The Design Guide](#) to support applicants and providers with design, planning and construction considerations for new or converted care homes for children and young people – and ensure that their rights were upheld in this area. This was done through consultation with colleagues internally and externally in both verbal and written format; ensuring young people had an opportunity to contribute their views through focus groups; and engaging with the Social Work Scotland Residential Child Care Forum to share the final draft version for feedback.
- Published [Guidance for providers of care homes for children and young people on the emergency relaxation of conditions of numbers](#) in 2022, ensuring children's rights are upheld during urgent situations
- Over the last four years, the [ELC improvement programme](#) has supported over **400** services across Scotland to make the necessary improvements to meet the national standard. Potentially benefiting more than **10,000** children.

### Publications

- Participated in the development of the [Secure Care Pathway and Standards Scotland](#) which were created to improve the experiences of children and young people who are in, or on the edges of, secure care, leading to better outcomes.
- Published a protocol and procedures for secure accommodation services on registered emergency beds (2022), ensuring young people's rights and experiences are better supported.
- Developed tools and resources, such as the Appropriate Adult Services Quality Improvement Framework (2022), informed by lived experiences and promoting participation, non-discrimination, and equality.
- Updated inspection resources for children at risk of harm, encouraging local audits and improving relationships and rights recognition.

- Collaborated on [Staying together and connected: getting it right for sisters and brothers: national practice guidance](#) (2021) to enhance sibling relationships in care.
- Contributed to the Children (Care and Justice) (Scotland) Act 2024, ending the use of Young Offender Institutions for children under 18.
- Routinely applied PANEL principles in His Majesty's Inspectorate of Prison for Scotland's inspection reports, embedding rights-based methodologies in all related work.
- In May 2023 we managed the high profile and controversial publication of our [Guidance for children and young people's services on the inclusion of transgender including non-binary young people](#) which attracted international attention, to ensure that it continued to deliver for the people it was intended to serve. This informed our approach when we published a revised version in May 2024.
- Published findings from the [Level of Service / Case Management Inventory \(LSCMI\)](#) (2022) at the request of Scottish Ministers, ensuring decisions upheld legal and human rights.
- Created a [Guide for providers on personal planning: children and young people](#) (2021), influencing practices to support individual rights.
- Published dementia-focused papers and guidance, emphasising person-centred and rights-based approaches during the Covid-19 pandemic.

## Quality improvement

Our [Quality Improvement and Involvement Strategy 2022-25](#), integrates quality improvement, co-production, equality, and fairness across all our work. In addition to achievements under equality outcome two, we have:

- Developed tools with frontline staff to address causes of stress and distress, reducing stigma, unnecessary psychoactive medication, and ensuring symptoms are addressed
- Collaborated with Public Health Scotland, Scottish Government, and key stakeholders to create Learning Disability and Relationships Guidance
- Responded to the Learning Disabilities, Autism, Neurodivergence Consultation
- Co-designed the Neurological Conditions Network structure with individuals in NHS Ayrshire and Arran living with neurological conditions
- Conducted a quality improvement visit with a health board alongside the Centre for Sustainable Delivery (2024)
- Presented on Standards, Rights, and Equality, covering public sector equality duties and engaging social practitioners at the Falls and Frailty Forum (2022)

- Piloted the PainChek app using facial analysis to monitor pain in individuals unable to verbalise discomfort, particularly benefiting those with dementia or severe autism
- Enhanced well-being in older people's care homes through Arts in Care. Community artists trained to deliver sessions received positive feedback, improving well-being for residents and staff
- Engaged **14** people across three care homes in Screen Memories, which involved reminiscing activities using technology, fostering connection, inclusion, and improved mood
- Ensured appropriate staffing levels to deliver safe, high-quality, person-centered care in health and social care services, by working towards the Health and Care (Staffing) (Scotland) Act 2019
- Further information is available on our [Hub page](#).

### **Information technology, digital and transformation**

In building new digital solutions such as our registration and complaints apps, we adhere to design principles that ensure these tools are accessible. These principles are formalised by the [Digital Scotland Service Standard](#), which aims to ensure that public bodies are designing and delivering services that are inclusive and accessible to meet the needs of users.

### **Equality data**

We are working closely with the Scottish Government and other statutory agencies as part of a significant change programme to [integrate data across health and social care and are named in Scotland's Equality Evidence Strategy 2023-2025](#). This involves collaborating with colleagues in Public Health Scotland and Healthcare Improvement Scotland to create unified data sets. See our publications [here](#).

In 2023, we jointly reviewed the content of our annual returns with the Scottish Social Services Council. This is a key source of social care workforce [data](#).

## Mainstreaming equality as an employer

### Leadership, governance, and decision making

The Corporate Equalities Group, with senior leadership involvement, drives equality diversity and inclusion (EDI) across the organisation. It ensures legal compliance, integrates EDI principles into policies, and enhances accountability.

The Strategic Workforce Plan (SWP) defines priorities to support our people, achieve Corporate Plan goals, and embed our values. Developed through stakeholder input, it reflects diverse perspectives.

Workforce Priority 1: Living Our Values, created with the Equalities Professional Adviser, aligns with our Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy to promote inclusion across all areas. By addressing barriers and fostering an environment where everyone thrives, the SWP reinforces our commitment to diversity and our core values. Our organisational values and behaviours are currently being refreshed with the workforce, focusing on equity, dignity, and equal outcomes.

### Inclusive leadership for Board members and Executive Team

In November 2022, Board members and the Executive Team participated in a workshop on fostering an inclusive leadership. They also:

- signed the [statement of intent on equality, diversity, and inclusion](#)
- continue to sponsor and support employee networks.

These actions reinforce leadership's commitment to inclusion.

### Policies, procedures, and processes

We are committed to fostering an inclusive and equitable workplace, underpinned by robust policies designed to address discrimination, harassment, and victimisation.

We have the following policies in place:

- Dignity at Work
- Discipline
- Grievance
- Equal Pay Statement
- Equality and Diversity
- Family-Friendly
- Flexible Working.

Our family-friendly policies have undergone a comprehensive review and launched in October 2024.

#### Equality, diversity, and dignity at work:

As part of our commitment to a fair and inclusive workplace, we conducted an in-depth review of our Equality and Diversity policy, and our Dignity at Work policy. This reinforced our:

- zero-tolerance stance on discriminatory behaviour
- outlined the steps for addressing concerns
- emphasised fairness across all practices.

These updated policies will be implemented in early 2025.

#### Flexible working:

A detailed review assessed how flexible arrangements meet the diverse needs of employees, considering age, disability, and other protected characteristics.

#### **Equally safe at work**

We are participating in the Equally Safe at Work employer accreditation programme to support victim survivors, prevent gender-based violence, and promote gender equality. We have:

- established a dedicated working group, with the Chief Executive serving as the senior sponsor
- actively participated in externally facilitated communities of practice organised by Close the Gap
- made progress with our action plan as aligned with the Development Tier Standards
- created a comprehensive communication plan for the 16 Days of Activism, running from White Ribbon Day (25 November to 10 December 2024).

#### **Employee health and wellbeing**



We support employee well-being through open conversations, reasonable adjustments, and updated HR training on absence and performance management. Resources include:

- access to work schemes, employee assistance, disability passport, occupational health
- health promotions, awareness days, and well-being policies
- tools like the Unmind app, carers, accessibility, and menopause groups
- reasonable adjustment passport
- Wellbeing Action Plan

### **Corporate induction and learning and development**

- Our refreshed corporate induction now includes input from the Participation and Equalities team, highlighting the importance of participation and equality, and opportunities to join employee network groups.
- Mandatory equality and diversity training is tailored for staff, managers, and leaders, with completion regularly monitored.
- Non-mandatory learning opportunities include LGBT+ inclusion, human rights, and trauma-informed practice, ensuring staff understand their EDI responsibilities and foster inclusion.
- A Leadership and Management Framework is being developed to define EDI responsibilities and guide a comprehensive development programme. A skills matrix for care inspectors links EDI to role requirements and organisational goals.

### **Employee voice**

We promote collaboration through a partnership agreement aligned with the Fair Work Framework. Staff surveys conducted in 2022 and 2024 created opportunities for feedback on culture, inclusion, and leadership, with protected characteristics data guiding future priorities. A pulse survey (condensed survey) was undertaken in 2023. The 2024 survey showed **88%** inclusion and **72%** respect for differences.

### **Employee networks**

Employee networks offer supportive spaces for colleagues with shared characteristics to connect, share experiences, and amplify their voices. They foster

inclusion by shaping discussions, informing policies, and addressing barriers to align with fair work principles.

Networks host events, raise awareness on internal platforms, and provide regular updates to senior management and the board. Open to all employees, each network is supported by co-chairs, a senior sponsor, and the Equalities Professional Adviser, promoting collaboration and intersectionality. These networks enhance belonging, inform decision-making, and drive meaningful change, creating a more inclusive workplace.

### **Improving race equality group**

Our group worked with CEMVO to develop the Race Equality in Employment Plan. The priorities are:

- collecting and analysing data
- reviewing policies and procedures
- identifying structural barriers
- improving recruitment and stakeholder engagement
- meeting our commitments in the [Fair Work Minister's Public Sector Leadership Summit on Race Equality in Employment](#).

The group also:

- participated in the Stand Up to Racism event to raise awareness and promote solidarity
- shared resources for Race Equality Week
- hosted a Black History Month event with Sir Geoff Palmer.

### **Staff accessibility network**

We have:

- Designed and shared a survey to gather insights on inclusion within the organisation.
- Developed a disability engagement plan.
- Provided input on the Disability Confident Scheme Level 2 action plan to further support disabled individuals in the workforce.

- Published four lived experience blogs, sparking valuable discussions on Viva Engage, our internal networking platform. Employee feedback highlights the impact of these stories.

### Unpaid carers group

Since 2021, we've supported unpaid carers by:

- hosting Carers' Rights Day webinars on carers' rights, support, and enhancing carer services
- raising awareness as part of the annual Carers Week
- developing a carers network with Dundee Carers Centre in 2023 for shared learning and discussions, the networks meet monthly
- achieving the Level 2 Carer Established Award and signing the [Carers of Dundee Charter](#).



### LGBT+ charter champion group

Achievements include:

- winning the Proud Scotland Employer Award (2022) Large Employer (over 500 employees). This award recognises employers who have led the way in creating a culture conducive to happiness and security within the workplace for employees who identify as LGBT+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans)
- collaborating with LGBT Youth Scotland on learning needs, pride cafes, and sector-specific guidance
- producing resources addressing promoting inclusion and rights
  - 2021 Virtual Pride: Social media takeover, ally messages, and a webinar with Life Changes Trust and LGBT Health and Wellbeing
  - 2022 Virtual Pride: Continued social media campaigns and six themed conversation cafes on topics like, intersectional identities and LGBT+ inclusion
  - 2024 Dundee Pride

- promoting branded materials and resources to foster inclusivity during inspections
- attending Pride events helps dispel myths, reassure LGBT+ individuals about receiving high quality care experiences, and encourage open discussions about equality in social care services.

### **Care experienced**

In 2024 we launched a peer group for staff members who are care-experienced. The group collectively share insights and reflections of the care system to help us increase understanding amongst colleagues about the experiences of the care system for children and young people. The group also helps to shape our policies as a corporate parenting organisation.

### **Communication and engagement with our workforce**

Internal communications play a vital role in fostering inclusion and promoting EDI across our workforce. Activities include:

- our Equality Professional Adviser provides regular updates to directorate management teams to keep EDI at the forefront
- each employee network has a dedicated communications plan. This includes marking equality dates with all-staff emails, blogs, intranet updates, Viva Engage, webinars and conversation cafes
- a dedicated EDI page serves as a hub for information, updates, and resources
- using social media to promote commemorative dates significant to minority groups, fostering awareness and inclusivity.

## Equality work – external collaboration

We collaborate with national agencies, regulators, advocacy groups, and justice organisations to embed equality, diversity, and human rights, fostering inclusion and advancing rights-based approaches in care settings.

### Scottish Government

- A duty bearer of SNAP2 (Scotland's National Action Plan for Human Rights) Leadership Panel
- Supported guidance for Anne's Law to ensure care home residents maintain meaningful essential connections with loved ones, promoting a human rights-based approach.

### Scottish Human Rights Commission (SHRC)

We are working with SHRC to develop and deliver our Professional Development Award (PDA), aligning it with current human rights and equality policies and practices.

### Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC)

- Jointly reviewed safer recruitment guidance to enhance diversity, reduce racial discrimination, and promote a rights-based approach. The guidance includes advice on reducing discrimination and supporting positive action for age, race, disability, and care experience, improving outcomes and life chances.
- Issued a [joint statement](#), December 2022, advocating for refugee rights and encouraging their recruitment in the care sector.
- Supported the SSSC in revising codes of practice to emphasise equality, non-discrimination, rights, and relationships, aligning with the Health and Social Care Standards.
- Collaborated with SSSC, Scottish Care, Coalition of Care and Support Providers in Scotland and Skills Development Scotland to create comprehensive [guidance](#) aimed at supporting the employment of 16- 17-year-olds in the health and social care sector.

### NHS Education Scotland (NES)

- Participated in the Leading to Change programme to develop compassionate, diverse leaders across health, social work, and social care, with a focus on equality.

- Delivered training on mental health, anti-racism, and cultural awareness.
- Partnered to develop e-learning modules and workshops on mental health, cultural awareness, and anti-racism.
- Collaborated to train inspectors on managing professional impact, identifying distress, and implementing self-care strategies to enhance resilience and well-being.

### **Healthcare Improvement Scotland (HIS)**

- Jointly published [My New Home Guidance](#) (October 2022) for individuals with learning disabilities and dementia transitioning into care homes (October 2022), addressing that people living with a learning disability are living longer and are more likely to develop dementia than people in the general population.
- Developed Bairns Hoose Standards to support justice and recovery for children experiencing trauma.
- Collaborated on joint inspections and the Quality Improvement Framework for adult support and protection.

### **Stand Up for Siblings, Clan Childlaw and CELCIS**

In collaboration with Stand Up for Siblings and Clan Childlaw, we helped develop national guidance, [Staying Together and Connected: Getting it Right for Sisters and Brothers](#). Our contributions include introducing flexibility in care service registration to:

- uphold children's rights
- improve care transitions and promote best practices
- support strong sibling relationships in Scotland's care system.

### **Who Cares Scotland?**

We partnered with Who Cares Scotland? to deliver corporate parenting training to **162** employees and tailored modern apprenticeship recruitment to better reach care-experienced applicants. We were finalists at the Who Cares Scotland? 2024 Corporate Parenting awards in the category of 'innovation'.

## **Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO)**

As one of the few scrutiny bodies with a statutory duty to directly investigate complaints, we work closely with the SPSO to uphold the rights of complainants. We are currently helping them to develop a national child-friendly complaints process.

### **Other scrutiny bodies**

We collaborate with other scrutiny bodies, including:

- HMIPS (His Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons for Scotland)
- HMICS (His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland)
- IPS (His Majesty's Inspectorate of Prosecution in Scotland)

on shared responsibilities.

In 2021, we developed an information-sharing agreement with Ofsted to address breaches of young people's rights by placing authorities. Insights from this work informed the Children (Care and Justice) (Scotland) Act 2024 through engagement with Scottish Government colleagues.

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