

Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2022-25



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1. Foreword

At the NHSBSA, our people are everything to us. We simply would not be able to deliver great services without the care and commitment of our brilliant colleagues. The strong sense of community and belonging we have is a fundamental part of what makes the NHSBSA a great place to work, and our approach to diversity and inclusion is integral to that.

Our aim is that the NHSBSA is a truly inclusive organisation, where all colleagues feel able to be themselves at work so they can thrive and be at their best. We're also committed to having a diverse workforce which is representative of the populations we serve. This not only leads to better decision making and innovation, but supports our people to deliver accessible, easy to use services which meet the diverse needs of our customers. Both of these aims are fundamental to our success as an organisation.

Whilst we're proud of the strides we've made on our journey to achieving these, we know that we have further to go, and this strategy outlines how

we plan to reach our destination of becoming a truly diverse and inclusive organisation. We've set some ambitious objectives to support these aims as we know we won't achieve them without bold action. All of us, and especially our leadership community, have a role to play in bringing this strategy to life and my ask is that we all get involved in creating a great place to work.



Michael Brodie
Chief Executive

2. Why are Diversity and Inclusion so important to us?

The NHSBSA's Strategy sets out our plans to be on the front foot to support the frontline as we fulfil our purpose of being a catalyst for better health and our vision of being the delivery partner of choice for the health and care system.

Our **Strategic Goals** help bring this purpose and vision to life. Our approach to Diversity and Inclusion underpins our Strategic Goals, especially:



Our People - we enable our people to be their best



Customer - our customers are at the heart of what we do







Ambition - we are ambitious about the future and want to share a sense of optimism with our colleagues



Social Impact - we work with partners to better understand and respond to growing challenges of health inequality and sustainability

The table below shows how the Diversity and Inclusion Strategy underpins the achievement of these strategic goals.

Strategic Goals				
	Our People	Customer	Ambition	Social Impact
	We enable our people to be at their best by creating a fantastic colleague experience, providing ongoing development opportunities with an eye to future needs and being a great, inclusive place to work.	We actively seek feedback from and listen to our customers to enable us to design and deliver brilliant business in a way that best meets their needs.	We recognise that one of our strengths is the ability to evolve to become the organisation that the health and care system needs us to be.	We work with partners to better understand and respond to growing challenges of health inequality and sustainability
How our Diversity and Inclusion Strategy underpins the strategic goals	Attract	Service Design	Innovation	Procurement
	If we're going to attract the best talent in an ever-more competitive market we need to reach and be attractive to diverse talent, and ensure our recruitment and selection is free from bias	To be able to design brilliant services which are fully accessible and easy to use, we must listen to and understand the different needs of all our diverse customers, and those who we aren't yet reaching.	To evolve and achieve our ambitions we need innovation and creativity. A diverse workforce brings diversity of thought, with people contributing their own unique perspectives and experiences.	Our approach to social value when we buy products and services and including diversity and inclusion criteria in this helps us have a positive impact beyond our organisation.
	Retain	Service Delivery	Decision making	Giving Back
Creating an inclusive organisation where all colleagues can be themselves and have a sense of belonging will help us retain our talent. When we can be ourselves at work, we're happier, perform better, and stay with our employer for longer.	To deliver brilliant, accessible, easy to use services, our workforce must understand and reflect the diverse populations we serve.	Having a diverse and highly engaged workforce where everyone feels able to have a voice and share opinions and ideas, leads to better decision making	Enabling our people to support those in our communities who are often marginalised and left behind in society not only has a social impact, but also helps the wellbeing, learning and development of our people.	

	Develop			
	When people can be themselves and feel able to have a voice, it creates the conditions for people to thrive, be at their best and reach their full potential. Being representative of the diverse populations we serve also helps us to learn and develop, both individually and collectively as an organisation.			

What does this strategy mean for our colleagues?

Achieving this strategy will help the NHSBSA to become an organisation ...

- where we all belong and feel able to be ourselves at work
- where we can all thrive and reach our potential
- with high levels of engagement, where everyone has a voice and is listened to
- with a culture where everyone’s contribution is valued and where we can share our different ideas and opinions in a respectful way
- where we attract, develop and retain diverse talent so that we are representative of the populations we serve
- where we work with and learn from colleagues from a diverse range of backgrounds, understanding and valuing each other’s differences
- with an inclusive and compassionate approach to leadership.

3. Our objectives – what we will do

To achieve our overarching aims for Diversity and Inclusion, we will focus our attention on seven key objectives for 2022-25. These are:

Objective 1	We will develop and support our leaders to have an inclusive and compassionate leadership approach, ensuring our people can be at their best
Objective 2	We will attract and acquire diverse talent so that our workforce reflects the diversity of the populations we serve
Objective 3	We will develop our diverse talent so that all colleagues can achieve their potential, creating a talent pipeline so that our leadership community reflects the diversity of our workforce
Objective 4	We will retain diverse talent and create an inclusive environment in which all colleagues can thrive
Objective 5	We will design inclusion in from the start to our new policies, practices and how we work, as we evolve into a fully hybrid organisation
Objective 6	We will design and deliver easy to use services which are accessible and inclusive for our customers with diverse needs
Objective 7	We will make a positive social impact on individuals who are often marginalised and the organisations representing them, extending the reach of our organisation into society

These objectives will be achieved through supporting actions as the following sections explain. For 2022-25, within objectives 1-4 we will focus our activity on the four key areas we are currently under-represented by in our workforce and/or leadership community; people who identify as Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME), having a Disability or Neurodiversity, as LGBTQ+, and Women. We will develop supporting Plans on a Page for each of these key areas, with the first being our Race Inclusion Plan . We also have separate supporting actions plan in place for our participation in various performance assessments .

3.1 Objective 1: We will develop and support our leaders to have an inclusive and compassionate leadership approach, ensuring our people can be at their best

We will build deeper understanding, confidence and capability in our leaders to support them to adopt an inclusive and compassionate leadership style, through the delivery of specific interventions which focus on increasing open and trusting dialogue between leaders and colleagues. We will also hold our leaders to account for creating an inclusive environment within their teams, with an explicit expectation that all leaders engage with the diversity and inclusion agenda, acting as visible role models and champions.

We will achieve this by:

- Ensuring leaders are equipped with the essential knowledge to lead people inclusively, through delivery of our **Management Essentials** programme of courses such as Supporting Colleagues with Mental Health and Disabilities
- Including a focus on diversity and inclusion issues through our **learning programmes** targeted at our senior leadership community, such as Catalyse
- Providing leaders with the opportunity to engage with and learn from our Wellbeing and Inclusion Networks, through delivery of **WeCARE Cafes and awareness sessions** specifically focussed on supporting managers, building knowledge of inclusion issues and providing a safe space for discussion.
- Facilitating and supporting leaders to have a deeper understanding of diversity and inclusion issues and how they impact in the workplace

from a lived experience perspective, through participation in our bespoke **Reciprocal Mentoring for Inclusion** scheme, focussed on the areas we are under-represented by in our leadership community

- Building the capability and confidence of leaders to engage with the diversity and inclusion agenda and take accountability for relevant issues within their teams, through delivery of our bespoke **'Let's Talk About ...'** programme. This uses a rich learning experience and team conversations facilitated by managers to explore inclusion issues within teams and encourage individual and team accountability through action setting. The programme will focus on race during 22/23, to be followed by other areas of under-representation
- Building on this approach, we will further develop the confidence and capability of leaders to hold individual **Wellbeing and Inclusion conversations** – every colleague will have at least one conversation a year with their manager which will only focus on their individual wellbeing, including any relevant inclusion issues influencing this.
- Increasing understanding amongst leaders of **the importance of colleague networks** and how they can best support network members and Co-Chairs in their roles, through dedicated training focussed on recognising this
- Engaging and involving leaders in our approach, we will provide the means to visibly demonstrate their support. As part of a growing focus on allyship we will develop our approach to **role modelling and championing** of diversity and inclusion issues within our leadership community.

3.2 Objective 2: We will attract and acquire diverse talent so that our workforce reflects the diversity of the populations we serve

Ensuring we can attract and recruit diverse talent is critical to achieving our aim to have a diverse workforce which is representative of the populations we serve. To do this the NHSBSA needs to be an employer of choice with a holistic, future focused approach to talent acquisition. The jobs market has never been more competitive for employers and candidates are looking at employers for multiple offerings including their approaches to diversity and inclusion and social impact, as well as considering how reflective the organisation is of how they themselves identify. This strategy underpins our talent acquisition approach to ensure we can attract and acquire the talent we need. We will develop our external brand and enhance our profile as an inclusive employer of choice, and we will attract and recruit diverse talent from groups often marginalised in the jobs market, so that our workforce becomes reflective at all levels of the populations we serve.

We will achieve this by:

- **Building our brand and profile as an inclusive employer of choice** by participating and promoting our performance in various external accreditations and assessments including the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index (we ranked at 5th place in 2022 and the top performing NHS organisation in the Index), the Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion (enei) Talent, Diversity and Inclusion Evaluation (we are a Gold Standard Employer and the top performing organisation

in the 2021 TIDE), and the Disability Confident Scheme (we are a Level 3 - Leader organisation). Promoting our performance in these will raise our profile as an employer of choice and give job seekers confidence we are an inclusive organisation

- Visibly promoting and supporting relevant campaigns and schemes, and delivering a wide range of **high visibility external communications and media** from a mix of our leaders and colleague networks about our approach to diversity and inclusion, which focus on lived experience, authenticity, allyship and which demonstrate our ongoing organisational commitment.
- **Proactively reaching out to communities who are often marginalised in society and building further relationships** with charities, community groups and education providers to create effective, holistic talent acquisition partnerships. This will include promoting employment opportunities through involvement in community events (for example Prides), support of charities (for example sponsorship of Pride Radio to advertise our roles), and providing a wide range of work experience, placements, apprenticeships and other opportunities with us for people from a diverse range of backgrounds.
- Ensuring we have eliminated as far as possible any conscious and unconscious bias from our recruitment and selection processes. Having attracted diverse talent, it is essential we don't lose applicants through these processes. Following a successful pilot to test the impact of diversifying **our recruitment panels** on the outcome of the diversity of appointed

candidates, we will embed this approach across the organisation. This will be done in a phased approach to ensure long term sustainability, starting with gender and race diversification, followed by other under-represented groups in the longer term.

3.3 Objective 3: We will develop our diverse talent so that all colleagues can achieve their potential, creating a talent pipeline so that our leadership community reflects the diversity of our workforce

Our approach to Diversity and Inclusion is fundamental to enabling colleagues to be at their best and achieve their potential. Identifying and nurturing our diverse talent and designing ways in which they are able to move into the right roles at the right time is key to ensuring we have a talent pipeline. We know we have work to do to ensure our leadership community reflects the diversity of our workforce and the wider population, and as with our approach to talent attraction, for 2022-25 we will focus on the four key areas of under-representation.

We will achieve this by:

- Creating specific **learning and development opportunities for BAME colleagues** at all levels, based on development needs and continuing to work closely with our BAME Network, to address the under-representation of BAME colleagues at all levels of our leadership community
 - Delivering a wider roll out of the **Springboard Women's Development programme** to
- address the under-representation of women in our leadership community
 - Supporting participation in **Stonewall's range of learning and development opportunities** for colleagues who identify as LGBTQ+ or as allies, including their Allies, Role Models and Leadership programmes
 - Developing the **knowledge, skills, capability and confidence of the members of our Inclusion networks** by supporting attendance at diversity and inclusion seminars and conferences, and offering access to relevant qualifications, in addition to network participation providing a great opportunity for colleagues to develop new skills they may not ordinarily in their roles, such as those for presentation and facilitation
 - Developing the **knowledge, skills, capability and confidence of the Co-Chairs of our Inclusion networks**, through the Co-Chair model we use which is designed to provide additional development. All Co-Chairs are offered access to a range of opportunities including the Radius Network Leadership programme and also work closely with the Wellbeing and Inclusion Team for further development and support
 - **Providing access to mentoring from senior leaders for colleagues from under-represented groups**, through our in-house Reciprocal Mentoring for Inclusion Programme. As well as building a deeper understanding of diversity and inclusion issues amongst our leadership community, it will provide mentoring for colleagues from under-represented groups, improving representation by bringing about

individual and organisational change.

- **Providing development for leaders aspiring to a Director level role, from an under-represented group**, through our Shadow Board which has ring-fenced seats for colleagues identifying from those groups. In addition, each Shadow Board member is sponsored by a member of the Leadership Team
- Ensuring we identify any potential impacts on diversity and inclusion, and design in an inclusive approach as we implement a new **Performance Talent and Learning Management system, create Career Pathways, develop Talent Pools and a system-led approach to Succession Planning.**

3.4. Objective 4: We will retain diverse talent and create an inclusive environment in which all colleagues can thrive

Ensuring all of our people have a great, inclusive colleague experience, and a sense of belonging at the NHSBSA, is essential to enabling colleagues to be at their best, and to their retention. Research shows that when people feel able to be themselves at work not only are they happier, they perform better and have increased loyalty to their employer. Our approach includes increasing knowledge and understanding amongst colleagues and leaders of diversity and inclusion issues and involving them in creating an inclusive environment in which all colleagues can thrive.

We will achieve this by:

- Promoting **highly visible and engaging internal communications** on an ongoing

basis from our leaders and colleague networks about our approach to diversity and inclusion, which focus on lived experience, authenticity, allyship and demonstrate our ongoing organisational commitment

- **Increasing colleague engagement and involvement** on diversity and inclusion issues, through involving colleagues in our Inclusion Networks and their wide-ranging annual programmes of events
- Ensuring that we continue to **listen to and act on feedback** from our Inclusion Networks who act as critical friends in identifying barriers to inclusion
- **Building knowledge and understanding** amongst colleagues of diversity and inclusion issues through a wide range of resources including an ongoing programme of awareness sessions and talks from guest speakers, in addition to training and developing further resources to **support ongoing learning**, such as our Inclusion Library
- Encouraging **deeper learning, normalising team conversations and encouraging individual accountability** about diversity and inclusion issues through delivery of our 'Let's Talk About ...' programme. This uses a rich learning experience and team conversations to explore inclusion issues within teams and encourage accountability through action setting
- Ensuring we provide **safe spaces for colleagues with shared lived experiences to connect** with each other, through our Inclusion Networks and the ongoing delivery of WeCARE cafes for colleagues to engage in, which also offer learning from colleagues as well as safe spaces for discussion

- Ensuring we **listen to and act on to the voice of all colleagues** through our Inclusion Networks, Freedom to Speak Up champions, and relationship to the Shadow Board and Wellbeing and Inclusion Committee
- **Aligning our strategy to our Wellbeing** agenda and collaborative working across our Wellbeing and Inclusion Networks will support us to have a **focus on intersectionality**, ensuring a holistic approach to colleague experience
- Using this intersectional approach to develop additional support and resources for new areas of focus including **menopause** and colleagues who are **carers**

Increasing our focus on allyship as we know allyship is as important as lived experience in driving our agenda forwards. Our Diversity and Inclusion Network will be transformed to become an Allies Network to support this, and building on our Trans Allies work, other resources and learning will be developed.

3.5. Objective 5: We will design inclusion in from the start to our new policies, practices and how we work, as we evolve into a fully hybrid organisation

The NHSBSA is currently on a transformational journey, taking the best of what we created and learnt from during the Covid-19 pandemic, and building on this as we evolve out of the pandemic to become a fully hybrid organisation. We will design inclusion in from the start to our new supporting policies, practices and the way we work, as these develop, to ensure they meet the diverse needs of all colleagues.

We will achieve this by:

- Including a **Diversity and Inclusion focus** in each of the four workstreams within the **Our Ways Ahead** programme, which is leading our transformation journey, to design in inclusion from the start
- Ensuring potential Diversity and Inclusion impacts are identified and remedied through the use of our **Wellbeing and Inclusion Analysis** process
- Continuing to actively **seek feedback from a diverse range of colleagues** including our Inclusion Networks as our plans evolve

3.6 Objective 6: We will design and deliver easy to use services which are accessible and inclusive for our customers with diverse needs

Our customers are at the heart of what we do. We aim to design and deliver brilliant services which are inclusive, fully accessible and easy to use for all of our customers with diverse needs. To do this our workforce must understand the diverse populations we serve and reflecting them will help us on that journey. The nature of some of our services means that we have contact with customers with a wide range of needs and it is essential we have robust mechanisms in place to provide appropriate support.

We will achieve this by:

- Ensuring **diversity and inclusion issues are integral to service design, development and onboarding**, through our Wellbeing and Inclusion Analysis and due diligence processes

- **Increasing our focus on accessibility of services** through development of an Accessibility Governance Framework and risk management process
- **Building the knowledge and skills around digital accessibility** across our services, through training and creation of an Accessibility Champions community and an SME group
- **Strengthening our approach to safeguarding** vulnerable customers through development of a new policy, processes and training for all those who have contact with customers.
- **Promoting our services to marginalised groups** through our outreach work
- **Actively seeking and acting on feedback from our diverse customers** to understand their different needs and why we might not yet have reached all those we intend to.

3.7 Objective 7: We will make a positive social impact on individuals who are often marginalised and the organisations representing them, extending the reach of our organisation into society.

We will extend the reach of our diversity and inclusion agenda beyond the NHSBSA into society, making a positive social impact. Our approach to social value when we buy products and services and including diversity and inclusion criteria in this helps us have a positive impact beyond our organisation. Enabling our people to engage with and support those in our communities who are often marginalised and left behind in society not only has a social impact, but also helps the

wellbeing, learning and development of our people, helping us to understand and meet the needs of our diverse customers as well as supporting our approach to talent acquisition.

We will achieve this by:

- **Using social value criteria** when we buy products and services and including diversity and inclusion criteria in this, and working closely with our Commercial team to increase knowledge across the organisation
- Supporting colleagues to give back to society through our **aligning our corporate approaches to volunteering and fundraising with our diversity and inclusion agenda**. We will promote volunteering opportunities for colleagues with charities representing diverse communities and our Inclusion Networks will lead colleague fundraising for diversity charities and groups
- **Utilising our approach to talent acquisition**, we will proactively reach out to and engage with marginalised groups, promoting employment opportunities with us and building partnerships to provide a wide range of work experience, placements, apprenticeships and other opportunities with us for people from marginalised groups.

4. Our approach – how we will achieve this

We will work towards these objectives using the following principles. We will ...

- use an evidence-based approach, utilising a wide range of data
- use digital solutions wherever possible. We will build our people data and digital capability and resources
- be transparent in our progress, sharing our data and performance with our people and externally
- work collaboratively across the NHSBSA, aligning our approach to Diversity and Inclusion with other agendas to achieve maximum impact
- work in partnership with other organisations on this strategy, sharing our learning and resources where possible
- empower colleagues to be part of our journey and help shape the organisation they want – embracing the ethos of ‘nothing about us, without us’
- hold our leaders to account for their role in delivering this strategy
- measure our success through a range of means including participation in several external performance assessments and benchmarks.