



Wirral Community  
Health and Care  
NHS Foundation Trust

# Inclusion and Health Inequalities Strategy

**2022 - 2027**

SHAPING  
**OUR**  
FUTURE

# Removing the boundaries

We are extremely proud of our strong track record of ensuring Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion in our services and across our workforce during the last three years since we launched our Inclusion Strategy.



We are pleased to be able to present to you our strategy for the next five years which builds on this strong foundation and importantly recognises the impact of Inclusion on Health Inequalities for our communities, and vice versa. We have therefore brought our strategic intent around both themes into one strategic document - our Inclusion and Health Inequalities Strategy 2022-2027.

The Covid-19 pandemic has played out against a backdrop of multiple inequalities, driven by a range of factors including levels of poverty and deprivation, systemic discrimination, safe and healthy housing, education, employment and access to healthy food and green space. Despite a gradual move towards embedding health inequalities and the wider determinants of health as a key responsibility of the health and care system, the NHS' potential to contribute towards a comprehensive approach to population health and narrowing health inequalities has not yet been fully realised.



The pandemic has also highlighted the need for our continued focus on Inclusion, exposing stark differences in impact for various excluded, minority and vulnerable groups and widening inequalities. It's our duty to understand and overcome the root causes of these differences, ensuring that our Trust and the services we offer are as inclusive and welcoming to everyone and we must eliminate barriers, bias or discrimination wherever they are identified.

A lot can and is being done by working as a health and social care system to operate at a population level and impact positively on some of these wider determinants of health. We play a significant role in the system and will continue to work with partners to maximise our impact across Cheshire and Merseyside to ensure that we are tackling these wider determinates in a joined up and coordinated way as we move into our new Integrated Care System (ICS) structures.



It is vital that we continue to prioritise this focus on inequalities. Improvement in this area may take time, may bring additional costs, and will be challenging as we work to reducing waiting lists for NHS services, but it is clearly the right thing for us, the rest of the NHS, and our strategic partners to be focused on if we are to truly impact on years of health inequity.

This strategy, like the trust Quality Strategy which it sits beneath, holds at its heart our organisational values - **Compassion, Open, Trust**. It continues to build a culture of collective responsibility for the delivery of inclusive and equitable care for all. It will move our care beyond current boundaries and aims to enhance the experience of our staff and improve quality of life for all.

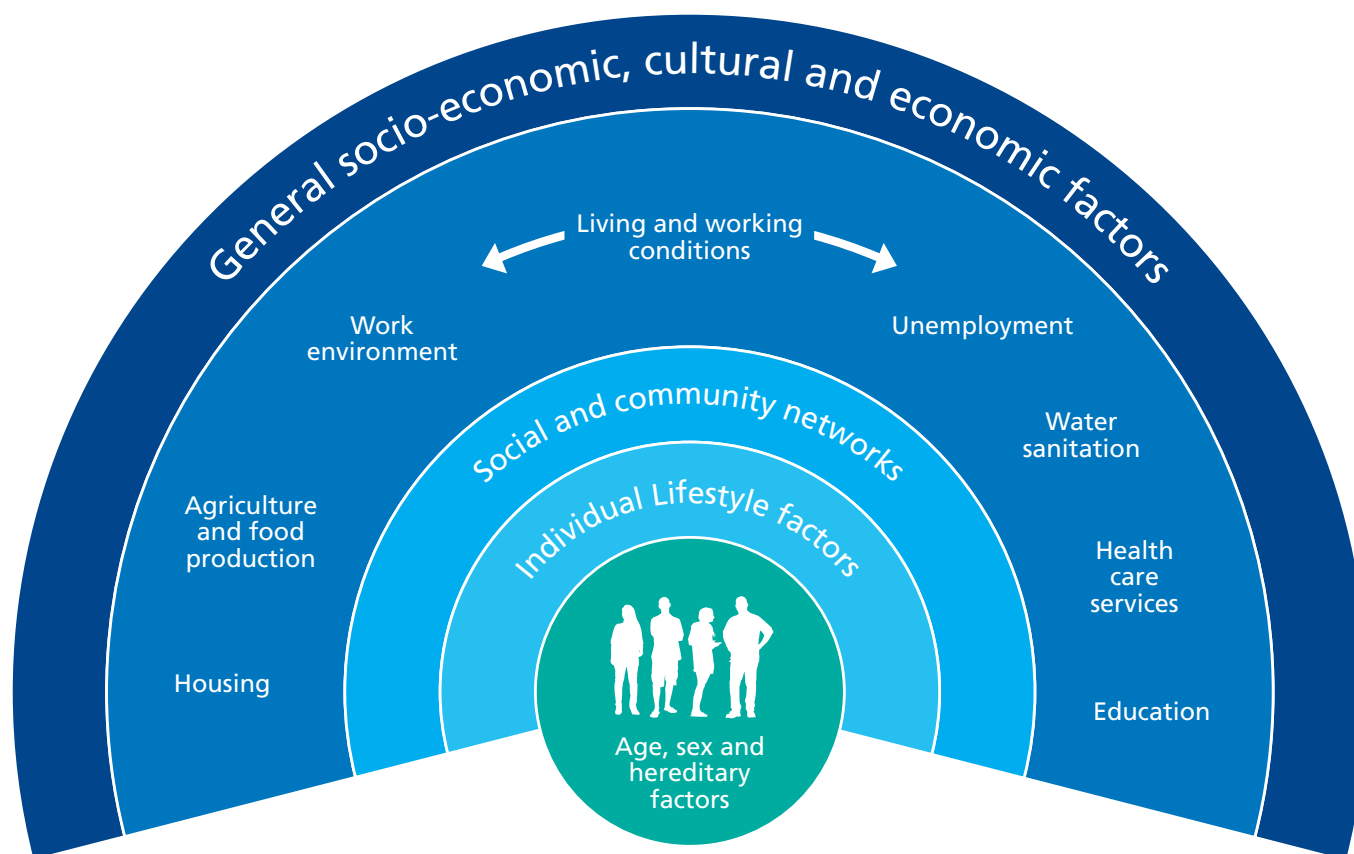
As Chief Nurse and Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development we commend this Strategy to you.



# Health Inequalities

...are 'unfair and avoidable differences in health across populations and between different groups within society' (The King's Fund 2020).

Health inequalities arise because of the different conditions in which we are born, live, work and age, and are affected by the factors that determine how easy it is for people to access healthy choices equally - for example, services are designed, funded, and run in a way that means they are equally accessible for everyone; and supporting people by turning into reality government policies that prioritise tackling health inequalities. Some of the people most at risk of experiencing health inequalities are also often those who find it the hardest to access high-quality support (Hart 1971). It is these 'wider determinants of health' that require our coordinated efforts on, working with our key partners across the populations we serve.



The Dahlgren-Whitehead Rainbow Model

As a community health and care trust we see on a daily basis the impact of poverty, low health literacy, homelessness, unemployment, lack of social support and other factors making it harder for people to seek support, understand and engage with their care, navigate the various services that can help meet their needs, take preventive action early, and live life as healthily as possible for as long as possible. You will have also seen variations in the way that services are run or barriers in practice that can also make things harder for people and thus worsen inequality (Baker et al 2017).

A lot can and is being done by working as a health and social care system to operate at a population level and impact positively on some of these wider determinants of health. WCHC plays a significant role in the system and will continue to work with partners across Cheshire & Merseyside to ensure that we are tackling these wider determinates in a joined up and coordinated way.

However, it is important to remember that health inequalities can be tackled by practitioners who focus on the care of the individual and are not just the sole responsibility of those working at population level. Whatever our role, each of us can make a difference, whether that is about supporting an individual during a consultation, through influencing the design of services, or using our influence to advocate for wider changes in the organisation or beyond. (My role in tackling health inequalities: A Framework for AHP, Kings Fund; D Dougal; D Buck (2021)

WCHC also recognises that its workforce is in a large part also part of the local community. The quality of patient experience cannot be separated from the quality of staff experience. The inequalities in workforce diversity can also not be divorced from the inequalities of health outcomes.

Inclusion activity to ensure that our workforce is diverse in its make up and individuals feel heard, included and represented and valued in the wider workforce is another key strand of our approach and this strategy sits alongside our people strategy in supporting this ambition. Much of our activity will be focused around the 9 protected characteristics, identified and protected by law in the Equality Act 2012 comprising;

- Age
- Gender
- Race
- Disability
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage or civil partnerships
- Pregnancy and maternity

Alongside these characteristics we will also be working with other individuals and communities

who may experience exclusion, discrimination or disadvantage for a number of reasons. We sometimes refer to these as Inclusion Health Groups and may include people who experience homelessness, drug and alcohol dependence, vulnerable migrants, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities, sex workers, people in contact with the justice system and victims of modern slavery, but can also include other socially excluded groups.

The National Director for Health Inequalities at NHS E & I recently described how the NHS can contribute to tackling inequalities. Essentially there are three key fields of work which we can all influence as NHS employees to greater or lesser extent and they impact on both the workforce and the populations we serve.



**Bola Owolabi's vision for an NHS that can play its full part in tackling health inequalities:**

***"for us to get to a place where we have and are delivering exceptional quality healthcare for all, but ensuring equitable access, excellent experience, and optimal outcomes, that is the marker of success for me."***

**National director for Health Inequalities at NHS England and NHS Improvement, May 2021.**

Our strategic approach therefore focusses on the three domains of:

**Access** - ensuring that barriers to access are removed or overcome by adjusting our approach to the needs of individual to ensure equitable access for all.

**Experience** - ensuring that everyone's experience of the Trust and its services is in line with our Trust values of 'Open, Trust and Compassion'.

**Outcomes** - ensuring that all that we do is focused on improving outcomes for individuals and reducing any inequalities in outcomes between different groups or communities.

Embedding **Equality, Diversity** and **Inclusion** in everything we do is key to Wirral Community Health and Care NHS Foundation Trust delivering our stated values: **Compassion, Open, Trust.**

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion is the building block for compassionate care. Achieving diversity in our workforce and embedding inclusivity in our approach is not 'an optional extra' but a 'must have' for all NHS health and care providers.

With this strategy therefore, we have an aspiration to ensure Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) is at

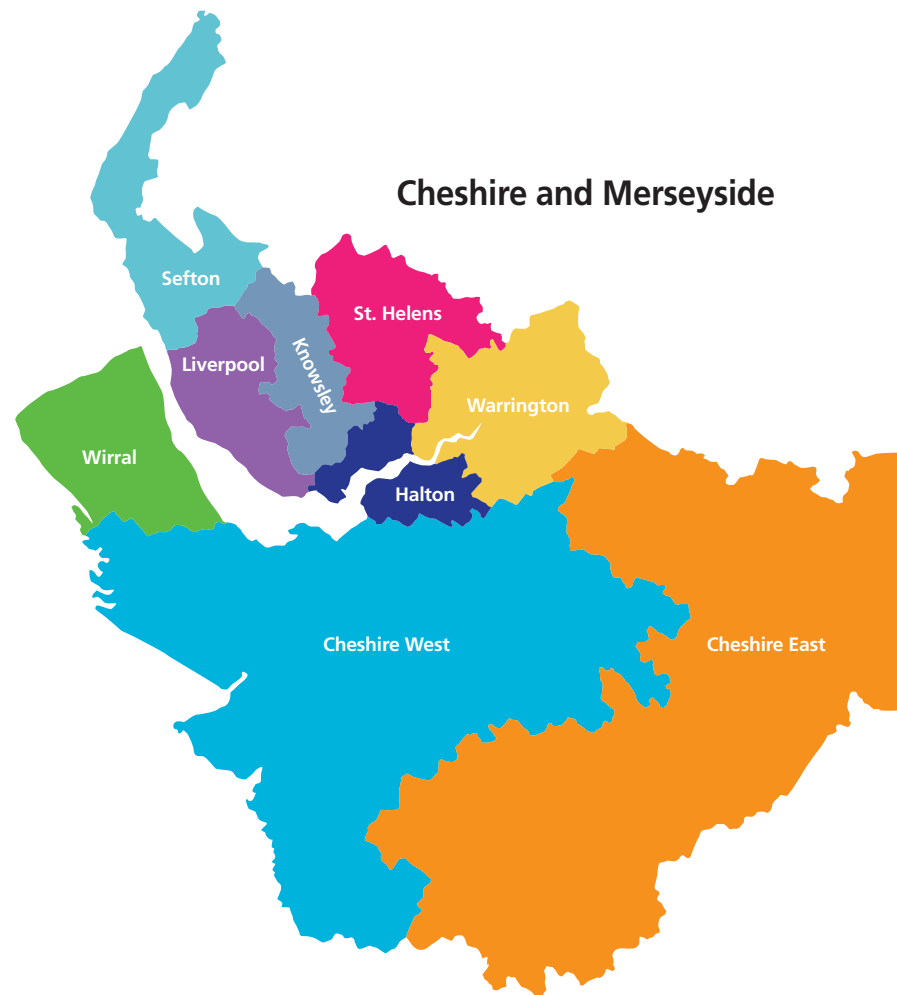
the heart of everything we do. We believe that this agenda is critical to building a future proof workforce that is truly reflective of the diverse communities we serve and critical to reducing widening inequalities. We also believe that in building a diverse workforce, we will increase the talent pool from which we recruit and build services that are responsive to the needs of the local community and contribute to efforts to reduce health inequalities.



# The Challenge

The links on this page will take you to the latest 'Joint Strategic Needs Assessment' websites for each of the areas where we deliver our services. These will provide you with the latest available data on population health, inequalities, needs and outcomes.

**We will use this data alongside our own data and data and intelligence from other trusted sources, both qualitative and quantitative, to direct our resources and develop our service to tackle inequalities and ensure we are getting it right for everyone.**



## **Wirral**

[Wirral Councils Public Health Intelligence service](#)

## **Cheshire East**

[Cheshire East Councils JSNA](#)

## **St Helens**

[St Helens Councils JSNA](#)

## **Knowsley**

[Knowsley Councils JSNA](#)

# Inclusion and Health Inequality Strategy Model



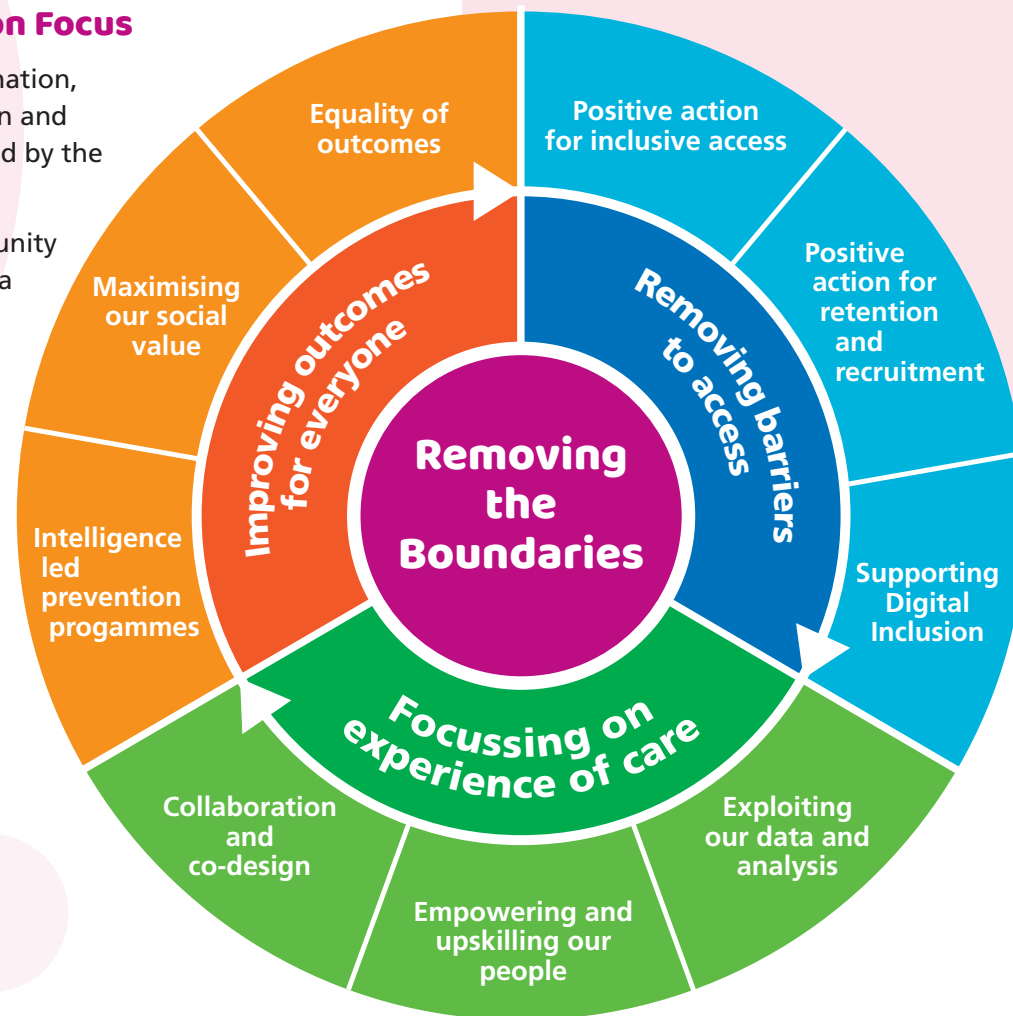
**Tackling Inequalities through improved access and enhanced experience resulting in more equitable outcomes for the people we serve delivered by a diverse workforce who feel valued and supported.**

## Equality and Inclusion Focus

Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010.

Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.





# What we've achieved so far...



## Removing barriers to access



- Enhanced recording of communication needs and reasonable adjustments at patient level with improved data analysis capabilities
- Service level Covid-19 equality checklist created awareness and educated our staff around the impact of Covid-19 on health inequalities and prompted and supported service to modify their delivery to provide services in other ways
- Developing record systems for improved inclusion data collection and analysis across protected characteristics and inclusion health groups
- Delivered a pilot reciprocal mentoring programme pairing staff from ethnic minorities with senior leaders in the organisation supporting shared understanding of lived experience

## Focusing on experience of care



- Developed an Inclusion dashboard to support improved insight into our services
- Established and embedded four staff network groups, with identified executive sponsors, helping us make the trust an inclusive and welcoming place to work and receive care
- Engaged in a wide range of awareness days and campaigns focused on inequalities and protected characteristics and inclusion topics

## Improving outcomes for everyone



- Expanded and sustained our partnership forum focussing on engagement and co-production with excluded or under-represented communities
- Delivery of a range of preventive outreach programmes including for example cervical cytology for vulnerable women
- Continue to grow and develop our team of Inclusion Champions across our service who act as Inclusion and Health Inequality advocates and facilitators

# Our ambitions

## Removing barriers to access

We will strive to remove or overcome barriers to access by ensuring our approach meets the needs of individuals, ensuring equitable access to care and employment for all.

## Focussing on experience of care

We will ensure that everyone's experience of the Trust and its services is positive, inclusive and reflects our values of 'Compassion, Open and Trust'.

## Improving outcomes for everyone

We will focus our efforts on improving outcomes for individuals and reducing inequalities in outcomes for people with protected characteristics and those who live in our most disadvantaged areas.

## Our ambitions are underpinned by nine principles

### 1. Positive action for inclusive access

We will prioritise the most vulnerable people as our services are restored and delivered. This will consider clinical acuity, social deprivation and people disadvantaged due to protected characteristics or other vulnerabilities.

### 2. Supporting Digital Inclusion

Appropriate access to care and support - expanding the benefits of digital inclusion.

### 3. Positive action for retention and recruitment

We are committed to making our workforce reflect the diverse populations we serve through positive action and engagement with our communities and our people.

### 4. Collaboration and co-design

We will work with those less frequently heard to co-design inclusive services and care pathways.

### 5. Exploiting our data and analysis

We will focus on maximising our data collection, insight and analysis to understand the experience of those who face barriers or disadvantage to bring about equality of outcomes.

### 6. Empowering and upskilling our people

We will create an environment of positive allyship within the workforce to ensure we are comfortable to bring our whole selves to work and feel equipped and empowered to tackle discrimination, promote inclusion, and reduce inequalities.

### 7. Equality of outcomes

We will take a population health approach, striving to create equality of outcomes across the populations we serve by using Core20PLUS5 principles.

### 8. Maximising our social value

As an anchor institution we will also make choices aimed at reducing inequalities with particular focus on purchasing locally and employing inclusively.

### 9. Intelligence led preventive programmes

We will implement evidence based, intelligence led and innovative preventive programmes across the Trust to maximise our impact in preventing health inequalities and promoting health and wellbeing for our workforce and the communities we serve.

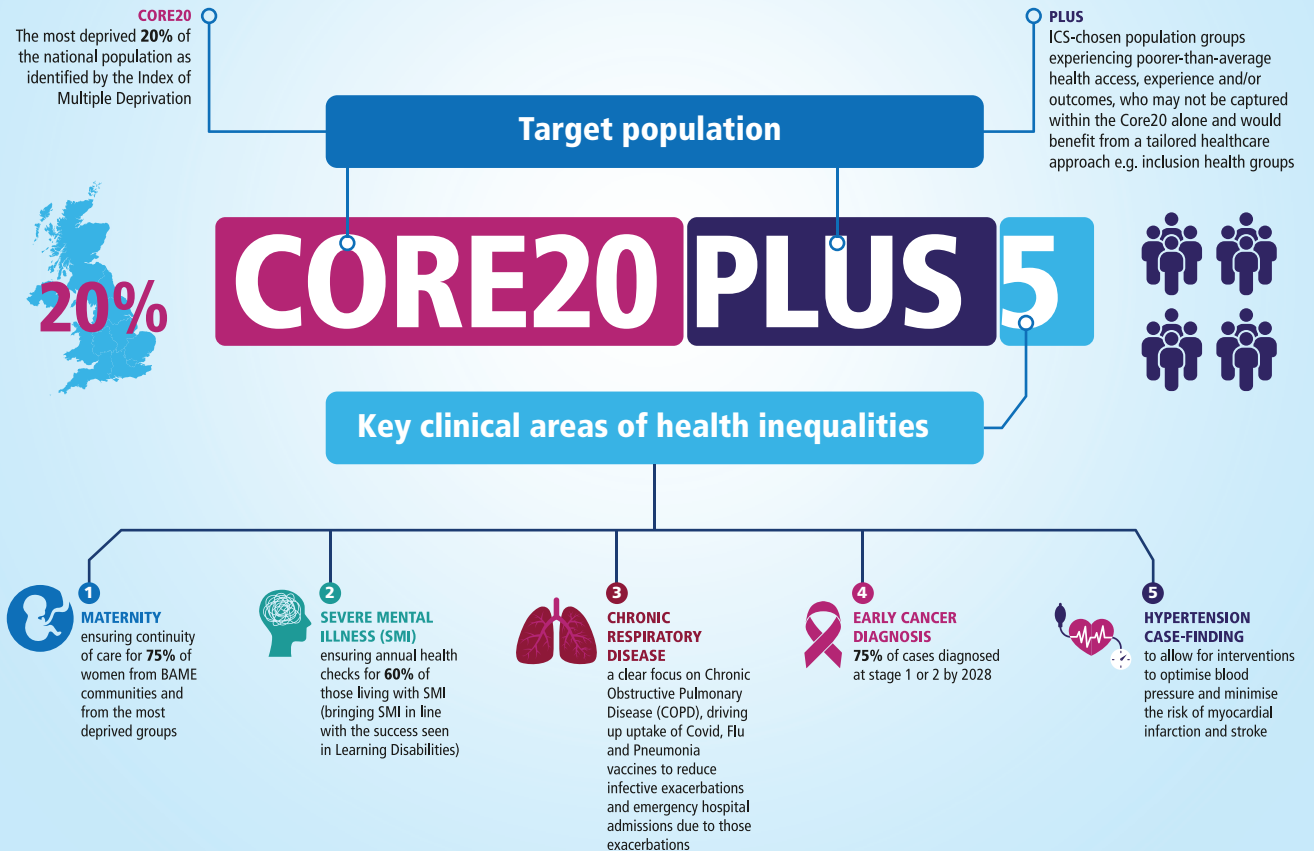
# Core20PLUS5

We have embedded the principles of Core20PLUS5 in our strategy to tackling Health Inequalities and will work with our system partners and beyond to synergise our efforts around our shared priorities identified through this approach. This national approach will allow us to target resources and efforts to where we can be most effective in improving health outcomes.



## REDUCING HEALTHCARE INEQUALITIES

The Core20PLUS5 approach is designed to support Integrated Care Systems to drive targeted action in health inequalities improvement



# Removing barriers to access

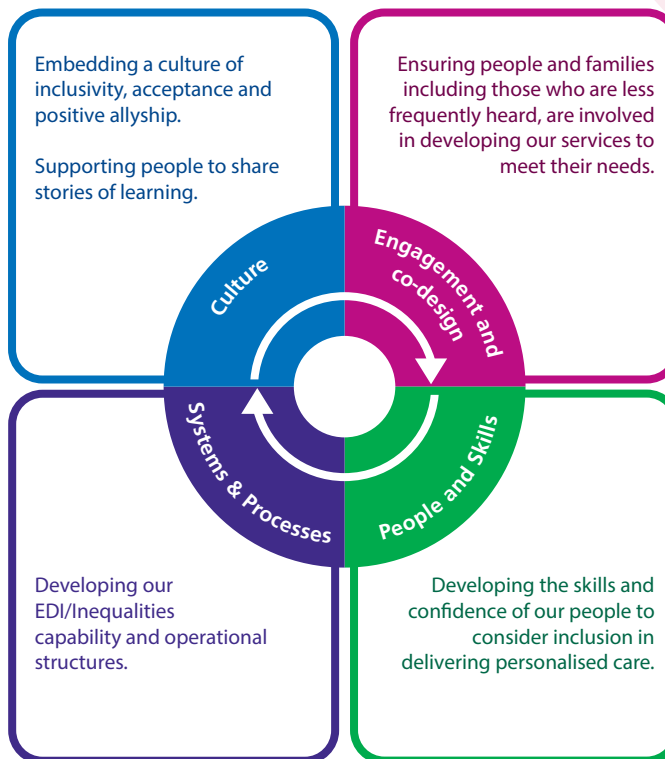
Our five year aspirations...

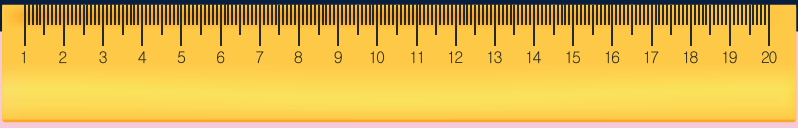
We will nurture a positive anti discriminatory culture across the system where we actively seek out and eliminate barriers.

## Goal

To create an inclusive, positive and anti-discriminatory culture across the organisation that actively addresses barriers to accessing our services and employment opportunities, specifically targeting positive action to tackle inequalities or underrepresentation.

## We will achieve this by





## We will measure success by evidencing that...



We prioritise the most vulnerable people as our services are restored and delivered. This will consider clinical acuity, social deprivation and people disadvantaged due to protected characteristics or other vulnerabilities.



We will ensure appropriate access to care and support - expanding the benefits of digital inclusion but ensuring alternative provision for those that need it.



We are committed to making our workforce reflect the diverse populations we serve through positive action and engagement with our communities and our people.



## During the next five years

- We will be working together as a system to improve person centred and inclusive pathways ensuring our care is accessible and efficient for all
- Digital technology will facilitate one of a number of channel support timely access to holistic care care. We will ensure there is access to digital equipment when necessary and will offer face to face interventions as required to best meet the needs of the individual
- Equitable distribution of outcomes across our population will be supported by the deployment of resources across services and localities based on the Core20PLUS5 principles and informed by sophisticated analysis of health inequalities data. Any waiting lists will be managed using these principles
- We will have a robust induction and essential training programme for Equality Diversity, Inclusion and health inequalities, for all Trust staff, with opportunities for staff to develop skills and understanding around specific protected characteristics or vulnerabilities as needs are identified
- Our Inclusion Champions will operate across our services actively supporting the identification and sharing of best practice and skills and knowledge around EDI and Health Inequalities at service level
- The organisational culture will be benefiting from a strong and empowered staff voice within organisation supported by our high performing staff networks and staff council with embedded in governance structures up to board level

# Focussing on experience of care

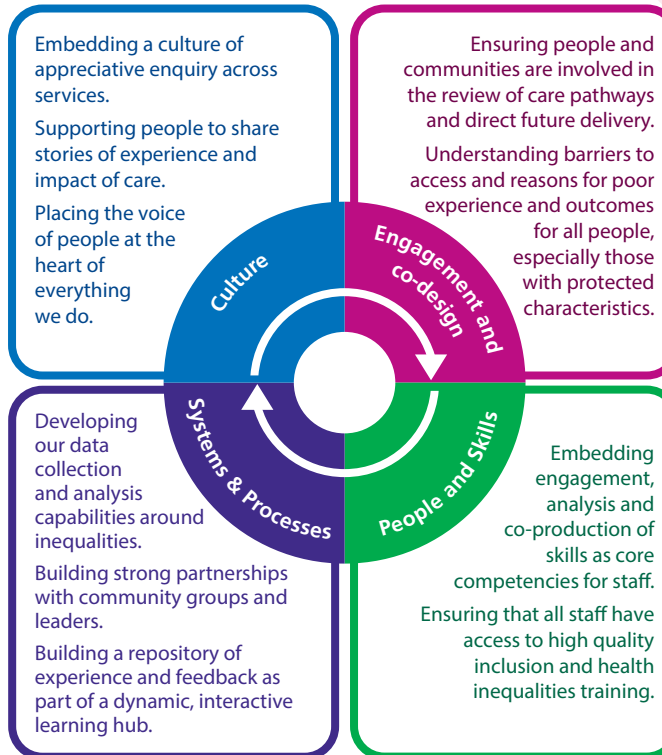
## Our five year aspirations...

We will ensure that everyone's experience of the Trust and its services is positive, inclusive and reflects our values of 'Open, Trust and Compassion'.

### Goal

To create a system where we positively engage and listen to our service users, using hard and soft intelligence to co-design services delivered by staff who are skilled at inclusion and reducing inequalities.

### We will achieve this by





## We will measure success by evidencing that...



We work with those less frequently heard to co-design inclusive services and care pathways.



We focus on maximising our data collection and analysis to understand the experience of those who face barriers or disadvantage to bring about equality of outcomes.



We create an environment of positive allyship within the workforce to ensure we are comfortable to bring our whole selves to work and feel equipped and empowered to tackle discrimination, promote inclusion, and reduce inequalities.

## During the next five years

- We will continuously learn from experience data collected from people and communities at a local and national level, informing us of who is using our service to better understand exclusion and barriers to access and inequalities
- Services will be addressing health inequalities by hearing from those with poorer health outcomes, learning and understanding the context of people's lives and what the barriers to better health might be
- We will have impactful relationships with community partners ensuring all voices are heard and care designed around individual needs
- We will have embedded processes for systematically hearing from people and communities, building a more comprehensive picture of people's lives, what matters to them, how they think services should be delivered and their experiences of care
- We will benefit from an environment of positive allyship within the workforce to ensure we are comfortable to bring our whole selves to work and feel equipped and empowered to tackle discrimination, promote inclusion and reduce inequalities
- Engagement and co-production capacity and capability will be exceptional across the organisation, with engagement leaders present in all services

# Improving outcomes for everyone

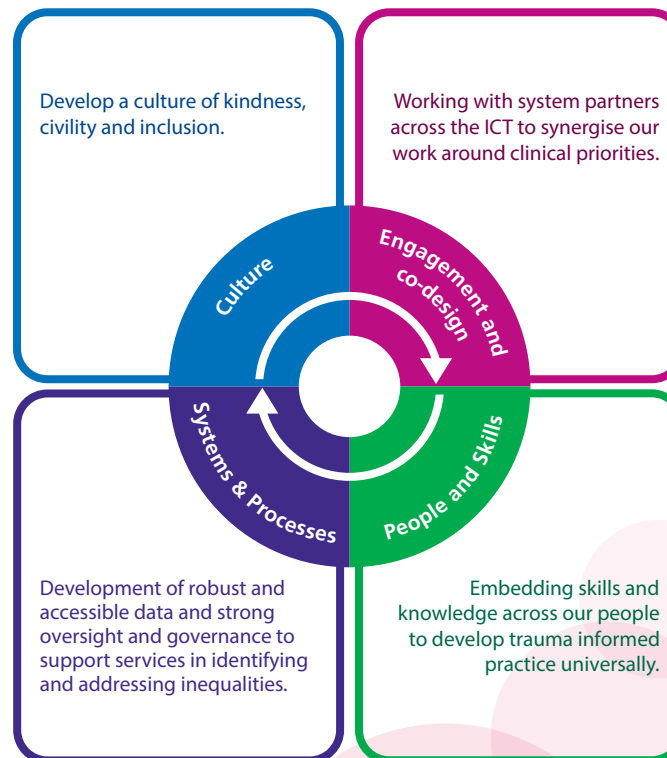
## Our five year aspirations...

We will focus our efforts on improving outcomes for individuals and reducing inequalities in outcomes for people with protected characteristics and those who live in our most disadvantaged areas.

### Goal

By using Intelligence led preventive programmes and by embedding a population health approach using Core20PLUS5 principles we will contribute to levelling up outcomes for those with protected characteristics or other vulnerabilities, whilst maximising our social value as an anchor institution within the communities we serve.

### We will achieve this by







## We will measure success by evidencing that...



We will take a population health approach, striving to create equality of outcomes across the populations we serve by using Core20PLUS5 principles.



As an anchor institution we make choices aimed at reducing inequalities with particular focus on purchasing locally and employing inclusively.



We implement evidence based, intelligence led and innovative preventive programmes across the Trust to maximise our impact in preventing health inequalities and promoting health and wellbeing for our workforce and the communities we serve.

## During the next five years

- The Trust will be utilising detailed information on an Inclusion and Inequalities Dashboard to support, direct and target its work on tackling inequalities, including a heat map tool presenting population level data on dashboard
- Our electronic patient records and electronic staff records systems will be fully supportive of our data collection methodologies, contributing effectively to our intelligence led approach to inclusion and inequalities
- Interventions will be embedded in partnership with system partners to address the inequalities that exist within areas targeting the 5 clinical priorities identified by Core20PLUS5.
- Our people will be delivering focussed brief interventions and signposting at every appropriate patient contact, using Core20PLUS5 to maximise our impact on outcomes and utilising a holistic, person-centred approach.
- We will be an organisation skilled in building on assets and strengths as well as delivering trauma informed practice across our services, supporting improved access, experience, and outcomes for those impacted by trauma

# Governance, Leadership and Regulation

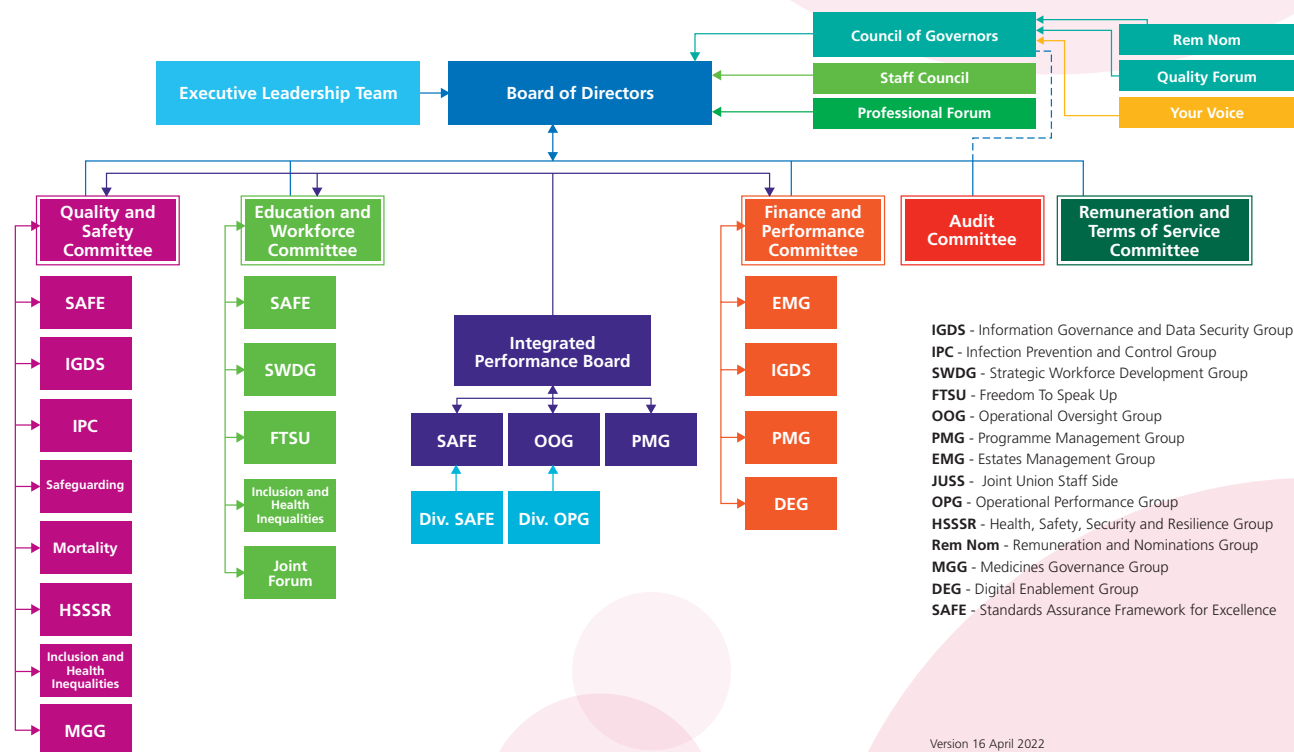
We will embed a strong system of Equality Diversity and Inclusion governance including accountability, authority, and responsibility for compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty at individual, team, service and organisational levels.

## Executive leadership functions

**Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development:** Executive Director responsible for compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty

**Chief Nurse:** Executive Lead for Health Inequalities

## Governance Infrastructure



Version 16 April 2022

## Quality Governance Framework



### ✓ Quality Control

Systematic processes for ensuring all staff, clinical and non-clinical, are aware of their accountability in supporting the delivery of equitable and inclusive care:

- Professional accountability and compliance with Public Sector Equality Duty
- Clear equality and diversity standards
- Mandatory education and learning

### ✓ Quality Assurance

Evidence that the highest standards of care are being consistently delivered:

- Inclusion and Health Inequalities Group
- Inclusion dashboard
- EDS and legislative compliance

### ✓ Quality Improvement

Aspiration and action to continually improve access, experience, and outcomes:

- Data driving improvement
- Focus on understanding and addressing systemic discrimination
- Purposeful and targeted engagement and co-production

# Relationship to other strategies

To implement our Inclusion and Health Inequalities priorities, we must align our thinking and connect our strategy ambitions. The information opposite summarises our strategic ambitions around Inclusion and tackling health inequalities pulling outcome measures from across a number of organisational strategies, ensuring that Inclusion and Health Inequalities are mainstreamed in our strategic thinking and operational intent.

**We will work together to ensure all priorities within supporting strategies are aligned to achieve best outcomes for the people we serve.**



## Quality Strategy

- We ensure that all voices, including under-represented groups can be heard and encouraged to influence change
- We take a population health approach, striving to create equality of outcomes across the populations we serve



## Digital Strategy

- Appropriate access to care and support - expanding the benefits of digital inclusion
- Development of information to predict and identify health inequalities



## People Strategy

- Improve our workforce equality, diversity and for all staff leading with our board members

## Public Health Annual Reports across the populations we serve

- Strengthen action to address differences in health outcomes and prevention

# Inclusion and Health Inequalities

Inclusion and Health equity are principles that are embedded across all key organisational strategies. We have included appropriate measures to meet the ambitions of this strategy within these key documents. In addition to the measures we have mainstreamed in our other strategies, the following additional measures will monitor our success on implementing this Inclusion and Health Inequalities strategy.



## Access

Delivery of an annual positive action programme targeting access or recruitment or retention of underrepresented communities.



## Experience




Attainment of appropriate inclusion charter marks and year on year improvements in the level of award.



## Outcomes

Development of the inclusion and inequalities dashboard to demonstrate improvements across the domains of access, experience and outcomes.

# Over the next 5 years we will deliver against the following timeline:

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
 <b>Removing barriers to access</b>	Embed a system for improving data collection as standard				
		Developing EDI Skills and knowledge of our people			
		Positive action driving workforce diversity			
 <b>Focussing on experience of care</b>	Collaboration and co-design of services and pathways to improve inclusivity				
		Exploit our data and analysis to better understand inequalities			
		Develop a culture of inclusiveness and enable and empower positive allyship			
 <b>Improving outcomes for everyone</b>	Focussing our population health impact using Core20PLUS5 principles				
		Lever maximum social value in our role as an anchor organisation through local purchasing and employment			
		Effective intelligence led preventative programmes focussed on improving outcomes			