

**Inclusion and Belonging Action Plan - Update
Public Board
July 2026**

Presented for:	Information and Assurance
Presented by:	Suzanne Dunkley, Chief People Officer
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Previous Committees:	27 November 2025 – Trust Board 29 January 2026 – Trust Board 11 March 2026 – People Committee 26 March 2026 – Trust Board 28 May 2026 – Trust Board

Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Exemption	☐ YES (restricted from the FOIA) ☒ NO (available to the public under the FOIA)
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Link to Strategic Objective	Support and develop our people
Link to Provider Capability Assessment	People and culture
Link to CQC Well-led Statement	Capable, Compassionate and Inclusive Leaders
Regulatory Impact	Regulation 17: Good governance

Key points	Purpose
1. Continued progress against the Trust-wide Inclusion and Belonging Action Plan.	Assurance and Approval
2. Detailed progress updates provided for actions with notable progress made since May's Board paper update.	

Risk Appetite Framework			
Level 1 Risk	Level 2 Risks	(Risk Appetite Scale)	Impact
Workforce Risk	Workforce Retention Risk - We will deliver safe and effective patient care, through supporting the training, development, and H&WB of our staff to retain the appropriate level of resource to continue to meet the patient demand for our clinical services	Cautious	Moving Towards

1. Summary

During October to December 2025, the Trust reviewed and reflected on findings from the CQC Well Led Review, the Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion (ENEI) Review and the Maternity Safety Support Programme. Following Board discussions in October and November 2025, a single, Trust-wide Inclusion and Belonging Action Plan was developed to bring this work together into a coherent programme of improvement. The Plan was first presented to the Board in November 2025 and subsequently refreshed in January 2026 to reflect progress and emerging priorities.

This paper provides assurance on progress against the Inclusion and Belonging Action Plan (Appendix 1 and 2) including delivery of the associated National 'EDI High Impact Actions' since January 2026. There are no current risks to highlight across the actions.

The Board is requested to acknowledge ongoing progress and provide guidance on the level of ongoing assurance required at Board.

2. Progress Since Last Update

Key progress and updates since the May 2026 Board update include:

All actions are progressing well with delivery supported by the established governance processes, including the People Committee and regular Trust Board reports.

Values

- Work has progressed to align Inclusion and Belonging with the launch of the refreshed Trust values of Kind, Open & Honest, Responsible, and One Team including the development of behavioural definitions launched on 15th July 2026 via LTHT Live and the Trust's inaugural Leadership Conference on 22nd July 2026.
- Since the review and launch for the refreshed Trust values, an 'embedding' action plan has been scoped and approved for delivery and includes the development of Trust branding, communication designs, videos, identity narrative as well as colleague and leadership guidance.

Mid-Year Review Workshop

- An Inclusion and Belonging Improvement Plan mid-year progress review workshop took place on 29 June 2026 involving Trust-wide stakeholders where priority progress was reviewed and SMART actions identified. A cyclical process comprising an annual and mid-year priorities review is in-development to mature the activities in respect of the nationally mandated annual improvement plan publication required each October. This process will ensure a structured and assured approach to development, publication and progression of a data informed improvement plan including the identification and action against risks and assurance gaps.

Lord Mann Review

- A self-assessment has been completed in relation to the recent publication of the national Lord Mann Review.

Raising the profile of Inclusion and Belonging champions:

- A CSU Champion Maturity Matrix pilot has been successfully completed within Oncology and rollout across all CSU teams is now underway. This self-assessment process led by the newly appointed CSU Lead Speaking Up Champions in collaboration with Tri Teams provides a structured mechanism for measuring assurance at Trust level and identifying opportunities to strengthen speaking up governance, leadership and infrastructure within CSUs. The maturity matrix is now being aligned with the People Improvement Framework (PIF) enabling oversight, benchmarking and triangulation with existing CSU workforce metrics to support a comprehensive view of organisational culture and improvement.

Review and re-defining the role of Networks and their Chairs

- 'Roles, Responsibilities, Governance and Collaboration Guidance' has been drafted and socialised with the 'Parent Network' Chairs via the new Network Chairs Collaborative bi-monthly meeting. The improved guidance aims to outline and clarify roles and responsibilities of networks and chairs alongside other inclusion and belonging stakeholders and the interactions between such roles, as well as the articulation of a refreshed governance structure, and escalation routes.

All legal and national obligations continue to be fulfilled as part of standard work, this includes Workforce Race/Disability Equality Standard (WRES/WDES), Equality Delivery System (EDS) and Pay Gap Reporting (Gender, Ethnicity and Disability).

Please note: For priority 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.2, 3.2 and 3.3 respectively scoping is complete, SMART actions have been identified and actions are now either successfully progressing or transitioning into standard work. In these cases, outcome reporting will be available once fully embedded over the coming months and in line with their initial categorisation ('short', 'medium' and 'long-term' priority).

3. Financial Implications

There are no new financial risks beyond what we have already committed to. Improvement work will continue to be embedded and supported through LTHT's evolving Inclusion & Belonging Improvement Plan.

4. Risk

As previously reported, there is a **workforce retention and morale risk** (Cautious). This work continues to emphasise simplicity, consistency, shared responsibility and practical

impact reducing the risk of colleagues experiencing Inclusion and Belonging as ‘additional initiatives’ or siloed activity rather than part of everyday working life and supporting all to recognise their role in supporting their colleagues to feel included with a sense of belonging.

5. Communication and Involvement

Internal and external communications continue to align Inclusion and Belonging with the wider Trust strategy, ensuring coherence rather than duplication. Colleague networks, CSUs, Corporate Departments, professional groups and all colleagues remain key partners in delivery alongside Inclusion & Belonging Strategic Group stakeholders.

6. Impact on Equality and Health Inequalities

While focused on the workforce, Inclusion and Belonging actions also support the Trust’s wider commitment to health equity, recognising colleagues as members of the communities we serve and contributing to long-term, systemic improvement. Our Inclusion and Belonging Plan includes action against our new workforce health inequalities strategy, following the conduction of research within LTHT followed by the presentation of recommendations for improvement.

7. Publication Under Freedom of Information Act

This document is accessible in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

8. Recommendations

- Note and be assured of the progress since Board May 2026.
- To close actions 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.2, 3.2 and 3.3 within Appendix 1, and for the Board to receive an assurance update, in 6 months’ time.

9. Supporting Information

Appendix 1: Published LTHT Inclusion and Belonging Priorities: Short, Medium, and Long-term– high level summary

Appendix 2: National ‘EDI High Impact Actions’

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July 2026

Appendix 1: Published LTHT Inclusion and Belonging Priorities: Short, Medium, and Long-term – High Level Summary

No	Action	Senior Lead	When	Status	Progress
Short-Term Priorities					
1.1	Ensure all board members champion at least one Inclusion & Belonging action in the Trust: All board members are expected to champion at least one I&B action within the Trust. This commitment ensures that Inclusion and belonging remains a strategic priority and is visibly supported at the highest levels of leadership.	Suzanne Dunkley & Jo Bray	30-Jun-26	On Track	All Board members have been briefed, and support guide provided. Objectives have been confirmed for all Board members, as part of the 2026 Appraisal season. Assurance has been developed as part of the established Board governance routes/processes. A report is scheduled for July's Board, following the ending of the Appraisal season (June). Via the recent mid-year review workshop, further actions have been discussed to further strengthen this action, to include visibility of objectives, enabling alignment across the wider inclusion and belonging priorities. Recommendation to Board: close action and receive an assurance update in six months' time.
1.2	Review and re-define the role of Networks and their Chairs: Further defining and strengthening the role of colleague networks, and their chairs, in alignment to the delivery of the Trust's Inclusion & Belonging Plan. These networks are recognised as pivotal contributors to shaping an inclusive culture across the Trust.	Nikki Hosty	31-Mar-26	On Track	Network Chair Collaborative' established following a January thought Leadership session with Chairs (bi-monthly meeting, first one 11/03/2026), and improvement actions identified and underway aimed at establishing standard work. Developed draft 'Roles, Responsibilities, Governance and Collaboration Guidance', being socialised for co-creation with Network Chairs. Next meeting 22 July 2026. Recommendation to Board: close action and receive an assurance update in six months' time.
1.3	Raise the profile of Inclusion & Belonging champions and allies across the Trust: Further strengthen and raise the profile of champions and allies across the Trust. These individuals play a crucial role in advocating for inclusion, supporting colleagues, and driving local cultural change.	Nikki Hosty	31-May-26	On Track	Review of various inclusion and belonging and FTSU Champion roles, and supporting infrastructure, is now complete, SBAR developed & approved, and pilot complete. Implementation now commenced. Ongoing activity will relate to embedding and supporting the volunteer champions. Recommendation to Board: close action and receive an assurance update in six months' time.
Medium-Term Priorities					
2.1	Reasonable adjustments - supporting consistent and impactful use: To renew our collective focus on reasonable adjustments. Enabling effective support and utilisation of adjustments to ensure consistently equitable working conditions.	Anna Edgren-Davies	31-Dec-26	On Track	Scoping and review underway. SMART action developed and relevant project stakeholders aligned and engaged.

2.2	Simple belonging language: To review and utilise simple, inclusive language that feels accessible by all, and promotes active use to empower a sense of belonging throughout the organisation.	Suzanne Dunkley Jane Westmoreland	30-Jun-26	On Track	Revised inclusion and belonging language now utilised across internal and external communications and relevant stakeholders. Embedded as part of refreshed and launched Trust values. Desire to broaden action to include a Communications Department holistic 'Trust style guide' under development, with plans to embed inclusion and belonging language, and use across Inclusion & Belonging intranet pages. A SMART action has been developed during the mid-year review workshop to agree further progression of this action. Identified as a 'medium-term priority' within the published Inclusion and Belonging Improvement Plan. Completion date scheduled for December 2026. Recommendation to Board: close action and receive an assurance update in six months' time.
Long-Term Priorities					
3.1	Impactful management awareness, education and development: Review and make available impactful training, that ensures that all leaders across the Trust are equipped with the knowledge and sensitivity required to foster inclusive environments and uphold Inclusion & Belonging principles.	Nikki Hosty	31-Aug-26	On Track	The pilot model focused on greater self-directed learning, supporting accessible learning, accompanied by in person, exploratory 'Learning Sessions', to enable reflection, knowledge sharing and build further understanding. The pilot will commence over the following few months.
3.2	Review how, where, and when we invest our resources: To identify and support further improvements.	Suzanne Dunkley	30-Jun-26	On Track	30 June 2026: Scoped and approach agreed and progressing: Resource realignment underway across People Function Roles and responsibilities review underway across Networks and Champions, including a pilot of alternative Network Co-Chair model. Meeting audit and governance review underway. Recommendation to Board: close action and receive an assurance update in six months' time.
3.3	Available data that is easy to access, tells you about your team and is useful and actionable: Review and develop data that is easily accessible, relevant, and actionable. Enabling the Trust, leaders and teams to make informed decisions that support inclusion and address disparities effectively.	Nikki Hosty	30-Jun-26	On Track	30 June 2026: Scoping is now complete, and development work assigned and commenced: New PIF process embedded to inform local action and support, and Power BI Dashboard under development. A SMART action has been developed during the mid-year review workshop to agree further progression of this action. Identified as a 'long-term priority' within the published Inclusion and Belonging Improvement Plan. Completion date scheduled for March 2027. Recommendation to Board: close action and receive an assurance update in six months' time.
No	Action	Lead	When		Progress
Long-Term Priorities					

3.4	Communication (from 'ward to board') - Strengthen communication strategies and opportunities to enable greater engagement and involvement, from frontline colleagues to senior leadership, in Inclusion and Belonging practice and activity. This 'ward to board' approach ensures that messages and initiatives are consistently shared, understood and accessible across all levels.	Suzanne Dunkley Jane Westmoreland	31-Aug-26	On Track	Reviewed meeting structure for senior leadership team to encourage two-way communication and cascade of information. Reviewed internal communications channels to ensure content is relevant and engaging for colleagues. This will also include practical campaigns focusing on inclusion and belonging, and health and wellbeing.
3.5	Workforce Health Equity: Following the research conducted over the last year, implement the recommended outcomes. This supports the wellbeing of all employees, particularly those from underrepresented or vulnerable groups.	Anna Edgren-Davies	31-Mar-27	On Track	Progress: 1. LTHT Workforce Health Equity Plan developed, informed by LTHT research recently conducted. Discussions progressing to agree actions for progression for 2026/27 in line with People Function available resources. Priority actions progressing as part of broader, aligned action plans. 2. Significant progress made as part of the Leeds Health and Care Academy priorities, including, but not limited to: Apprenticeship Pathways, Schools & Young People H&C Careers, Your Health-Your Career, Better Careers for Better Health Research, Fairer Healthier Leeds Development Programme, Narrowing Inequalities across health work & skills.

Appendix 2 – National 'EDI High Impact Actions'

HIA	Action	Senior Lead	When	Status	Progress
HIA-1 Chief executives, chairs and board members must have specific and measurable EDI objectives to which they will be individually and collectively accountable.					
1.1	Every board and executive team member must have EDI objectives that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and timebound (SMART) and be assessed against these as part of their annual appraisal process.	Suzanne Dunkley	30-Jun-26	Completed	All Board members have been briefed, and support guide provided, to incorporate an Inclusion & Belonging objective within their 2026 Appraisal. A report is scheduled for July's Board, following the ending of the Appraisal season (June).
1.2	Board members should demonstrate how organisational data and lived experience have been used to improve culture.	All Board members	31-Oct-26	On Track	To form part of the Inclusion and Belonging Board reporting, Appraisal objectives and governance.
1.3	NHS boards must review relevant data to establish EDI areas of concern and prioritise actions. Progress will be tracked and monitored via the Board Assurance Framework.	All Board members	31-Oct-26	On Track	To form part of the Inclusion and Belonging Board reporting, Appraisal objectives and governance.
HIA-2 Embed fair and inclusive recruitment processes and talent management strategies that target under-representation and lack of diversity.					
2.1	Create and implement a talent management plan to improve the diversity of executive and senior leadership teams and evidence progress of implementation.	Suzanne Dunkley	30-Jun-26	Completed	Roll out scope for growth conversations for Leaders in the 2025-26 Appraisal window.

2.2	Implement a plan to widen recruitment opportunities within local communities, aligned to the NHS Long Term Workforce Plan. This should include the creation of career pathways into the NHS such as apprenticeship programmes and graduate management training schemes. Impact should be measured in terms of social mobility across the integrated care system (ICS) footprint.	Chris Jones	30-Jun-26	Completed	Completed - Leeds Career Compass Gold Standard Apprenticeship process Rotational Apprenticeship programmes Established Graduate scheme Ongoing work includes social mobility measures, which will be incorporated into broader action.
HIA-3 Develop and implement an improvement plan to eliminate pay gaps.					
3.1	Implement the Mend the Gap review recommendations for medical staff and develop a plan to apply those recommendations to senior non-medical workforce.	Paddy Coughlin & Elizabeth Garthwaite	31-Oct-26	On Track	Completed - Inclusive Recruitment Policy in place which includes Consultant and Medical and Dental Appointments. Flexible Working Policy in place. Further work to provide assurance of all the recommendations in the Mend the Gap report.
3.2	Analyse data to understand pay gaps by protected characteristic and put in place an improvement plan. This will be tracked and monitored by NHS boards. Reflecting the maturity of current data sets, plans should be in place for sex and race by 2024, disability by 2025 and other protected characteristics by 2026.	Chris Jones	31-Oct-26	Completed	Annual Gender Pay Gap, Ethnicity Pay Gap and Disability Pay Gap. To be maintained as part of the Inclusion and Belonging Board reporting. Standard work established: review of all metrics to inform the annual LTHT Inclusion & Belonging Plan in Oct each year, incorporating actions into a holistic plan to avoid the development of multiple action plans.
3.3	Implement an effective flexible working policy including advertising flexible working options on organisations' recruitment campaigns.	Chris Jones	30-May-27	Completed	Completed - Inclusive Recruitment Policy in place. Flexible Working Policy in place. Flexible Working improvement Project completed. Ongoing work includes the New Applicant Tracking System of which is being incorporated into the People Improvement Framework (PIF) as it matures.
HIA-4 Develop and implement an improvement plan to address health inequalities within the workforce.					
4.1	Line managers and supervisors should have regular effective wellbeing conversations with their teams, using resources such as the national NHS health and wellbeing framework.	Chris Jones	30-Jun-26	Completed	Completed Work underway as part of continuous improvement cycle.
4.2	Work in partnership with community organisations, facilitated by ICBs working with NHS organisations and arm's length bodies, such as the NHS Race and Health Observatory. For example, local educational and voluntary sector partners can support social mobility and improve employment opportunities across healthcare.	Chris Jones	1-Apr-26	Completed	Completed Previously collaborated on system recruitment events. Standard work in place.
HIA	Action	Lead	When		Progress
HIA-5 Implement a comprehensive induction, onboarding and development programme for internationally-recruited staff.					

5.1	Before they join, ensure international recruits receive clear communication, guidance and support around their conditions of employment ; including clear guidance on latest Home Office immigration policy, conditions for accompanying family members, financial commitment and future career options (by March 2024).	Lisa Kirk	31-Oct-26	Completed	Completed Part of Inclusive Recruitment Policy Process established to identifying staff new to UK, and on project plan for new recruitment system. - signposted to the Colleague Networks for support. International Recruitment ceased . Medical Inductions take place- cohort recruitment ceased. No plans for further international recruitment of registered nurses. Last cohort arrived July 2023. Recruitment 2019-2023 all of whom benefited from: relocation benefit package, pastoral and settle in support, preparation for transition to UK practice and NMC test of competence. Established and use the Globally Trained Nurses Colleague Network for ongoing support and maintenance.
5.2	Create comprehensive onboarding programmes for international recruits, drawing on best practice. The effectiveness of the welcome, pastoral support and induction can be measured from, for example, turnover, staff survey results and cohort feedback.	Lisa Kirk	31-Oct-26	Completed	Completed Standard work in place for onboarding, welcome and pastoral support. As above.
5.3	Line managers and teams who welcome international recruits must maintain their own cultural awareness to create inclusive team cultures that embed psychological safety.	Lisa Kirk	28-Feb-26	Completed	Completed International recruits '<i>Globally Trained Nurses Network</i>' colleague network in place. Active colleague networks encourage line manager involvement and participation.
5.4	Give international recruits access to the same development opportunities as the wider workforce. Line managers must proactively support their teams, particularly international staff, to access training and development opportunities. They should ensure that personal development plans focus on fulfilling potential and opportunities for career progression.	Lisa Kirk	30-Jun-26	Completed	Completed Scope for growth conversations as part of the annual appraisal. Offering Scope for Growth conversations as part of appraisals and regular 121s for all internationally educated and trained colleagues.
HIA	Action	Lead	When		Progress
HIA-6 Create an environment that eliminates the conditions in which bullying, discrimination, harassment and physical violence at work occur.					
6.1	Review data by protected characteristic on bullying, harassment, discrimination and violence. Reduction targets must be set and plans implemented to improve staff experience year-on-year.	Dominic Barnes	30-Jun-26	Completed	Completed Annual Employment Relations reporting to Board Bi-annual Freedom to speak up report Availability of new Staff Survey results dashboard- enabling Trust and local breakdowns Implementation of the People Improvement Framework Development of Power BI Dashboard underway (see I&B Plan priority 3.3)

6.2	Review disciplinary and employee relations processes. This may involve obtaining insights on themes and trends from trust solicitors. There should be assurances that all staff who enter into formal processes are treated with compassion, equity and fairness, irrespective of any protected characteristics. Where the data shows inconsistency in approach, immediate steps must be taken to improve this.	Dominic Barnes	30-Jun-26	Completed	Completed Implementation of PIF Weekly MHPS review Monthly complex case review Monthly lessons learnt review Daily escalations Avoidable Harm roll out Paper scheduled for July People committee (BME / Conduct cases analysis and recommendations)
HIA	Action	Lead	When		Progress
HIA-6 Create an environment that eliminates the conditions in which bullying, discrimination, harassment and physical violence at work occur.					
6.3	Ensure safe and effective policies and processes are in place to support staff affected by domestic abuse and sexual violence (DASV). Support should be available for those who need it, and staff should know how to access it.	Nikki Hosty	31-Dec-26	On Track	Completed Intranet resource for all colleagues Report for support and ongoing work on Violence Prevention Reduction reported to Board Annual Employment Relations reported to Board Freedom to Speak up reported to Board Health and Safety reported to Board To progress Review and implementation of the Sexual Misconduct Policy Framework and associated actions.
6.4	Create an environment where staff feel able to speak up and raise concerns, with steady year-on-year improvements. Boards should review this by protected characteristic and take steps to ensure parity for all staff.	Chris Jones Alan Sheppard	30-May-26	Completed	Completed CSU Speaking Up Framework embedded, and maturity Assurance Matrix being piloted for roll out. Rolled out of Freedom to Speak Up App Increased visibility and number of FTSU champions FTSU Steering Group established Regular reporting to Board Incorporated into the People Improvement Framework Aligned to FTSU Improvement Plan Community of practice established Champions development sessions set up as standard work
6.5	Provide comprehensive psychological support for all individuals who report that they have been a victim of bullying, harassment, discrimination or violence.	Chris Jones	30-Jun-26	Completed	Completed Health and Wellbeing support available physical, mental and financial.
6.6	Have mechanisms to ensure staff who raise concerns are protected by their organisation.	Chris Jones Alan Sheppard	30-May-26	Completed	Completed Procedure for Dealing with Reported Negative Impact (Detriment) Risk Assessment for Reported Negative Impact (Detriment)