

**Inclusion and Belonging Action Plan Update
Public Board
September 2026**

Presented for:	Information and Assurance
Presented by:	Suzanne Dunkley, Chief People Officer
Author:	Nikki Hosty, Director of OD and Inclusion
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 30 July 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. The introduction of a Leeds Way Inclusion Calendar - A social model to support inclusion and belonging. 2. Inclusion and belonging steering group and priority sessions held, using the 3Rs model to develop practical action plans to deliver change. 3. Integrating our widening participation programmes into the inclusion and belonging priorities.	Assurance and Approval

<u>Risk Appetite Framework</u>			
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

Since the last Board there has been a deliberate shift towards creating more opportunities for colleagues to come together, identify priorities and co-design solutions. Activity has centred on increasing participation, strengthening shared ownership and creating more opportunities for colleagues, networks and stakeholders to come together to influence the direction of this agenda through their experiences, insights and ideas. This approach ensures that the programme continues to be shaped by workforce data, colleague feedback and lived experience, whilst building greater collective ownership of the Inclusion and Belonging agenda across the Trust.

This reflects a broader move away from Inclusion and Belonging being something that is developed centrally and delivered to colleagues, towards an approach that is participative, collaborative and co-created. By creating opportunities for colleagues to shape contribute to solutions, we are building a stronger sense of ownership, increasing engagement whilst ensuring that improvement activity is grounded in the realities of colleagues' experiences and aligned to the Leeds Way values.

2. Progress

Strengthening the role of the Steering Group

A dedicated session was held on 6 August 2026 to discuss the purpose for the Inclusion and Belonging Steering Group (previously EDI Steering Group). The intention was to move beyond the Steering Group being primarily a forum for receiving updates and instead develop a clearer shared understanding of how the group can provide direction, maintain momentum, connect colleague voice to organisational decision-making and support accountability for delivery.

This discussion is important because the long-term success of Inclusion and Belonging depends on visible ownership across the organisation. A clearer purpose for the Steering Group will help create a stronger link between strategy, lived experience and practical improvement, while ensuring that priorities do not sit solely with the central Inclusion and Belonging team.

Inclusion and Belonging Priorities Hot House Event

Following the Inclusion and Belonging steering group meeting an Inclusion and Belonging Priority Hot House session was held on 1 September 2026 using the 3Rs model: Result, Reality and Response.

The approach was designed to help a diverse range of stakeholder colleagues define what good should look like, be honest about the current position and agree practical actions that would move the work forward.

The Hot House focused on two Inclusion and Belonging priorities:

Priority 1 Board to ward communications: improving the way the Trust communicates with and engages with frontline colleagues, including clearer two-way dialogue, accessible language, effective routes for raising concerns and visible feedback on what has changed. Outputs from the session were:

RESULT (What good would look like)	REALITY (What is the current reality)	RESPONSE (What activity do we need to take)
Open, clear and responsive communication Trusted routes to raise concerns Inclusive language Visible two-way feedback.	Unclear ownership Inconsistent use of the channels we have available Limited feedback Reliance on individual goodwill.	Task and finish group regarding inclusive communication to be developed – 22 October 2026 Clear guidance for colleagues regarding how to raise an issue, what happens next and when they can expect a response. – 31 October 2026 Allies and champions update sessions – 30 th November 2026 We will publish quarterly updates showing what we have heard, what action has been taken and what difference it has made via Trust communication channels– 1 st December 2026

Priority 2 Compassionate and effective leadership: This discussion focused specifically on what colleagues want to see in the new programme which will be available from January 2027.

RESULT (What good would look like)	REALITY (What is the current reality)	RESPONSE (What activity do we need to take)
Colleagues experience leadership that is compassionate, inclusive, open and consistent in everyday practice.	Colleagues want leadership development to reflect their day-to-day experience, rather than being shaped primarily around organisational or technical requirements.	Design the programme around what colleagues say matter most: active listening, openness, inclusion, consistency and compassion.
Colleagues feel listened to, involved and able to speak openly without being judged.	The discussion highlighted the importance of leaders listening without judgement, spending meaningful time	Build practical listening, inclusive communication and non-judgemental leadership behaviours into the programme, supported

	with colleagues and communicating openly.	by opportunities to practise and reflect.
Leadership decisions are understood, fair and applied consistently.	Colleagues identified inconsistency in leadership decisions and communication as an important influence on their everyday experience.	Equip leaders to explain decisions clearly, apply expectations consistently and be open about the factors informing their decisions.
Leadership development strengthens inclusion, belonging and the everyday colleague experience.	Leadership development, inclusion and colleague experience can feel like separate areas of activity.	Use these expectations to connect leadership development explicitly with inclusion, belonging and the experience colleagues have at work every day.

All actions in the response section has a deadline for delivery of 31 December 2026 in order that the content is available within the programme for launch on 1 January 2027.

Leeds Way Inclusion Calendar - A social model to support inclusion and belonging

Alongside the Steering Group and the Hot House events, the aim is to move towards a more social model of education and awareness across the Inclusion and Belonging agenda. Formal learning, policies and governance remain important, but positive change also develops through the conversations, relationships and shared experiences colleagues have with one another. The aim is therefore to create more informal and accessible opportunities for colleagues to come together, ask questions, share perspectives and learn in ways that feel relevant to everyday working life.

To support this approach, a Leeds Way Inclusion Calendar (Appendix 1) has been developed. The calendar brings together a series of inclusion events across the year, linked to key dates and opportunities to celebrate differences.

Each event will be used to bring colleagues together, encourage open and productive conversation and create opportunities to learn from lived experience. This directly supports the Leeds Way by encouraging colleagues to be Kind in how they listen and learn, Open and Honest in sharing experiences, Responsible for creating inclusive environments, and One Team in building understanding across roles, teams and services.

Widening Participation

Widening participation is a critical part of the Inclusion and Belonging agenda because it focuses on creating fair access to opportunities and ensuring that talent can be identified, developed and supported from all parts of our communities.

Throughout 2026, widening participation activity has continued to focus on creating meaningful routes into employment and development. This has included ongoing support for Project Search placements, helping people with learning disabilities and autism gain valuable workplace experience and access employment opportunities. Activity has also been used to raise awareness and understanding of neurodiversity, supporting the wider ambition of creating a workplace where all colleagues feel valued, understood and able to

contribute. Increasing organisational awareness and understanding of different experiences and needs.

In addition, schools' engagement activity has been relaunched through attendance at careers fairs and engagement with schools, colleges and universities. This provides an important opportunity to introduce young people to careers within the NHS.

Collaboration with Networks on Career Progression

Working with our colleague networks, we have established areas of focus to improve internal career progression for colleagues and to develop an inclusive leadership team at AfC B6 and AfC B8 and above. A plan to transform our approach will be presented at Board in November.

3. Financial Implications

There are no new financial risks beyond what we have already committed to. We will soon review the resources within the People Function, which has included the commencement of the appointments to the recent vacancies. 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

Taken together, these activities represent a clear shift towards a more participative, action-focused and colleague-led approach to Inclusion and Belonging. They provide stronger opportunities for colleagues, networks and stakeholders to influence priorities, define what good looks like and contribute directly to the solutions that will drive improvement.

We are using colleague insights from the Hot House, PPIG and PPSG to shape the compassionate and effective leadership programme, ensuring it reflects the behaviours and experiences colleagues value most, including active listening, openness, compassion and consistency.

Alongside this, we have developed the Leeds Way Inclusion Calendar, which supports a more social approach to learning and engagement.

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.

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 August Board 2026.

9. Supporting Information

Appendix 1: Action Plan

Author

Nikki Hosty, Director of OD and Inclusion

September 2026