

A diverse group of six people, including men and women of various ages and ethnicities, are gathered around a laptop. They are all looking at the screen with interest and engagement. The setting appears to be a modern office or meeting room with grey acoustic panels on the wall.

# **Diversity, Inclusion and Social Mobility Strategy**

2025-29

# Contents

<b>03</b>	Introduction
<b>04</b>	Scene setting
<b>06</b>	Our journey so far
<b>07</b>	Our strategic framework
<b>09</b>	Objectives
<b>12</b>	Making our diversity, inclusion and social mobility strategy a reality
<b>13</b>	Measuring success - benchmarking and evaluation

# Introduction

I'm delighted to introduce our Diversity, Inclusion and Social Mobility strategy for 2025-29.

The purpose of the NHS Business Services Authority (NHSBSA) is to deliver business service excellence to the NHS to help people live longer, healthier lives. As a public sector organisation delivering on behalf of the taxpayer, we recognise the important role we play in society and the positive impact we can have. We're an integral part of the communities we serve as both a great service provider and an employer of choice.

Our organisation strategy includes the bold and ambitious targets we have set to achieve our goals, which centre on our people, our customers, delivering value and efficiency, and being a good corporate citizen, minimising our environmental impact and maximising our social impact. This diversity, inclusion and social mobility strategy directly supports the achievement of these strategic goals.

We're passionate about creating the best place any of us have worked. Our colleagues are crucial to our overall success and collectively contribute to building a positive culture. 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. We foster an inclusive work

environment that promotes engagement and wellbeing as part of our People Promise so our people can thrive at work. Our People goal includes our absolute commitment to being a truly inclusive employer where all colleagues can be their best selves. Having a diverse and highly engaged workforce at all levels, which is representative of the population we serve, leads to better decision making and innovation and is fundamental to the success of our organisation.

Through our environmental, social and governance goal we have pledged to make a significant positive social impact. One of the bold commitments we have made is to play our part in supporting social mobility and to become recognised as a top employer for social mobility where talent from all socio-economic backgrounds is nurtured, harnessed and rewarded. Our ambition is to achieve accreditation in the top 75 within the Social Mobility Employer Index. Under our Customer goal, we have committed to providing a great experience for our customers and meeting their needs first time. We aim to provide easy to use, accessible services. To achieve this, our workforce must understand and reflect the diverse populations we serve.

We have made great progress over the last few years on our diversity and inclusion aims and made an exciting start on our social mobility journey. However, we recognise that while we have much to be proud of, we have much more still to do and only by keeping the focus on our goals and taking bold action, will we become a truly diverse and inclusive organisation.



**Michael Brodie**  
Chief Executive  
NHS Business Services Authority



**Mark Dibble**  
Chief People Officer

# Scene setting

For the next four years our commitment to diversity, inclusion and social mobility is a key focus. Building on our strong foundations as an inclusive employer, we look to embed our vision of being a truly inclusive employer where colleagues thrive, feel they belong and can access opportunities to achieve the aspirations they hold for themselves. Externally, we commit to driving positive change in our communities, offering opportunities, good work and jobs, and providing benefits to society through volunteering, a core value, which positively impacts society. We will maximise impact through our commercial processes embedding diversity, inclusion and social mobility into our social value approach, maximising the benefit gained from suppliers through this process.

Our approach is underpinned by the Public Sector Equality Duty and broader statutory and regulatory obligations such as the Equality Act amongst others. These provide a solid base which we have built on over the years, ensuring we are ahead of the curve and are ambitious about growing a truly inclusive workplace.

Our strategy commits to the NHSBSA being the best place any of us have ever worked. We aim to be the most inclusive place any of us have ever worked, this should apply regardless of individual characteristics, background and circumstances of our colleagues. To truly feel like an inclusive organisation for all is our ultimate aim, and to achieve that we will take a person-centred approach ensuring intersectionality is a core theme. This approach will thread through other key organisational goals, such as our Customer goal of ensuring that we provide a great experience, meeting customer needs first time by embedding within that approach understanding of our diverse customer base and making sure we take an inclusive approach and are accessible in our services.

Since our initial strategy, we have achieved so much. We have maintained our Gold Award standard with enei TIDE benchmarking, Disability Confident Leader status, have achieved Carer Confident status for the first time and have entered the Social Mobility Employer Index placing 134th on our first entry. This benchmarking underpins our approach, providing best practice frameworks to assess our performance against. We have implemented some fantastic programmes of work collaboratively across our organisation, such as our ethnic minority development



programme, our bespoke reciprocal mentoring for inclusion programme, work experience targeted at students from lower socio-economic backgrounds, and pre-employment work with community groups. We have done this in collaboration with key stakeholders across our organisation and our colleague networks, who remain a key collaborator.

There is more we can do to build on our successes so far, and to continue to address barriers and challenges faced, considering the changing landscape our communities face. We want to be a workplace where everyone knows they are valued and welcomed, and that opportunities will be open to everyone, to make sure that colleagues can continue to achieve their aspirations and career goals. This will in turn help us deliver against our aims to deliver a great customer experience and value and efficiency by making sure talented colleagues are supported and developed, that they are recognised for their work and that talent is harnessed to support the delivery of our work, ensuring a clear talent pipeline and embedding inclusion through this approach and the approach to strategic workforce planning.

Social mobility is a newer area of focus, but one which is crucial to achieving our aspirations, such as our environmental, social and governance goal to place in the top 75 of the Social Mobility Employer Index. Through pursuing this work we can broaden our inclusion impact encompassing socio-economic background, ensuring the door is open for people who may have found it difficult to access previously. Working with schools, colleges and universities to provide early experiences of work, meaningful work experience and routes to employment with NHSBSA, and utilising pathways such as apprenticeships will help to make a meaningful and tangible impact.

In 2024, we signed the Social Mobility Pledge committing to four key areas of focus: outreach, access, recruitment and progression. Together with the Social Mobility Employer Index, we have shaped our approach to social mobility at NHSBSA. This has also allowed us to assess our performance so far, identify any gaps and drive improvement in key areas. We entered the Social Mobility Employer Index for the first time in 2024, and were pleased to have benchmarked well against the criteria within that index, placing 134th.



# Our journey so far



Maintained our **Gold Standard Employer** status with enei TIDE benchmarking since 2020



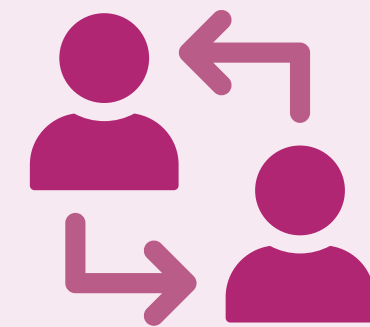
**Launched and delivered three cohorts** of our Development Programme for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) Colleagues



**Shortlisted for an award** for our bespoke pre-employment programme working with the Newcastle Women's Swahili Group



Maintained our **Disability Confident Leader** status



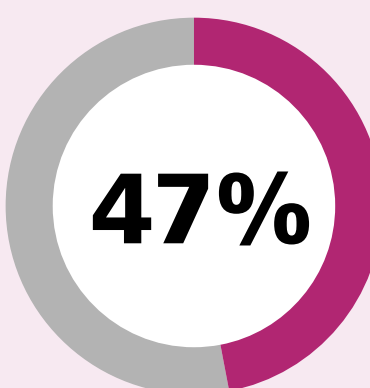
**Launched and delivered three cohorts** of our bespoke reciprocal mentoring for inclusion programme



Achieved **representation** in terms of LGBTQ+ colleagues, ethnic minority colleagues and women, and lower socio-economic background



Achieved **Carer Confident - Accomplished** status



**Collected socio economic background data** for the first time, achieving a **47%** response rate and being representative at all levels for socio-economic background



Entered the **Social Mobility Foundation Employer Index**, placing 134th on our first entry, and signed the Social Mobility Pledge

# Our strategic framework

We commit to advancing our work through these robust principles:



We will make an **impact in our communities**, for our colleagues and for the organisations we work with, aiming to reduce inequalities and improve health for all.



We will enable our colleagues to **live their values through volunteering** their time and supporting development through skills sharing and exposure to new experiences.



We will continue to **listen to our colleagues' voices** through our colleague networks, taking onboard their views, opinions and experiences to help shape our work and our culture.



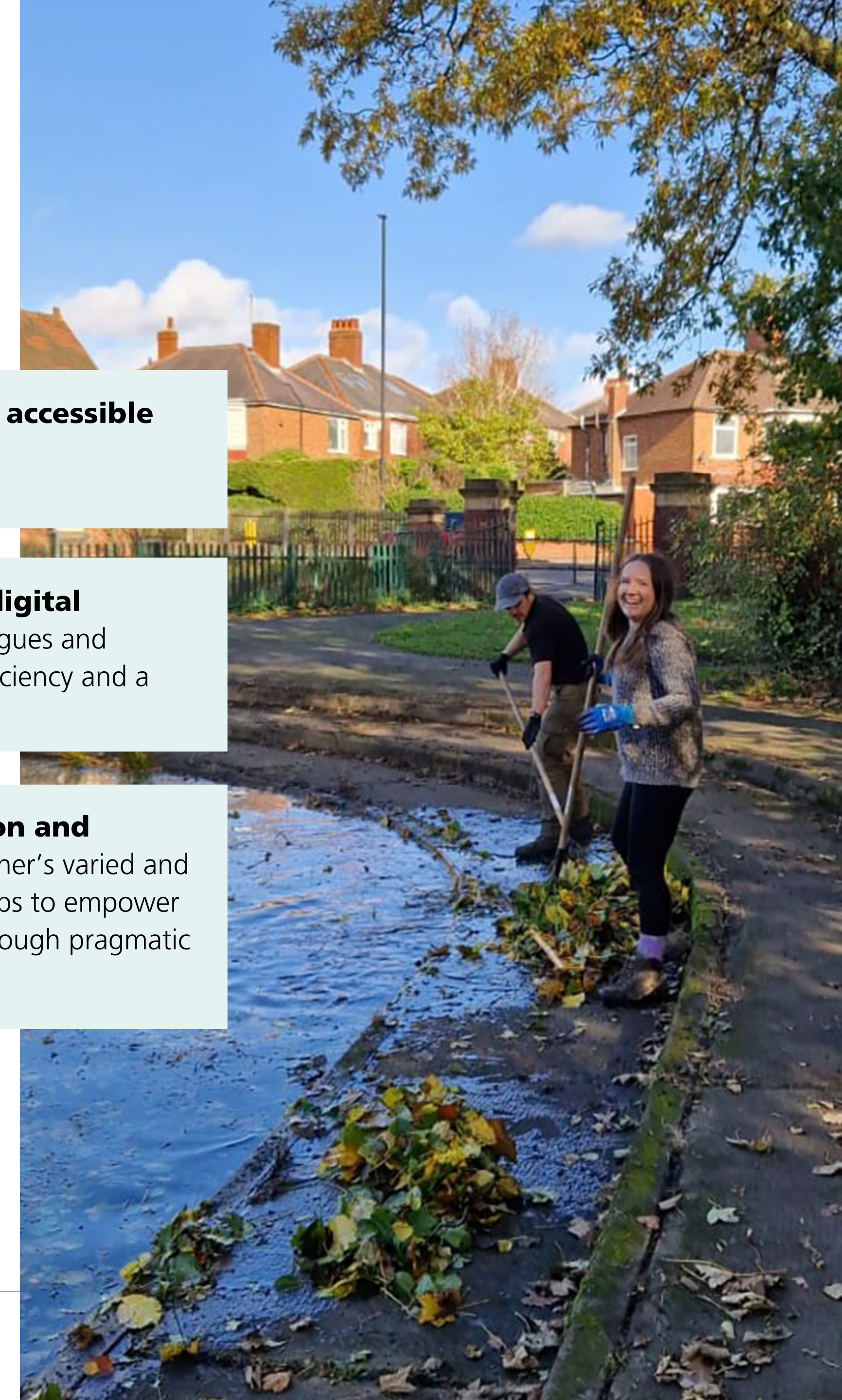
We will be a **digitally and physically accessible workplace**.



We will **maximise technology and digital solutions** to support and engage colleagues and customers, ensuring value for money, efficiency and a great customer experience



We will create a **culture of compassion and allyship**, seeking to understand each other's varied and intersectional experiences and to take steps to empower colleagues to achieve their aspirations through pragmatic solutions.



## Our objectives

We will achieve and maintain a workplace that is representative of the communities in which we live, work and serve; at all levels and within our leadership community.

We will attract and recruit the best talent from diverse groups within our communities, with a priority focus on disadvantaged groups.

We will continue to build an inclusive and empowering workplace culture, aiming to create a workplace where everyone feels valued and that they belong.

We will continue to develop inclusive leadership and a culture of allyship.

We will embed inclusion throughout the employee lifecycle; in particular we will develop and retain our diverse talented colleagues.

We will create positive impact in our communities through embedding inclusion in our services and working within our local communities.

We will embed inclusive practice through the organisation, undertaking Inclusion Impact Analysis on all business change, policies and processes.

We will aim to achieve top 75 in the social mobility employer index, embedding social mobility and socio economic inclusion throughout all aspects of our work.

## Our areas of focus

Disability and neurodivergence

Ethnic minority

LGBTQ+

Socio economic background

Women

## Our enablers

Allyship and cultural intelligence

Volunteering; skills sharing, mentoring and community connection

Physical and digital accessibility

Our approach to developing our future workforce

Business change, procurement and social value

We will be data, evidence and best practice informed and we will listen to and act on colleague voice

# Objectives

## Our objectives for 2025-2029

### 1. We will achieve and maintain a workplace that is representative of the communities in which we live, work and serve

This will be organisation wide, across all bands, and in our leadership community and will be focussed on ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, disability and socio-economic background

We will do this by:

- collecting and analysing representation data of marginalised groups such as ethnicity, sex and gender diversity, disability and neurodiversity, sexual orientation and, socio- economic background
- encouraging voluntary reporting of characteristics and monitoring data in ESR
- building confidence and awareness relating to why sharing this data is important

### 2. We will attract and recruit the best talent from diverse groups within our communities, with a priority focus on disadvantaged groups

We will do this by:

- working with community groups and external stakeholders to attract diverse talent
- providing accessible and supportive recruitment and onboarding processes to ensure barriers are removed and access to opportunities is promoted
- providing meaningful experiences of work, work experience and apprenticeship opportunities to people from all backgrounds



### 3. We will continue to build an inclusive and empowering workplace culture, aiming to create a workplace where everyone feels valued and that they belong

We will do this by:

- building trust and encouraging openness where colleagues feel confident to share their identities and seek any support required
- promoting colleague voice, actively listening to feedback and experiences shared which will shape our approach
- supporting colleagues to access workplace adjustments and managers to implement them so that colleagues have every opportunity to succeed in their roles
- ensuring opportunities for colleagues to build knowledge and understanding of inclusion, why it is important and how it influences our work
- being an employer of choice, ensuring our workplace policies and processes promote inclusivity and engagement

## Our objectives for the next four years

### 4. We will continue to develop inclusive leadership and a culture of allyship

We will do this by:

- building cultural intelligence and promoting compassionate, inclusive leadership through raising awareness and understanding by participation in programmes such as reciprocal mentoring for inclusion
- focussing on cultivating a culture of allyship, where everyone feels empowered to drive positive change for themselves and others
- creating the conditions for a workplace that not only supports individual growth but also becomes the most rewarding and inclusive environment any of us have experienced

### 5. We will embed inclusion throughout the employee lifecycle, in particular we will develop and retain our diverse talented colleagues

We will do this by:

- providing specific and tailored development opportunities for our diverse communities who have faced barriers to accessing development, such as those from lower socio-economic backgrounds, those with disabilities, health conditions and who are neurodiverse, LGBTQ+ or are care experienced
- embedding inclusivity into our leadership development approach, making sure that our internal talent pipeline is diverse and that we remove barriers to progression for our colleagues
- retaining our diverse colleagues through taking a person-centred approach, making sure that development reflects the needs of the person through use of GROW, ensuring colleagues have access to the tools they need to be the best they can be and to succeed

### 6. We will create positive impact in our communities through embedding inclusion in our services, working within our local communities with groups that have been traditionally disadvantaged, to drive wider positive impact through volunteering, skills sharing and mentoring

We will do this by:

- taking a data led and evidence-based approach focussing on those who are most disadvantaged
- utilising our policies and processes to drive positive change
- using volunteering time and focus fundraising on those groups, working also to support those groups aligned to our colleague networks
- using a skills sharing approach to volunteering to make a meaningful impact in society
- supporting mentoring and coaching as a vehicle for raising aspirations and providing social and workplace skills to aid with accessing opportunity and progression

## Our objectives for the next four years

### 7. We will embed inclusive practice through the organisation, including through procurement and social value, business change and all people policies and processes, undertaking inclusion impact analysis to inform and shape practice

We will do this by:

- supporting completion of an inclusion impact analysis on all procurements, business change and approaches impacting people such as policy and processes
- identifying and understanding potential consequences arising from the impact analysis as early as possible, taking steps to ensure we removed or mitigate any risk and impact at an early stage
- maximising value from our supply chain to improve and create positive social mobility in our communities

### 8. We will aim to achieve top 75 in the social mobility employer index, embedding social mobility and socio-economic inclusion throughout all aspects of our work

We will achieve this by:

- entering the Social Mobility Employer Index on an annual basis, benchmarking NHSBSA against best practice, reviewing and evaluating our performance to improve our position year on year
- collecting and analysing data on socio-economic background to ensure we are representative and to inform our approach and programmes of work
- creating a culture in which colleagues from lower socio-economic backgrounds can thrive and can progress and achieve their aspirations
- creating clear pathways to employment at NHSBSA for those from lower socio-economic backgrounds
- working to enhance social mobility in our local communities through targeted interventions such as skills development, knowledge and skills sharing and collaboration with community groups



# Making our diversity, inclusion and social mobility strategy a reality

We will:



**Create a long-term action plan** that sets out our approach to delivering our strategy.



**Use our internal governance structures** to ensure progress is made against the strategy.



**Make sure that we have the right resources** in place including budgets, team resource and designated roles that are responsible for the delivery against this strategy.



**Collaborate with all key stakeholders** including colleague networks, our wider People Team, operational colleagues and other teams/services that shape the colleague and customer experience at NHSBSA.



**Publish our annual diversity, inclusion and social mobility report** to openly share what we've achieved, the impact it's had, and our progress against our commitments. We'll also look at areas where improvements are needed and how we will address those.



# Measuring success

## Benchmarking and evaluation

We will report our progress against this strategy on an annual basis, reporting case studies, relevant data, feedback and analysis of this, to evidence progress and to evaluate the impact of our work. We will use this insight to build on and improve our programmes of work, ensuring colleagues are at the heart of this approach.



We will continue to assess our performance against industry recognised best practice benchmarking and maintain accreditations such as:

- enei TIDE
- Disability Confident Leader
- Carer Confident accreditation
- Social Mobility Employer Index

To produce this strategy, we have received input from stakeholders and colleagues across the organisation, and particularly our lived experience networks, who we thank for their openness, insight and support.

## Diversity, Inclusion and Social Mobility Strategy

2025-29

 [www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk](http://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk)

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 NHS Business Services Authority