

Public Sector Equality Duty Public Report 2023-2024

A reflection of progress in relation to Equality Diversity & Inclusion, including our statutory equality standards

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HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

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Executive Summary

As a publicly funded organisation, Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust (BHT) is required to publish information annually on how it has met the [Public Sector Equality Duty \(PSED\)](#) and taken steps to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity for people with [protected characteristics](#) and foster good relations between those who share protected characteristics and those who do not. The information provided demonstrates how in 2023/24 we have considered how our services and activities, both as an employer and a service provider, affect people with different protected characteristics.

Equality objectives for patients and the general public were set by our Trust Board for 20219-2023:

- Reduce inequalities for patients with protected characteristics
- Engage isolated patient groups in Buckinghamshire
- Listen and encompass the patient voice

This report provides an update on how the Trust is meeting its PSED obligations along with an overview of activity undertaken to meet its equality objectives during the financial year 2023/34 covering the following key areas::

- Patient Profile
- Business Planning
- Patient Experience and Involvement
- Public and Patient Engagement

In 2024 the Trust will be reviewing its equality objectives in line with our strategy and 5-year plan using the [Equality Delivery System 2022](#)).

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Summary of Activity 2023/24

Our key achievements in reducing health inequalities and fostering relationships in 2023/24 were:

- **Reducing smoking in pregnancy** - increased engagement with the Trust's smoking cessation service from 25% to 70%. As a result, less than 5% of women now smoke at time of delivery meaning that 226 babies were protected against the negative impacts of smoking in pregnancy
- **Increasing the percentage of people being referred to cardiology services from the most deprived areas** - As part of a collaborative working agreement with Novartis UK, the Trust has created the Buckinghamshire Lipid Optimisation Programme. The programme seeks to proactively reach out to patients with a history of cardiovascular disease and high cholesterol, offering them cholesterol lowering therapies which reduce their overall cardiovascular risk.
- **Improving the early identification of frailty**, with more than 30% of patients in our Emergency Department having a documented frailty score - over 90% of patients aged over 65 presenting in the Emergency Department have had a Clinical Frailty Score documented during the year.
- **Patients from a South Asian background reported lower levels of satisfaction with BHT services**. The Trust has undertaken a range of initiatives over the year to improve patient experience and outcomes for patients from a south Asian background
- **Improved access to interpreting services**
- **Increased opportunities to feedback**
- **Improving Maternity Services at Wycombe Hospital** – patient engagement
- **Older People's Health & Wellbeing days** – Thame & Chalfont & Gerrards Cross Community Hospitals – public engagement
- **Research & Innovation** – ranked 2nd in England for research trial recruitment among similar-sized acute trusts and 1st for setting up trials. Over 4,500 Buckinghamshire residents, a quarter from primary care, participated in 70 studies across 26 specialties
- **Homeless workshop** – increasing collaborative working across key local stakeholder organisations

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Next steps for 2024/25

Building on from this positive progress in 2023/24 but recognising there are still improvements to make in 2024/25 we aim to:

- Make reducing health inequalities and improving population health a key priority and work collaboratively with our partners at place to support delivery of this
- Further develop partnership working with our communities and key stakeholders
- Further develop co-production
- Develop new equality metrics for the trust
- Creating an Accessible Information Standard and Reasonable Adjustment Policy and training programme
- Improving the ethnic diversity across patient groups with a particular focus on the South Asian community which reports lower satisfaction
- Targeted project on reducing did not attend (DNA) rates
- Continuing to supporting services within the Trust to engage with local communities through targeted public engagement events
- Improving response rates for FFT by rolling out QR codes to services including our community children & young people's services and end of live care.
- Developing and implementing a strategy for ensuring we listen to the voices of children and young people
- Supporting colleagues and patients to use video interpreting
- Promoting on-demand British Sign Language (BSL) in areas such as the Emergency Department and Maternity where it is difficult to book an interpreter in advance

We also have specific breakthrough metrics for 2024/25 to support the reduction of health inequalities these are:

- Improve children's development for communities experiencing the poorest outcomes, with 85% attending 12 month review by age 15 months
- Improve identification of hypertension, with 75% of patients having a blood pressure check at Outpatient appointment

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Section 1: Patient Profile

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Patient Profile

- By analysing our patient profile by protected characteristic, we can look at which patient groups are accessing our services. It enables us to look at patterns of service uptake and understand our patient flows. This can help us identify and understand any potential inequalities of access.
- The Care Group structure has been introduced during the last financial year to better align each of the services and specialties, which were previously structured into Divisions.
- The ethnic categories across our acute and community services have been updated to match the definitions in the [NHS Data Dictionary](#), with all systems now using the national list of sixteen categories, plus 'Not known' and 'Not stated'
- To apply these changes, the full dataset has been fully refreshed for the previous five years activity rather than merging this year's data on to previously published information.
- The volume of patients accessing the Trust continued to increase during 2023/24.

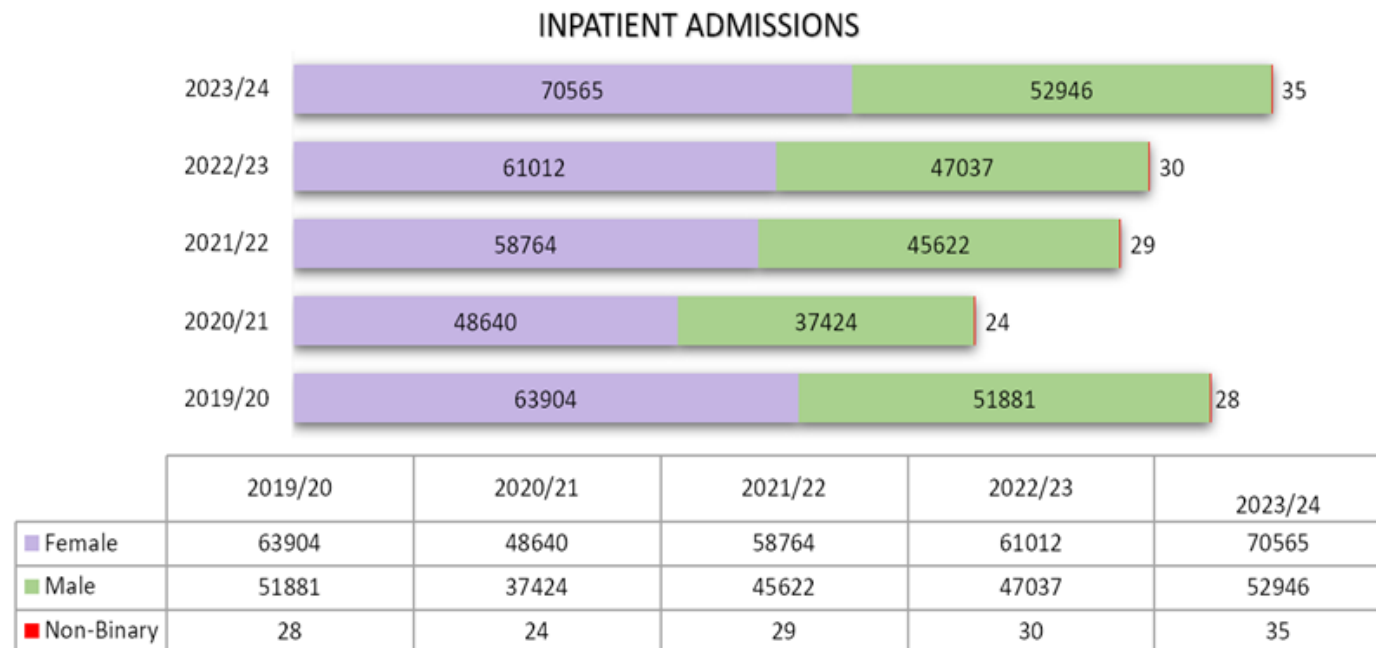
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Inpatient Admissions

- Overall there continues to be a higher proportion of female inpatients, averaging 56.4% in 2023/24 which is an increase of 0.67% compared to the previous year.



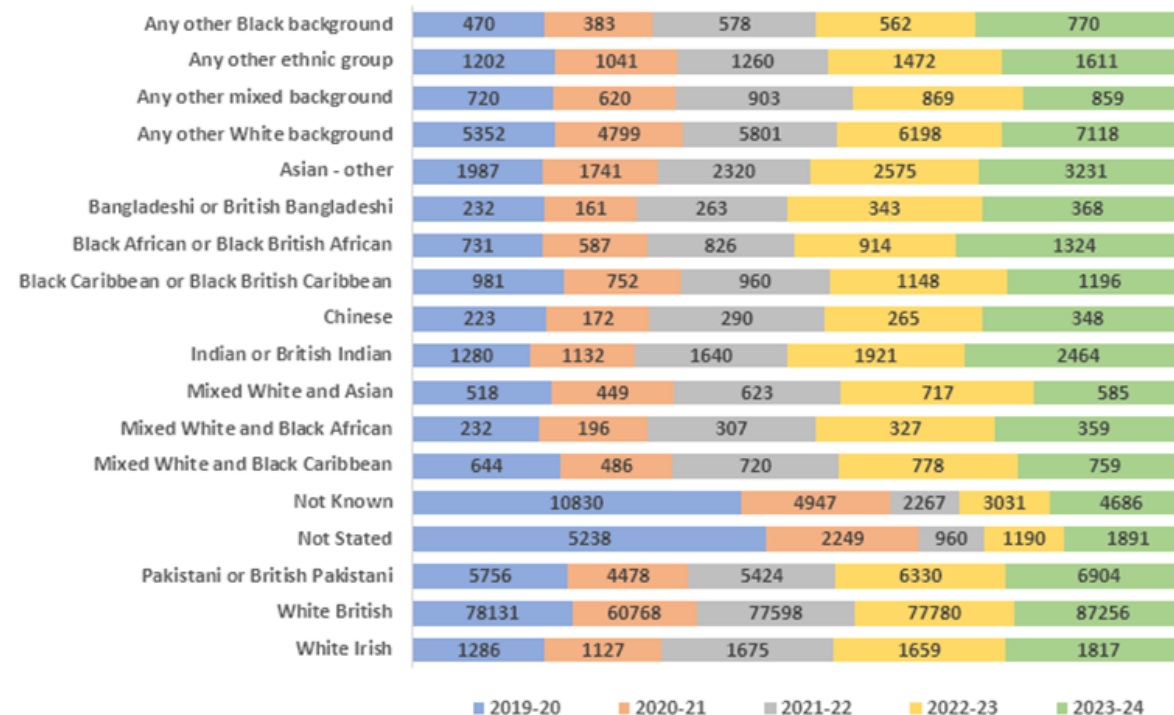
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Inpatient Ethnicity

- The patients recorded in groups 'Not Stated' or 'Not Known' are those who have not given an answer or have not been asked the question regarding their ethnicity. This group has risen over the last year from 3.91% in 2022/23 to 5.32% in 2023/24. Whilst still lower than pre COVID-19 levels, the rise in this cohort is higher than expected and continues to be targeted as part of our data quality monitoring and during training briefings for staff at point of contact with patients.



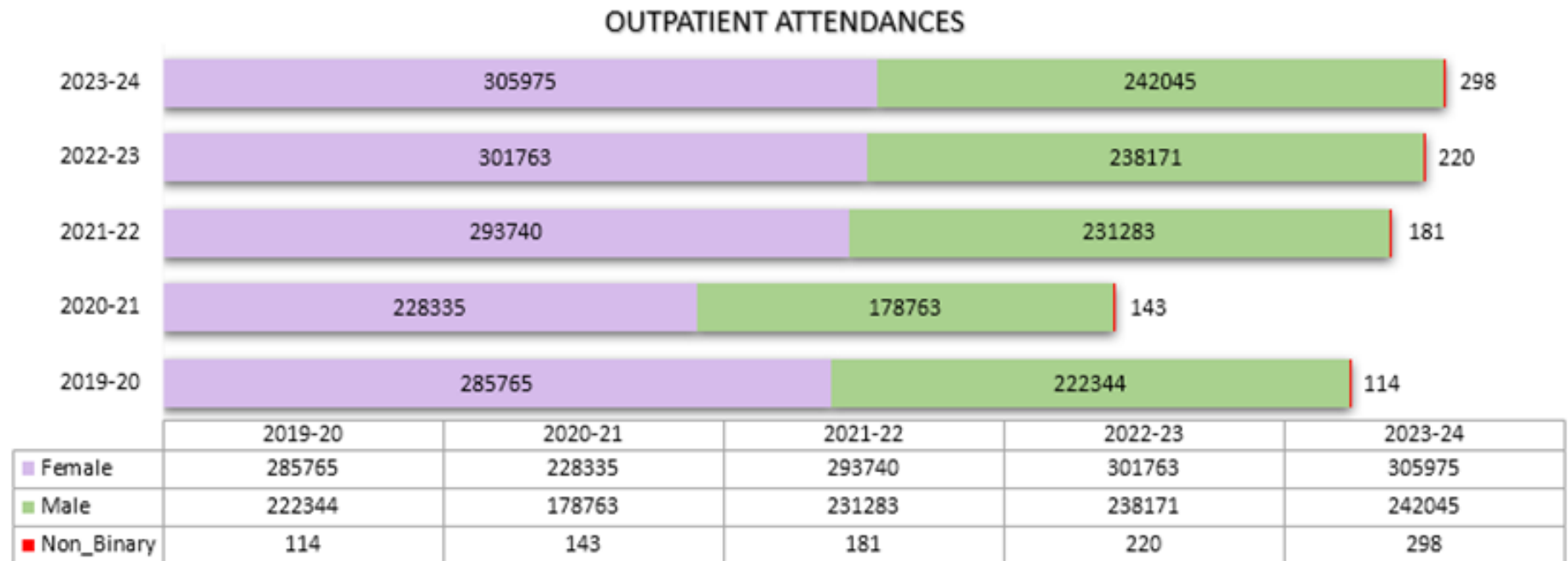
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Outpatient Activity

- As with Inpatient admissions, females account for highest proportion of outpatient activity at 55.8%. This is driven by some of the specialist and maternity services provided by the Trust.
- Again, this year's data also includes patients who identify as Non-Binary and are indicated in red, to the right of the chart below.



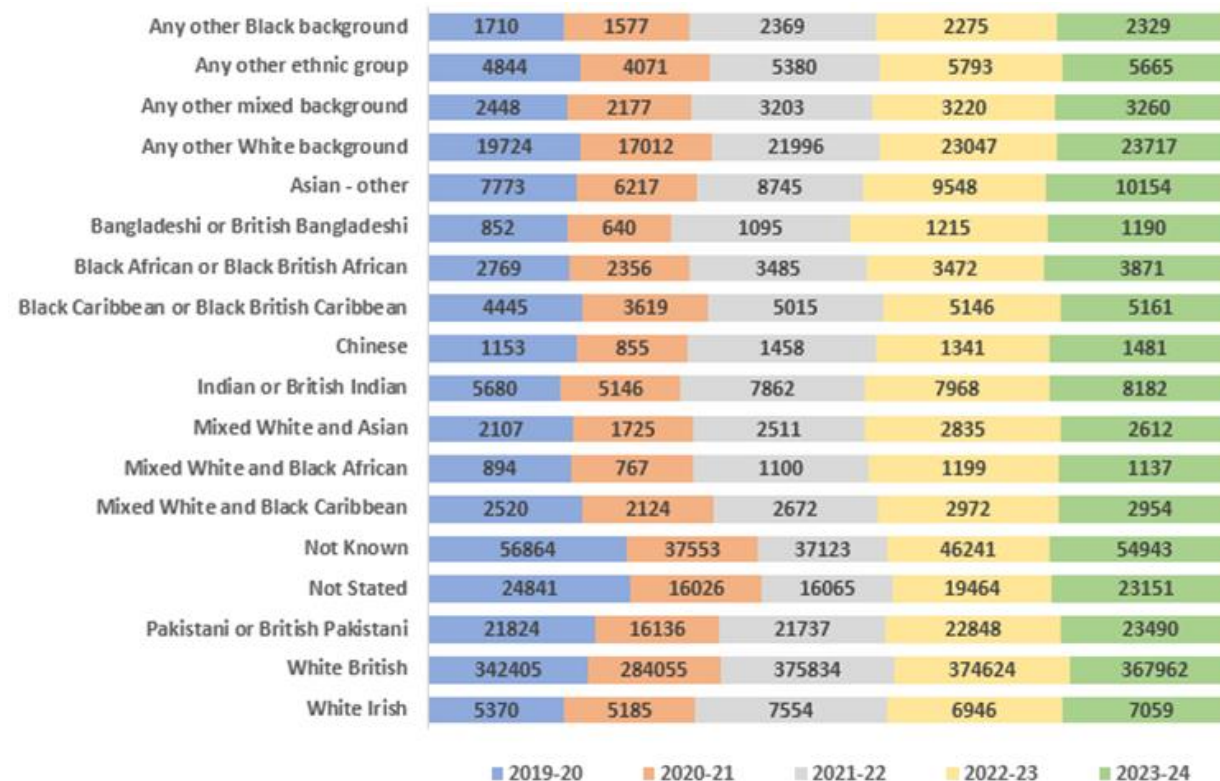
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Outpatients by Ethnicity

- Outpatients have also seen a rise in the number of patients recorded as Not Known and Not stated, with the percentage of patients recording as White British decreasing from 69% in 2022/23 to 67 % in 2023/4.



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Did Not Attend Outpatient appointments

- Overall, the number of patients that 'Did Not Attend' (DNA) an appointment increased by 8.6% during 2023/24. In an effort to reduce the DNA volumes, the Trust is currently expanding the number of services that use an SMS texting service to remind the patient of their upcoming appointments
- There are nine ethnic groups where more than ten percent of the booked appointments were not been attended in 2023/24:

Ethnic Group 2023-24	DNA	ATTENDED	DNA %
Any other Black background	269	2329	10.35%
Any other mixed background	417	3260	11.34%
Asian - other	1172	10154	10.35%
Bangladeshi or British Bangladeshi	146	1190	10.93%
Black African or Black British African	494	3871	11.32%
Black Caribbean or Black British Caribbean	669	5161	11.48%
Mixed White and Black African	146	1137	11.38%
Mixed White and Black Caribbean	401	2954	11.95%
Pakistani or British Pakistani	3155	23490	11.84%

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Community Activity

- Community activity is for patients seen in clinic sessions mostly based outside of the main acute hospital sites and for patients seen in their own homes or place of residence.
- With increased volumes of patients, it is once again noticeable that the only large decrease was in an ‘Other’ category of any other mixed background, with smaller decreases in people of Indian and mixed White & Black African ethnicity.
- The largest percentage increase in community activity was by people identifying as Chinese or Bangladeshi with showed an increase of 71.2% and 54,9% respectively compared to the previous year.

Ethnic Group	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Any other Black background	1372	1288	923	1039	1142
Any other ethnic group	2450	2473	3655	3127	4087
Any other mixed background	6968	11162	14864	15816	13811
Any other White background	12648	17757	18547	19005	19911
Asian - other	2784	2703	3627	3640	4581
Bangladeshi or British Bangladeshi	670	654	746	668	1035
Black African or Black British African	1686	1995	2873	3162	3565
Black Caribbean or Black British Caribbean	3729	3818	4323	4421	5088
Chinese	203	249	402	420	719
Indian or British Indian	5313	6513	8683	10358	10284
Mixed White and Asian	3397	3820	3804	2915	3081
Mixed White and Black African	683	711	821	843	842
Mixed White and Black Caribbean	4040	4290	3687	4037	4594
Not Known	202279	199868	211677	191671	216584
Pakistani or British Pakistani	14494	16218	18637	18203	21052
White British	262194	265798	291825	302989	329495
White Irish	2689	3491	3320	3939	4545
Grand Total	527599	542808	592414	586253	644416

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Section 2: Business Planning

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Business Planning

- Each year the Trust undertakes annual business planning to set the priorities for the year ahead. This takes account of national requirements, our Trust Strategy and the requirements of the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care System.
- A key part of business planning is the agreement of our 'areas of focus' for the year ahead – these are a small set of organisation-wide priorities which are understood and owned by everyone. They provide a shared focus around which to energise teams to drive improvements and support the achievement of our medium-term goals. These 'areas of focus' for 2023/24 are set out on the next slide.
- An integral part of our Trust vision is to work with partners to build healthy communities and tackle healthy inequalities; which is directly linked to our equality objective to 'reduce inequalities for patients with protected characteristics'.
- In 2023/24 our priorities for Healthy Communities were focused on:
 - Reducing smoking in pregnancy, with the aim of less than 5% of women smoking at the time of delivery
 - Increasing the percentage of people being referred to cardiology services from particular wards in Buckinghamshire
 - Improving the early identification of frailty, with more than 30% of patients in our Emergency Department having a documented frailty score to enable better management of support of frail patients

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Reducing Smoking in Pregnancy

- We launched our smoking cessation service to support pregnant women to give up smoking, increasing engagement with the Trust's smoking cessation service from 25% to 70%. As a result, less than 5% of women now smoke at time of delivery meaning that 226 babies were protected against the negative impacts of smoking in pregnancy – 90 more than the previous year. This was against a national target of 6% and compared to c.7% at the end of 2022/23.
- We also monitor carbon monoxide levels during pregnancy and have increased the number of women screened for carbon monoxide levels from 20% to 95%. This monitoring is for all pregnant women, not just those who smoke, as they may be exposed to carbon monoxide because other family members smoke or from faulty boilers. High levels of carbon monoxide are potentially fatal for pregnant women and their unborn babies.
- The Trust's smoking cessation team is now also referring other family or household members who smoke to Be Healthy Bucks to provide babies with the best possible start in life.

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Cardiology Referrals

- We have prioritised the cholesterol management of cardiovascular patients from particular wards in Buckinghamshire
- As part of a collaborative working agreement with Novartis UK, the Trust has created the Buckinghamshire Lipid Optimisation Programme. The programme seeks to proactively reach out to patients with a history of cardiovascular disease and high cholesterol, offering them cholesterol lowering therapies which reduce their overall cardiovascular risk. The programme has also ensured the pioneering innovative medication Inclisiran (a 6-monthly cholesterol lowering injection) is available to all eligible patients in Buckinghamshire.
- The programme uses an innovative, novel population healthcare tool (developed alongside Graphnet) which allows BHT clinicians to identify patients from information within their shared care record.
- This search tool has identified over 2,100 patients across Buckinghamshire with a history of cardiovascular disease and high cholesterol levels.
- So far over 700 patients have been seen in virtual clinics within the first five months of the programme. Prior to the launch of this programme, the BHT lipid service would see four new patients a week. Over 230 patients have been offered the injectable medication Inclisiran, with over 65% of patients having their cholesterol medication adjusted and guidance provided to their GP.

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Improving the Early Identification of Frailty

- Frailty is now understood to be a long-term condition rather a word that is often applied to people purely because of their age.
- The early identification of frailty coupled with targeted support can help older people living with frailty to stay well and live independently for as long as possible.
- The Clinical Frailty Scale (CFS) is an evidence-based tool which we use to assess frailty in elderly individuals. It prompts clinicians to consider how a person has changed from their previous ability to function in daily tasks.
- At the start of 2023/24 the Trust had an objective of improving the early identification of frailty using the CFS, with a target of more than 30% of patients in our Emergency Department having a documented frailty score by the end of the year.
- During the year, there have been several initiatives to raise awareness of the importance of recording the Clinical Frailty Score, including 'frailty at the front door workshops' for our Emergency Department clinical colleagues and the availability of the Clinical Frailty Score app to support staff in calculating the score. As a result, over 90% of patients aged over 65 presenting in the Emergency Department have had a Clinical Frailty Score documented during the year.

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Section 3: Patient Experience & Involvement

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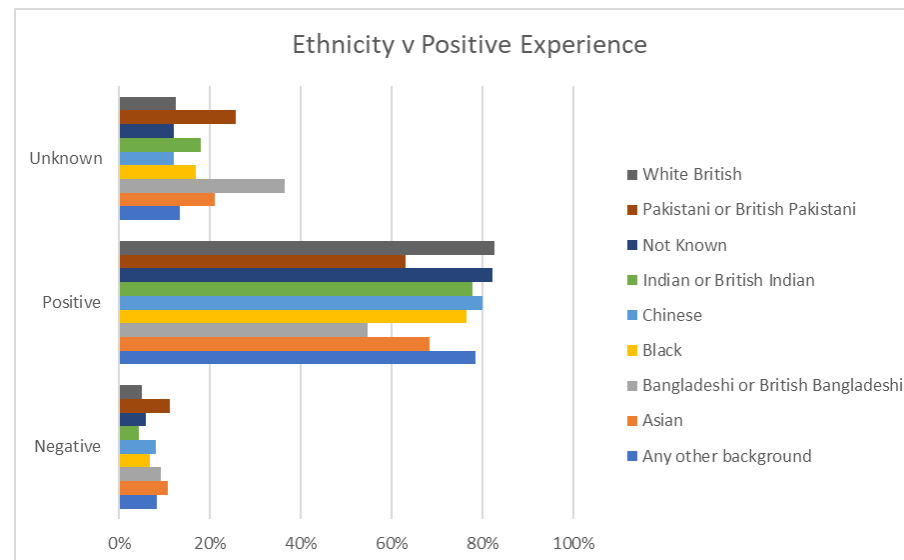
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Friends and Family Test

- The NHS Friends and Family Test (FFT) was created to help service providers and commissioners understand whether patients are happy with the service provided, or where improvements are needed. Feedback is requested from acute and community patients who have accessed our services by SMS text, QR codes and survey links. Equality monitoring is only available from those who have responded to SMS messages as this is linked to anonymous patient records. In 2023/24 we received 80,779 responses.
- The age group with the highest response rate continues to be those aged 61 to 80, with 46% of the total responding and the lowest response rate is 2.5% from patients aged 17 to 30, although this has seen a small improvement of 1% from last year. Over the last year the Trust has introduced QR codes as a way to engage this group.
- As part of the feedback given from our service users, Care and Treatment was the highest recorded theme with 100% of respondents from a number of ethnic groups giving a positive rating related to this theme, including White/Asian, Chinese and Black Service users. Asian service users reported the lowest satisfaction score with 11% saying that their experience overall had been poor or very poor. White British patients and service users had the highest response rate with 83% being positive overall. The lowest response rate at 4.2% is from those recorded as Indian or British Indian.



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Clinical Effectiveness team

- Each year the Clinical Effectiveness Team supports several local patient experience surveys designed to obtain feedback on specific services from patients, parents and carers who use these services. These surveys may just focus on one particular aspect of a service e.g., the quality of verbal and written information provided or the whole care pathway from diagnosis to discharge. In 2023/24 nine of these local patient experience surveys were completed. Areas surveyed included:
 - Outpatient Hysteroscopy Pain Assessment
 - Colposcopy
 - Medicine for Older People
 - Pharmacy
 - Obstetrics and Gynaecology
 - Hospital on the High Street
 - Bariatrics
 - Complaints team
 - Maternity

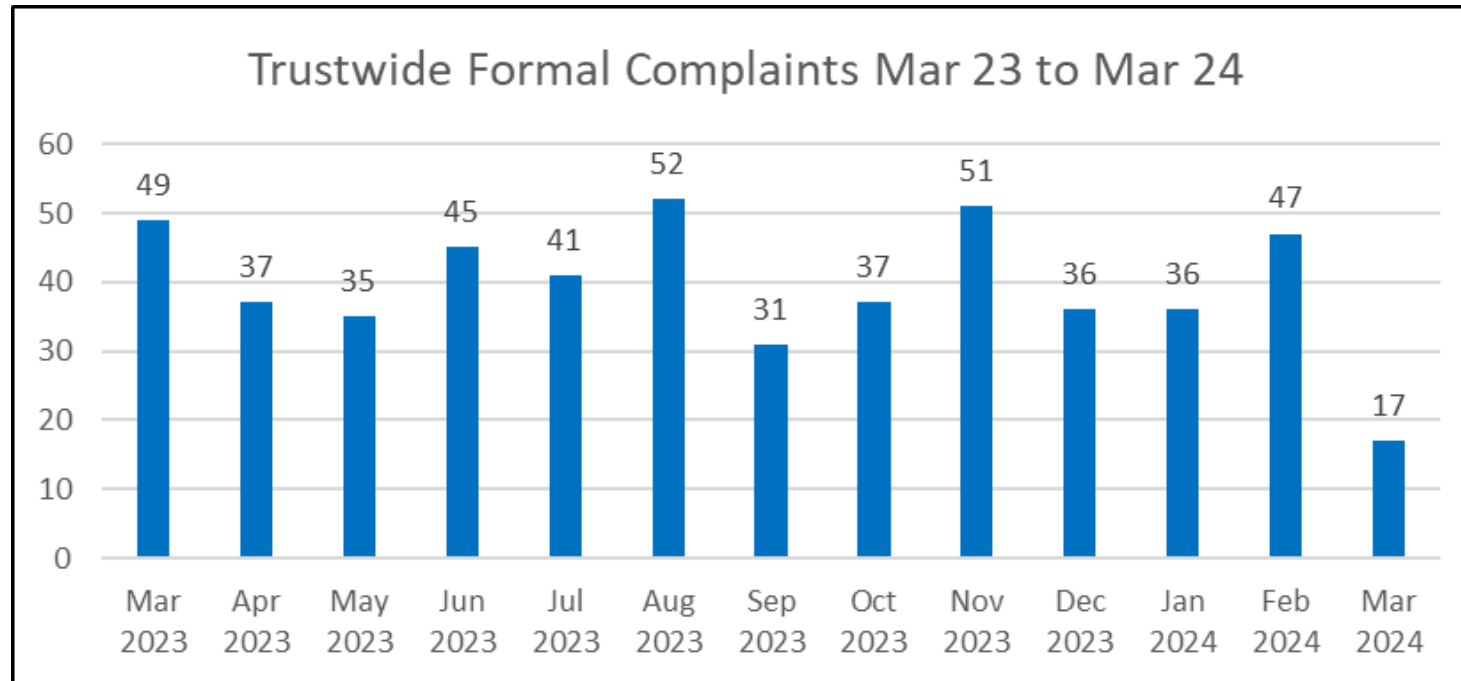
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Complaints

- In 2023/2024, the Trust received 465 formal complaints, a decrease from 538 in 2022/2023



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Patient Involvement 2023/24

Better support for women with threatened or actual miscarriage in the Emergency Department (ED):

Following a complaint about lack of appropriate care by a woman who miscarried in the Emergency Department the following changes were made to improve the care and experience of women with threatened or actual miscarriage in ED:

- Dignity packs including pads and wipes stored in triage area for ease of distribution when required
- New mandatory ED training day on miscarriage delivered by recently recruited early pregnancy loss midwife
- ED team working with Aching Arms charity which offers a support service to parents after their loss, whether it was during pregnancy, at birth or soon after.

Maternity services

- To improve our Maternity services at Wycombe hospital giving support to someone during pregnancy and in the few weeks after a baby has been born, BHT invited past, current and potential future service users to help us understand what we were doing well, what we need to do better and what additional services they would like to see at Wycombe hospital.
- Firstly, a survey was distributed to 29,392 past and current service users and was also promoted through traditional and social media and by MNVP and HealthWatch. Of the 826 respondents, 72% were white, 17% Asian, 4% Black, 3% mixed background, 2% undisclosed, <1% Romany gipsy/traveller, 1% other ethnic backgrounds.
- The Trust also ran two virtual events as well as attending three events organised by The Maternity and Neonates Voices Partnership for Buckinghamshire which were held at local family centres and baby groups.

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Patient Involvement 2023/24

Engaging with and improving services for South Asian patients:

Patients from a south Asian background reported lower levels of satisfaction with BHT services. The Trust has undertaken a range of initiatives over the year to improve patient experience and outcomes for patients from a south Asian background. These include:

- Engaging with 168 south Asian service users of BHT maternity services, as part of a review of maternity services at Wycombe Hospital
- Expanding the chaplaincy offer to patients of a south Asian background by, recruiting a Muslim chaplain and three female Muslim chaplaincy volunteers to provide religious and spiritual support to our Muslim patients the majority of whom are from a south Asian background. The chaplaincy also has a Hindu volunteer and Christian volunteers of Indian origin. One of our ophthalmology consultants from a Sikh background provides support to the chaplaincy team for patients who are Sikh. All Chaplaincy volunteers are trained internally but many also hold external qualifications in religious studies.

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Patient Forums

- Patient forums are a great source of patient experience feedback. They are representative of the patients using our services and assist us with improvement projects throughout the Trust.
- We now have 5 regular patients forums that we work with throughout the year:
 - Patient Experience Group (PEG)
 - Maternity & Neonatal Voices Partnership (MNVP)
 - National Spinal Injuries Centre Forum
 - Stroke Forum
 - Cystic Fibrosis Parent Forum
- Over the last year we have continued to increase diversity in our patient forums:
- The Maternity and Neonatal Voice Partnership (MNVP) works with the South Asian and Muslim population in High Wycombe through the Mamas and Baba's group which has led to a growing number of women attending sessions/events. The MNVP Equity Lead has also been building relationships with the Black community.
- We have continued to look at Children and Young People voices through alternative methods of capture through QR codes, local surveys, and video feedback through short stories.
- We are working alongside our paediatric team to ensure the voice of the child is being heard through our feedback methods and in how we are presenting their data in reporting so that it is not lost amongst our adult services.

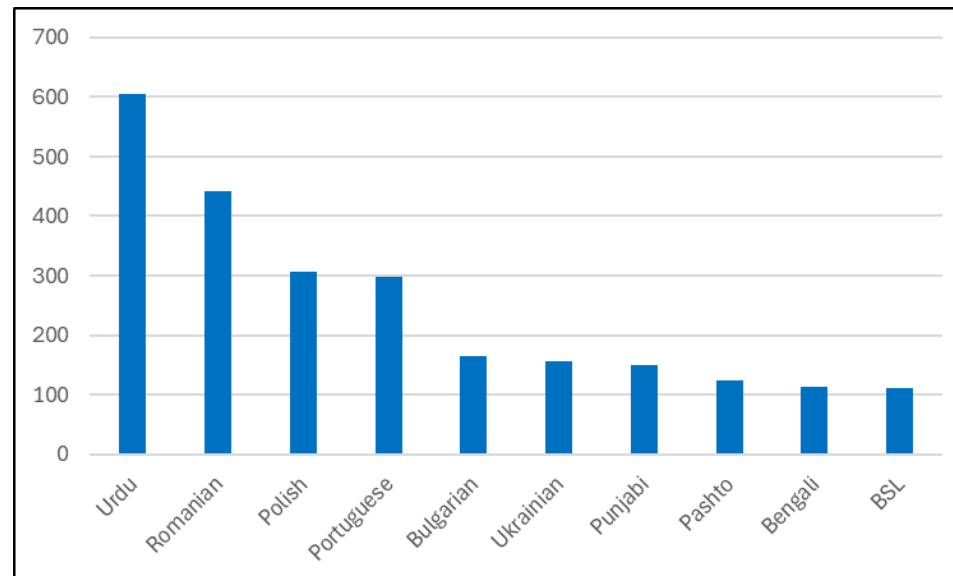
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Interpretation Services

- There was a total of 3,353 requests for interpretation that were met during 2023/24 compared to 3199 in 2022/23, representing a 5% increase. Interpreters were provided for 98% of telephone requests, and 77% of in-person requests. In-person interpreting accounted for 25% of the total requests.
- Urdu, Romanian and Polish were the top three requested languages in 2023/24. These are the same top three as in 2022/3, but with Urdu now taking first place over last year's top language of Romanian.
- A maternity CQC inspection raised the concern that staff did not always use translation services when required, and that there was no accessible information to inform children, young people, and their families this service was available. To address these issues :
 - Posters are now displayed in all clinical areas in the top 10 most used languages advising service users of availability of interpreting services. The information is also displayed on digital patient information screens
 - 123 colleagues trained via webinars on utilising the Trust's interpretation service
 - On-demand video BSL service introduced



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Section 4: Public Engagement

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Public Engagement Activity

We know that good health is influenced by factors including lifestyle, genes, housing, income, employment, education as well as access to and quality of healthcare. The Trust's strategy reflects the NHS Long Term Plan published in early 2019 and is aligned to the Buckinghamshire Joint Local Health and Wellbeing strategy: Healthier, Happier Lives developed by the Buckinghamshire Health and Wellbeing Board.

Health and Wellbeing Days for Older Residents

Following on from the work that took place last year, a blueprint was created to enable more community sites to run health and wellbeing older people's events for local communities where our community hospital sites are placed. Events were held at Marlow Community Hospital on 19th April 2023 and at Chalfont and Gerrards Cross Community Hospital on 4th October 2023. A total of 30 stand holders were present at these events providing information, guidance and advice on relevant services and topic areas local to these communities which included Age Concern, Dementia Action Marlow, Thames Valley Police, Alzheimer's Society, LEAP Carers Bucks, Chiltern Prostate Cancer Support Group, Trading Standards and Buckinghamshire County Council. A total of over 100 residents attended both events and 85% of them said the event was "extremely useful".

Research & Innovation - The Trust's Research and Innovation department has had a highly active year, engaging with various stakeholders and achieving remarkable milestones. It ranked 2nd in England for research trial recruitment among similar-sized acute trusts and 1st for setting up trials. Over 4,500 Buckinghamshire residents, a quarter from primary care, participated in 70 studies across 26 specialties, including a significant Spinal Muscular Atrophy study. The department opened 45 new studies and continued engagement in Research Ready Community Programmes, with approximately 1,500 individuals signing up for preventative health assessments. As well as research, the team has continued to champion healthcare innovation with a clear focus on enhancing patient care and providing a supportive work environment for colleagues.

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Public Engagement Activity

Health on the High Street – Unit 33

Unit 33 offers a range of services including blood pressure testing, health visiting services, NHS Health Checks, sexual health services, veteran support, and immunisation. It supports residents in one of the most deprived areas of the Buckinghamshire, to take control of their health and wellbeing and helps to free up appointments from other local services by offering proactive support and advice, in a convenient location with excellent public transport links. Unit 33 offers both booked appointments and drop-in services to be able to fully support our community. Unit 33 took part in the Aylesbury community action day. Over 200 residents attended this event.



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Stakeholder Engagement

- **Chiltern Prostate Cancer Group** - This group promotes awareness and supports individuals affected by prostate cancer either those with the disease or their carers. A grant was awarded by Heart of Bucks to enable the Chiltern Prostate Group to run further events during 2023/4, particularly targeted at men from the Afro-Caribbean population who are at much higher risk. At the first session held on 15 July 174 men booked. 11% were identified as needing to consult with their GP. The second session held on 28 October 184 men booked. 10% were identified as needing to consult with their GP. These men were asymptomatic and would not have been picked up without such testing. BHT supported this event by providing a volunteer to book patients into their time slots and give them the relevant paperwork for their tests.
- **BHT Open Day and Careers Fair** - On Saturday 29th July 2023 BHT held its first open day since COVID. The open day is a public event that gives the general public the opportunity to hear from services and depts within BHT plus attend some behind the scenes tours of areas that the public do not have access to ordinarily plus to find out about plans for the future of healthcare in Buckinghamshire. 22 stalls were present at this event representing BHT services and depts giving out details of the services they offer our local communities. BHT also ran 5 behind the scenes tours operating throughout the duration of the event.
- **Homeless Clinic Workshop** - Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust (BHT) has been running a Homeless clinic since May 2022 engaging with two local homeless charities, Aylesbury Homeless Action Group (AHAG) and Wycombe Homeless Connection (WHC). BHT invited local key stakeholders within the community to attend this workshop with the aim of exploring how we can work together and support our local homeless community more.

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Section 5: Next steps

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Equality Objectives

By the end of 2024, the Trust will involve colleagues, patients and the public as part of EDS2 to develop new public and patient equality objectives for the next 2 years. An action plan will be developed to address the agreed objectives.

In addition, the Trust will continue to focus on breakthrough objectives to tackle health inequalities. The key areas of focus for 2024/25 are detailed below:

Vision Mission Outstanding Care, Healthy Communities, Great Place to Work <i>Personalised, compassionate care every time</i>			
	Outstanding Care	Healthy Communities	Great Place to Work
Strategic Goals 2025	We will see people as early as possible when they need our services to improve outcomes We will continuously improve our services and use of resources to deliver value for our residents	We will prevent people dying earlier than they should , with a particular focus on addressing inequalities in access and outcomes	Our people will feel motivated, able to make a difference and be proud to work at BHT We will attract and retain talented people to build high performing teams with caring and skilled people
Outcome Measures 2025	Eliminate corridor care Improve productivity to be in the top quartile nationally	Play our part in ensuring that more children in the most deprived communities are ready for school Increase proportion of people over the age of 65 years who spend more years in good health Improve outcomes in cardiovascular disease	Improve staff engagement score to be in the top quartile in the National NHS Staff Survey Improve overall Trust vacancy rate to be no more than 8%
Focus 2024/25	Improve waiting times in our Emergency Department, with fewer than 10 patients a day waiting more than 12 hours Improve safety, with all inpatient and outpatient services achieving clinical accreditation, and at least 40% being awarded the silver standard Improve productivity by a further 5%, ensuring every patient is seen within a year, improving patient outcomes	Give children living in the most deprived communities the best start in life by increasing the proportion who have a 12-month review to at least 85% Tackle the biggest driver of cardiovascular disease by ensuring at least 75% of outpatients have their blood pressure checked	Improve everyone's experience of working at BHT by taking a zero tolerance approach to bullying, becoming best in class in the staff survey within 2 years

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Equality Objectives

Following feedback from patients and service users, work is already underway to tackle a number of issues that have been highlighted including:

- Creating an Accessible Information Standard and Reasonable Adjustment Policy and training programme
- Continuing to supporting services within the Trust to engage with local communities through targeted public engagement events
- Improving the ethnic diversity across patient groups with a particular focus on the South Asian community which reports lower satisfaction
- Improving response rates for FFT by rolling out QR codes to services including our community children & young people's services and end of live care.
- Developing and implementing a strategy for ensuring we listen to the voices of children and young people
- Supporting colleagues and patients to use video interpreting
- Promoting on-demand British Sign Language (BSL) in areas such as the Emergency Department and Maternity where it is difficult to book an interpreter in advance

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