

Voluntary Health Scotland Anti-Racism Statement



Voluntary Health Scotland is a movement for health creation working to reduce health inequalities to enable the people of Scotland to live well. We believe that health is more than the absence of illness, and together with our members and partners we champion this belief. We collaborate to provide the national voice for third sector health organisations in Scotland.

We know that racism is a public health issue and a driver of health inequalities amongst racially minoritised communities. Racism harms individuals, communities, and countries. It builds barriers to creating good health, wellbeing, dignity, safety and opportunity.

We recognise that structural, institutional and interpersonal racism continues to affect people and communities across Scotland. These inequalities are reflected in people's experiences of health and care services alongside employment, housing, education, income, and participation in civic life. The intersectionality of inequalities is also an important factor in how people experience health and care services. VHS' [\(IN\)Visible Report 2026](#), by providing research into gender and health inequalities, continues to highlight these challenges. These experiences negatively impact on people as foundational social determinants of health.

Our long-term ambition is to create a culture of anti-racism and allyship. We remain committed to creating positive change across our membership and wider community. To achieve this, Voluntary Health Scotland recognises its own working cultures need to become more inclusive, representative and equitable.

As an organisation committed to reducing health inequalities and promoting equity, we are committed to being actively anti-racist in our work, culture, partnerships, and influence. Core to these ambitions is our Strategic Plan 2025-2030 objectives:

1. We will grow and diversify our membership, to provide more effective representation for organisations that support people experiencing health inequalities and disadvantage across Scotland.

2. We will amplify the voices, stories and impact of our members and their communities to influence for change.

This means we will:

- Challenge racism, discrimination, prejudice, and exclusion wherever and whenever we encounter them.
- Listen to and amplify the voices and experiences of our members and their communities affected by racism.
- Work to ensure our policies, practices, communications, and decision-making are inclusive, equitable, and culturally responsive.
- Promote diversity and representation across our organisation, leadership, networks, membership, communications, and events.
- Support learning, reflection, and accountability on anti-racism for staff, trustees, members, and partners.
- Use our influence to advocate for policies and systems that address racial injustice and reduce racialised health inequalities.
- Build partnerships based on respect, equity, collaboration, and shared learning.
- Monitor our progress in work through our Strategic Plan 2025-2030 performance indicators and measures.

We understand that being anti-racist is an active, continuous commitment and not a one-time occurrence. We are committed to continual learning, honest reflection, and meaningful action, and we recognise that we will not always get everything right. We will seek feedback from members and our stakeholders, remain accountable, and continue to improve with support and expertise from our partners.

We stand in solidarity with individuals and communities affected by racism and are committed to helping build a healthier, fairer, and more equitable Scotland for everyone.

Signed by VHS Chair and Chief Executive on behalf of the organisation:



Christine Carlin, Chair



Tejesh Mistry, Chief Executive