**Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) Report**

**Title:** Decontamination Science Programme
**NES Directorate or Department:** NHS Scotland Academy – Learning and Innovation
**Date Report Completed:** March 2025

**Introduction:**

An Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) supports NES in meeting the three parts of the Public Sector Equality Duty by:

* Taking effective action on equality
* Developing better education, policy, and workforce planning solutions
* Demonstrating how equality has been considered in decision-making

This EQIA assesses the *Decontamination Science Programme*, developed by NHS Scotland Academy (NHSSA), and reflects our commitment to embedding equality, diversity, and inclusion throughout the programme lifecycle.

**Overview of the Programme:**

The *Decontamination Science Programme* has been designed for entry-level Healthcare Scientists (Career Levels 2–4) working within Central Decontamination Units (CDUs) in NHS Scotland. It consists of four online digital modules delivered through Moodle and includes contextualised formative and summative assessments. The programme supports NHS Board workforce development needs and is aligned with the NHS Recovery Plan (2021–2026) under a ‘Once for Scotland’ model to ensure consistency and sustainability.

**Programme aims and outcomes:**

* Support accessible, inclusive entry-level training
* Increase CDU workforce capacity and capability
* Embed equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) across all programme elements

**Learning outcomes:**

* Demonstrate understanding of legal, ethical, and professional principles
* Apply decontamination processes to support safe, effective practice
* Understand legislative requirements relevant to decontamination

**Relevance to Equality Outcomes**

Yes – the programme aligns with NES Equality Outcomes by:

* Improving access to education and career development for underrepresented groups
* Reducing barriers to participation in formal training
* Promoting inclusive learning through digital accessibility and flexible design

**Reducing Inequality and Improving Outcomes**

The programme is designed to widen access by offering:

* Asynchronous, modular learning to support learners in remote, rural, or lower-income areas
* Digital resources aligned with NES accessibility standards
* SCQF credit-bearing education supporting future progression

It offers targeted support for early-career staff and promotes equity in recruitment, development, and retention.

**Approach to the EQIA**

This is a new programme developed collaboratively with stakeholders across service and education sectors. It has been informed by learner voice, educational design frameworks, and workforce needs analysis. Strategic input has been provided by the Decontamination Short Life Working Group and the Scottish Academy Learning and Design Roadmap (SALDR).

Stakeholder engagement and feedback, including learner perspectives, were key throughout development. This EQIA reflects that collaborative process.

**Evidence:**

Key evidence includes:

* Workforce data indicating recruitment and retention challenges for Band 2–4 CDU roles
* Feedback on the limitations of the existing IDSc Certificate
* Stakeholder consultation through SALDR workshops
* NHS and Scottish Government strategies (Recovery Plan, Workforce Strategy, etc.)
* Peer-reviewed literature on accelerated and adult learning

Identified gaps: Ongoing monitoring will assess lived experience and impact across protected characteristics post-implementation.

**Assessment of Impact:**

We considered the Public Sector Equality Duty and relevant protected characteristics, as well as socio-economic factors and rural access.

**Progressing Equality of Opportunity**

* Removes financial and geographic barriers to training
* Supports career development for underrepresented and lower-band staff
* Flexible delivery supports learners with caring responsibilities, neurodiversity, or accessibility needs

**Eliminating Discrimination**

* Programme design includes content on professional responsibility and EDI
* Digital learning ensures consistent access across all NHS Boards
* NHSSA staff encouraged to participate in diversity networks within host Boards

**Promoting Good Relations**

* EDI themes are embedded throughout the curriculum
* Programme delivery encourages safe reflection on lived experiences and professional behaviours

**Children’s Rights and The Promise**

While not directly targeting under-18s, the programme indirectly supports children and young people by enhancing the capacity of the healthcare workforce, including those working in family and paediatric services. Care-experienced individuals will not be excluded from access to training or development.

**Summary of Impact**

* No unlawful discrimination identified
* Programme actively supports equality of opportunity and inclusive workforce development
* Designed with a learner-centred, rights-based approach
* Supports NES’s accessibility and inclusion priorities

**Next Steps**

| **Issue or Risk Identified** | **Action** | **Responsibility** | **Timescale** | **Resource Required** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Identify actual equality impacts post-launch | Include equality questions in evaluation and review | Programme Team | Ongoing; annual review | Stakeholder feedback; annual report |
| Ensure content remains inclusive and up to date | Monitor and refresh content as part of regular evaluation | Programme Team | Annual and ad hoc | Evaluation reports; learner feedback loops |
| Review EQIA based on evaluation findings | Reassess EQIA to incorporate post-launch data | Principal Educator | Within one year of launch | Programme review forums and governance |

**Monitoring and Review**

* Evaluation will include qualitative and quantitative data
* Ongoing engagement with Boards and learners
* Annual programme review will include consideration of equality impacts

**Sign-Off:**

**Director:**

**Date:**