

Responding to Concerns Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment (EQIA)

September 2026

Version 3.0

Name: HIS Equality Impact Assessment

Directorate: Quality Assurance & Regulation

Team: Responding to Concerns

Assessment lead: Alan Ketchen

Responsible manager: Lindsay Macphee

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Background

For all new or revised work, Healthcare Improvement Scotland has a legal requirement under the [Public Sector Equality Duty](#) to actively consider the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the [Equality Act 2010](#).
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a [protected characteristic](#) and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Additionally:

- We give consideration to the principles of the [Fairer Scotland Duty](#) by aiming to reduce inequalities of outcome that are based on socio-economic disadvantage.
- As the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 names Healthcare Improvement Scotland as a corporate parent, we must consider the needs of young people who have experienced care arrangements, and young people up to the age of 26 who are transitioning out of these arrangements.
- Per the UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024 Healthcare Improvement Scotland must ensure that its activities are compatible with [UNCRC](#) requirements.
- If the work will impact islands communities please follow the guidance from Scottish Government here: [Island communities impact assessments: guidance and toolkit - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#). Island communities are included within this impact assessment template.

EQIA overview

Status	New ☐	Existing ☒
Aim(s)	To respond to concerns raised by NHSScotland staff or referred to us by another organisation about the safety and quality of patient care. The Responding to Concerns (RTC) programme involves undertaking a prompt, proportionate and coordinated assessment of the concerns to ensure that NHS boards are aware of the concerns, are responding with appropriate actions, have effective governance and executive oversight arrangements in place to monitor progress and that there are robust arrangements for measuring and monitoring the safety and quality of care within the relevant service. The process for managing concerns that come to the RTC programme has been revised to reflect the recommendations from the Independent Review of Healthcare Improvement Scotland's RTC process and this updated EQIA incorporates those changes.	
Intended Outcome(s)	To contribute to public and wider stakeholder confidence in the provision of health and social care services in Scotland.	

Is there specific relevance for children and young people?	Yes ☐	No ☒
Are island communities included in the work?	Yes ☒	No ☐

Advancing equality

Age	
Positive impact	The RTC programme considers concerns received from any NHSScotland member of staff or referred to us by another organisation about the safety and quality of care within the NHS. Therefore, we only receive concerns from people of working age. While the work does not look at individual patient care or incidents, we may receive concerns which have the potential to impact on specific groups or services eg dementia or paediatric services. As a result of our RTC assessment process, we can have a positive impact for particular age groups.
Negative impact	
Neutral impact	

Care Experience	
Positive impact	
Negative impact	
Neutral impact	Experiences of care are outwith the RTC programme's remit.

Disability	
Positive impact	The RTC programme considers concerns received from any NHSScotland member of staff or referred to us by another organisation about the safety and quality of care within the NHS. While the work does not look at individual patient care or incidents, we may receive concerns which have the

	potential to impact on specific groups. As a result of our RTC assessment process, we can have a positive impact for people with these characteristics and the quality and safety of care provided. For example, we have recently considered the care of patients with a particular condition classed as a disability by law, within the acute setting. Following assessment, we have supported wider discussions around the care of patients with this condition to contribute to improvements on a national level.
Negative impact	All of the RTC process information is available on the HIS website, however it is not currently available in alternative accessible formats.
Neutral impact	The RTC programme considers concerns from any member of NHSScotland staff or referred to us by another organisation about the safety and quality of patient care within the NHS. We do not look at individual patient care or incidents. We also do not consider complaints raised by members of the public regarding the care that they or a family member has received. Where such complaints are received, we pass these to the HIS complaints team, which signposts people to relevant information and advice.

Gender Reassignment	
Positive impact	Concerns could be received which have the potential to impact on gender identity services.
Negative impact	
Neutral impact	The RTC programme considers concerns received from any NHSScotland member of staff or referred to us by another organisation about the safety and quality of care within the NHS. Irrespective of gender We do not look at individual patient care or incidents. We also do not consider complaints raised by members of the public regarding the care that they or a family member has received. Where such complaints are received, we pass these to the HIS complaints team, which signposts people to relevant information and advice.

Marriage and Civil Partnership	
Positive impact	
Negative impact	
Neutral impact	The RTC programme considers concerns received from any NHSScotland member of staff or referred to us by another organisation about the safety and quality of care within the NHS. We do not look at individual patient care or incidents. We also do not consider complaints raised by members of the public regarding the care that they or a family member has received. Where such complaints are received, we pass these to the HIS complaints team, which signposts people to relevant information and advice.

Pregnancy and Maternity	
Positive impact	Concerns could be received which have the potential to impact on pregnancy and maternity services. While the work does not look at individual patient care or incidents, we may receive concerns which have the potential to impact on maternity services more widely. As a result of our RTC assessment process, we can have a positive impact for people within this group. For example, we have previously undertaken an assessment of concerns relating to maternity services and supported improvements through direct engagement with the relevant NHS Board and with other national organisations who have a remit in this area.
Negative impact	
Neutral impact	

Race	
Positive impact	
Negative impact	
Neutral impact	The RTC programme considers concerns received from any NHSScotland member of staff or referred to us by another organisation about the safety and quality of care within the NHS. We do not look at individual patient care or incidents. We also do not consider complaints raised by members of the public regarding the care that they or a family member has received. Where such complaints are received, we pass these to the HIS complaints team, which signposts people to relevant information and advice.

Religion or Belief	
Positive impact	
Negative impact	
Neutral impact	The RTC programme considers concerns received from any NHSScotland member of staff or referred to us by another organisation about the safety and quality of care within the NHS. We do not look at individual patient care or incidents. We also do not consider complaints raised by members of the public regarding the care that they or a family member has received. Where such complaints are received, we pass these to the HIS complaints team, which signposts people to relevant information and advice.

Sex	
Positive impact	

Negative impact	
Neutral impact	The RTC programme considers concerns received from any NHSScotland member of staff or referred to us by another organisation about the safety and quality of care within the NHS. We do not look at individual patient care or incidents. We also do not consider complaints raised by members of the public regarding the care that they or a family member has received. Where such complaints are received, we pass these to the HIS complaints team, which signposts people to relevant information and advice.

Sexual Orientation	
Positive impact	
Negative impact	
Neutral impact	The RTC programme considers concerns received from any NHSScotland member of staff or referred to us by another organisation about the safety and quality of care within the NHS. We do not look at individual patient care or incidents. We also do not consider complaints raised by members of the public regarding the care that they or a family member has received. Where such complaints are received, we pass these to the HIS complaints team, which signposts people to relevant information and advice.

Socio-economic	
Positive impact	
Negative impact	
Neutral impact	The RTC programme considers concerns received from any NHSScotland member of staff or referred to us by another

	organisation about the safety and quality of care within the NHS. We do not look at individual patient care or incidents. We also do not consider complaints raised by members of the public regarding the care that they or a family member has received. Where such complaints are received, we pass these to the HIS complaints team, which signposts people to relevant information and advice.
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Island communities	
Positive impact	The RTC programme considers concerns from any member of NHSScotland staff or referred to us by another organisation about the safety and quality of patient care within the NHS, regardless of whether the service is on the mainland or the Scottish islands.
Negative impact	
Neutral impact	

Overcoming negative impacts

Protected characteristic	Actions	Person responsible
All characteristics		
Age	N/A	
Care experience	N/A	
Disability	Ensure that our approach to providing information in different formats/alternative communication methods is in line with HIS policy.	RTC team
Gender reassignment	N/A	
Marriage/civil partnership	N/A	
Pregnancy and maternity	N/A	
Race	N/A	
Religion or belief	N/A	
Sex	N/A	
Sexual orientation	N/A	
Socio-economic	N/A	
Island communities	N/A	

Impact rating

Impact Rating Key

- Low  There is little or no evidence that some people are (or could be) differently affected by the work.
- Medium  There is some evidence that people are (or could be) differently affected by the work.
- High  There is substantial evidence that people are (or could be) differently affected by the work

Protected characteristic	Low	Medium	High
Age	X		
Care experience	X		
Disability	X		
Gender reassignment	X		
Marriage/civil partnership	X		
Pregnancy and maternity	X		
Race	X		
Religion or belief	X		
Sex	X		
Sexual orientation	X		
Socio-economic	X		
Island communities	X		

Stakeholder collaboration

Protected characteristic	Organisation / Team / Person	Contact details
	Complaints Reviewer Independent National Whistleblowing Officer	INWO@spso.gov.scot
	Stakeholder Intelligence Sharing Manager Nursing and Midwifery Council	intelligence.sharing@nmc-uk.org
	Public Services Delivery Scotland	psd.contact-us@nhs.scot
	Mental Welfare Commission for Scotland	mwc.enquiries@nhs.scot
	HIS Adult Support & Protection Lead	his.comments@nhs.scot

Monitor and review

Identified issue	Person responsible	Review date
Consider providing information in different formats / different communication methods for every case received.	Sue Lovatt/Leanne Hamilton	Ongoing for each case
Consider providing information in different formats / different communication methods for RTC information published on HIS website.	Sue Lovatt/Leanne Hamilton	Annually

Evidence and research

Evidence and research	Attached information
The previous signed-off RTC EQIA informed this updated EQIA.	 20230830 Responding to Con

Appendix A

UNCRC Checklist – not relevant

EQIA sign off

Please ensure the project lead is satisfied with the assessment and that you retain a copy for your records

If you need any advice on completing this form, or any aspect of the Equality Impact Assessment process, please contact the Equality, Inclusion and Human Rights Manager rosie.tyler-greig@nhs.scot

Project lead	Lindsay Macphee
Sign-off date	16 June 2026