

Equality. Fairer Scotland. Children's Rights. Impact Assessment Report

Midlothian Integration Joint Board's Strategic Plan 2025 Community Engagement ECRIA

Report written by:

Equality and Human Rights Lead, Midlothian Health and Social Care Partnership - August 2024

Participants consisted of equality and engagement professional, project managers and planning officers from Midlothian Health and Social Care Partnership. Third sector representatives were invited but could not attend due to scheduled annual leave.

Report authorised by:

Integration Manager – August 2024

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Description

Title of proposed work

Midlothian Integration Joint Board's Strategic Plan 2025 Community Engagement ECRIA (referred to hereafter as the Strategic Plan).

Purpose/objective of proposed work

The purpose of the Strategic Plan is to set out the aims, values and approach that Midlothian Integration Joint Board will take to directing health and social care services that have been delegated to their management over the period 2025 – 2040 (15 years).

Midlothian Integration Joint Board will be engaging with the community of Midlothian to discover their opinions on the first draft of the plan that has been written (based on earlier rounds of community and internal engagement) and receive their feedback. Community feedback will be integrated into the final draft of the Strategic Plan.

Midlothian Integration Joint Board is undertaking this engagement to check if the public agree that Midlothian Joint Board has identified the right aims, values and approaches to commissioning health and social care on their behalf.

There is also a statutory need, set out in the Joint Working Act 2014, to involve the community in decisions that impact their health and social care. There are specific requirements applicable to producing Strategic Plans, including the production and publishing of an Engagement and Communication Plan (Scottish Government: Strategic Commissioning Plan Guidance).

Who will be affected by this proposed work

Strategic Plan - All Midlothian adults: The majority of Midlothian Integration Joint Board's health and social care services are for adults (16 years +). Some areas provide a service for those aged under 16 (details are available on request).

For the purposes of the community engagement activities, the ECRIA will focus on:

- Readability/information accessibility for all abilities, languages and support needs (potential Protected Characteristics: Disability, Race Ethnicity (indirectly) and Fairer Scotland: socio-economic disadvantage)
- Physical accessibility and suitability of any venues booked (potential Protected Characteristic: Disability, Gender Reassignment, Religion or Belief, Sex, Age)
- Reaching out to/making welcome seldom heard voices/the most vulnerable community members and supporting their participation (potential Protected Characteristics: Race and Ethnicity, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Sexual Orientation, Sex, Religion or Belief, Age, Pregnancy and Maternity. Additionally, carers, those with experience in the justice system, the homeless, people living on low incomes, people experiencing substance use challenges).

Evidence

Evidence used:

For the purposes of this ECRIA on the community engagement plan for the Strategic Plan, those working closely with the community have been asked to offer their opinions and ideas on behalf of the groups with which they interact. People belonging to Protected Characteristic Groups, and those with lived experience will be directly engaged with during the planned community engagement activities proposed and impact assessed in this ECRIA.

People invited to participate in the ECRIA session were offered a number of documents to assist them to participate with the activity and to complement their own unique perspectives and professional experiences. These were:

- What is a Strategic Plan? – A brief explanation about the purpose and features of a Strategic Plan in the health and social care context. A brief description of the unique features of this Strategic Plan (e.g. longer term – 15 years – rather than required 5)
- Midlothian: Who We Are – A short, data supported description of the demographics of Midlothian and how the community has changed and is anticipated to change.
- Engagement and Communication Activity Plan – The activities that have been approved by the Midlothian Integration Joint Board for engaging with the community. **This plan can change if this ECRIA presents and major concerns.**
- ECRIA Guidance – This document informs participants about how this system of assessing equality and Fairer Scotland laws and duties and children’s rights laws works and offers support about how to complete each section.

Summary of findings:

*A granular breakdown will be offered in the tables of this report by protected characteristic of Fairer Scotland aspect.

The session identified a short list of suggested improvements based on preventing discrimination, supporting people with support needs to participate and maximising positive impacts through a focus on inclusion.

- Readability/information accessibility for all abilities, languages and support needs:
 - There were a number of constructive suggestions for improving readability and comprehension of the questions. The suggestions are summarised in the 'Making a Difference' table.
 - It was suggested that the questions related to the Strategic Plan aims were instead focused on the objectives and should be redirected towards the aims themselves. If the questions are not redirected, it is recommended that the aim is stated before the question so participants can see which aim the question they are answering links to.
 - It was considered beneficial if the wording of the questions could be adjusted to inform the public about what will be done with their responses/how the Strategic Plan will change as a result of them.
 - ECRIA session participants suggested the survey may be too long and there were benefits to reducing its length (e.g. less overwhelming when filling in a printed copy, quicker to complete).

- Reaching out to/making welcome seldom heard voices/the most vulnerable community members and supporting their participation – Discussion focussed on how groups less often heard could be encouraged to participate through existing links with them. It was agreed there were benefits to making connections with Planning Officers, third sector advocacy organisations, equality community representatives and other existing mechanisms such as panels and forums. Invitations to complete the survey and attend Townhall events could be offered, **but a method to collect feedback on the aims/values in whichever way the group feels comfortable offering it should be established.**

- Create a way to collect questions for discussion at Townhall sessions anonymously before the events to preserve anonymity of those that prefer privacy.

Making a difference

Survey

Changes	What difference this will make
<p>The survey will include some opening text that explains what a Strategic Plan is and what the aims hope to achieve. The text should clearly explain why we are asking the public to interact with us and for what purpose/what we will do with the results.</p>	<p>The opening text provides a brief, very high-level introduction to Strategic Plans and their purpose. It is hoped this will encourage engagement and empower the community to participate in an informed way. This honours the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act and Human Rights Approach to community engagement.</p>
<p>The wording of the survey questions should be revised with a focus on readability/accessibility, specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aims questions – ‘Is it clear that...?/Have we demonstrated that...?’ • Clarity of the intention of the question – What are we actually asking e.g. for an opinion, for confirmation, for agreement, for a intensity of feeling from positive to negative? 	<p>This will improve understanding and potentially participation of people that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read at below average population proficiency levels – This could include people with learning difficulties or learning disabilities (Equality Act 2010: Disability), those affected by socio-economic disadvantage through disruptions to education (Fairer Scotland Duties). <p>It is likely the change will encourage people to participate by improving the clarity of questions and helping people to engage with the concepts.</p> <p>The change in wording will increase the quality and relevance of the responses received, making it easier to translate the responses to practical changes to the final Strategic Plan.</p>

Changes	What difference this will make
<p>Simplification of answers with a scale as the response mechanism (currently a 5-point scale). Reduce to a three-point scale with only 'Yes/No/Don't Know' e.g. Aim 1. Do you agree with this aim? Yes/No/Don't Know.</p> <p>Consider the use of emoticons instead or thumbs up/down.</p>	<p>This will improve understanding and potentially participation of people that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read at below average population proficiency levels – This could include people with learning difficulties or learning disabilities (Equality Act 2010: Disability), those affected by socio-economic disadvantage through disruptions to education (Fairer Scotland Duties). • Require assistive technologies to read online content (e.g the vision impaired – Equality Act: Disability). • Younger people or people that use smart phones as their primary method of technology (Equality Act 2010: Age, Fairer Scotland Duties – lack of access to or familiarity with technology). • Are low on free time – Carers, parents etc.
<p>Reorder the survey questions so the key Strategic Plan questions/most important questions appear first (aims/values questions), followed by more general questions and demographic questions.</p>	<p>This is anticipated to reduce the numbers of people that start the survey but do not complete it.</p> <p>Voluntary questions, like the equality monitoring/demographic questions, should be at the end of the survey.</p> <p>Questions that produce a quantifiable response (multiple choice/scale questions) should be at the beginning.</p> <p>This is anticipated to assist people with very little free time (carers, parents etc) or people with attention deficit conditions/cognitive function decline to participate.</p>

Changes	What difference this will make
<p>Offer open text opportunities for the community to share their opinions on the Strategic Plan.</p>	<p>This respects them as co-designers/stakeholders rather than as a reviewing resource.</p>
<p>Include 'About You' section that collects equalities/Fairer Scotland information about participants (voluntary only as it is sensitive personal information). Midlothian Health and Social Care Partnership colleagues working most closely with the groups will be asked to provide a question that will best capture the information about each group e.g. Planning Officer for Carers/Vocal will be asked to suggest the wording for the question related to carers.</p> <p>This section will ideally include a question to state if you are a staff member of Midlothian Health and Social Care to capture any staff specific trends in responses.</p>	<p>It will help Midlothian Integration Joint Board and Health and Social Care Partnership to understand which sections of the community we are reaching. We can then make efforts to receive feedback from under-represented groups via existing links e.g. Third sector partners, community organisations.</p>
<p>Improve the breadth of stakeholders engaged with/invited to participate by making use of existing connection within Midlothian Health and Social Care Partnership and formalising the how we will receive feedback in different formats from these established connections/groups.</p>	<p>Supporting the most vulnerable in the community to participate in ways they are comfortable, or via supports they already interact with (Fairer Scotland Duties).</p> <p>This will diversify the channels from which Midlothian Health and Social Care Partnership can receive feedback and establish an agreed way to transfer information between the Partnership and a wide range of community and interest groups.</p>

Engagement Events/Supporting Engagement Events

Changes	What difference this will make
<p>Create a video version of the Strategic Plan to share/link to for those answering the survey and to publish alongside the final plan (2 minutes maximum).</p>	<p>This will assist people that don't read at an average level or have sensory loss or issues to receive the information in a more visual/audible way (Equality Act 2010: Disability). Use closed captions on the video to support hard of hearing/deaf viewers and those using translation tools (Equality Act 2010: Age/Disability/Ethnicity (indirectly, people using languages other than English, Fairer Scotland Duties: people using phones as their main/only form or technology). Ideally this video would have BSL translation incorporated.</p>
<p>Virtual (online) townhall events to use automatic closed captioning.</p>	<p>This action is to support participants that are hard of hearing/deaf (Equality Act 2010: Disability, Age) and those wanting to translate the event into languages other than English (Equality Act 2010: Ethnicity (indirectly through minority languages).</p>

Sharing with decision-makers

The results of this ECRIA will be presented:

- To the Integration Manager for Midlothian Integration Joint Board
- At the Midlothian Integration Joint Board meeting on 22 August 2024. Results of the decisions made will be recorded in the existing ECRIA governance process used by Midlothian Integration Joint Board.

The Strategic Plan project team managers and the Equality and Human Rights Lead will request direct feedback and formal confirmation of approval before enacting the Engagement and Communication Plan. This will be fed back to the participants of the ECRIA who be offered the opportunity to ask questions about the decisions of Midlothian Integration Joint Board.

The ECRIA will be published on the Midlothian Integration Joint Board's webpages. If people in the Midlothian Community want to query any decisions, they have the right to ask a question to Midlothian Integration Joint Board, to make a formal request to participate or can ask their local Councillor to make a request on their behalf.

Monitoring the impact

What information will you start or continue to collect and report on?	What impact are you measuring
The survey will include collection of demographic information (voluntary).	Whether any trends exist between answers to questions and protected characteristics, socio-economic indicators or children (under 16 years).
Registration for the events will record (voluntarily) demographic information about people that attend our events online and in person.	Which parts of the community we are reaching and which parts of the community are interested in health and social care planning. This will help us to target future communications towards groups that appear to be less well connected/communicated with. It will measure interest from those under 16 years of age.
Number of participants that request additional support to participate and the types of supports they request, grouped thematically e.g. financial support for transport, space for religious observance, ventilation, gender neutral toilets.	The types of supports that are most regularly requested in our community so we can arrange future events to best support these needs.
A map of the organisations and groups that contribute to the community engagement on the Strategic Plan and how they do it.	This will measure engagement with our stakeholders and record how they like to offer us information. We can benefit from keeping a record of this to assist future interactions/requests for participation.
<p>A thematic analysis of the open text questions/responses from other engagement activities (e.g. Townhall events) grouping them under:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protected Characteristics (Equality Act 2010) • Public Sector Equality Duties • Fairer Scotland Duties • UNCRC 	<p>The thematic analysis will help the project team to quantify and qualify requested changes by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Popularity/frequency requested or mentioned • Relationship to legally protected characteristics or requirements

Impact on equality & socio-economic disadvantage

Negative impacts

Using the evidence you have collected, explain if your proposal could be discriminatory and/ or put a group of people sharing one of these characteristics at a disadvantage for a reason connected to that characteristic.

Note – answer yes/ no and if yes provide brief reasons.

Relevant group	Could your work result in unlawful discrimination?	Could your work put people at a disadvantage/ make their lives worse?
People in different age groups	<p>Not directly. Indirectly if formats and wording are not well crafted, it could potentially lead to discrimination by:</p> <p>Discouraging or preventing those using phones/tablets as their primary or only form of technology to participate with the survey and engagement activities (the youngest and oldest age groups).</p> <p>People in the oldest age groups have the highest levels of sensory loss and cognitive function decline in the community, so methods that support people with visual, hearing or cognitive function decline's participation will be prioritised.</p> <p>Though it is not expected that many people under 16 years of age would like to participate as the service under the direction of Midlothian Integration Joint Board are adult services, younger</p>	<p>This could prevent them from exercising their rights to co-design services which effect their lives.</p>

Relevant group	Could your work result in unlawful discrimination?	Could your work put people at a disadvantage/ make their lives worse?
	<p>people have been considered in two capacities: Those with a genuine interest in health and social care that would like to attend. Young carers that are interested in the events on behalf of an adult they care for. A space will be available on the registration form for participants to request assistance or a suitable adult to accompany them to the events. Support will be provided on a case by case basis.</p>	
Disabled people	<p>No. We will be making the Strategic Plan, survey and events as accessible as possible, paying special attention to physical accessibility of venues and toilets, seating (well ventilated, good toilet access and wheelchair designated areas), BSL translation, closed caption use and visual formats. We recognise as a former mining community, people in the older age groups may be experiencing higher rates of respiratory illness or may be clinically vulnerable. The area of the venue that will be better ventilated (window or door open) will be advertised in the promotional materials so people can discreetly choose those areas. The registration should ask anyone feeling unwell to not attend, or to wear a mask to protect the most vulnerable in the community from infection.</p>	<p>Only if there was an unexpected issue on the day e.g. accessible toilets were out of order, assistive technologies failed, BSL translators cancelled.</p>

Relevant group	Could your work result in unlawful discrimination?	Could your work put people at a disadvantage/ make their lives worse?
Trans and non-binary people	No. We will be ensuring that there are gender neutral toilet facilities at any physical venues and that participants in the survey have the option to designate their gender themselves/outside the gender binary e.g. a gender self-selection of Woman/Man/I identify another way (optional open text box to express gender identity if wanted).	No.
People who are pregnant or on maternity leave	This protected characteristic does not apply in this context, but no. Pregnant people will be considered in relation to allocated seating at any physical events and proximity to toilet facilities.	No.
People from different ethnic backgrounds	No, not directly, but some people from different ethnic backgrounds may require translation into language that are not English (the default language we are using). We have considered the needs of people that will require written and video/webinar translation into languages other than English and will be using formats compatible with translation tools and automatic closed captioning/transcription that can be translated. Survey participants will be given the opportunity to voluntarily share their ethnicity orientation will us in the About You section of the survey. Participants will need to agree to a code of conduct during registration that highlights the no tolerance policy towards cruel or insulting	No.

Relevant group	Could your work result in unlawful discrimination?	Could your work put people at a disadvantage/ make their lives worse?
	language towards any members of the community, including people belonging to different ethnic backgrounds.	
People with religious or protected beliefs	<p>No. Physical venues will be booked with consideration for adjacent private space for religious observance. Participants will be asked during registration if they require a space for religious observance to check that facilities meet their needs.</p> <p>Out of respect for Muslim and Jewish faiths, events will avoid Friday afternoon and evenings. Weekends will be avoided out of respect for observers of Christian faiths (Sunday and traditional Saturday sabbath worship times).</p>	No.
Men and women [This may include carers, because many are women.]	<p>No. Physical events will be mindful of extra ventilation required for those experiencing temperature related symptoms of the menopause. The area of the venue that will be better ventilated (window or door open) will be advertised in the promotional materials so people can discreetly choose those areas.</p> <p>It is also acknowledged that some age groups may experience higher levels of bladder issues so promotional materials for physical events will highlight the layout of the venue and toilet</p>	No.

Relevant group	Could your work result in unlawful discrimination?	Could your work put people at a disadvantage/ make their lives worse?
	locations so participants can choose a location closest to facilities.	
People who are heterosexual, lesbian, gay or bisexual	<p>No. LGBT+ survey participants will be given the opportunity to voluntarily share their sexual orientation will us in the About You section of the survey.</p> <p>Participants will need to agree to a code of conduct during registration that highlights the no tolerance policy towards cruel or insulting language towards any members of the community, including people belonging to the LGBT+ community.</p>	No.
People who are married or in a civil partnership [only in employment situations]	Not applicable.	No.
Care experienced people	<p><i>NOTE - there is no legal protection from discrimination on basis of care experience.</i></p> <p>However, if any young person (under 16 years of age) in care is interested in attending an in-person event, we will work with social work to arrange an appropriate adult to accompany them they will be asked to express their</p>	No.

Relevant group	Could your work result in unlawful discrimination?	Could your work put people at a disadvantage/ make their lives worse?
	situation in the registration process so we can provide assistance.	
<p>People experiencing health inequalities caused by socio-economic disadvantage [This may include people living in different or difficult circumstances such as people experiencing homelessness, who are in prison or are ex-offenders, people with addictions and people involved with prostitution. Note – travel costs have a particular impact on people experiencing poverty.]</p>	<p><i>NOTE - there is no legal protection from discrimination on basis of socio-economic disadvantage.</i></p> <p>There will be a section of physical venues that is better ventilated to lower risks of person to person airborne infections for those with compromised immunes or other complex health needs. This seating area will be advertised in promotional materials so that people can choose this seating area discreetly.</p>	No.
<p>People experiencing employment inequalities caused by socio-economic disadvantage [This may include people living in different or difficult circumstances, such as people experiencing homelessness, who are in prison or</p>	<p><i>NOTE - there is no legal protection from discrimination in employment on basis of socio-economic disadvantage.</i></p> <p>If people from the community would like to attend an in-person event and travel costs a causing a barrier to attendance, we can discuss support with the person on a case by</p>	No.

Relevant group	Could your work result in unlawful discrimination?	Could your work put people at a disadvantage/ make their lives worse?
<p>ex-offenders, people with addictions, ex-service personnel/veterans and people involved with prostitution. Note – travel costs have a particular impact on people experiencing poverty.]</p>	<p>case basis. There will be a space to note this on the registration form.</p>	
<p>Carers</p>	<p><i>NOTE - there is no legal protection from discrimination on basis of caring responsibilities. Women continue to have the majority of caring responsibilities and can be put at a particular disadvantage in connection with this. This may be unlawful indirect sex discrimination.</i></p> <p>Carers will be considered in relation to space in physical venues for people with different support needs. There will be a space in the registration form to request any assistance needed. If carers require respite care in order to participate with the events, it is asked that they note this requirement during registration. Whilst not guaranteed, we will look for a solution that enables the carer to participate.</p>	<p>No</p>

Relevant group	Could your work result in unlawful discrimination?	Could your work put people at a disadvantage/ make their lives worse?
	<p>If any young carers (under 16 years caring for older family members) would like to participate, they will be able to request any assistance they might need to attend the event and we will work with them on a case by case basis to meet their needs.</p>	

Positive impact

Using the evidence you have collected, explain if and how your proposal could have a positive impact on reducing inequalities experienced by groups of people sharing these characteristics.

Note – answer yes/ no and if yes provide brief reasons.

Relevant group	Can your work advance equality of opportunity? [reduce disadvantage, meet needs, increase participation]	Can your work foster good relations? [reduce prejudice + increase tolerance]
People in different age groups	Yes. The engagement activities if well targeted, promoted and planned can give a voice to people of all ages that would like to participate in the co-design of their health and social care planning.	Yes, by recognising and supporting the valuable contributions of people in all age groups, especially the oldest and youngest.
Disabled people	Yes. By planning events considerately we hope to improve participation of people with disabilities and meet their support needs.	Yes, by acknowledging the different needs of people with disabilities and long term conditions and trying to meet them. Visibility of people with disabilities and supports of people with disability during registration and at public events encourages reduces prejudice and 'othering' of disabled people by those that do not share that ability and highlights that people with and without disabilities are deliberately planned for in health and social care in Midlothian.
Trans and non-binary people	Yes. By ensuring that all participants are aware of the respect they must show all communities at out events and by ensuring suitable toilet facilities exist at venues that we book. This demonstrates sensitivity to the needs of the trans and non-binary community and could inspire other events to take a similar approach.	Yes, by making arrangements that meet the needs to trans and non-binary people, this may encourage their attendance, reducing 'othering' and removing barriers in the community between trans and non-binary people and those identifying within the gender binary.

Relevant group	Can your work advance equality of opportunity? [reduce disadvantage, meet needs, increase participation]	Can your work foster good relations? [reduce prejudice + increase tolerance]
People who are pregnant or on maternity leave	No. We will however make arrangements for those that are pregnant to access seating close to toilet facilities if they chose.	No.
People from different ethnic backgrounds	Indirectly by supporting requirements for translation, removing barriers to participation.	Yes, but removing barriers to participation through considerate planning supporting translation we potential improve the visibility of people of different ethnic background in civil society/health and social care reducing prejudice and 'othering'.
People with religious or protected beliefs	Yes, by avoiding planning events at the most common times of religious observance and by accommodating requests for support to undertake religious observance we hope to increase participation of those that are religiously observant.	Yes, by increasing awareness that some people are religiously observant and that observance sometimes comes with practical requirements for space, washing facilities, avoidance of particular times of the week.
Men or women [This may include carers, because many are women]	Yes. By planning ahead thoughtfully for those with temperature related symptoms of the menopause and those with bladder problems we can meet the needs of those that require this support, chiefly older men and women (there are exceptions to this group that experience issues, but rates are highest in the older population).	Yes, by supporting people of all genders to participate and by increasing the visibility of supports for those with common health concerns associated with biological sex.
People who are heterosexual, lesbian, gay or bisexual	Yes, we hope to increase LGBT+ participation by indicating strongly at registration that a code of conduct will be followed in relation to showing respect for everyone, including LGBT+ people.	Yes, by clearly communicating a code of conduct respecting people of all sexual orientations we are fostering better relations within the whole community.

Relevant group	Can your work advance equality of opportunity? [reduce disadvantage, meet needs, increase participation]	Can your work foster good relations? [reduce prejudice + increase tolerance]
Care experienced people	Yes, by removing barriers to attendance for children in care by arranging a suitable adult to accompany them (case by case basis).	Yes, by doing our best to support children currently in care to participate, we hope to increase aware around the barriers they face to participating in context requiring adult accompaniment of children and reduce prejudice towards care experienced people.
People who experience health inequalities caused by socio-economic disadvantage [This may include people in different or difficult circumstances, such as people experiencing homelessness, who are in prison or ex-offenders, people with addictions and people involved with prostitution. Note – travel costs have a particular impact on people experiencing poverty.]	Yes, by carefully planning out activities and offering additional support where we can for all community members (case by case basis) we hope we can meet the needs of people experiencing health inequalities related to socio-economic disadvantage.	No.
People who experience employment inequalities caused by socio-economic disadvantage. [This may include people in	No.	No.

Relevant group	Can your work advance equality of opportunity? [reduce disadvantage, meet needs, increase participation]	Can your work foster good relations? [reduce prejudice + increase tolerance]
different or difficult circumstances, such as people experiencing homelessness, who are in prison or ex-offenders, people with addictions, ex-service personnel/veterans and people involved with prostitution. Note – travel costs have a particular impact on people experiencing poverty.]		
Carers	Yes, by supporting carers ability to attend the events and meeting their needs on site at our event venues.	Yes, by acknowledging the barriers carers face in participating in civic life, we hope to foster better relations across the whole community.

Impact on UNCRC rights

If your proposal does not affect children and young people do not complete this section.

This section will not be filled in as it is not anticipated that many children (under 16 years) will be interested in participating in the engagement activities as the services that Midlothian Integrated Joint Board plan for are adult services. Children are however invited to attend the session with a parent/carer/guardian attending with them. Children are mentioned in the prior table under the category of 'Care Experienced'. Efforts will be made to arrange a suitable adult to accompany any children in care that would like to attend the in person events.