

Workforce Disability Equality Standard

April 2024 – March 2025



The NHS Workforce Disability Equality Standard (WDES) is an initiative designed to improve the workplace experience and career opportunities for NHS staff with disabilities (including staff with long-term health conditions (LTC)).

It requires NHS organizations to measure and understand the experiences of these staff through a set of specific metrics. These metrics include aspects such as representation in the workforce, career development opportunities, and levels of bullying or harassment.

By analysing this data and implementing targeted actions, the WDES aims to create a more inclusive and supportive environment for disabled staff, ensuring they have equal opportunities to thrive within the NHS. The 2024-2025 WDES Report is based on a snapshot of our workforce data as at 31 March 2025. Benchmark data, used for comparison, is based on staff survey results from NHS organisations of a similar size and nationally compiled data.

We deliver a range of initiatives across the year to support disabled staff including access to advice and guidance, health and wellbeing and occupational health services and access to training and development, including the launch of Trust-wide mentoring and Scope for Growth Career Conversations; and the Differently Abled Staff Network Chair represents the voice of disabled staff at key stakeholder meetings and committees.

The network continues to engage with our Estates Department to provide insights into improving accessibility to the Trust site and this programme of work is being

carefully monitored at the strategic committee that oversees EDI.

During 24/25 the Trust developed an action plan in response to the national NHS EDI Improvement Plan six high impact actions. We have highlighted relevant actions that respond to WDES in the table at the end of this section of the report and actions for the next financial year (April 2025 to March 2026).

Disabled Staff Representation

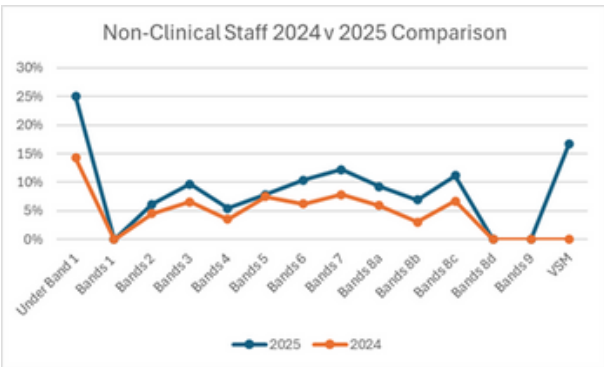
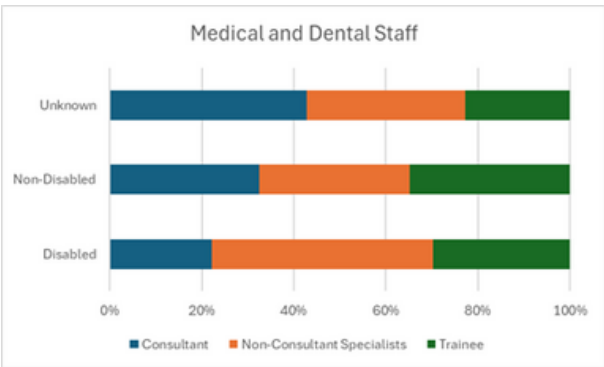
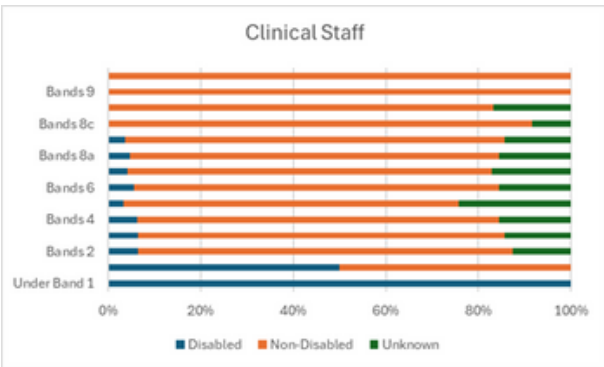
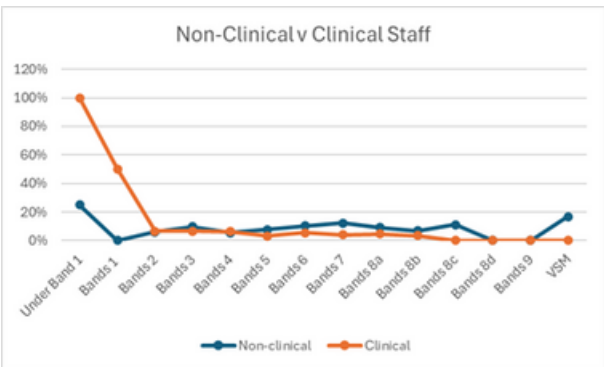
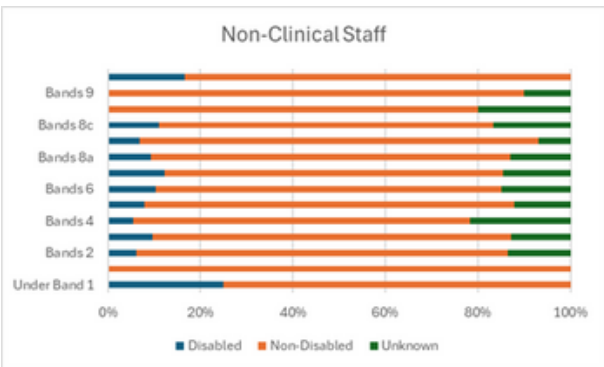
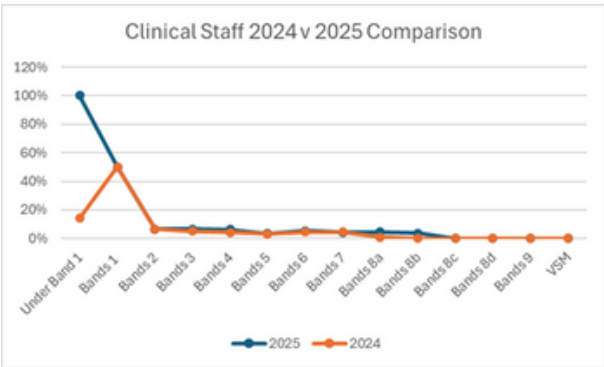
Overall disabled staff representation has increased from 247 (4.14%) in 2023/24 to 327 (5.33%) this year, with a modest increase in disabled staff across most bands. The largest growth being in entry and lower-mid roles (Band 2 to Band 4). Agenda for Change (AfC) Non-Clinical Disabled Staff – representation across Bands 2 to 4 is relatively the same (6.3%-6.5%), targeted development opportunities for this group of staff could support progression.

Reducing the 'unknown' status would help to improve data quality – this reaches 14% in some bandings. There are two disabled staff who are 8c and one Very Senior Manager (VSM).

AfC Clinical Disabled Staff – representation is poorer in this group of staff, with no representation above Band 8b. The Trust will continue to offer career development opportunities for all staff and improve its recruitment practices to ensure it is fair and equitable, for example, we introduced Inclusion Recruitment Champions (IRCs) in November 2023, the IRCs sit on interview panels for 8b and above roles. We also advertise roles across varied channels which has helped to attract a more diverse candidate pool.

Medical and Dental Roles – there is low representation across all medical and dental consultant, specialists and trainee roles (between 2% to 3%), non-disclosure is high amongst consultant and specialist staff (14% and 11% respectively).

This data will be reviewed with the Trust Board and representatives of the disabled staff network, the Differently Abled Network, during the summer of 2025 to identify any targeted actions.



AfC Non-clinical staff	Disabled		Non-disabled		Unknown		Total
AfC Bands <1 to 4	70	8%	702	78%	130	14%	902
AfC Bands 5 to 7	28	10%	217	76%	39	14%	284
AfC Bands 8a to 8b	7	8%	67	81%	9	11%	83
AfC Bands 8c to VSM	3	8%	31	79%	5	13%	39
Total non-clinical	108	8%	1017	78%	180	14%	1308

AfC Non-clinical staff	Disabled		Non-disabled		Unknown		Total
AfC Bands <1 to 4	86	7%	1035	79%	184	14%	1305
AfC Bands 5 to 7	109	4%	1942	76%	503	20%	2554
AfC Bands 8a to 8b	7	4%	126	80%	24	15%	157
AfC Bands 8c to VSM	0	0%	21	91%	2	9%	23
Total non-clinical	202	5%	3124	77%	713	18%	4039

Non-declaration rates

15.9% of staff have not stated whether they have a disability or not. This has improved since last year, when the rate was 19.1%. We have seen a year-on-year improvement since the Trust commenced measuring this data which was 30% in 2019. When rates of non-declaration are higher than the declaration rate this affects the quality of the data, and adds significant uncertainty to the estimate of disabled staff representation. The actual level of representation could fall anywhere between 5.3% and 21.2%.

WDES Improvements

There has been a small improvement in representation. The percentage of disabled staff and staff with LTC or illness who have experienced harassment, bullying and abuse from patients has reduced by 0.81%, this is 4.51% higher than the benchmark average, and is a continuing downward trend for the third year in a row. The percentage for staff without a disability or LTC or illness remains relatively the same since last year (0.8% higher than the benchmark average).

The WDES Metrics below, indicate where we have made improvements and where the metrics have worsened. Numbers in green indicate an improvement, numbers in red indicate the metric has worsened and numbers in yellow indicate there is relatively little or no change.

The three high priority areas for improvement include bullying and harassment from staff and patients and equal opportunities/progression (metric 4 and 5) are noted in the table at the end of these reports (see section 'high priority areas for improvement'), including actions that we will take in response to this data.

WDES Metrics

Ten metrics in table below, highlighting changes since last year. National data* and the Trust's benchmark data are highlighted in blue.

No	WDES Metric	Benchmark	2023-2024	2024-2025	Difference	Direction
1	Percentage of staff in each of the AfC Bands 1-9 and VSM	5.7%*	4.10%	5.30%	1.20%	Improved
2	Relative likelihood of staff being appointed from shortlisting across all posts A figure below 1:00 indicates that Disabled staff are more likely than Non-disabled staff to be appointed from shortlisting. However, 7.5% of applicants had an unknown status - the number could be closer to parity (i.e. 1:00).	0.98*	1.46	0.8	-0.66	Similar

3	Relative likelihood of staff entering the formal disciplinary process, as measured by entry into a formal capability investigation (average rolling two-year period) A figure above 1:00 indicates Disabled staff are more likely than Non-Disabled staff to enter the formal capability process. Number of non-disabled staff reported increased from 6 to 11 this year.	2.04*	6.17 (2 disabled staff)	2.01 (1.5 disabled staff)	-4.16	Improved
4	Percentage of Disabled staff compared to non-disabled staff experiencing harassment, bullying or abuse in the last 12 months from:					
	Patients, their relatives or the public	29.40%	34.70%	33.90%	-0.8	Improved
	Managers	15.10%	12.80%	14.20%	1.4	Worsened
	Colleagues	25.20%	23.20%	26.80%	3.6	Worsened
	a) Percentage of staff who reported bullying and harassment	51.80%	45.70%	51.60%	5.9	Improved
5	Percentage of Disabled staff compared to non-disabled staff believing that the Trust provides equal opportunities for career progression or promotion	51.30%	52.90%	51.60%	-1.30%	Worsened

6	Percentage of Disabled staff compared to non-disabled staff saying that they have felt pressure from their manager to come to work, despite not feeling well enough to perform their duties	26.80%	27.20%	28.20%	1	Worsened
7	Percentage of Disabled staff compared to non-disabled staff saying that they are satisfied with the extent to which their organisation values their work	34.70%	34.00%	34.40%	0.4	Similar
8	Percentage of Disabled staff saying that their employer has made adequate adjustment(s) to enable them to carry out their work	74.00%	73.20%	74.20%	1	Improved
9a	a) The staff engagement score for Disabled staff, compared to non-disabled staff and the overall engagement score for the organisation	6.4	6.4	6.3	-0.1	Similar
	b) Initiatives that support the voice of disabled staff: Executives Sponsor attends disabled staff network meetings; Board engages with staff network leads; EDI Lead supports network chairs; EDI champions programme launched in January 2024; staff network chair represents staff at EDI strategic committee meetings; all staff can engage with Group CEO at monthly open forums; line managers receive training to support health and wellbeing conversations; EDI-related training provided to enable staff to speak-up (e.g. Bystander and Addressing Unprofessional Behaviours workshops).					
10	Percentage difference between the organisation's Board voting membership and its organisation's overall workforce	5%*	N/A (no Board members)	0.55%	N/A	N/A

Board representation

This data excludes Associate Non-Executive Directors. The Trust currently has two associates, one from a BME background and no disabled associates.

2024 Board Membership							Rate of disability/ LTC* from staff survey
	Voting	Non-Voting	Executive	Non-Executive	Total	Overall Workforce	
Disabled	1	0	0	1	1	5%	22%
Non-Disabled	11	0	7	4	11	79%	78%
Unknown	4	1	2	3	5	16%	

High priority areas for improvements for WDES and WRES

Metric	Description	2024-2025 Actions (reporting year)	2025-2026 Planned Actions
WDES3	Formal disciplinary process (capability)	· Evaluate data by demographic group to identify any disparities and audit via a monthly case work meeting · One-day Expectations of Line Managers workshop, covering all aspects of line management responsibilities · Training to support implementing the Just & Learning 4 step model	· Pilot Cultural Ambassadors to improve the experience of staff involved in formal and informal processes and reduce the imbalance in severity of disciplinary actions against minoritised staff. Current three staff trained in role
WDES4 WRES5	Harassment, bullying and abuse from patients, relatives and visitors	· Launch of Maybo training (reduce risk of behaviours of concern and workplace violence) for priority areas · Introduction of EDI Champions – currently 62 across the Trust · Launch of 'Addressing Unprofessional Behaviours' and 'Bystanders' training · Launch of 'Cultural Competence' training that includes ableism · Staff access Freedom to Speak Up Guardian Service · Staff receive support from disabled staff network and its chair	· Safe to speak engagement: bullying and harassment from patients and visitors · Launch of Never OK campaign in June 2025, including Go & See to wards with police staff · Increase number of EDI Champions · Slice of Life: Board engagement - values-led behaviours: engagement with staff to explore their lived experience · Regular comms to promote available support - EDI Lead to launch drop-in clinic (sessions) for staff to seek advice and guidance
WDES5 WRES7	Equal opportunities for career progression and promotion	· Train Inclusion Recruitment Champions to sit on interview panels 8B+ roles · Leadership and CPD development accessible to all staff. 7% of staff who accessed CPD training stated they had a disability, 30% were BME · Apprenticeships accessible to all staff, 27% are BME, staff preferred not to share sexual orientation or disability status	· Focus on development of existing staff, due to reduction in recruitment across the NHS: · Increase number of Inclusion Recruitment Champions · Improve demographic data capture for Leadership programmes · Promote mentoring through all Staff Networks and extensively across the Trust

WDES4 WRES5 WRES8	Discrimination from other colleagues (which will have a positive impact on metric 6, harassment and bullying)	· Introduction of EDI Champions – 62 across the Trust · Launch of 'Addressing Unprofessional Behaviours' and 'Bystanders' training · Launch of 'Cultural Competence' training that includes racism · Staff access Freedom to Speak Up Guardians (x number) · Staff receive support from Race Equality staff chair and EDI Lead	· Slice of Life: Board engagement - values-led behaviours: engagement with staff to explore their lived experience · Continue with provision of training to address unprofessional behaviours · Continue to recruit, train and deploy EDI Champions who can support colleagues locally
WDES6	Felt pressure from their manager to come to work, despite not feeling well enough to perform their duties	· Line manager training to support health and wellbeing conversations · One-day Expectations of Line Managers workshop, covering all aspects of line management including EDI, health and wellbeing and supporting attendance	· Continue with training offer including Expectation of Line Manager workshops (aiming 90% of Band 6 to 8C who are identified as a supervisor on the Electronic Record System)