



Workforce Disability Equality Standard (WDES) Data Report

**Covering the period of
1st April 2023 – 31st March 2024**

Introduction

This report sets out the 2023/24 annual workforce data in relation to disability which the trust is required by NHS England to publish. Working to address inequalities identified by workforce data demonstrates our compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty. Monitoring workforce equalities data is also central to ensuring that we are delivering on our equality, diversity and inclusion priorities:

1. We will ensure our current employees and future talent have fair opportunities and access to jobs and career progression resulting in improved representation of diverse groups at all levels of the organisation, including Board.
2. We will educate and develop our leaders and staff to improve understanding of racism, discrimination and cultural competence to deliver a step change in the experience of our staff and patients.

Workforce Disability Equality Standard (WDES)

The WDES is a set of ten specific measures (metrics) which enables NHS organisations to compare the workplace and career experiences of disabled and non-disabled staff. We use the metrics data to develop and publish an action plan, building on high impact actions as set out in the EDI improvement plan. Year on year comparison enables us to demonstrate progress against the indicators of disability equality to create the cultures of belonging and trust that will improve retention, recruit from the widest possible talent pool and provide sustainable careers.

This data in this report relates to the period of 1st April 2023 – 31st March 2024. In line with the nationally mandated timeframe, the data was submitted to NHS England in May 2024. This is the sixth year of reporting for WDES, and as with previous years, the data includes results from the NHS Staff Survey.

Metric 1: Percentage of staff in Agenda for Change (AfC) pay-bands or medical and dental subgroups and very senior managers (including Executive Board members) compared with the percentage of staff in the overall workforce.

The following two tables provide a breakdown of representation of disabled staff within the NWS non-clinical and clinical workforces.

	Non-clinical Staff					
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Cluster 1: Bands 1 - 4	5%	4.7%	6.7%	10.7%	10.4%	13.3%
Cluster 2: Bands 5-7	2%	3.5%	5.8%	6.2%	8%	10.5%
Cluster 3: Bands 8a-8b	3%	0%	0.0%	4.7%	3.6%	4.8%
Cluster 4: Bands 8c-9 and VSM	3%	2.6%	5.1%	5.0%	14%	10.2%

	Clinical Staff					
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Cluster 1: Bands 1-4	3%	3.65%	4.5%	4.5%	6.1%	7.4%
Cluster 2: Bands 5-7	4%	4.05%	4.5%	5.0%	6.4%	7.5%
Cluster 3: Bands 8a-8b	2%	3.70%	5.2%	6.9%	14.3%	16.7%
Cluster 4: Bands 8c-9 and VSM	8%	7.69%	13.3%	11.1%	0%	0%

The data shows that there has been an increase in the proportion of disabled staff in Bands 1 – 8b across both clinical and non-clinical staff groups. However, there has been a notable decrease of 3.8% in the most senior non-clinical staff cohort (8c-9 and VSM). The likely reason for this is that as this is a relatively smaller cohort of staff, any change in headcount (increase or decrease) makes a significant impact.

On the whole, we have continued to see an increase in the numbers of staff declaring that they have a disability or long-term condition. At the end of March 2024, 7.8% of all staff had declared they had a disability – an increase from 6.5% in 2023 and 5.0% in 2022.

The sustained increase in declaration rates may be the result of a number of important factors, including the promotion of internal communications campaigns aimed at encouraging staff to update their disability status on the Electronic Staff Record (My ESR). Additionally, Workforce Wellbeing Officers and the Disability Network have also been undertaking initiatives to engage staff around disability declaration and promoting the newly created reasonable adjustments policy. We have also introduced a policy to support neurodiverse employees which is having a positive impact.

Additionally, we joined the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower scheme during National Hidden Disabilities Week in 2023. The Sunflower Scheme aims to raise awareness of and assist individuals with hidden disabilities which are not immediately apparent to others. In addition to promoting the Sunflower lanyard and wristbands, we also rolled out an e-learning package for staff to increase their understanding of hidden disabilities and the scheme.

There are still 475 members of staff who have a 'null' or 'disability unknown' entry in their ESR profile, but this is another significant decrease from 541 in 2023 (642 in 2022, 805 in 2021). Building on the types of actions referenced above, we will continue to encourage all colleagues to keep their disability status up to date. Of those who are yet to declare, we aim to particularly focus on the following staff cohorts:

Clinical

Band 3	5.4% - 88 people	(2023, 6.4%, 111 people)	Medium Impact Percentage / High
Band 6	10.4% - 198 people	(2023, 11.7%, 230 people)	High Impact Percentage / High
Band 7	6.7% - 36 people	(2023, 8.5%, 50 people)	Medium Impact Percentage / High

Non-Clinical

Band 8d	15.4%	(2023, 13.3%)	High Impact Percentage
VSM	31.3%	(2023, 18.2%)	High Impact Percentage

Metric 2: Relative likelihood of non-disabled staff compared to disabled staff being appointed from shortlisting across all posts.

The target outcome is a figure of 1.0 – meaning that disabled candidates are no less likely to be appointed from shortlisting than candidates who have not declared a disability. A figure of 1.0 reflects well on the fairness of current recruitment processes.

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Likelihood	1.0	1.1	1.39	1.56	1.26	1.29

The data in this metric has not significantly shifted since 2023, with non-disabled applicants still being 1.3 times more like to be appointed. However, this is lower than the peak in 2022 when non-disabled candidates were more than one-and-a-half times more likely to be appointed.

Between April 2023 and March 2024, **703 disabled applicants** were shortlisted for trust roles (561 in 2023/23, 250 in 2021/22). **108 disabled staff were appointed** in this period (92 staff in 2022/23, and 42 in 2021/22).

While we still have a way to go to improve the metric score, the increased numbers of disabled applicants applying for and being appointed to trust roles is encouraging. These improved figures may be reflective of inclusive language and imagery being used in recruitment adverts, promotion of the trust being a Disability Confident Leader, highlighting work of the Disability Network externally, and development of compassionate and inclusive management through training such as Beyond Bias.

In response to the data emerging from this metric and a similar metric in the Workforce Race Equality Standard (WRES), in summer 2023 we completed an audit of our end-to-end recruitment and selection processes through an external and independent consultancy. The audit undertook a deep dive in to the data and explored a range of issues impacting applicants who are disabled, and those from black and minority ethnic backgrounds. It identified potential solutions and provided recommendations to effectively address the challenges and improve access to employment opportunities in the trust. Many of the recommendations emerging from the audit are now being taken forward by a recently established Inclusive Recruitment Group.

Metric 3: Relative likelihood of disabled staff compared to non-disabled staff entering the formal capability process on the grounds of performance, as measured by entry into the formal capability procedure

As with recruitment, a figure of 1.0 or below is desired, as this would indicate disabled staff are no more or less likely to enter into the formal capability process than non-disabled staff. This metric is based on data from a two-year rolling average of the current year and the previous year and looks at capability on the grounds of performance only, rather than ill health.

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Likelihood	5.52	2.71	0.00	1.47	1.63

This metric was voluntary and not reported by NWS in 2019.

The figure in 2024 has further deteriorated from the previous year's score, meaning that that disabled staff are over one-and-a-half times more likely to enter the performance process compared to non-disabled staff. The number of overall staff in the formal performance process is low, and the actual number of disabled staff in the performance process in 2023/24 was lower still, in single figures. However, it is important to understand and ascertain why the disproportionality exists, and work will continue to be undertaken through the HR Business Partnering Team to explore this further.

The data in the following Metrics (4 - 9) is based on responses in the NHS Staff Survey.

In 2023, we achieved our highest ever response rate in the NHS Staff Survey. More than 3400 NWAS staff participated in the survey, equating to nearly 50% of the workforce. Around 30% of all respondents indicated that they had a disability or long-term condition. This is a substantially higher figure when compared to disability declaration rates on the ESR. However, NWAS is not unique in this position, as NHS organisations across the country report higher rates of disability declaration in the staff survey in comparison to ESR. While it is difficult to know exactly why this is the case, there could be a number of reasons including, the way in which the question about disability is asked in the Staff Survey compared to ESR, concerns that a declaration on ESR may lead to negative presumptions from managers/colleagues, and concerns about confidentiality.

Metric 4: Percentage of Disabled staff compared to non-disabled staff experiencing harassment, bullying or abuse from:

- **4.1: Patients/Service users, their relatives or other members of the public**

The proportion of disabled staff experiencing these negative behaviours has reduced from the previous year and is significantly lower than the 2019 peak. However, it remains the case that a considerably higher percentage of disabled staff indicated experiencing these behaviours in comparison to non-disabled staff, with the difference between the groups rising to nearly 20%.

	NHS Staff Survey Year					
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
non-disabled	45.8%	45.0%	42.1%	37.8%	34.1%	26.8%
disabled	52.0%	56.2%	47.0%	45.9%	47.2%	45.1%
difference	6.2%	11.2%	4.9%	8.1%	13.1%	18.3%

- **4.2: Managers**

Responses to this question have remained largely stable for disabled staff from 2021 to 2023. There difference in experience between disabled and non-disabled staff has been consistently narrowing over the last five years.

	NHS Staff Survey Year					
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
non-disabled	13.2%	11.8%	14.5%	11.3%	10.1%	10.1%
disabled	25.8%	23.2%	22.1%	18.6%	16.8%	16.1%
difference	12.6%	11.4%	7.6%	7.3%	6.7%	6%

4.3: Other colleagues

The results for this question continue to show that around 1 in 5 disabled staff experience abuse from colleagues, which is significantly higher than non-disabled staff. The difference between disabled and non-disabled staff has however reduced to its lowest level of 5.6%, and shows a downward trend overall since 2021.

	NHS Staff Survey Year					
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
non-disabled	15.6%	14.5%	15.5%	14.1%	14.0%	13.4%
disabled	26.5%	26.7%	23.0%	23.6%	21.8%	19%
difference	10.9%	12.2%	7.5%	9.5%	7.8%	5.6%

- **4.4: Percentage of Disabled staff compared to non-disabled staff saying that the last time they experienced harassment, bullying or abuse at work, they or a colleague reported it.**

There has been a notable increase in the proportion of disabled staff reporting negative experiences. On the whole, results since 2018 consistently show that a greater percentage of disabled staff report negative experiences compared to non-disabled staff. However, more than half of all staff (disabled and non-disabled) still indicated they have not reported the experiences they had.

	NHS Staff Survey Year					
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
non-disabled	38.2%	43.7%	43.4%	43.8%	45.1%	46%
disabled	39.9%	49.1%	49.3%	46.3%	44.7%	48.7%
difference	1.7%	5.4%	5.9%	2.5%	-0.4%	2.7%

Metric 5: Percentage of Disabled staff compared to non-disabled staff believing that the Trust provides equal opportunities for career progression or promotion.

The response from disabled staff has improved on this question compared to the previous year, and with the highest % since 2018, it has helped narrow the gap between disabled and non-disabled staff. However, the data show that more than half of disabled staff believe the organisation does not act fairly in terms of career progression.

	NHS Staff Survey Year					
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
non-disabled	53.9%	53.7%	52.0%	49.7%	51.9%	52.2%
disabled	43.3%	45.5%	44.9%	39.4%	45.1%	48.7%
difference	-10.6%	-8.2%	-7.1%	-10.3%	-6.8%	-3.5%

We are continuing efforts to improve retention of talent, as well as support career progression and development opportunities for staff. This work is taking in to account the experiences of staff with protected characteristics, and the barriers they may face in their professional development and career progression.

Metric 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.

Just over a third of disabled staff reported that they felt pressure to come to work when not feeling well enough, compared to 1 in 4 non-disabled staff. For both staff groups, these figures are the most improved since 2018 and do indicate a gradual improvement.

	NHS Staff Survey Year					
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
non-disabled	32.6%	30.8%	29.5%	28.6%	27.2%	24.8%
disabled	45.3%	44.0%	38.9%	40.6%	38.3%	35%
difference	12.7%	13.2%	9.4%	12.0%	11.1%	10.2%

Metric 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.

Around 1 in 3 disabled staff reported feeling satisfied with how the organisation values their work, and this is the highest positive response since reporting on this metric started in 2018. Additionally, the gap in experience between the disabled and non-disabled staff has significantly narrowed in comparison to the previous year.

However, it is important to note that 70% of disabled staff and around two-thirds of non-disabled staff did not respond positively to this question.

	NHS Staff Survey Year					
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
non-disabled	36.7%	39.5%	35.2%	32.9%	33.6%	35.7%
disabled	25.3%	29.1%	29.1%	27.5%	23.9%	31.1%
difference	11.4%	9.6%	6.1%	5.4%	9.7%	4.6%

Metric 8: Percentage of Disabled staff saying that their employer has made reasonable adjustment(s) to enable them to carry out their work.

Positive responses to this question have continued to increase since 2021, with nearly two-thirds of disabled staff in 2023 saying that reasonable adjustments had been made for them.

	NHS Staff Survey Year					
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
disabled	60.3%	58.6%	71.0%	57.8%	63.0%	65.2%

In December 2023, we launched the Procedure for Requesting and Managing Reasonable Adjustments setting out guidance for staff and managers, with a new reasonable adjustments

application form. We also recently completed a refresh of the Wellbeing Passport and introduced a Carers Passport too. These resources are now being promoted to staff across the trust.

The Trust continues to provide equipment and support to staff to ensure they have all they need to work from home where operationally suitable, while at the same time ensuring safe work environments on trust sites.

Metric 9: Staff engagement score for calculated from nine specific questions in the NHS Staff Survey

The 2023 staff engagement score shows that the gap between disabled and non-disabled staff has narrowed from 0.6 to 0.4, with the scores showing improvements for both staff groups.

	NHS Staff Survey Year					
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
non-disabled	6.5	6.5	6.4	6.2	6.2	6.3
disabled	5.7	5.8	6.0	5.6	5.6	5.9
difference	0.8	0.7	0.4	0.6	0.6	0.4

This metric also asks whether the organisation has taken action to facilitate the voices of staff with disabilities to be heard, to which NWAS has said ‘Yes’ and added the following note:

“The Disability Network is open to all staff with disabilities and long-term health conditions, staff who care for someone with a disability and colleagues who want to learn more about disability. The network promotes equality across the trust and aims to open up conversations about the barriers facing people with disabilities, to give staff a voice to improve understanding of disabilities, raise awareness more generally and provides the opportunity to influence organisational change.”

Metric 10: Representation of disabled people among Board members

Percentage difference between the organisation’s board voting membership and overall workforce, disaggregated by:

- voting and non-voting membership of the board
- executive and non-exec membership of the board.

The data shows that the proportion of total board members declaring a disability has remained at around 14%, but disability declarations in the workforce overall have increased to 7.8%.

Disability declarations

NWAS overall	7.8%	Board overall	14.2%
Voting Board Members	10%	Non-Voting Board Members	25%
Executive Board Members	25%	Non-Executive Board Members	0

The table below shows the percentage difference when comparing the total Board number to the overall workforce.

	2024
Disabled	7%
Non disabled	-29%
Disability unknown	22%

Trust-wide actions

The WDES data along with the Workforce Race Equality Standard (WRES), and Gender Pay Gap data (set out in separate reports) reflects the ongoing work to support all our staff groups and address inequalities in the workplace. While there have been some improvements across a number of key areas, we recognise that there remains a significant difference in the experiences of disabled and non-disabled staff. We will continue to explore the reasons for this and put in place actions to help improve the employee experience of our colleagues with disabilities.

In 2024/25, to support improvements for Metric 2 (recruitment), we are aiming to complete the refresh of the recruitment and selection policy with the input of a wide range of stakeholders, including the Disability Network. This refresh will take into account learning from the Inclusive Recruitment Audit referenced in the report earlier.

In order to develop a clearer understanding of the data in Metric 3, we will be undertaking a deep dive into the performance process to explore and understand the potential reasons for disabled staff being one-and-a-half times more likely to be subject to the performance process, compared to non-disabled staff.

Additionally, through delivery of training programmes such as Civility Saves Lives and Leading with Diversity & Inclusion, we are aiming to see improvements in the data in Metric 4 (negative experiences). With the expansion of the Freedom to Speak Up function across the trust, we will be looking to see an increase in the proportion of disabled who feel confident in reporting any negative experiences.

With the launch of Developing Leaders programme in 2024/25, we aim to support more colleagues from underrepresented backgrounds into leadership roles by providing them with the skills and knowledge to progress in the careers. We are aiming to positively impact Metric 5 through this work.

A full set of actions are set out in our EDI Action Plan.