**Workforce Disability Equality Standard 2021**

1. **Purpose of the report**
   1. This report provides a summary of key data, issues and recommendations arising from the Workforce Disability Equality Standard (WDES) report (snapshot as at 31 March 2021)
2. **Background**
   1. The WDES has been in place since 2018; this is the third consecutive national collection of WDES data. The 2020 national WDES report is not published at the time of writing and it is anticipated in Autumn 2021.
   2. The window for data collection templates for the reporting period (data up to 31 March 2021) is 1 July 2021 to 30 August 2021. WDES data uploads are supplemented by a narrative return which is derived from the content of this report.
   3. NHS England requires that WDES action plans are ratified by the Trust Board and are published by 30 October 2021.
3. **Data quality and outline numbers**
   1. Data for the Trust’s data return is derived from a combination of sources; Electronic Staff Record, TRAC (recruitment), Selenity (Employee Relations) and the NHS Staff Survey 2020.
   2. Following recruitment, data files transfer from TRAC to ESR upon an applicant’s appointment.
   3. All colleagues have access to the ESR self-service portal which allows them to review and update their personal information at regular intervals. This is supported by user manuals and support from the HR Services team.
   4. As at 31 March 2021, 15.11% of colleagues (573 headcount) had chosen not to disclose their disability status. Further work is required to close this gap as it has remained relatively static since 2018/19.

1. **Recruitment**
   1. A figure below 1.00 indicates that Disabled staff are more likely than non-disabled staff to be appointed from shortlisting. The Trust has improved in this regard since 2020 – in 2020 this figure was 1.25 and it is now 0.92.
   2. A number of actions have supported this improvement in year; unconscious bias training has been added to MK Manager’s Way, Recruitment and Equality Diversity and Inclusion training. Diverse interview panels have been recommended by the Workforce teams to increase awareness of particular issues.
   3. The Trust operates what was previously known as a Guaranteed Interview Scheme in line with its Recruitment and Selection Policy and under its Disability Confident accreditation at Level 2 (Employer) status. Level 3 (Leader) is the aspiration for all NHS Trusts and a further self-assessment toolkit will be completed in collaboration with the Staff Ability Network to enable further improvement.
2. **Capability process**
   1. The Trust has sustained its 2020 position of no disabled colleagues entering the formal capability process in 2021.
   2. Coupled with an increase in the level reasonable adjustments made as reported in the NHS Staff Survey 2020 and a shift in employee relations towards a more fair and just culture with the employee at the heart of decision making and part of the solution, it is believed that this level continues to be sustainable.
   3. A further supportive measure in 2021 has been a soft update to the Trust’s Sickness Absence and Attendance Policy to support learning from cases and staff side colleagues.
3. **Staff Survey data**
   1. The NHS Staff Survey shows a deterioration across a number of levels for disabled colleagues:

* Staff experiencing harassment, bullying or abuse from managers and other colleagues
* Staff saying that the last time they experienced harassment, bullying or abuse, they or a colleague reported it
* Staff believing that the Trust provides equal opportunities for career progression or promotion
* Staff saying that they have felt pressure from their manager to come to work despite not being well enough to perform their duties
  1. A number of positive areas have also been noted:
* Staff experiencing harassment, bullying or abuse from the patients, service users, public, families
* Staff saying that they are satisfied with the extent to which the Trust values their work
* Staff saying that their employer has made adequate adjustments to enable them to carry out their work
* Overall Staff Engagement score (compared to non-disabled and Trust-wide score)
  1. Given the variance of Staff Survey outcomes as one source, improved communications and publicity across the Trust would be advisable.
  2. The deterioration of the perception of equal opportunities and career progression compared to the relative improvement in the recruitment metric is also an area for further exploration.

1. **Facilitating the voices of disabled colleagues**
   1. The Trust’s Disability network has been in place since late 2019 and has developed its collective voice, its membership and reach, alongside an open door approach with the Chief Executive and Director of Workforce.
   2. In 2021 the network was renamed as the Staff Ability Network following discussion at a network meeting – shifting the focus of the group to align to its positive and developmental ethos.
   3. Governance has been strengthened in 2021 with the establishment of a formal Terms of Reference and membership with key roles established such as Vice Chair to support leadership and management of the group.
   4. The group’s work to support deaf awareness in the Trust’s vaccination centre was showcased nationally by NHS Employers and locally, its influence is growing to support the growth of the Trust’s estate, its employees and patients and relatives (e.g Sunflower hidden disabilities scheme).
   5. The Leadership Inclusion Council recruitment and selection process has taken place with many roles having been filled but with action being delayed due to the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. It is believed that full commencement in the coming quarter will further decision making at Board level and support a wider and greater appreciation of associated issues for both patients (accessibility of services and experience) and colleagues.
   6. Further regional (ICS) and national (WDES) engagement is planned to support its development
2. **Trust Board composition**
   1. The Trust Board composition has not changed markedly from 2020 and remains broadly representative of its clinical workforce in terms of disability.
   2. An improvement in the disclosure of disabilities and/or long-term conditions is apparent in 2021 compared to previous years.
3. **Recommendations**
   1. Take steps to encourage colleagues to self-declare their disability/long term condition status through positive communications and improved use of electronic systems
   2. Disability Confident Level 3 (Leader) is the aspiration for all Trusts and a further self-assessment toolkit should be completed in collaboration with the Staff Ability Network to enable further improvement.
   3. Triangulation of data is required to impact upon staff experience e.g., informally resolved cases, grievance and disciplinary data, exit questionnaires, data held by; staff side colleagues, FTSU guardian, Staff Health and Wellbeing, Incident reports
   4. Explore further the deterioration of the perception of equal opportunities and career progression compared to the relative improvement in the recruitment metric – career pathways are a development area within the Workforce Strategy.
   5. Cultural Ambassadors, License to Hire training and Disability Passports are part of the Workforce Strategy Plan and will support further improvement in the recruitment metric as well as the equal opportunities and career development NHS Staff Survey outcomes.
   6. Improve communications and publicity across the Trust specifically around the impact of key workstreams such as; Staff Ability Network and achievements, working groups on additional paid hours, presenteeism, violence and aggression in the workplace, the Living our Values culture programme and behaviours framework.
   7. Continue to support the ongoing development of the Staff Ability Network.

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