

Workforce Disability Equality Standard 2022

1. Purpose of the report

- 1.1. 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 2022)

2. Background

- 2.1. The WDES has been in place since 2018; this is the fourth consecutive national collection of WDES data.
- 2.2. The window for data collection templates for the reporting period (data up to 31 March 2021) is 01 July 2022 to 31 August 2022. WDES data uploads are supplemented by a narrative return which is derived from the content of this report.
- 2.3. NHS England requires that WDES action plans are ratified by the Trust Board and are published by 31 October 2022.

3. Data quality and outline numbers

- 3.1. Data for the Trust's data return is derived from a combination of sources; Electronic Staff Record, TRAC (recruitment), Allocate ER Case Tracker (employee relations) and the NHS Staff Survey 2021.
- 3.2. Following recruitment, data files transfer from TRAC to ESR upon an applicant's appointment.
- 3.3. 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.
- 3.4. As at 31 March 2022, 12.4% of colleagues (489 headcount) had chosen not to disclose their disability status. This is a reduction from 2021 where 15.1% (573 headcount) of colleagues had not disclosed their disability status.
- 3.5. As at 31 March 2022, 4.4% of colleagues (174 headcount) had disclosed that they have a disability. This is an increase from 2021 where 3.8% of colleagues (145 headcount) had disclosed that they have a disability.

4. Recruitment

- 4.1. 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 0.92 in 2021 however, there has been a slight increase in 2022 with the figure reporting as 0.99.
- 4.2. A number of actions have supported this improvement in year including the addition of unconscious bias training to MK Manager's Way, the Trust's development scheme for line managers, and a review of inclusive, values-based recruitment practices.

- 4.3. 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.

5. Capability process

- 5.1. In 2022, the Trust has sustained its 2020 and 2021 position of no disabled colleagues entering the formal capability process.
- 5.2. The Trust continues to review HR policies to ensure that employee relations cases are moving 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.

6. Staff Survey data

- 6.1. The 2021 NHS Staff Survey shows a deterioration across three factors for disabled colleagues:
- Staff experiencing harassment, bullying or abuse from patients/service users, relatives of the public.
 - Staff saying that the last time they experienced harassment, bullying or abuse, they or a colleague reported it.
 - Staff believing that the Trust has made adequate reasonable adjustments to enable them to carry out their work.
- 6.2. A number of areas where scores have increased in the 2021 survey have been identified:
- Staff experiencing harassment, bullying or abuse from managers.
 - Staff experiencing harassment, bullying or abuse from other colleagues.
 - Staff believing that the Trust provides equal opportunities for career progression or promotion.
 - Staff feeling pressure from their managers to come to work, despite not feeling well enough to perform their duties.
 - The extent to which staff feel that the organisation values their work.
 - The staff engagement score.
- 6.3. A listening event was held with the Ability Network to discuss the 2021 staff survey results and provide context for the Trust's scores in the WDES-specific questions. An action plan has been co-produced with the network.
- 6.4. The Trust has undertaken extensive work throughout 2021/22 to address incidents of violence, aggression and unacceptable behaviours. A working group has been implemented and is reviewing support mechanisms for staff, training, de-escalation and communication.
- 6.5. The Trust is trialling a Disability Advisor role that will support line managers with implementing reasonable adjustments for employees, both in existing employment and at recruitment stage. Training for line managers on how to identify and implement reasonable adjustments is also being implemented.

7. Facilitating the voices of disabled colleagues

- 7.1. The Trust's Disability network (Ability 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.
- 7.2. The Inclusion Leadership Council has been in operation since November 2021 and is a bi-monthly meeting where representatives from all staff networks can raise matters to the highest level of the Trust. Supporting this is a more informal, monthly meeting with the Head of HR Business Partnering and ED&I Lead to ensure ongoing engagement on everyday matters.
- 7.3. Ongoing regional (ICS) and national (WDES) engagement is planned to support its development
- 7.4. Working with the ED&I Lead, the Ability Network has developed a Disability Inclusion Plan, which includes the implementation of AccessAble and Reciteme which will support colleagues and patients with abilities including visible and hidden disabilities.
- 7.5. The ED&I Lead is working with the Ability Network to deliver workshops on the lived experiences of employees who are neurodivergent. This is supported by the creation of mandatory training for line managers to assist them with identifying and implementing reasonable adjustments for their staff, whether their disabilities be hidden or visible.
- 7.6. The Ability Network has been working with the local college to support young neurodiverse students who will potentially become part of our workforce.
- 7.7. The Trust has gained approval to operate Learning Disability Internships with support from external partners, which will allow for young people with learning disabilities to gain essential work experience needed to help them secure future employment. It is the Trust's aim to roll this out from September 2023.
- 7.8. The Trust is actively exploring the implementation of Ability Champions who would support the Ability Network, HR, EDI, and recruitment with onboarding and continuous support to disabled colleagues.

8. Trust Board composition

- 8.1. The Trust Board composition has not changed from 2021 and remains broadly representative of the workforce in terms of disability, with 7.1% of voting members having declared a disability.

9. Recommendations

- 9.1. Take steps to encourage colleagues to self-declare their disability status through positive communications and improved use of electronic systems, including a "share" campaign to encourage employees to share equality data that they may have not disclosed at recruitment stage.
- 9.2. 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.

- 9.3. Triangulation of data is required to ascertain impact of increase in harassment, bullying and abuse 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
- 9.4. Talent Management is 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.
- 9.5. Full implementation of reasonable adjustments training for line managers to ensure employees have the appropriate support to undertake their roles and to further promote the use of Employee Passports.
- 9.6. Continue to support the ongoing development of the Staff Ability Network.

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