



A care system support organisation



NECS Workforce Disability Equality Standard Report

2025





The Workforce Disability Equality Standard (WDES)

Background and context

- The Workforce Disability Equality Standard (WDES) was introduced within the NHS in 2019. Its purpose is to ensure that colleagues living with disabilities, long term health conditions, or illnesses have equal access to career opportunities and receive fair treatment in the workplace.
- The WDES comprises a set of ten specific measures (metrics) which enables NHS organisations to compare the workplace and career experiences of disabled and non-disabled colleagues. NHS organisations use the metrics data to develop and publish an action plan. Year-on-year comparison enables NHS organisations to demonstrate progress against the indicators of disability equality.
- WDES reports are published in an open and transparent way to demonstrate where there are discrepancies and how organisations are addressing disability equality issues.



The Workforce Disability Equality Standard (WDES)

Introduction

- NECS has a clear ambition to advance our commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion – ensuring that all our people have fair access to opportunities and support
- NECS are committed to monitoring and analysing disability equality data against the WDES indicators to provide transparency and the opportunity for colleague involvement in the development of action plans
- NECS have completed a WDES report since 2022 with the aim of making improvements against the 10 indicators and continue to do so in demonstration of addressing any disability equality concerns
- Contextually, it is important to reference the considerable organisational change that has been underway for approximately 2 years prior to the data selection date



Key findings

- As of March 2025
 - 12.6% of NECS workforce (159 individuals) are disabled, an increase of 3.9%
 - 80% of the workforce are non-disabled (1010 individuals)
 - 7.4% have an undisclosed disability status (93 individuals)
- The 2024/25 data shows an increase in disabled colleagues for all bands since 2023/24
- Disabled applicants were significantly more likely to be appointed from shortlisting than non-disabled applicants (0.29). This represents a 1.33 change from 2024 (1.62)
- Disabled colleagues were more likely (3.18) to enter the formal capability process than non-disabled colleagues. However, this is a positive change from 2023 where disabled colleagues were although disabled colleagues were still **more likely** to enter the capability process, the relative likelihood was higher at 3.57
- The percentage of colleagues experiencing harassment, bullying or abuse from **patients, relatives or the public, and managers** has reduced for disabled colleagues but increased for non-disabled colleagues. The percentage of colleagues experiencing harassment, bullying or abuse from **other colleagues** has reduced for disabled and non-disabled colleagues. The percentage of colleagues saying the last time they experienced harassment, bullying or abuse at work, they or a colleague reported it has reduced for both disabled and non-disabled colleagues

Indicators 1-4





Key Findings

- The percentage of colleagues who believe that their organisation provides equal opportunities for career progression or promotion has reduced for both disabled and non-disabled colleagues
- The percentage of colleagues who have felt pressure from their manager to come to work, despite not feeling well enough to perform their duties has reduced for disabled colleagues but nominally increased for non-disabled colleagues
- The percentage of colleagues satisfied with the extent to which their organisation values their work has reduced for both disabled and non-disabled colleagues
- The percentage of colleagues with a long-lasting health condition or illness saying their employer has made reasonable adjustments to enable them to carry out their work has declined
- Staff engagement scores have reduced for both disabled and non-disabled colleagues
- There has been a reduction in the Board diversity since 2023/24, and the board disability profile is now 60% non-disabled and 40% disability status unknown

Indicators 5-9





WDES Indicators

Indicator	Workforce Indicators – For each of these 4 workforce indicators, data from disabled and non-disabled colleagues are compared
1	Percentage of staff in each of the AfC bands 1-9 and VSM (including exec. Board members) compared with the percentage in the overall workforce. Note – Organisations should undertake this calculation separately for clinical and non-clinical staff
2	Relative likelihood of staff being appointed from shortlisting across all posts
3	Relative likelihood of staff entering formal capability process, as measured by entry into a formal capability procedure
	National NHS Staff Survey Indicators – For each of the 4 staff survey indicators, the outcomes of the responses are compared for disabled and non-disabled colleagues
4a	Percentage of staff experiencing harassment, bullying or abuse from patients/service users, their relatives, or the public in the last 12 months
4b	Percentage of staff experiencing harassment, bullying or abuse from managers in the last 12 months
4c	Percentage of staff experiencing harassment, bullying or abuse from other colleagues in the last 12 months
4d	Percentage of staff saying that the last time they experienced harassment, bullying or abuse they or a colleague reported it
5	Percentage of staff believing that the trust (organisation) provides equal opportunities for career progression/promotion
6	Percentage of staff feeling pressure from their manager to come into work, despite not feeling well enough to perform their duties
7	Percentage of staff who feel their work is valued by their organisation
8	Percentage of staff who have had adequate reasonable adjustments carried out at work by their employer
9	Staff engagement score
	Board Representation Indicator – For this indicator, the differences for disabled and non-disabled staff are compared
10	Percentage difference between the organisation's Board voting membership and its overall workforce. Note – only voting members of the Board should be included when considering this indicator



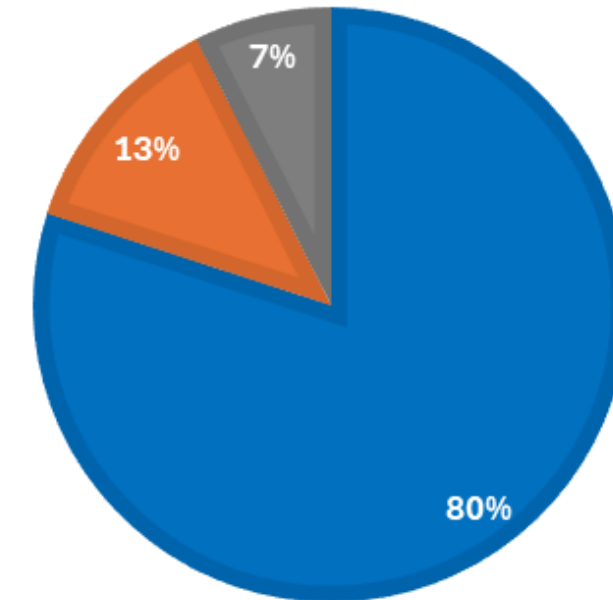
WDES Indicator 1: Overall breakdown of workforce data

Disability status comparison for: Percentage of staff in each of the AfC bands 1-9 and VSM (including Exec. Board members) compared with the percentage in the overall workforce

The percentage of disabled colleagues is 12.6%, which is lower than the population in England and Wales (17.5%, 2021 Census).

NECS WORKFORCE DISABILITY SUMMARY

■ Non-disabled ■ Disabled ■ Unknown



	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2024/25 Performance compared with 2023/24 (%)
Non-disabled	82.4%	83.0%	80.0%	-3.0
Disabled	9.6%	8.7%	12.6%	+3.9
Unknown	8.0%	8.2%	7.4%	-0.8



WDES Indicator 1: Overall breakdown of workforce data

Disability status comparison for: Percentage of staff in each of the AfC bands 1-9 and VSM (including Exec. Board members), compared with the percentage in the overall workforce

Disability Status Split for Each Banding Level								
	2023/24				2024/25			
	Bands 1-4	Bands 5-7	Bands 8a-8b	Bands 8c-VSM	Bands 1-4	Bands 5-7	Bands 8a-8b	Bands 8c-VSM
Non-Disabled	82.2%	81.2%	89.8%	80.1%	78.4%	77.0%	88.4%	81.5%
Disabled	11.2%	9.0%	6.2%	6.6%	15.4%	13.4%	9.7%	9.2%
Unknown	6.6%	9.7%	4.0%	13.2%	6.2%	9.6%	1.9%	9.2%

- There has been a positive increase (3.9%) in the number of disabled colleagues in 2024/25 when compared with the 2023/24
- There has also been a slight positive reduction (0.8%) in the number of colleagues from an unknown disability status since last year, which indicates more colleagues are choosing to share their disability status. This could further indicate
- There has been a positive increase in disabled colleagues for all bands in 2024/25, but there is an uneven distribution of colleagues with disabilities, with the lower bandings comprising the largest number of disabled colleagues and the upper bandings comprising fewer disabled colleagues.



WDES Indicator 2: Recruitment

Disability status comparison for: The Relative likelihood of non-disabled candidates compared to disabled candidates being appointed from shortlisting across all posts

	2023/24			2024/25		
	Shortlisted	Appointed	Relative likelihood of non-disabled applicants being appointed	Shortlisted	Appointed	Relative likelihood of non-disabled applicants being appointed
Disabled	48	8	1.62	97	5	0.29
Non-disabled	388	105		1255	19	
Unknown	0	0		33	19	

- The organisation appointed 43 individuals in 2024/25
- The relative likelihood of non-disabled applicants being appointed compared with disabled applicants, is 0.29. This is a reduction of 1.33 from last year, where the relative likelihood was 1.62. This indicates disabled candidates are significantly more likely to be appointed to role than non-disabled applicants.



WDES Indicator 3: Colleagues entering formal capability processes

Disability status comparison for: The Relative likelihood of non-disabled colleagues entering the formal capability process compared with disabled colleagues, as measured by entry into a formal capability procedure

- NECS records and monitors all capability cases against protected characteristics and makes note of the reason behind the case. The indicator looks at the number of capability cases over a 2-year period and considers whether they may be on the grounds of ill health
- Where the number of colleagues entering a formal capability process is 5 or less, NECS will not disclose or publish the information for reporting purposes, to maintain confidentiality and anonymity of individuals subject to such processes
- For the period 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2025, 8 colleagues entered a formal capability process across NECS (average of 4 over two years). This has reduced since 2022/24, where there were 14 recorded cases over a 2-year period (average of 7 over two years)
- As there are 5 or fewer colleagues who have entered the formal capability process in certain disability status groups, it is not possible to disclose detailed information. Analysis of the data shows that disabled colleagues are significantly more likely than non-disabled colleagues to enter a capability process, with a likelihood of 3.18. However, this is an improvement since 2023/24, where the relative likelihood was 3.57
- No colleagues have entered a formal capability process on grounds of ill health over the last 2 years



WDES Indicators 4-9: Staff survey questions

Disability status comparison for: Percentage of colleagues that said “YES” to the WDES questions in the 2024 Staff Survey and a comparison with the 2023 results

Staff Survey indicator (WDES)	Disability status	Survey results		Staff Survey indicator (WDES)	Disability status	Survey results	
		2023	2024			2023	2024
Indicator 4a - Percentage of colleagues experiencing harassment, bullying or abuse from patients/service users, their relatives or other members of the public in the last 12 months	Non-disabled	2.3%	2.7%	Indicator 5 - Percentage of colleagues who believe that their organisation provides equal opportunities for career progression or promotion	Non-disabled	69.2%	61.7%
	Disabled	5.3%	4.3%		Disabled	59.2%	52.3%
Indicator 4b - Percentage of colleagues experiencing harassment, bullying or abuse from managers in the last 12 months	Non-disabled	4.4%	5.0%	Indicator 6 - Percentage of colleagues who have felt pressure from their manager to come to work, despite not feeling well enough to perform their duties	Non-disabled	11.1%	11.2%
	Disabled	13.5%	10.4%		Disabled	18.2%	16.3%
Indicator 4c –Percentage of colleagues experiencing harassment, bullying or abuse from other colleagues in the last 12months	Non-disabled	6.4%	5.3%	Indicator 7 - Percentage of colleagues satisfied with the extent to which their organisation values their work	Non-disabled	62.3%	51.3%
	Disabled	15.2%	13.0%		Disabled	47.8%	38.5%
Indicator 4d – Percentage of colleagues saying the last time they experienced harassment, bullying or abuse at work, they or a colleague reported it	Non-disabled	59.0%	38.6%	Indicator 8 - Percentage of colleagues with a long-lasting health condition or illness saying their employer has made reasonable adjustments to enable them to carry out their work	Disabled	82.9%	76.3%
	Disabled	61.2%	50.0%				



WDES Indicators 4-9: Staff survey questions

Disability status comparison for: Percentage of colleagues that said “YES” to the WDES questions in the 2024 Staff Survey and a comparison with the 2023 results

Staff Survey indicator (WDES)	Disability status	Survey results	
		2023	2024
Indicator 9a – Staff engagement score (0-10)	Non-disabled	7.1	6.5
	Disabled	6.5	5.9
Indicator 9b – Has your organisation taken action to facilitate the voices of your disabled staff to be heard? (yes) or (no)			Yes

- In 2024/25 performance against the staff survey indicators has predominantly decreased. However, there have been positive improvements in experience for both disabled and non-disabled colleagues on:
 - Indicator 4c
- For disabled colleagues on:
 - Indicator 4a
 - Indicator 4b
 - Indicator 6



WDES Indicators 4-9: Staff survey questions

- There has been a decrease in the percentage of both disabled and non-disabled colleagues saying the last time they experienced harassment, bullying or abuse at work, they or a colleague reported it. The % decrease for non-disabled colleagues is significantly higher than the decrease for disabled colleagues, and more disabled colleagues are reporting this than non-disabled colleagues
- There has also been a decrease in the percentage of both disabled and non-disabled colleagues saying they believe that their organisation provides equal opportunities for career progression or promotion. The % decrease for non-disabled colleagues is greater than the decrease for disabled colleagues, which is marginal, however fewer disabled colleagues than non-disabled colleagues believe in equal opportunities for career progression or promotion
- The percentage of colleagues satisfied with the extent to which their organisation values their work has decreased for both disabled and non-disabled colleagues. The % decrease for non-disabled colleagues is greater than the decrease for disabled colleagues, which is marginal, however significantly fewer disabled colleagues than non-disabled colleagues feel satisfied with the extent to which their work is valued
- There has been a reduction in staff engagement for both disabled and non-disabled colleagues, by the same number of points. However, more non-disabled colleagues have taken part in the staff survey than disabled colleagues



WDES Indicators 4-9: Staff survey questions

- For non-disabled colleagues, there has been an increase in the percentage of colleagues experiencing harassment, bullying or abuse from patients/service users, their relatives or other members of the public in the last 12 months. While there has been a reduction in the % of disabled colleagues saying they experience this, there is still more disabled colleagues than non-disabled colleagues experiencing this
- The percentage of non-disabled colleagues saying they experienced harassment, bullying or abuse from managers in the last 12 months has increased, but is still significantly lower than the percentage of disabled colleagues saying they experience this
- The percentage of non-disabled colleagues saying they have felt pressure from their manager to come to work, despite not feeling well enough to perform their duties has increased, but is still significantly lower than the percentage of disabled colleagues saying they have experienced this
- For disabled colleagues, there has been a reduction in the percentage of colleagues with a long-lasting health condition or illness saying their employer has made reasonable adjustments to enable them to carry out their work

WDES Indicator 10: Board Membership Representation

Disability status comparison for: Percentage difference between organisations' Board (Exec team) membership and its overall workforce

Board Membership								
	2023/24				2024/25			
	Disabled	Non-disabled	Unknown	Total	Disabled	Non-disabled	Unknown	Total
Count	1	3	2	6	0	3	2	5
Percentage	16.7%	50.0%	33.3%		0.0%	60.0%	40.0%	
No. of colleagues in Workforce								
	2023/24				2024/25			
	Disabled	Non-disabled	Unknown	Total	Disabled	Non-disabled	Unknown	Total
Count	163	1552	154	1869	159	1010	93	1262
Percentage	8.7%	83.0%	8.2%		12.6%	80.0%	7.4%	

- There has been a reduction in the Board diversity since 2023/24, and the board disability profile is now 60% non-disabled.
- While board membership was not representative of the workforce disability demographics in 2023/24, in 2024/25 disabled colleagues are significantly underrepresented.
- Two (40%) board members have chosen not to share their disability data



Summary and Next Steps



What we have done well

- There has been a 3.9% increase in the number of disabled colleagues since 2024.
 - In 2024/25, our people comprised 12.6% disabled colleagues. There has also been a positive increase in the number of disabled colleagues across all bands.
 - There has also been a slight positive reduction (-0.8%) in the number of colleagues from an unknown disability status since last year, which indicates more colleagues maybe choosing to share their disability status on ESR.
- There has been a slight reduction (-0.39) in the relative likelihood of non-disabled colleagues going through the formal capability process when compared with disabled colleagues. No colleagues have entered the formal capability process on the grounds of ill-health over the last 2-years.
- There have been some improvements in harassment, bullying, and abuse from colleagues for both disabled and non-disabled colleagues.
- For disabled colleagues there have been improvements in harassment, bullying and abuse from patients/service users, their relatives or other members of the public, and from managers.
- There have also been improvements in the number of disabled colleagues who have felt pressure from their manager to come to work, despite not feeling well enough to perform their duties, with a reduction in presenteeism.



Where we need to improve

- Our organisation is not representative of the population we serve
 - The percentage of disabled colleagues (12.6%) is lower than the population in England and Wales (17.5%, 2021 Census).
 - There is an uneven distribution of disabled colleagues across the bands, with more disabled colleagues being in the lower bands and fewer in the higher bands
- Disabled colleagues are significantly more likely to be appointed to a role than non-disabled colleagues.
 - The relative likelihood of non-disabled candidates being appointed to a role compared with disabled candidates has reduced from 1.62 to 0.29.
- Disabled colleagues are significantly more likely to go through a formal capability process than non-disabled colleagues.
 - The relative likelihood of disabled colleagues entering a formal capability process compared with non-disabled colleagues is 3.18, indicating that disabled colleagues are significantly more likely to enter a capability process than their non-disabled counterparts



Where we need to improve

- There has been a reduction in the percentage of colleagues with a long-lasting health condition or illness (disabled colleagues) saying their employer has made reasonable adjustments to enable them to carry out their work (-6.6%).
- There has been a significant negative reduction in the percentage of colleagues saying the last time they experienced harassment, bullying or abuse at work, they or a colleague reported it, for disabled (-11.2%) and non-disabled (-20.4%) colleagues.
- For disabled and non-disabled colleagues there has also been a significant reduction in colleagues believing that their organisation provides equal opportunities for career progression or promotion, feeling satisfied with the extent to which their organisation values their work, and staff engagement scores
- For non-disabled colleagues, there has been an increase in the percentage of colleagues experiencing harassment, bullying or abuse from patients/service users, their relatives or other members of the public, and from managers. The percentage of non-disabled colleagues who have felt pressure from their manager to come to work, despite not feeling well enough to perform their duties has also increased nominally
- There has been a reduction in the Board diversity since 2024.
 - The disability profile is now 60% non-disabled, 40% unknown disability status



Actions for 2025/26

In 2025/26 it's important to contextualise as the organisation is undertaking significant changes as it moves towards closure. There will be an ongoing focus on ensuring colleagues who are disabled have an equitable experience to those who are non-disabled through the following actions which are embedded in the EDI Strategy for 2025/26.

- Increase training and development opportunities accessible to all colleagues using NHS Elect
- Share information quarterly on why equality information is gathered, who has access to it, and how to update it, to try and ensure all colleagues' disability status is recorded
- Ensure "Inclusive Recruitment and Unconscious Bias" training is available for all colleagues, and it is a requirement for managers undertaking interviewing as part of recruitment or a management of change process
- Embed a psychologically safe workplace and culture through work on reasonable adjustments
- Ensure the organisational culture is aligned to the values to reduce bullying, harassment, and abuse from colleagues and managers through;
 - Confirming colleagues have had a quality appraisal which has clear behavioural objectives built around our values
 - Developing consistent management behaviour through management training
 - Psychological safety is embedded so colleagues feel able to speak up and challenge inappropriate behaviour, or have clear and accessible outlets of escalation such as the Freedom to Speak up Guardian
 - Support options being available to people to help them maintain their own wellbeing and resilience during organisational change and uncertainty