EDI Annual Report 2024-25

North of England Commissioning Support Unit

Official

Contents

Official

Introduction

- NECS (North of England Care System Support) is one of four Commissioning Support Units (CSUs) in England

- NECS was originally set up in 2013 to meet the needs of NHS healthcare commissioners in the North East and North Cumbria

- Since then, we diversified and expanded the range of customers served, by delivering support to health and social care systems locally, nationally and internationally. Our portfolio of services was also further enhanced, with a Consulting Practice and a suite of innovative Digital Applications, which complement our extensive, end-to-end care system support capabilities

- As part of the NHS 10 Year Plan, proposals set forward the planned closure of all CSUs by March 2027. We will continue to support the needs of our customers, offer cutting edge solutions to health and social care challenges, and fulfil our statutory and mandatory requirements, until closure

Our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion

- We are committed to our social purpose of reducing inequalities, creating jobs and generating wealth for communities. We want to create a more sustainable, more inclusive society, through the work we undertake across the health and social care system

- NECS is committed to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) for our people, customers and the communities we serve, until such time as we close. We recognise the importance of having a diverse and engaged workforce. Our established employment practices, policies and procedures make sure that no colleagues receive less favourable treatment on the grounds of any protected characteristics

Our values

At NECS, we have five core values which drive everything we do – and the way we do it. These are detailed as follows:

- We value the views and perspectives of others, creating an environment of inclusivity and make sure we treat all our customers, colleagues and partners with respect

Dignity and respect

- Our people are proud of what they do and know that their work makes the world a better place

Happy and fulfilled

- As a trusted and transparent part of the NHS, we take care to be consistent in our words and deeds

Honesty and integrity

- We are collaborative and focus on solving problems and finding solutions

Professionalism

- We are a learning organisation with a focus on quality and continuous improvement

High standards and performance

Public Sector Equality Duty

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The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), outlined in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, requires public authorities to have due regard to certain equality considerations when exercising their functions, like making decisions. It encourages public sector organisations to engage with diverse communities to ensure that policies, projects, services and significant decisions are accessible and consider the diverse needs of the populations we serve

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The general duty requires public authorities, in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other unlawful conduct prohibited by the act
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share and people who do not share a relevant protected characteristic
- Foster good relations between people who share and people who do not share a relevant protected characteristic

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This report demonstrates **our commitment** and **how** we have complied with the PSED for 2024-25

1 Meeting our duties

Legal duties and mandated requirements

- Each member of the Executive Team has an EDI Strategy Objective which they are accountable for. This allows us to ensure that the organisation's commitment to EDI is led from the top and filtered throughout the organisation at every level. Work produced in line with the EDI Strategy is shared with the Staff Council, Partnership Forum, Inclusion Network, and during Executive Development Sessions

- Our EDI Policy sets out our organisational commitment to EDI, and our statutory and mandatory requirements. It outlines the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) and the need to demonstrate due regard to:

  - Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act

  - Advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it

  - Fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it

- The policy also provides an overview of different types of discrimination, victimisation, and harassment, and sets out a procedure for dealing with any complaints pertaining to this. It goes on to outline the responsibilities of different colleagues within the organisation

- In order to meet the above, we ensure that we undertake the workforce disability and race equality standards, pay gap reporting and meet the requirements of the Accessible Information Standard (AIS). In addition, we are also a member of Onvero (formerly the ENEI - Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion), where we have achieved a Bronze Standard, and we are a Disability Confident Leader

Summary of Progress 2024-25

- The EDI Strategy was developed using workforce data, staff survey data, and a co-production approach that involved the facilitation of three Action Group Meetings, to discuss potential objectives. Colleagues also chose to share their thoughts on organisational changes that could be made from an EDI perspective via email, an online form and during Inclusion Network Meetings and Safe Space Events. As a result of the data reviewed and feedback received, five key objectives were developed, with a further 61 actions supporting them

- Each of the EDI Strategies Objectives was led by a member of the executive team, with regular update meetings held with the EDI Lead to discuss progress against the actions on either a monthly or two-monthly basis. A six-monthly update was held with the Executive Team to discuss the progress of the whole plan, potential issues, and changes if necessary

- Progress was made with all five EDI Strategy objectives in 2024-25, with only five of 61 actions remaining incomplete, two partially progressed and 54 actions completed.

- The five incomplete actions related primarily to recruitment and could not be progressed due to the organisational changes and the pause on recruitment
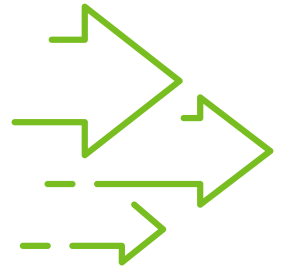
Equality objectives 2024-25

Develop communication pathways for dialogue, support and growth for colleagues from protected groups	Improve workplace accessibility for colleagues with diverse needs	Embed EDI education at every level within the organisation to further support an inclusive culture	Support the development of a diverse and representative workforce through retention and recruitment	Advance our corporate commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion and inclusive leadership
• Further develop the organisations Safe Space Events • Engage with colleagues to enhance and embed the Inclusion Network • Develop communication support tools for colleagues including anonymised contact routes • Work to strengthen the Freedom to Speak Up programme	• Share guidance to better promote understanding of accessibility support • Review policies from an accessibility perspective working collaboratively with other CSUs • Develop accessibility guidance and resources for managers and colleagues • Create guidance around Reasonable adjustments and Access to Work	• Create Gender Health specific learning and resources • Develop monthly lunch and learn events to further inclusion • Host micro-aggression and neurodiversity training • Better promote existing EDI training and look at developing monitoring records	• Embed EDI within external communications • Further support the development of a diverse and representative workforce • Review current recruitment process • Campaign to improve ESR disclosure rates	• Undertake statutory reporting and work to meet the NHS EDI Improvement Plan High Impact Actions • Undertake ENEI Tide Benchmarking and work to become a Disability Confident Leader • Develop Trans Inclusion Guidance
✓ Success Measures • Engagement with and attendance of Safe Space Events • Engagement with, attendance of and actions developed as a result of Inclusion Networks • Staff Survey Colleague Experience Data • Reporting of bullying and harassment	**✓ Success Measures** • Staff Survey Colleague Experience Data • Staff Survey Reasonable Adjustment Data • Increase in usage of Health and Carers Passport • WDES Indicator 8	**✓ Success Measures** • Staff Survey Colleague Experience Data • Increased retention rates • Attendance of and access to training and inclusion sessions • Colleague feedback and interaction rates	**✓ Success Measures** • Staff Survey Colleague Experience Data • Retention and recruitment data • Improvement in Gender Pay Gap • Increase in ESR disclosure	**✓ Success Measures** • Staff Survey Colleague Experience Data • Colleague feedback and interaction rates • Retention and recruitment data • TIDE award and Disability Confident Leader status

Equality Strategy Achievements – Objective 1

- All Objective 1 actions were successfully met, with further development of Safe Space Events, the Inclusion Network, communication pathways and bullying and harassment resources

- A poll was shared with colleagues to understand which topics they wished to focus on most during Safe Space Events. As a result, colleagues highlighted that the topics they wished to cover most were mental health, reasonable adjustments, women's health and neurodiversity

- In total five safe space events were held in 2024-25, the first being a general open space, and the remaining four covering the aforementioned topics. Attendees during the events ranged between 11 to 24 people, with a total of 98 colleagues attending the events. All events were attended by a representative from the OD team and one of the Executive Directors. The Reasonable Adjustment Safe Space event specifically was extremely well attended and had representatives from the People and Health and Safety teams in attendance, to listen to colleagues and take away learning for organisational improvements. Learning was taken away from all events, with colleagues being listened to, questions being answered and, where possible, support being provided

- Four Inclusion Network meetings were held in 2024-25, with attendance ranging from between 6 and 27 people and a total of 72 colleagues attending the events. All meetings were attended by a representative from the OD team, and a member of the Executive Team attended three out of four of the events. At the start of the year, the Inclusion Network has four Chairs, but due to leavers the number of chairs has since reduced to two.

- Discussions during the Inclusion Network meetings ranged from EDI reporting (including WRES, WDES and Pay Gap Reporting), specific awareness days and events, feedback from safe space events, colleague concerns, the change process and potential tasks the Inclusion Network could support in terms of delivery. Chairs also provided colleagues with support through acting as a valuable confidential feedback portal, sharing any concerns colleagues had regarding equity in the organisation with us

- To encourage colleagues to share their thoughts with us, an anonymised feedback portal was also created using JISC, where colleagues could choose to share any thoughts around equality with us. This is monitored on a monthly basis and has been utilised a total of six times over the course of the year, with colleagues sharing concerns around working practices, representation, and organisational change. All relevant feedback was shared during Inclusion Network meetings and where possible any concerns were addressed, either by the EDI team during Inclusion Network meetings, or through comms if relating to a wider issue

- In terms of bullying and harassment, segments on this are included as part of the EDI training. Communications have also been shared to promote the Freedom to Speak Up Guardian, and the different avenues of available support in the organisation, highlighting who to turn to if an incident occurs

Equality Strategy Achievements – Objective 2

- All Objective 2 actions were successfully met, with further development of health and wellbeing guides and tools, a review of available support means, the development of a glossary of EDI terms, and the launch of Reasonable Adjustment Guidance documents

- The first part of this objective largely involved communications shared, focusing on health awareness days and topics affecting colleagues or the local population and working to share information to develop colleagues' knowledge on a variety of issues. This included neurodivergence, caring responsibilities, and cancer care, and provided colleagues with a library of resources and blogs to access, as well as signposting to further support. The health and carers passport was promoted as part of this, and reference to it is also made as part of the EDI training, to emphasise the benefits of it

- Originally the health and wellbeing team hosted several menopause cafes, this was further expanded, with mental health cafes also being developed, and promotions for colleagues to join external groups such as Andy's Man Club. Within this, colleagues were not only provided with information, but they were also given the opportunity to ask questions and open up about their own experiences

- The Reasonable Adjustment guidance was developed in conjunction with the Health and Safety and People teams. As part of this an audit was undertaken to understand different accessibility tools available to support colleagues and a tool was created to record reasonable adjustment requests going forward

- Lastly, discussions were held with the People team around flexible working. Guidance was shared by the People team in January 2025 outlining NECS' Ways of Working Principles, key manager and colleague duties and providing guidance around informal flexible working

Equality Strategy Achievements – Objective 3

- The majority of Objective 3 actions were successfully met, with key achievements being in the launch of Neurodiversity Awareness training and Words Have Impact – Understanding Microaggressions training

- As discussed within Objective 2, the health and wellbeing team originally hosted a number of menopause cafes. This was further expanded, with mental health cafes also being developed, and promotions for colleagues to join external groups such as Andy's Man Club. Within this, colleagues were not only provided with information, but they were also given the opportunity to ask questions and open up about their own experiences. Information was also shared via the intranet and blogs on gender specific health issues

- While it was not possible to host monthly EDI bitesize learning events, events were hosted around Ramadan, and Black History Month, and further events hosted by other CSUs were shared with colleagues to attend

- An Inclusive Language Guide was developed and launched via the intranet. Alongside this the Words Have Impact training was launched, providing colleagues with an insight into microaggressions and how to manage them. Neurodiversity training was also developed, with feedback from neurodivergent colleagues within the organisation used to help shape the training. Three Words Have Impact sessions and five Neurodiversity Awareness training sessions have been delivered in 2024-25

- Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) cafes were hosted on a fortnightly basis from July 2024 to present. In total 25 colleagues have attended the cafes, to receive support and advice when developing EIAs. EIA training has also been developed to support the process but has yet to be launched

- Lastly, an EDI segment was included within the Induction sessions. Inductions were held on a monthly basis, with a total of seven sessions held from September 2024 to March 2025

Equality Strategy Achievements – Objective 4

- Due to the pause of recruitment, it was not possible to meet all actions for Objective 4

- Work has been undertaken with the communications team to share diverse external communications. Where possible, colleagues are also encouraged to share blogs regarding their personal experiences and events that are important to them

- It was not possible to develop or share external recruitment materials due to the ongoing changes. However, the inclusion of an EDI data review has been changed from a six-monthly to an annual basis and will be shared in the EDI annual reports

- Job adverts include transparency of flexible working and the development of an options paper, which was shared with the Executive Team around making the interview process more accessible. Discussions were also held with other CSUs to understand their approaches and consider the feasibility of a joint approach.

- An ESR campaign was launched to encourage colleagues to update their demographic data and assure them of the confidentiality of the data shared with us. Based on a comparison between the declaration rates for 2024-25 with the previous year, there has been a reduction in undeclared data for disability, religion, and sexual orientation

Equality Strategy Achievements – Objective 5

- The majority of the actions for Objective 5 have been met. A UK Supreme Court ruling on gender impacted an action to introduce Transitioning at Work Guidance. The document was developed and ready for launch in April however has not yet been launched as NHS guidance has not yet been shared.

- All EDI WRES, WDES and gender pay gap reporting was completed, with pay gap reporting for additional protected characteristics included within this report. Regular meetings were also held with Executive Directors to discuss their EDI objectives and the progress being made against them

- An assessment was undertaken to understand what was required of NECS to become a Disability Confident Leader and it was understood that changes would need to be made to the leadership statement, with an evidence base created around disability support needing to be developed and submitted. In light of the NHS 10-year Plan closure of Commissioning Support Units (CSU) announcement, this is something that we will no longer be pursuing. Instead, the focus will be on staff support, care and wellbeing

- Onvero (formerly ENEI) Talent Inclusion and Diversity Evaluation (TIDE) Benchmarking was completed and NECS received a Bronze Award as a result of the EDI work being completed and the inclusive practices embedded within the organisation

Engaging with colleagues

The Inclusion Network was launched as part of the 2023-2024 EDI Strategy and work has been undertaken to further develop it. We recognise that each one of us possesses multiple protected characteristics and therefore networks for individual characteristics might mean choosing between different aspects of oneself in terms of membership and attendance of meetings. The Inclusion Network is a space for all colleagues to come together and discuss equity and inclusion, while celebrating diversity

The current membership of the group stands at 54 members, with meeting attendance ranging between 6 to 27 people. The feedback from the group has been invaluable, providing insights on colleagues' experience in terms of disability, race, reasonable adjustments, religion, and LGBTQIA+ support

In addition to the Inclusion Network, colleagues also have access to regular Safe Space Events, an anonymised feedback portal, Health and Wellbeing Ambassadors, and Mental Health First Aiders. Communications have also been shared around who to contact for support, whether it is a line manager, the People team, the EDI Lead, or the Freedom to Speak Up Guardian. Additionally, a comms campaign was launched on Supporting Staff to Raise Concerns, highlighting the additional roles of senior managers as Freedom to Speak Up Guardian, Health and Wellbeing Guardian, Safeguarding Lead, Senior Information Risk Officer, and Caldicott Guardian

Awareness days and education events

Each year the EDI and Health and Wellbeing teams develop a joint EDI Calendar of Events, working together on developing guides and support materials for a range of awareness days, festivals and events

Over the course of 2024-25, 63 different EDI and Health and Wellbeing campaigns were covered. The campaigns covered events that lasted a day, a week, or sometimes even a month. Notable campaigns include LGBT+ History Month, Vaisakhi, International Women's Day, Holy Week, NHS Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Week, Ramadan, South Asian Heritage Month, Inclusion Week, Black History Month, International Men's Day, and Disability History Month

Communications have also been shared asking colleagues to share blog posts, with 15 external blogs being shared on the NECS website in 2024-25 covering religion, health, race, and gender

Equality Impact Assessments (EIA)

- Approximately, **100 EIAs** were submitted and reviewed in 2024-25. Of these, 28 EIAs required a full Step 2 assessment

- **48 EIAs were approved** requiring no further changes and the remainder required resubmissions

- Since July 2024, **fortnightly EIA cafes** have been held to support colleagues in undertaking EIAs and answer any questions they might have. In total, only 25 colleagues have attended the EIA cafes from July 2024 to March 2025. There have also been three instances where teams have requested specific guidance on EIAs and how to undertake the assessments

- Going forward, further work needs to be done to support colleagues in undertaking EIAs and ensuring the assessments completed are as robust as possible

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Equality frameworks and membership

- NECS is a member of the Onvero (formerly ENEI), a UK-based, not-for-profit organisation that helps employers build and maintain diverse teams and inclusive cultures through their membership, training, and consultancy services

- The Onvero (ENEI) TIDE Benchmarking assessment was completed in May 2024, with results announced in September 2024. While NECS has completed the assessment previously in 2022, in 2024 NECS achieved a Bronze Award for the EDI work being undertaken throughout the organisation

- NECS is also a Disability Confident Employer and is currently assessing the feasibility of becoming a Disability Confident Leader

- In terms of Health and Wellbeing, NECS has achieved the Maintaining Excellence and Ambassador status for the Better Health at Work Award, a Bronze Level Armed Forces Recognition Award, and Henpicked membership

Workforce Race Equality Standard (WRES) 2024-25

13.5% of NECS workforce (170 individuals) are from ethnically diverse groups (black & minority ethnic)

83% of the workforce are white (1043 individuals)

3.5% have an undisclosed ethnicity (44)
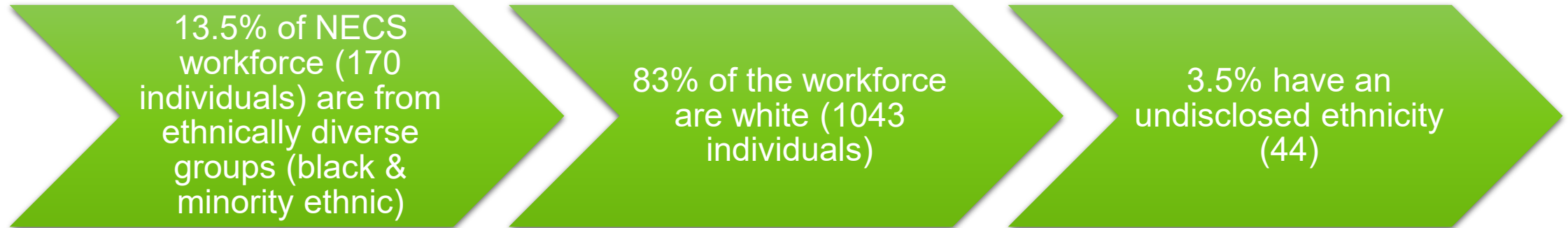
- The 2024/25 data shows a marginal 2% increase in colleagues from ethnically diverse groups since 2023/24, all within Bands 2-8b

- White applicants were significantly more likely to be appointed from shortlisting than ethnically diverse applicants (4.16). This represents a 1.49 change from 2023/24 (2.67)

- Ethnically diverse applicants were less likely (0.88) to enter the formal disciplinary process than white applicants. This shows a positive change from 2023 where ethnically diverse colleagues were 0.99 times **more likely** to enter the disciplinary process. This is the 3rd consecutive year showing improvement

- In 2024/25, the likelihood of ethnically diverse colleagues accessing non-mandatory training and CPD is almost equal (1.01) to white colleagues – this shows no change to 2023/24

Workforce Race Equality Standard (WRES) 2024-25

- The percentage of colleagues from ethnically diverse groups reporting experiencing harassment, bullying, or abuse from **patients, relatives or the public** has reduced, whilst white colleagues have reported a minor increase

- The percentage of both ethnically diverse and white colleagues experiencing harassment, bullying, or abuse from **colleagues** has reduced. Whilst there has been a minor reduction for white colleagues, this is larger for colleagues from ethnically diverse groups

- The percentages for colleagues from white and ethnically diverse groups believing the organisation provides equal opportunities for career progression have both fallen, although this is marginal for colleagues who are ethnically diverse, their reported numbers are lower than white colleagues

- There has been a minor increase in the number of white colleagues reporting experiencing discrimination from a manager/ team leader or colleagues however there has been a significant change (more than 50% *decrease*) in colleagues from ethnically diverse groups reporting discrimination

- A full summary of the WRES data is provided in Appendix 1

Workforce Disability Equality Standard (WDES) 2024-25

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 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

Workforce Disability Equality Standard (WDES) 2024-25

- 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

- A full summary of the WRES data is provided in Appendix 2

Gender Pay Gap

Gender	Mean				Median			
	2024	2025	Change in Gender Pay Gap % from 2024-25 to 2023-24		2024	2025	Change in Gender Pay Gap % from 2024-25 to 2023-24	
	Hourly Rate	Hourly Rate			Hourly Rate	Hourly Rate		
Female	£21.72	£23.50			£21.80	£22.52		
Male	£22.73	£24.71			£21.18	£23.03		
Difference	£1.01	£1.21			£0.62	£0.51		
Gender Pay Gap (%)	4.44	4.90	+0.46		2.84	2.21	-0.63	

Pay Quartile	Hourly Pay Rate Range Female Employees	Number of Female Employees	Hourly Pay Rate Range Male Employees	Number of Male Employees
1	£9.85 - £16.53	255 (65.1%)	£9.85 - £16.53	137 (34.9%)
2	£16.53 - £22.99	231 (61.1%)	£16.53 - £22.99	147 (38.9%)
3	£22.99 - £27.93	244 (59.2%)	£22.99 - £27.78	168 (40.8%)
4	£28.29 - £66.20	221 (55.9%)	£28.00 - £75.18	174 (44.1%)

- The above table shows there is a positive and negative pay gaps which means men on average are paid more than women in terms of mean pay, but women are paid more than men in terms of median pay. This is mainly due to a higher proportion of men being in higher banded roles than women and there being a higher proportion of women in the workforce overall

- As at 31st March 2025, 60.3% of colleagues identify as female (951 colleagues), with 39.7% being male (626 colleagues). The gender profile is shown in the tables above, and the higher representation of women in the NHS workforce is reflective and broadly comparable (77% women - NHS Confed report 2020) to the national NHS workforce

- Nationally, in all employment among full-time employees, the gender pay gap in April 2024 was 7.0%; this was 7.5% in April 2023; 8.3% in April 2022; 7.7% in April 2021 and 9.0% in April 2019 (pre-coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic) – ONS October 2024

- It should be noted because of the NHS Agenda for Change, pay gaps within the organisation are solely influenced by the number of colleagues from different demographic groups and their distributions across the banding only

Ethnicity Pay Gap

Ethnicity	Mean				Median		
	2024	2025	Change in Ethnicity Pay Gap % from 2024-25 to 2023-24		2024	2025	Change in Ethnicity Pay Gap % from 2024-25 to 2023-24
	Hourly Rate	Hourly Rate			Hourly Rate	Hourly Rate	
White (1)	£22.23	£24.18			£21.80	£22.99	
Ethnically Diverse Groups (2)	£21.40	£22.98			£21.22	£22.71	
Unknown (3)		£22.06				£19.16	
Difference (1-2)	£0.83	£1.20			£0.58	£0.28	
Difference (2-3)		£0.92				£3.55	
Difference (1-3)		£2.12				£3.83	
Pay Gap (1-2) %	3.73	4.96	+1.23		2.66	1.22	+1.44
Pay Gap (2-3) %		4.00				15.63	
Pay Gap (1-3) %		8.77				16.66	

Pay Quartile	Hourly Pay Rate Range White Employees	Number of White Employees	Hourly Pay Rate Range Ethnically Diverse Employees	Number of Ethnically Diverse Employees
1	£9.85 - £16.53	320 (81.6%)	£12.08 - £16.17	58 (14.8%)
2	£16.53 - £22.99	331 (87.6%)	£16.53 - £22.71	34 (9.0%)
3	£22.99 - £27.93	357 (86.7%)	£22.99 - £27.50	44 (10.7%)
4	£28.00 - £75.18	340 (87.9%)	£28.87 - £52.20	47 (12.1%)

- The above table demonstrates a pay gap which means ethnically diverse people on the mean and median average are paid less than white colleagues, with a further increase in the pay gap since 2024

- The Ethnicity pay gap, the gap between median pay for white employees and ethnically diverse colleagues in 2022, was 5.7% - ONS November 2023

- Out of the colleagues who have shared their ethnicity data with us, 11.6% are from ethnically diverse groups (183 colleagues), with 85.5%% being white (1348 colleagues). 46 colleagues (2.9%) have chosen not to share their ethnicity data and have been excluded from the analysis within this report. The proportion of ethnically diverse colleagues in the NHS England workforce profile is at 28.6% (WRES 2024) and exceeds that of the ethnically diverse population in England and Wales 18.3% (2021 Census)

- It should be noted because of the NHS Agenda for Change, pay gaps within the organisation are solely influenced by the number of colleagues from different demographic groups and their distributions across the banding only

Disability Pay Gap

Disability Status	Mean			Median		
	2024	2025	Change in Disability Pay Gap % from 2024-25 to 2023-24	2024	2025	Change in Disability Pay Gap % from 2024-25 to 2023-24
	Hourly Rate	Hourly Rate		Hourly Rate	Hourly Rate	
Disabled (1)	£20.20	£22.26		£18.10	£20.45	
Non-Disabled (2)	£22.16	£24.14		£21.80	£22.99	
Unknown (3)		£24.42			£20.84	
Difference 2-1	£1.96	£1.88		£3.70	£2.54	
Difference 3-1		£2.16			£0.39	
Difference 2-3		-£0.28			£2.15	
Pay Gap 2-1	8.84	7.79	-1.05	16.97	11.05	-5.92
Pay Gap 3-1		8.85			1.87	
Pay Gap 2-3		-1.16			9.35	

Pay Quartile	Hourly Pay Rate Range Non-Disabled Employees	Number of Non-Disabled Employees	Hourly Pay Rate Range Disabled Employees	Number of Disabled Employees
1	£9.85 - £16.53	320 (81.6%)	£12.08 - £16.27	28 (7.1%)
2	£16.53 - £22.99	296 (78.3%)	£16.86 - £22.71	41 (10.8%)
3	£22.99 - £27.93	337 (81.8%)	£22.99 - £27.49	33 (8.0%)
4	£28.00 - £66.78	346 (87.6%)	£30.94 - £75.18	23 (5.8%)

- The above table demonstrates a pay gap for mean and median pay which means disabled people on average are paid less than non-disabled people, which is close to the national picture. There has been a reduction in the pay gap since last year for both mean and median pay. This highlights the disability pay gap has improved for the organisation

- Out of the colleagues who have shared their disability status with us, 7.9% of colleagues are disabled (125 colleagues), with 82.4% declaring they are non-disabled (1299 colleagues). 153 colleagues (9.7%) have chosen not to share their disability status and have been excluded from the analysis within this report. In the NHS national workforce, 5.7% declared a disability on ESR in 2024, an increase from 2023 where there was 4.9% of disabled colleagues in the workforce. Within the population in England and Wales 17.5% have a disability

- The disability pay gap, the gap between median pay for disabled employees and non-disabled employees, nationally this was 12.7% in 2023, 13.8% in 2021 and 14.1% in 2019 prior to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic; this gap has widened slightly since 2014 when disabled employees earnt 11.7% less than non-disabled employees (ONS April 2022)

- It should be noted because of the NHS Agenda for Change, pay gaps within the organisation are solely influenced by the number of colleagues from different demographic groups and their distributions across the banding only

Sexual Orientation Pay Gap

Sexual Orientation	Mean			Median		
	2024	2025	Change in Sexual Orientation Pay Gap % from 2024-25 to 2023-24	2024	2025	Change in Sexual Orientation Pay Gap % from 2024-25 to 2023-24
	Hourly Rate	Hourly Rate		Hourly Rate	Hourly Rate	
Heterosexual (1)	£22.20	£24.00		£21.80	£22.99	
LGBO (2)	£19.52	£21.91		£18.10	£20.15	
Unknown (3)		£24.38			£22.99	
Difference (1-2)	£2.68	£2.09		£3.70	£2.84	
Difference (3-1)		£0.38			£0.00	
Difference (3-2)		£2.47			£2.84	
Pay Gap (1-2) %	12.07	8.70	-3.37	16.97	12.35	-4.62
Pay Gap (3-1) %		1.56			0	
Pay Gap (3-2) %		10.13			12.35	

Pay Quartile	Hourly Pay Rate Range Heterosexual Employees	Number of Heterosexual Employees	Hourly Pay Rate Range LGBO Employees	Number of LGBO Employees
1	£9.85 - £16.53	331 (84.4%)	£12.08 - £15.33	14 (3.6%)
2	£16.53 - £22.99	315 (83.3%)	£16.53 - £20.84	15 (4.0%)
3	£22.99 - £27.93	346 (84.0%)	£23.60 - £27.01	16 (3.9%)
4	£28.01 - £66.78	332 (84.1%)	£28.87 - £43.78	8 (2.0%)

- The above table demonstrates a pay gap for mean and median pay which means LGBO people on average are paid less than heterosexual/straight people. There has been a reduction in the pay gap since last year for both mean and median pay. This highlights the sexual orientation pay gap has improved for the organisation

- Out of the colleagues who have shared their sexual orientation with us, 3.4% of colleagues identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Other (LGBO) (53 colleagues), with 84.0% identifying as Heterosexual/Straight (1324 colleagues). 200 colleagues (12.7%) have chosen not to share their disability status and have been excluded from the analysis within this report. In the NHS national workforce, 4.2% identified as LGBO on ESR in 2024, an increase from 2023 where there was 4.0% of LGBO colleagues in the workforce. Within the population in England and Wales 3.2% identify as LGBO

- It should be noted because of the NHS Agenda for Change, pay gaps within the organisation are solely influenced by the number of colleagues from different demographic groups and their distributions across the banding only

2 Demographic analysis

National and workforce demographic data comparisons

Age			
	National	**Workforce**	
Under 25	29.1%	**Under 25**	4.1%
25-44	26.5%	**26-45**	51.1%
45-64	25.8%	**46-65**	43.5%
65+	18.6%	**66+**	1.3%

Sex		
	National	**Workforce**
Female	51.0%	55.6%
Male	49.0%	45.4%

Ethnicity		
	National	**Workforce**
White	81.7%	83.1%
Ethnically Diverse Groups	18.3%	13.5%
Unknown	n/a	3.5%

Religion		
	National	**Workforce**
Christian	46.2%	36.9%
Non-Christian	10.6%	14.2%
Atheist/No belief	37.2%	24.2%
Unknown	6.0%	24.7%

Unpaid Carers		
	National	**Workforce**
Carer	8.4%	n/a
Non-Carer	91.6%	n/a

Disabled		
	National	**Workforce**
Disabled	17.5%	12.6%
Non-Disabled	82.5%	80.0%
Unknown	n/a	7.4%

Marital Status		
	National	**Workforce**
Married/Civil Partnership	36.4%	51.8%
Divorced/Separated	9.2%	8.2%
Single	30.9%	29.3%
Widowed	5.0%	0.6%
Unknown	18.5%	10.2%

National Identity		
	National	**Workforce**
UK	90.23%	94.1%
Other	9.77%	5.9%

Gender Identity		
	National	**Workforce**
Cisgender	93.5%	95.2%
Gender diverse	0.5%	0.3%
Unknown	6.0%	4.5%

	National	**Workforce**
Cisgender	93.5%	n/a
Trans Man	0.1%	n/a
Trans Woman	0.1%	n/a
Gender Diverse non specified	0.3%	n/a
Unknown	6.0%	n/a

Sexual Orientation		
	National	**Workforce**
Straight/ Heterosexual	89.4%	83.5%
LGBO	3.2%	3.2%
Unknown	7.5%	13.2%

NB. All NECS demographic data has been collected anonymously from ESR with the exception of gender identity data, which has been collected anonymously from the NHS staff survey.

A full NECS colleague banding analysis is provided in Appendix 3.

Workforce equality summary

- It is important to understand the demographics of the populations we serve and those of our workforce to determine how representative we are as an organisation. Diverse and representative workplaces ensure better outcomes for the communities we work in and our customer organisations, by providing us with a range of different viewpoints and perspectives, which drive innovation

- A comparison of our workforce against the population demographics for England and Wales shows some variation

- It is difficult to achieve a representative workforce for age, due to much of the under 25 age group being under the age of 18, many of which are in full time education. In terms of the over 66 age group, many people within this group have chosen to retire. For this reason, the majority of our workforce is aged between 26 to 65

- Historically, the NHS has a higher proportion of female colleagues than male colleagues. The 2020 NHS Confed report highlights that female colleagues make up 77% of the total NHS workforce. In terms of NECS, our representation is far closer to the population demographics of England and Wales with a workforce that is largely representative in terms of sex

- While the percentage of ethnically diverse colleagues in the organisation is lower than that of the general population, it should be noted that the organisations workforce is mainly concentrated in the North East of England (approximately 5% ethnically diverse groups, Census 2021), which has comparably lower populations of ethnically diverse groups

Workforce equality summary

- The proportion of disabled and non-disabled colleagues within the workforce is lower than that in the general population of England and Wales. This is due to there being over 7% of colleagues in the workforce who have chosen not to share their disability status data with us. Improved disclosure rates could positively impact this figure. A review of the anonymised staff survey data also shows that 27.4% of colleagues who completed the survey shared that they had a disability

- Almost a quarter of NECS colleagues have chosen not to share their religion/beliefs on ESR. For those who have shared their religion/belief with us, this is generally comparable with the demographics for England and Wales

- NECS has a higher proportion of married colleagues within the workforce, however, this could be due to the fact we have a lower percentage of unknown marital status colleagues when compared with the general population. Additionally, age should be taken into account when viewing marital status, as this characteristic covers all age groups and it is not possible to represent all within the workforce

- Within the workforce there is a higher proportion of UK nationals. This is likely due to all offices being based in the UK, with no scope for international recruitment

- In terms of sexual orientation, the representation of LGBO groups within the workforce is on par with that of the general population. However, there is a higher percentage of colleagues who have chosen not to share their sexual orientation on ESR, which accounts for the discrepancy in figures

- The following table also provides an overview of the workforce by banding and protected characteristic. However, because any data where there are 5 people or less has been removed to protect anonymity, the table unfortunately does not provide an accurate overview of the distribution

Recruitment

Characteristics	Sex			Age					Disability Status			Ethnicity Summary		
	Male	Female	Unknown	Under 24	25-44	45-59	60-74	Unknown	Disabled	Non-Disabled	Unknown	White	Ethnically Diverse Groups	Unknown
Applicants	21.7%	53.5%	24.8%	12.6%	50.0%	11.3%	0.9%	25.2%	4.7%	95.3%	0.0%	43.9%	30.9%	25.2%
Shortlisted	28.1%	71.6%	0.2%	17.3%	65.7%	15.0%	1.3%	0.7%	7.0%	90.6%	2.4%	58.6%	40.6%	0.7%
Appointed	25.6%	74.4%	0.0%	20.9%	37.2%	37.2%	4.7%	0.0%	11.6%	44.2%	44.2%	55.8%	9.3%	34.9%

Characteristics	Religion				Sexual Orientation					Marital Status						
	Atheism	Christianity	Non-Christian	Unknown	Bisexual	Gay or lesbian	Heterosexual/ Straight	Other	Unknown	Civil Partnership	Divorced	Legally Separated	Married	Single	Widowed	Unknown
Applicants	23.3%	37.5%	11.1%	28.1%	1.9%	1.7%	69.1%	0.2%	27.1%	2.4%	3.0%	0.3%	31.6%	35.6%	0.4%	26.9%
Shortlisted	30.4%	49.8%	15.0%	4.7%	2.8%	1.8%	91.8%	0.2%	3.3%	3.6%	4.0%	0.6%	42.9%	45.3%	0.5%	3.1%
Appointed	4.7%	20.9%	7.0%	67.4%	0.0%	0.0%	32.6%	0.0%	67.4%	0.0%	0.0%	2.3%	27.9%	18.6%	4.7%	46.5%

Applicants
- The majority of applicants are female, aged between 25-44, non-disabled, and of a white ethnicity. There is also a high proportion of Christian, heterosexual, married and single applicants. The groups with the fewest applicants have chosen not to disclose their age, disability status, ethnicity status, and are of a non-Christian religion. Groups with low application numbers also comprise those who have a sexual orientation listed as other, and are legally separated

Shortlisted
- The majority of shortlisted candidates are female, aged between 25-44, non-disabled, and of a white ethnicity. There is also a high proportion of Christian, heterosexual, married and single shortlisted candidates. The groups with the fewest shortlisted candidates have chosen not to disclose their sex, age, disability status, ethnicity status, and are of an unknown religious status. Groups with low shortlisting numbers also include those who have a sexual orientation listed as other, and are widowed

Appointed
- The majority of appointed candidates are female, aged between 25-59, non-disabled or of an unknown disability status, and of a white ethnicity. There is also a high proportion of unknown religious status, sexual orientation and martial status appointments. The groups with the fewest appointments have chosen not to disclose their sex or age, they have a disability, are of an ethnically diverse group and of a non-Christian religion. Groups with low appointment numbers also include those who have diverse sexual orientations, and are divorced or in a civil partnership

Summary
- The data shows that there is a large proportion of undisclosed data for all characteristics. This indicates that applicants may not feel comfortable sharing their demographic information with us, and more work needs to be done to promote NECS equal opportunities employer status and commitment to equality. In some instances, the percentage of undisclosed data increased the further along the application proceeded, indicating applicants were changing their demographic data to unknown, as the progress was continuing. This is especially apparent for disability status, where no applicants had an undisclosed disability status at application, but this increased to 44.2% at the appointment stage. The data also shows that more work should be done to improve the psychological safety of disabled, ethnically diverse and sexually diverse applicants in particular, and to increase disclosure rates. Work should also be undertaken to encourage more male applicants

Leavers analysis ● ● ●

Characteristics	Sex		Age				Disability Status			Ethnicity Summary		
	Male	Female	Under 25	26-45	46-65	66+	Disabled	Non-Disabled	Unknown	White	Ethnically Diverse Groups	Unknown
Total Leavers %	28.5%	71.5%	9.1%	42.7%	45.7%	2.5%	10.1%	80.6%	9.3%	88.3%	8.2%	3.5%

Characteristics	Religion				Sexual Orientation					Marital Status						
	Atheism	Christianity	Non-Christian	Unknown	Bisexual	Gay or lesbian	Heterosexual/ Straight	Other	Unknown	Civil Partnership	Divorced	Legally Separated	Married	Single	Widowed	Unknown
Total leavers %	24.3%	41.4%	8.2%	26.1%	2.0%	1.7%	80.9%	0.6%	0.3%	1.3%	7.3%	0.6%	46.1%	33.0%	2.4%	9.4%

- Significantly more female colleagues are leaving the organisation than male colleagues. When comparing this to the workforce data the percentage of female leavers are disproportionately higher than the percentage of female colleagues within the workforce

- In terms of age, this is largely comparable to the general workforce. However, there is a slightly higher proportion of under 25s and over 66+ colleagues leaving the workforce

- The disability status of leavers is very similar to that of the workforce. However, there a slightly lower proportion of disabled colleagues have chosen to leave the organisation, than are within the workforce

- A higher proportion of white colleagues and a lower proportion of ethnically diverse colleagues have left the organisation, when compared with the overall organisation demographics

- The religious beliefs of leavers from the organisation is largely representative of the workforce, with the percentage of unknown religion leavers and colleagues in the workforce accounting for any discrepancies

- While the majority of leavers identify as heterosexual/straight, a higher proportion of LGBO groups have left the organisation, when compared to workforce representation

- The marital status of leavers is largely comparable to that of the workforce demographics

Leavers analysis ● ● ●

- A comparison by group of the proportion of each protected characteristic against leaving reason has been undertaken (Appendix 4i). If there are high proportions of leavers tied to a specific protected group, they have been further discussed below

- A higher proportion of male colleagues are leaving the organisation due to the ending of their fixed term contracts, voluntary early retirement with actuarial benefits, and voluntary resignation to undertake further education or training. More female colleagues have cited leaving due to a lack of opportunities, employee transfer or the end of a working requirement

- A higher proportion of under 25s are leaving due to the end of a fixed term contract or to undertake further education or training. Key reasons for 26-65s leaving is promotion, health, retirement, or employee transfer. For the 66+ age group, a key leaving reason is retirement due to ill health or reaching retirement age

- For disability status, the majority of leavers are non-disabled colleagues. For non-disabled colleagues, reasons include employee transfer, end of fixed term contracts and resignation due to work life balance, relocation or promotion. Due to the low number of disabled leavers, it's difficult to infer a key reason for leaving the organisation

- Key reasons for white colleagues leaving the organisation include end of fixed term contract, employee transfer, retirement, and voluntary resignation due to pay and reward. Due to the low number of ethnically diverse leavers, it's difficult to infer a key reason for leaving the organisation

- A higher proportion of atheist colleagues have left the organisation to pursue further education or training (Appendix 4ii). More Christian colleagues have left due to reaching retirement age. A larger proportion of non-Christian colleagues have left due to employee transfer

- Due to the low number of LGBO leavers, it's difficult to infer a key reason for leaving the organisation. Heterosexual colleagues have cited employee transfer, voluntary resignation and retirement amongst key reasons for leaving NECS

- More married colleagues have left the organisation due to retirement. A key reason for single colleagues leaving the organisation is to undertake further education or training

- NECS had a total of 712 leavers in 2024-25. Of these, the key reasons for leaving the organisation (Appendix 4iii) were employee transfer, voluntary resignation due to promotion, and compulsory redundancy. Analysis of the data shows that just over a quarter of leavers chose to complete an exit questionnaire. Exit questionnaires can be helpful in understanding employee experiences and highlighting potential areas for continuous improvement. However, it is the individuals' choice to complete the questionnaire or not. A review was also undertaken to understand colleagues' destinations upon leaving the organisation. Most colleagues had left NECS for work in another NHS organisation

Formal processes

Characteristics	Sex		Age				Disability Status			Ethnicity Summary		
	Male	Female	Under 25	26-45	46-65	66+	Disabled	Non-Disabled	Unknown	White	Ethnically Diverse Groups	Unknown
Grievance	52.9%	47.1%	5.9%	52.9%	41.2%	0.0%	11.8%	64.7%	23.5%	82.4%	17.6%	0.0%
Disciplinary	77.8%	22.2%	0.0%	88.9%	11.1%	0.0%	44.4%	55.6%	0.0%	77.8%	11.1%	11.1%
Capability	100%	0.0%	0.0%	60.0%	40.0%	0.0%	20.0%	60.0%	20.0%	60.0%	0.0%	40.0%

Characteristics	Religion				Sexual Orientation					Marital Status						
	Atheism	Christianity	Non-Christian	Unknown	Bisexual	Gay or lesbian	Heterosexual/ Straight	Other	Unknown	Civil Partnership	Divorced	Legally Separated	Married	Single	Widowed	Unknown
Grievance	23.5%	52.9%	0.0%	23.5%	0.0%	0.0%	82.4%	0.0%	17.6%	0.0%	5.9%	0.0%	29.4%	41.2%	0.0%	23.5%
Disciplinary	22.2%	55.6%	11.1%	11.1%	11.1%	0.0%	88.9%	0.0%	0.0%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Capability	60.0%	0.0%	0.0%	40.0%	0.0%	20.0%	40.0%	0.0%	40.0%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Grievance
- There was an almost even split in gender in Grievance cases in 2024-25, with the majority of cases involving colleagues aged 26-65 years of age. The majority of colleagues involved were non-disabled and of a white ethnicity. Most colleagues involved in grievance processes were also Christian, single and identified as heterosexual/straight.

Disciplinary
- There was a significantly higher proportion of male colleagues than female colleagues involved in disciplinary cases in 2024-25. These colleagues were largely aged between 26-45 years of age, the majority of which were of a white ethnicity. There was an almost even split in the number of non-disabled and disabled colleagues involved in this formal process, with the majority being Christian and heterosexual/straight

Capability
- All colleagues involved in formal capability processes were male. Colleagues were aged between 26-65 years of age, and the majority of colleagues were of a white ethnicity status and identified as non-disabled. The majority of colleagues involved in this formal process were atheist and in terms of sexual orientation either identified as heterosexual or chose not to share their sexual orientation with us

Summary
- It should be noted that there have been very few formal processes occurring in 2024-25. In order to protect anonymity, the exact numbers cannot be disclosed. However, the data indicates that out of the cases that have occurred, there are generally higher rates of male, heterosexual, non-disabled, white ethnicity status colleagues, aged 26-65, entering formal processes. Further work should be undertaken to understand if there is a correlation between service line, banding and the occurrence of formal processes, to understand if there are any patterns or targeted support is required

Training

Characteristics	Sex		Age				Disability Status			Ethnicity Summary		
	Male	Female	Under 25	26-45	46-65	66+	Disabled	Non-Disabled	Unknown	White	Ethnically Diverse Groups	Unknown
%	56.7%	43.3%	3.5%	50.8%	44.7%	1.0%	10.4%	82.4%	7.2%	83.8%	13.5%	2.7%

Characteristics	Religion				Sexual Orientation					Marital Status						
	Atheism	Christianity	Non-Christian	Unknown	Bisexual	Gay or lesbian	Heterosexual/ Straight	Other	Unknown	Civil Partnership	Divorced	Legally Separated	Married	Single	Widowed	Unknown
%	23.7%	38.1%	14.6%	23.6%	1.0%	1.4%	84.6%	0.4%	12.6%	1.7%	7.4%	0.8%	50.7%	28.7%	0.6%	10.2%

- The data indicates that more male colleagues than female colleagues have been accessing training, when compared with the organisational demographics

- The majority of colleagues accessing training are also aged between 26-65

- The disability status, ethnicity, religion/beliefs, sexual orientation and marital status of colleagues accessing training is largely comparable to workforce demographics

- Overall, it shows that NECS colleagues' access to training is largely representative of the workforce

Sickness/Absence Rates
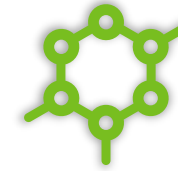
Characteristics	Sex		Age				Disability Status			Ethnicity Summary		
	Male	Female	Under 25	26-45	46-65	66+	Disabled	Non-Disabled	Unknown	White	Ethnically Diverse Groups	Unknown
%	32.2%	67.7%	3.1%	40.2%	54.0%	2.7%	25.9%	63.7%	25.9%	86.6%	10.7%	2.7%

Characteristics	Religion				Sexual Orientation					Marital Status						
	Atheism	Christianity	Non-Christian	Unknown	Bisexual	Gay or lesbian	Heterosexual/ Straight	Other	Unknown	Civil Partnership	Divorced	Legally Separated	Married	Single	Widowed	Unknown
%	17.1%	43.6%	17.1%	22.3%	0.9%	2.7%	79.0%	0.3%	17.1%	1.5%	9.5%	0.6%	47.6%	28.1%	1.8%	11.0%

- The data shows that more female colleagues than male colleagues have experienced absences due to sickness, this is a higher proportion than within the overall workforce

- The majority of colleagues experiencing absence due to sickness are aged between 26-45 years. This is largely representative of the organisational demographics

- Significantly higher disabled colleagues and colleagues of an unknown disability status have experienced sickness related absences, when compared with workforce demographics

- The ethnicity and marital statuses of colleagues experiencing sickness related absences is comparable to that of the workforce

- A lower percentage of atheists and a higher percentage of non-Christians have sickness related absences, when reviewed against organisational demographics

- A higher percentage of LGBO colleagues and lower percentage of heterosexual/straight colleagues have experienced absences due to sickness, when compared with the workforce

- In terms of absence reasons, the key condition is cold, cough, flu – influenza. The next highest reasons relate to gastrointestinal problems and mental health (Appendix 5)

Summary

- The data indicates that more work may be required to understand the needs of female, disabled, unknown disability status and 26-45 year old colleagues. Further work should be undertaken to understand if there is a correlation between these demographic groups and the absence reasons. By doing this, we can seek to understand whether changes need to be made to our health and wellbeing offer and the support available to colleagues

3

Looking forward
Key priorities for 2025-26

Key priorities 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 have an equitable experience through the following actions which are embedded in the EDI Strategy for 2025/26. It should also be noted that the EDI Strategy has been developed using a co-production approach, considering colleague feedback as well as the potential challenges highlighted by the reports and data included within this report.

- 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' demographic statuses are recorded

- 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

Equality objectives 2025-26

Amplify and celebrate diversity

- Embed a psychologically safe workplace and culture through work on reasonable adjustments;
  - Engage managers to have conversations and implement changes.
  - Support colleagues to raise concerns / reasonable support requirements.
- Offer health programmes increasing knowledge of family health and sexual safety.
  - Develop guidance and support for family related needs.
  - Host sessions about gender related health conditions.
- Identify support for mental health linked to protected characteristics, creating opportunities to speak up and share.
- Ensure awareness of the Freedom to Speak Up Guardian, contact details and confidentiality.

✔ Success Measures

- Fewer HR contacts about supporting reasonable adjustments.
- Staff survey scores.
  - Increase in colleagues agreeing NECS takes positive action on health / wellbeing.
  - Fewer reports of bullying, harassment and abuse.
  - Increased attendance at health / wellbeing sessions.
  - Increased FTSU contacts.

Expand insights and increase knowledge into health inequalities

- Increase knowledge of inclusion and health inequalities through training, learning sessions and guidance documentation.
- Provide discussion and coaching forums for managers and colleagues to develop compassion and understanding.
- Develop resources around intersectionality and how health inequalities affect race, sexual orientation, gender reassigment and other factors.
- Upskill colleagues in the undertaking of Equality Impact Assessments.

✔ Success Measures

- A minimum of quarterly training and learning sessions delivered.
- Positive feedback of training and learning sessions.
- Staff survey scores regarding learning and development and health and wellbeing questions.

Utilise collaborative working to further equality

- Create opportunities for learning events, collaboration, reporting and some key group objectives.
- Progress collaborative inclusion networking opportunities.
- Develop a framework for inclusion to support colleague integration when working across teams including sharing learning and colleague alliance journeys.
- Look to integrate colleague network groups and host joint events.
- Develop inclusive recruitment practices across the CSUs as part of the management of change, undertaking an analysis of leavers data.

✔ Success Measures

- Increased collaborative events where colleagues can interact and learn from each other.
- Collaborative learning events arranged and colleague attendance increasing throughout the year.
- Positive feedback from colleagues attending sessions.
- Positive feedback from those attending leadership and resilience training.

Advance organisational commitments to EDI

- Maintain the Executive leadership commitment to delivering objectives and being accountable for improving organisational equality metrics.
- Enable development of the inclusion network including increased membership, clarity of purpose and supporting actions arising from meetings.
- Identify and deliver targeted training for Executive and senior leaders on anti-racism and become an anti-racist employer.
- Deliver quarterly senior manager development sessions on different EDI topics and further training for managers.
- Appoint an Executive EDI Champion.

✔ Success Measures

- Executive leadership of EDI objectives.
- Increased membership of the Inclusion network and attendance at network meetings.
- Delivery of training and senior leadership attendance at training sessions.
- Commitment to being an anti-racist employer and clear communication of this.

4 Appendices

Appendix 1: WRES

Workforce profile	
White	83.0%
Ethnically Diverse Groups	13.5%
Unknown	3.5%

Formal disciplinary process

The total number of staff entering a formal disciplinary process across all NECS for the period 01 April 2024 to 31 March 2025 is 9. with a relative likelihood of 0.88 for white colleagues entering the formal capability process compared with disabled colleagues.

Board Membership	
White	100.0%
Ethnically Diverse Groups	0.0%
Unknown	0.0%

Recruitment

Ethnicity	Shortlisting	Appointment	Relative Likelihood of white staff being appointed
White	812	24	
Ethnically Diverse Groups	563	4	4.16
Unknown	10	15	

Non-mandatory training and CPD access

Ethnicity	No. of staff accessing non-mandatory training and CPD	Relative Likelihood of white staff accessing non-mandatory training and CPD
White	891	
Ethnically Diverse Groups	143	1.01
Unknown	29	

Staff survey indicator (WRES)	Ethnic group	Survey results		
		2023	2024	2024 comparison with 2023
Indicator 5- Percentage of staff experiencing harassment, bullying or abuse from patients, relatives or the public in last 12 months	White	3.1%	3.5%	+0.4%
	Ethnically Diverse Groups	2.9%	1.4%	-1.5%
Indicator 6- Percentage of staff experiencing harassment, bullying or abuse from staff in last 12 months	White	12.1%	11.6%	-0.5%
	Ethnically Diverse Groups	13.1%	9.9%	-3.2%
Indicator 7- Percentage believing that trust provides equal opportunities for career progression or promotion	White	68.1%	60.3%	-7.8%
	Ethnically Diverse Groups	54.7%	53.5%	-1.2%
Indicator 8- In the last 12 months have you personally experienced discrimination at work from Manager/team leader or other Colleagues?	White	4.4%	5.1%	+0.7%
	Ethnically Diverse Groups	10.8%	4.2%	-6.6%

Appendix 2: WDES

Workforce profile	
Disabled	12.6%
Non-Disabled	80.0%
Unknown	7.4%

Board Membership	
Disabled	0.0%
Non-Disabled	60.0%
Unknown	40.0%

Recruitment			
Disability status	**Shortlisting**	**Appointment**	**Relative Likelihood of non-disabled staff being appointed**
Disabled	97	5	
Non-Disabled	1255	19	0.29
Unknown	33	19	

Formal capability process
The total number of staff that entered a formal capability process in NECS for the period 01 April 2023 to 31 March 2025 is 8, or an average of 4 over the 2 year period. The relative likelihood of non-disabled colleagues entering the formal capability process compared with disabled colleagues is 3.18. No colleagues have entered a formal capability process on grounds of ill health over the last 2 years.

Staff survey indicator (WDES)	Disability Status	Survey results		
		2023	**2024**	**2024 comparison with 2023**
Indicator 4a. Percentage of staff experiencing harassment, bullying or abuse from patients/service users, their relatives or the public in the last 12 months	Disabled	5.3%	4.3%	**-1.0%**
	Non-Disabled	2.3%	2.7%	**+0.4%**
Indicator 4b. Percentage of staff experiencing harassment, bullying or abuse from managers in the last 12 months	Disabled	13.5%	10.4%	**-3.1%**
	Non-Disabled	4.4%	5.0%	**+0.6%**
Indicator 4c. Percentage of staff experiencing harassment, bullying or abuse from other colleagues in the last 12 months	Disabled	15.2%	13.0%	**-2.2%**
	Non-Disabled	6.4%	5.3%	**-1.1%**
Indicator 4d- Percentage of staff saying that the last time they experienced harassment, bullying or abuse at work, they or a colleague reported it	Disabled	61.2%	50.0%	**-11.2%**
	Non-Disabled	59.0%	38.6%	**-20.4%**
Indicator 5. Percentage of staff who believe that their organisation provides equal opportunities for career progression or promotion	Disabled	59.2%	52.3%	**-6.9%**
	Non-Disabled	69.2%	61.7%	**-7.5%**
Indicator 6. Percentage of staff who have felt pressure from their manager to come to work, despite not feeling well enough to perform their duties	Disabled	18.2%	16.3%	**-1.9%**
	Non-Disabled	11.1%	11.2%	**+0.1%**
Indicator 7. Percentage of staff satisfied with the extent to which their organisation values their work	Disabled	47.8%	38.5%	**-9.3%**
	Non-Disabled	62.3%	51.3%	**-11.0%**
Indicator 8- Percentage of staff with a long-lasting health condition or illness saying their employer has made reasonable adjustment(s) to enable them to carry out their work	Disabled	82.9%	76.3%	**-6.6%**
Indicator 9a. Staff engagement score (0-10)	Disabled	6.5	5.9	**-0.6**
	Non-Disabled	7.1	6.5	**-0.6**

Appendix 3: Colleague Banding Analysis

Characteristics	Sex		Age				Disability Status			Ethnicity Summary			Nationality		
Band	Male	Female	Under 25	26-45	46-65	66+	Disabled	Non-Disabled	Unknown	White	Ethnically diverse groups	Unknown	UK	EU National	Other
2	8	10	10	*	*	*	*	16	*	17	*	*	17	*	*
3	37	83	11	64	44	*	20	90	10	83	29	8	112	7	*
4	42	63	16	46	41	*	17	83	*	86	14	*	97	*	6
5	109	100	*	108	95	*	28	156	25	169	32	8	195	*	10
6	69	90	*	97	61	*	19	125	15	136	19	*	147	*	8
7	114	131	*	142	99	*	35	191	19	210	29	6	224	8	13
8a	76	76	*	80	70	*	19	131	*	127	21	*	148	*	*
8b	53	54	*	53	53	*	6	98	*	89	16	*	102	*	*
8c	26	33	*	25	34	*	6	49	*	53	*	*	59	*	*
8d	24	22	*	15	29	*	6	38	*	41	*	*	45	*	*
9	6	15	*	*	17	*	*	16	*	19	*	*	21	*	*
VSM	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	4	*	*
Other	7	11	11	6	*	*	*	14	*	15	*	*	16	*	*
Total	574	689	52	645	549	17	159	1010	94	1049	170	44	1187	28	48

Characteristics	Religion				Sexual Orientation					Marital Status						
Band	Atheism	Christianity	Non-Christian	Unknown	Bisexual	Gay or lesbian	Heterosexual/ Straight	Other	Unknown	Civil Partnership	Divorced	Legally Separated	Married	Single	Widowed	Unknown
2	10	*	*	*	*	*	17	*	*	*	*	*	*	13	*	*
3	21	36	23	40	*	*	97	*	19	*	6	*	39	51	*	20
4	21	36	14	34	*	*	91	*	12	*	7	*	48	33	*	14
5	43	79	39	48	*	*	174	*	28	7	16	*	92	66	*	27
6	40	54	21	44	*	*	139	*	18	*	11	*	78	46	*	19
7	69	93	36	47	7	6	201	*	30	*	19	*	134	73	*	14
8a	33	66	22	31	*	*	125	*	23	*	13	*	88	40	*	9
8b	29	39	11	28	*	*	92	*	12	*	6	*	70	19	*	7
8c	18	27	*	10	*	*	49	*	9	*	9	*	37	8	*	*
8d	12	19	*	11	*	*	38	*	8	*	*	*	30	*	*	6
9	*	10	*	7	*	*	17	*	*	*	*	*	12	*	*	*
VSM	*	*	*	*	*	*	4	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Other	*	*	*	7	*	*	11	*	*	*	*	*	*	13	*	*
Total	306	466	179	312	16	21	1055	*	167	21	94	9	633	370	7	129

NB. To protect colleague anonymity, any group with 5 people or less in it has been replaced with a *, to ensure that individuals and their characteristics cannot be singled out

Appendix 4i: Leavers analysis

Characteristics	Sex		Age				Disability Status			Ethnicity Summary		
	Male	Female	Under 25	26-45	46-65	66+	Disabled	Non-Disabled	Unknown	White	Ethnically Diverse Group	Unknown
Death in service	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Dismissal – capability	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%
Dismissal – Some other substantial reason	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%	50.0%	0.0%	50.0%
Employee transfer	21.5%	78.5%	4.1%	42.7%	51.9%	1.3%	8.2%	82.9%	8.9%	92.1%	5.9%	2.0%
End of fixed term contract	69.2%	30.8%	46.2%	38.5%	15.4%	0.0%	23.1%	65.4%	11.5%	80.1%	7.7%	11.5%
End of fixed term contract – Completion of training scheme	21.4%	78.6%	42.9%	28.6%	28.6%	0.0%	7.1%	85.7%	7.1%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%
End of fixed term contract – End of work requirement	25.0%	75.0%	25.0%	75.0%	0.0%	0.0%	25.0%	75.0%	0.0%	25.0%	25.0%	50.0%
End of fixed term contract – Other	0.0%	100.0%	66.7%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	66.7%	33.3%	66.7%	33.3%	0.0%
Flexi retirement	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Redundancy – Compulsory	44.3%	55.7%	0.0%	27.9%	65.6%	6.6%	14.8%	68.8%	16.4%	78.7%	14.7%	6.6%
Retirement – Ill health	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Retirement age	34.8%	65.2%	0.0%	0.0%	78.3%	21.7%	13.0%	69.6%	17.4%	95.7%	0.0%	4.3%

Characteristics	Sex		Age				Disability Status			Ethnicity Summary		
	Male	Female	Under 25	26-45	46-65	66+	Disabled	Non-Disabled	Unknown	White	Ethnically Diverse Group	Unknown
Voluntary early retirement – with actuarial reduction	71.4%	28.6%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	28.6%	71.4%	0.0%	85.7%	14.3%	0.0%
Voluntary resignation – Adult dependents	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Voluntary resignation – Health	37.5%	62.5%	12.5%	62.5%	37.5%	12.5%	25.0%	62.5%	12.5%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Voluntary resignation – Incompatible working relationships	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Voluntary resignation – Lack of opportunities	25.6%	74.4%	18.0%	48.7%	33.3%	0.0%	5.1%	89.7%	5.1%	82.0%	15.4%	2.6%
Voluntary resignation – Other/not known	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%
Voluntary resignation – Pay and reward related	34.8%	65.2%	26.1%	52.2%	21.7%	0.0%	17.4%	78.3%	4.3%	95.7%	4.3%	0.0%
Voluntary resignation – Promotion	27.0%	73.0%	14.3%	69.8%	14.3%	1.6%	9.5%	85.7%	4.8%	85.7%	11.1%	3.2%
Voluntary resignation – Relocation	33.3%	66.7%	22.2%	55.6%	22.2%	0.0%	0.0%	88.9%	11.1%	66.7%	33.3%	0.0%
Voluntary resignation – To undertake further education or training	80.0%	20.0%	60.0%	40.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	80.0%	20.0%	80.0%	0.0%	20.0%
Voluntary resignation – Work life balance	28.6%	71.4%	4.8%	47.6%	47.6%	0.0%	0.0%	90.5%	9.5%	80.9%	9.5%	9.5%

Appendix 4ii: Leavers analysis continued...

Characteristics	Religion				Sexual Orientation					Marital Status						
	Atheism	Christianity	Non-Christian	Unknown	Bisexual	Gay or lesbian	Heterosexual / Straight	Other	Unknown	Civil Partnership	Divorced	Legally Separated	Married	Single	Widowed	Unknown
Death in service	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Dismissal – capability	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Dismissal – Some other substantial reason	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%	0.0%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%
Employee transfer	21.7%	9.2%	49.6%	19.4%	1.3%	2.3%	85.2%	0.0%	11.2%	1.0%	9.2%	0.8%	53.7%	27.9%	2.3%	5.1%
End of fixed term contract	23.1%	7.7%	3.8%	65.4%	0.0%	0.0%	46.1%	0.0%	53.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	7.7%	57.7%	0.0%	34.6%
End of fixed term contract – Completion of training scheme	21.4%	7.1%	0.0%	71.4%	7.1%	0.0%	28.6%	0.0%	64.3%	14.3%	7.1%	0.0%	21.4%	21.4%	0.0%	35.7%
End of fixed term contract – End of work requirement	0.0%	25.0%	0.0%	75.0%	0.0%	0.0%	75.0%	0.0%	25.0%	25.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%	0.0%	25.0%
End of fixed term contract – Other	0.0%	33.3%	33.3%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%	66.7%	0.0%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	33.3%	33.3%	0.0%	33.3%
Flexi retirement	0.0%	50.0%	0.0%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%	0.0%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Redundancy – Compulsory	13.1%	44.3%	16.4%	26.2%	1.6%	1.6%	82.0%	1.6%	13.1%	1.6%	9.8%	1.6%	45.9%	32.8%	4.9%	3.3%
Retirement – Ill health	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Retirement age	21.7%	47.8%	4.3%	26.1%	0.0%	0.0%	91.3%	0.0%	8.7%	0.0%	8.7%	0.0%	52.2%	17.4%	8.7%	13.0%
Characteristics	Religion				Sexual Orientation					Marital Status						
	Atheism	Christianity	Non-Christian	Unknown	Bisexual	Gay or lesbian	Heterosexual / Straight	Other	Unknown	Civil Partnership	Divorced	Legally Separated	Married	Single	Widowed	Unknown
Voluntary early retirement – with actuarial reduction	14.3%	71.4%	0.0%	14.3%	0.0%	0.0%	85.7%	0.0%	14.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	85.7%	14.3%	0.0%	0.0%
Voluntary resignation – Adult dependents	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%	0.0%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Voluntary resignation – Health	12.5%	12.5%	0.0%	75.0%	0.0%	0.0%	75.0%	0.0%	25.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%	0.0%	12.5%	37.5%
Voluntary resignation – Incompatible working relationships	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Voluntary resignation – Lack of opportunities	28.2%	38.5%	5.1%	28.2%	5.1%	2.6%	82.0%	2.6%	7.7%	0.0%	2.6%	0.0%	30.8%	48.7%	0.0%	17.9%
Voluntary resignation – Other/not known	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Voluntary resignation – Pay and reward related	39.1%	30.4%	0.0%	30.4%	4.3%	4.3%	73.9%	4.3%	13.0%	0.0%	8.7%	0.0%	26.1%	52.2%	0.0%	13.0%
Voluntary resignation – Promotion	44.4%	28.6%	4.8%	22.2%	4.8%	0.0%	85.7%	0.0%	9.5%	1.6%	1.6%	0.0%	39.7%	0.5%	1.6%	6.3%
Voluntary resignation – Relocation	33.3%	11.1%	1.6%	44.4%	0.0%	0.0%	77.8%	0.0%	22.2%	0.0%	11.1%	0.0%	11.1%	44.4%	0.0%	33.3%
Voluntary resignation – To undertake further education or training	60.0%	0.0%	0.0%	40.0%	0.0%	0.0%	40.0%	20.0%	40.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	80.0%	0.0%	20.0%
Voluntary resignation – Work life balance	33.3%	19.0%	4.8%	42.9%	4.8%	0.0%	71.4%	0.0%	23.8%	0.0%	9.5%	0.0%	33.3%	33.3%	4.8%	19.0%

Appendix 4iii: Leavers analysis continued...

Leaving Reason	%
Death in service	0.1%
Dismissal – capability	0.3%
Dismissal – Some other substantial reason	0.3%
Employee transfer	54.9%
End of fixed term contract	3.7%
End of fixed term contract – Completion of training scheme	2.0%
End of fixed term contract – End of work requirement	0.6%
End of fixed term contract – Other	0.4%
Flexi retirement	0.3%
Redundancy – Compulsory	8.6%
Retirement – Ill health	0.3%
Retirement age	3.2%

Leaving Reason	%
Voluntary early retirement – with actuarial reduction	1.0%
Voluntary resignation – Adult dependents	0.3%
Voluntary resignation – Health	1.1%
Voluntary resignation – Incompatible working relationships	0.3%
Voluntary resignation – Lack of opportunities	5.5%
Voluntary resignation – Other/not known	0.3%
Voluntary resignation – Pay and reward related	3.2%
Voluntary resignation – Promotion	8.9%
Voluntary resignation – Relocation	1.3%
Voluntary resignation – To undertake further education or training	0.7%
Voluntary resignation – Work life balance	3.0%

Exit Questionnaire	%
Yes	25.8%
No	74.2%

Destination on leaving	%
Abroad – EU Country	0.3%
Abroad – Non-EU Country	0.4%
Death in service	0.1%
Education or training	0.8%
Education sector	0.3%
General practice	2.4%
NHS organisation	64.6%
No employment	10.1%
Other – Private sector	6.5%
Other – Public sector	2.1%
Prison service	0.1%
Private health care	0.8%
Self employed	0.1%
Social services	0.4%
Unknown	10.8%

Official

Appendix 5: Sickness/Absence Rates

Absence Reason	%
S10 Anxiety/stress/depression/other psychiatric illnesses	14.17
S11 Back Problems	2.34
S12 Other musculoskeletal problems	2.70
S13 Cold, Cough, Flu - Influenza	27.92
S14 Asthma	0.21
S15 Chest & respiratory problems	5.19
S16 Headache / migraine	7.42
S17 Benign and malignant tumours, cancers	1.04
S18 Blood disorders	0.10
S19 Heart, cardiac & circulatory problems	1.61
S21 Ear, nose, throat (ENT)	3.94
S22 Dental and oral problems	0.73

Absence Reason	%
S23 Eye problems	1.40
S24 Endocrine / glandular problems	0.21
S25 Gastrointestinal problems	16.50
S26 Genitourinary & gynaecological disorders	2.75
S27 Infectious diseases	0.62
S28 Injury, fracture	1.50
S29 Nervous system disorders	1.40
S30 Pregnancy related disorders	1.82
S31 Skin disorders	0.62
S98 Other known causes - not elsewhere classified	4.62
S99 Unknown causes / Not specified	1.19