

Alder Hey Children's Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

Workforce Disability Equality Standard (WDES)

2024/25



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Workforce Disability Equality Standard (WDES) Introduction

The NHS Workforce Disability Equality Standard (WDES) is designed to improve workplace experience and career opportunities for Disabled people working, or seeking employment, in the National Health Service (NHS). The WDES follows the NHS Workforce Race Equality Standard (WRES) as a tool and an enabler of change. The WDES was introduced in 2019 and is a requirement for all NHS organisations to publish data and action plans set against the ten specific measures 'Metrics' of workforce disability equality. Each of these metrics compares the experiences of disabled and non-disabled staff in the NHS. This report provides us with information relating to our staff at Alder Hey Children's NHS Foundation Trust 2024/25. The data provided which is taken from the national electronic staff record and the national staff survey, will help us to better understand the experiences of our disabled staff so that we can support the development of an action plan to demonstrate progress against the metrics to improve equality and inclusion for disabled staff. The intention of the WDES data is to help improve the experiences of disabled staff working in the NHS.

This report aims to outline the performance of the trust against the WDES metrics, identifying where improvements have been made and where there has been little or no improvement and/or a decline. The analysis of the data and development of the action plan have been completed together with the ACE Network members: (Ability, Celebrate, Educate - Disability and Long-Term Conditions Staff Network).

A note on language: In this report we use the term 'disability' as defined in the Equality Act 2010. However, we do recognise that 'disability' is a dynamic term, within which terms such as 'neurodivergence' and 'neurodiversity' are emerging and changing.

A message from the ACE Disability & Long-Term Conditions Staff Network

Over the past 12 months, the network has grown, and members have shared valuable insights to help shape how the Trust supports its people. The network offers a safe space where staff can raise challenges, with assurance that their voices contribute to finding solutions that enhance working life. Through trusted relationships with HR and senior leaders, the ACE network informs policy and process development by sharing lived experience and staff perspectives. This helps ensure that organisational decisions and resources are better aligned to the needs of both staff and managers. Sharing lived experiences to help shape policies and processes that work better for staff and managers. The network also contributes to discussions on providing reasonable adjustments and creating inclusive environments where all staff can thrive. This year's Workforce Disability Equality Standard results show encouraging progress, and while there is still more to do, the ACE network will continue to play an important role in informing the organisation's work and supporting the delivery of the action plan. Our shared goal is that every colleague feels they belong at Alder Hey, making it a truly inclusive and great place to work.

Helen Russell

Chair of the ACE Staff Network



Emily Kavanagh

Deputy Chair of the ACE Staff



Workforce Disability Equality Standard

Progress made in 2024/25

We are pleased to note that we have made improvements in 9 out of the 10 indicators of disability equality:

- There is an increase in staff working at Alder Hey who had declared a disability
- There has been a positive decrease in the relative likelihood of disabled staff entering the formal capability process
- There has been an improvement in the percentage of staff experiencing harassment, bullying or abuse from patients/service users, their relatives or other members of the public, and managers in the last 12 months
- The number of disabled staff who believe that Alder Hey provides equal opportunities for career progression or promotion has increased
- There is a positive decrease in the number of disabled staff who say that they felt pressure from their manager to come to work, despite not feeling well enough
- There is an increase in the number of disabled staff who say that they feel Alder Hey values their work
- There has been a notable improvement in the proportion of disabled staff who feel that Alder Hey has made adequate reasonable adjustments to ensure them to carry out their work
- The staff engagement score for disabled staff has positively increased
- The Trust Board representation has improved, with voting membership now aligning with the overall workforce

Several actions have been taken in the last 12 months that may well have contributed to the above improvements, these include:

- We continue to support the ACE, Disabilities and Long-Term Conditions staff network
- Working alongside the communications team to raise awareness of the staff network and disabilities awareness
- Development of resources to support managers
- Lunch and Learn sessions have continued, focusing on raising awareness around certain seen and unseen disabilities
- In partnership with the ACE staff network, we have promoted and encouraged staff to declare their disabilities on ESR
- The staff network have introduced Stoma friendly toilet facilities which is being rolled out across the Trust, and they have continued to support environmental walkabouts, identifying areas for improvement that would enhance experiences our staff with disabilities.
- The ACE staff network are finalists in the Alder Hey Star Awards

Improvement from Previous year		No significant improvement or decline		Declining from previous year	
WDES Metric		2022	2023	2024	2025
Metric 1: Percentage of staff who have declared a disability		3.9%	4.98%	6.27%	8.14%%
Metric 2: Relative likelihood of non-disabled staff compared to disabled staff being appointed from shortlisting across all posts		1.89	1.16	1.08	1.22
Metric 3: Relative likelihood of disabled staff compared to non-disabled staff entering the formal capability process, as measured by entry into the formal capability procedure			2.03	6.2	4.9
Metric 4: Percentage of staff experiencing harassment, bullying or abuse in the last 12 months from: Patients/Service users, their relatives, or other members of the public		23.8%	28.7%	19.73%	18.32%
Managers		14.6%	15.2%	12.04%	7.63%
Other colleagues		21.4%	21.0%	17.71%	18.87%
Percentage of disabled staff saying that the last time they experienced harassment, bullying or abuse at work, they or a colleague reported it		53.5%	61.4%	49.64%	53.85%
Metric 5: Percentage of disabled staff believing that Alder Hey Children's Hospital provides equal opportunities for career progression or promotion		54.9%	51.3%	57.80%	59.86%
Metric 6: Percentage of disabled staff feeling pressure to come to work, despite not feeling well enough to perform their duties		23.4%	28.5%	22.35%	20.86%
Metric 7: Percentage of disabled staff saying that feel Alder Hey values their work		42.6%	37.4%	39.79%	44.49%
Metric 8: Percentage of disabled staff saying Alder Hey has made an adequate reasonable adjustment(s) to enable them to carry out their work		74.3%	70.3%	70.77%	80.04%
Metric 9: Engagement Score		6.9	6.8	6.88	7.11
Metric 10: Percentage difference between the organisation's Board voting membership and its overall workforce disaggregated: By voting membership of the Board		0%	0%	-6.0%	0%
By Executive membership of the Board		0%	0%	-6.0%	-8.0%

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

Total Workforce	Disabled	Non-Disabled	Missing or Unknown
4646	378 (8.14%)	3707 (79.79%)	561 (12.07%)

	Disabled			Non-Disabled			Missing or Unknown		
	2023	2024	2025	2023	2024	2025	2023	2024	2025
Cluster 1 (under Band 1, Bands 1-4)	6.6%	7.1%	9.1%	66.3%	71.8%	74.5%	27.0%	21.1%	16.5%
Cluster 2 (Bands 5-7)	6.0%	6.9%	8.8%	82.8%	84.8%	85.0%	11.2%	8.3%	6.1%
Cluster 3 (Bands 8a-8b)	6.8%	7.9%	10.1%	79.6%	82.2%	83.5%	13.6%	9.9%	6.4%
Cluster 4 (Bands 8c-9 & VSM)	6.7%	3.8%	8.7%	82.2%	84.6%	84.8%	11.1%	11.5%	6.5%

Table 1: Non-Clinical Workforce Cohort (data source ESR)

The data shown in Table 1 shows that we have 378 staff (8.14% of the workforce) have declared a disability on the Electronic Staff Record (ESR). While declaration rates have continued to increase year on year; work is needed to raise awareness of the importance of self-recording disability so that we can better support. Over the past 12 months, the ACE Disability and Long-Term Conditions staff network have actively supported this by engaging with staff to promote the importance of recording disability status on ESR. The proportion of staff with an unknown disability status has decreased from 15.82% (704) to 12.07% (561) reflecting a positive trend. Although non-declaration remains a challenge, we are committed to creating an environment where staff feel confident and supported in disclosing their disability status. Table 1 also outlines the distribution of disabled and non-disabled staff across the different Agenda for Change (AfC) pay bands, with increased observed across all non-clinical clusters. The number of staff declaring a disability has increased across all four clusters amongst the non-clinical workforce, with Cluster 1 having the highest number of staff (72) who have declared a disability.

Table 2 presents data from the clinical workforce. There has been an increase in disability declarations in Cluster 1, 2, and 3 over the last 12 months. However, Cluster 4 and 6 continue to report no staff who have declared a disability. This highlights the need to further exploration into the barriers to declaration at senior clinical levels. Despite year-on-year improvements, non-declaration rates remain relatively high across all clusters. We recognise the importance of understanding the reasons behind this and we are committed to implementing measures that foster a culture of safety, openness, and support for all staff

	Disabled			Non-Disabled			Missing or Unknown		
	2023	2024	2025	2023	2024	2025	2023	2024	2024
Cluster 1 (Bands 1 - 4)	4.7%	6.1%	9.9%	68.8 %	76.6%	75.5%	26.5%	17.4%	12.6%
Cluster 2 (Band 5 - 7)	5.0%	7.1%	8.9%	74.3%	78.5%	80%	20.7%	14.4%	11.1%
Cluster 3 (Bands 8a - 8b)	3.7%	4.5%	4.8%	69.9%	76.6%	79.1%	26.4%	18.9%	16.1%
Cluster 4 (Bands 8c – 9 & VSM)	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	84.0%	89.7%	93.9%	16%	10.3%	6.1%
Cluster 5 (Medical and Dental staff, Consultants)	1.08%	2.38%	2.89%	71.68%	78.91%	83.6%	27.2%	18.7%	13.5%
Cluster 6 (Medical and Dental staff, non-consultant career grade)	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	70%	85.71%	82.6%	30%	14.3%	17.4%
Cluster 7 (Medical and Dental staff, Medical and Dental trainee grades)	1.69%	1.72%	3.06%	69.5%	96.5%	93.8%	28.8%	1.7%	3.06%

Table 2: Clinical Workforce (data source ESR)

WDES Metric 2 – Relative likelihood of appointment from shortlisting

This metric compares the data for non-disabled and disabled staff regarding the relative likelihood of being appointed. The metric includes both internal and external recruitment.

(Data source: Trust’s Recruitment data)

WDES METRIC	DESCRIPTOR	2023/24	2024/25
2	Relative likelihood of non-disabled staff compared to disabled staff being appointed from shortlisting across all posts	1.08	1.22

Table 3: Relative likelihood of appointment from shortlisting

In 2024/25, the relative likelihood of non-disabled staff being appointed from shortlisting increased from 1.08 to 1.22. this indicates that non-disabled applicants were 22% more likely to be appointed than disabled applicants compared to 8% in the previous year. Whilst this increase is moderate, it highlights a growing disparity in appointment outcomes. We are committed to ensuring we have equitable recruitment practices and recognise the importance of ensuring that disabled applicants have a fair and equal access to recruitment opportunities.

We will continue to work with the recruitment team to implement initiatives that ensures inclusive practices. We are currently a Disability Confident employer and guarantee interviews to disabled applicants who meet the minimum criteria for a job role. We are working towards becoming a Disability Confident Leader with support from the ACE staff network.

WDES Metric 3 – Relative likelihood of entering formal capability process

WDES METRIC	DESCRIPTOR	2023/24	2024/25
3	Relative likelihood of disabled staff compared to non-disabled staff entering the formal capability process, as measured by entry into the formal capability procedure	6.2	4.9

Table 4: Relative likelihood of entering formal capability process

As of March 2025, the likelihood ratio was 4.9, a decrease from 6.2 in the previous year. This figure is derived from a very small number of cases: specifically, 0.5 out of 378 disabled staff entered a formal capability process over the last 2 years, compared to 2 out of 3707 non-disabled staff. This figure is extremely small and when calculated as a relative likelihood gives rise to concern, although it does show that only 1 person with a disability over a period of 2 years entered the formal capability process. It is important to note that the single case involving a disabled staff member was not directly or indirectly related to their health or disability. We are confident that our processes and support is robust, and we have a very small number of staff who enter the formal capability process.

We maintain robust processes designed to prevent staff from entering formal capability procedures unnecessarily. We continue to work closely with HR Colleagues and the ACE staff network to monitor this data, raise awareness, and ensure that appropriate support and guidance is available for both staff and managers.

WDES Metric 4 – Harassment, bullying or abuse in the last 12 months

This metric compares the responses for disabled and non-disabled staff who have experienced harassment, bullying or abuse in the last 12 months. (Data source: Question 13, NHS Staff Survey)

WDES METRIC	DESCRIPTOR: Percentage of disabled staff compared to non-disabled staff experiencing harassment, bullying or abuse in the last 12 months from:	Disabled staff 2023/24	Non-disabled staff 2023/24	Disabled staff 2024/25	Non-disabled staff 2024/25
4 NHS Staff Survey results	Patients/Service users, their relatives, or other members of the public	19.73%	16.0%	18.32%	12.06%
	Managers	12.04%	4.55%	7.63%	4.00%
	Other colleagues	17.71%	10.20%	18.87%	9.67%
	Percentage of disabled staff compared to non-disabled staff saying that the last time they experienced harassment, bullying or abuse at work, they or a colleague reported it	53.47%	52.22%	60.78%	50.14%

Table 5: Harassment, bullying or abuse in the last 12 months

The 2024/25 NHS Staff Survey demonstrates that while some improvements have been made, disabled staff remain disproportionately affected by harassment, bullying and abuse compared to their non-disabled colleagues.

From patients/service/users, their relatives or other members of the public both disabled and non-disabled staff reported fewer incidents than in 2023/24. However, the reduction was greater for non-disabled staff, resulting in a widening gap, with disabled staff continuing to be more affected.

From managers there was a marked improvement for disabled staff, with reported experiences falling from 12.04% to 7.63%. Non-disabled staff also saw a small improvement (4.44% to 4.0%), although disabled staff remain almost twice as likely to experience bullying and harassment from managers.

From other colleagues, experiences worsened slightly for disabled staff, rising from 17.1% to 18.87%, while non-disabled staff saw a small reduction (10.2% to 9.67%). This has widened the disparity between the two groups.

Reporting of incidents increased significantly for disabled staff (53.47% to 60.78%), who are now more likely to report harassment, bullying or abuse than non-disabled staff (50.14%).

Overall, while progress has been made in some areas, particularly in reducing incidents from managers and improving reporting rates, disabled staff remain disproportionately affected by harassment, bullying and abuse. The widening gap in experiences between disabled and non-disabled staff, particularly in relation to colleagues and patients/service users, highlights the need for continued targeted action to create an equitable and inclusive working environment.

WDES Metric 5 – opportunities for career progression or promotion

WDES METRIC	DESCRIPTOR	Disabled 2023/24	Non-disabled 2023/24	Disabled 2024/25	Non-disabled 2024/25
5 NHS Staff Survey results	Percentage of disabled staff compared to non-disabled staff believing that Alder Hey Children's Hospital provides equal opportunities for career progression or promotion	57.80%	63.55%	59.86%	65.42%

Table 6: Opportunities for career progression or promotion

The data presented in Table 6 shows an improvement in the percentage of staff who believe that Alder Hey provides equal opportunities for career progression and promotion. 59.86% of disabled staff and 65.42% of non-disabled staff now hold this view, compared to 57.80% and 63.55% in 2023/24. Whilst both groups report improvement, disabled staff continue to perceive fewer opportunities compared to their non-disabled colleagues. Encouragingly, the gap has reduced slightly, though further work is required to ensure equitable access to career development and progression opportunities for disabled staff.

WDES Metric 6 – Presenteeism

WDES METRIC	DESCRIPTOR	Disabled 2023/24	Non- disabled 2023/24	Disabled 2024/25	Non-disabled 2024/25
6 NHS Staff Survey results	Percentage of disabled staff compared to non-disabled staff saying that they have felt pressure from their manager to come to work, despite not feeling well enough to perform their duties	22.35%	14.69%	20.86%	13.23%

Table 7: Presenteeism

The data presented in table 7 shows a positive reduction in the proportion of staff reporting that their felt under pressure from their manager to attend work when unwell. 20.86% of disabled staff and 13.23% of non-disabled staff reported this experience, compared with 22.35% and 14.69% in 2023/24. This gap has narrowed, although disabled staff are still more likely to report experiencing this pressure. This highlights the ongoing need to support managers to foster inclusive management practices and ensuring staff wellbeing is priority.

WDES Metric 7 – Satisfaction rate on how the organisation values staff

WDES METRIC	DESCRIPTOR	Disabled 2023/24	Non-disabled 2023/24	Disabled 2024/25	Non- disabled 2024/25
7 NHS Staff Survey results	Percentage of disabled staff compared to non-disabled staff saying that are satisfied with the extent to which Alder Hey Children's Hospital values their work	39.79%	51.68%	44.49%	53.72%

Table 8: Satisfaction rate on how the organisation values staff work

The data in Table 8 shows an encouraging improvement in staff satisfaction with how their work is valued at Alder Hey. 44.49% of disabled staff and 53.72% of non-disabled staff are satisfied with the extent to which Alder Hey values their work, compared to 39.79% and 51.68% in 2023/24. Both groups have seen improvements, with disabled staff reporting a stronger increase. As a result, the gap between disabled staff and non-disabled staff has narrowed, although we need continue to focus on ensuring all staff feel equally valued for their contributions.

WDES Metric 8 – Reasonable Adjustments

WDES METRIC	DESCRIPTOR	2023/24	2024/25
8 NHS Staff Survey results	Percentage of disabled staff saying Alder Hey Children’s Hospital has made an adequate reasonable adjustment(s) to enable them to carry out their work	70.77%	80.04%

Table 9: Reasonable Adjustments

Table 9 indicates a notable improvement in the proportion of disabled staff who feel that Alder Hey has made adequate reasonable adjustments to ensure them to carry out their work. 80.04% of disabled staff reported positively, compared to 70.77% in 2023/24. This represents a significant improvement of over 9 percentage points and demonstrates the Trust’s commitment to creating an inclusive workplace where staff are supported to perform their roles effectively. Nevertheless, we still need to ensure that all disabled staff’s needs are met, focusing on timely, proactive and effective implementation of reasonable adjustments.

WDES Metric 9 – The Engagement of disabled staff

WDES METRIC	DESCRIPTOR	Disabled 2023/24	Non-disabled 2023/24	Disabled 2024/25	Non- disabled 2024/25
9 NHS Staff Survey Results Engagement Score	The staff engagement scores for disabled and non-disabled staff Has Alder Hey Children’s Hospital taken action to facilitate the voices of disabled staff in your organisation to be heard	6.88	7.45	7.11	7.40
		Yes		Yes	

Table 10: The Engagement of disabled staff

Table 10 shows encouraging progress in staff engagement. The engagement score for disabled staff increased from 6.88 to 7.11, while the score for non-disabled staff remained stable (7.45 to 7.40). This has resulted in a narrowing of the engagement gap between the two groups. The Trust continues to take action to ensure the voices of disabled staff are heard, with positive feedback reflecting our commitment. Ongoing work to sustain this progress is needed and we will continue to learn from our ACE staff network, ensuring staff voices are heard and understood.

WDES Metric 10 – Board representation

WDES METRIC	DESCRIPTOR	Disabled 2023/24	Non- disabled 2023/24	Disabled 2024/25	Non- disabled 2024/25
10 Board Representation	Percentage difference between the organisation’s Board voting membership and its overall workforce disaggregated:				
	By voting membership of the Board	-6.0%	-1.0%	0%	-3.0%
	By Executive membership of the Board	-6.0%	13.0%	-8.0%	10.0%

Table 11: Board Representation

The data from 2024/25 shows that Board representation has improved, with voting membership now aligning with the overall workforce. This marks progress from -6.0% difference in 2023/24 to 0% in 2024/25. It should be noted, however, that the numbers are small, with only one voting member currently declaring a disability. While progress is evident, the comparison between executive membership and the overall workforce has shifted from -6% for disabled staff and +13% for non-disabled staff in 2023/24 to -8% for disabled staff and +10% for non-disabled staff. Overall, the trust has achieved the Board voting membership, which is a positive step forward. However, a few Board members continue to have an unknown status. Reducing the level of unknown declarations at senior level remains an important priority, helping to build confidence among staff that it is safe and encouraged to share their disability status.

Conclusions and next steps

The 2024/25 WDES report provides an assessment of our current position regarding the experiences of staff with disabilities working at Alder Hey. Overall, the findings demonstrate positive progress, with evidence that the Trust is moving in the right direction. However, we recognise that there is still much more to do, and the following areas have been identified as priorities for improvement:

- Continue to encourage all staff to declare their disability status on ESR
- Explore barriers that exist, preventing medical staff/senior clinicians from declaring disabilities
- We will continue to try and reduce the incidents of disabled staff experiencing harassment, bullying or abuse from colleagues
- We will ensure that our executive search agencies are committed to diversity in their policies and processes

With the support and involvement of the ACE staff network, the WDES action plan (Appendix 1) has been updated in response to the 2024/25 WDES data. Together, we will focus on delivering improvements against the themes identified, ensuring strategies are developed and implemented to create a more inclusive and supported workplace for all.

Appendix 1: WDES Improvement Plan 2024/25

Action	Progress	Next Steps	Update
Continue to increase disability declaration rates on ESR Metric 1, 9	- Continue to support staff network initiatives to raise awareness of the importance of self-declaration - Staff network held promotion events providing staff encouraging staff to declare any disability or long-term condition - Continued to promote the Reasonable Adjustments policy - Launched 'Management Essentials' training for managers focusing on EDI and reasonable adjustments - Launched 'Thriving Managers' programme which has and EDI focus	- Share WDES data in the form of an infographic with the wider workforce (link to HI action 1) - Launch 'People of the Posters' disability campaign - Tackle fear and stigma attached to declaration amongst medical staff - Promote the staff network amongst medics - Develop alternative confidential routes to declare disabilities - Create a Managers wellbeing forum where managers can come together to share challenges, gain information and support their wellbeing - Recruit EDI Allies across all divisions - Train in-house workplace assessors	We continue to promote the Reasonable Adjustments policy with our staff and managers We have begun to build a resource Hub which will provide staff and managers with information and resources. This hub will be hosted on the intranet so its easily accessible for all staff Continue to deliver 'Management Essentials EDI Introduction' programme. We will monitor the attendance and provide signposting managers to resources that will support them.
Continue to monitor and take action to prevent staff from experiencing harassment,	- Continue to raise awareness for reporting mechanisms to ensure colleagues have the confidence to speak up safely about issues. - Continue to work in partnership with Freedom	- Plan to deliver Reflective session in targeted areas in partnership with FTSUG - Continue to implement actions identified as part of the Staff Survey Action Group	The new Safe and Respectful Behaviour policy has been launched We continue to deliver 'Manager's essentials EDI Introduction' programme which aims at raising awareness of equality, diversity, and inclusion to

bullying or abuse from colleagues Metric 4	to Speak Up Guardian (FTSU) • Launched the new 'Safe and Respectful Behaviour' Policy • Launched new Trust values providing engagement sessions with staff • Launched 'Management Essentials & Thriving Leaders' EDI training	• Launch 'People of the Posters' disability campaign • Share the WDES Infographic with the wider workforce	managers. 'Thriving Leaders' has also been launched We are working with Teams to deliver Reflective sessions providing staff with a psychologically safe space, this will align to the staff survey results and the new Trust values, promoting civility.
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