

# WDES Executive Summary Report

This 2019 WDES Executive Summary Report presents key findings from the WDES Annual Report 2019 (and highlights next steps in the development of the WDES programme).

In April 2019, the NHS Workforce Disability Equality Standard (WDES) was formally launched and mandated to all NHS Trusts and Foundation Trust in England through the NHS Standard Contract. The WDES comprises a collection of 10 Metrics that incorporate data from three primary sources; the NHS Electronic Staff Record (ESR), NHS Staff Survey, and local HR and recruitment systems.

The Workforce Disability Equality Standard (WDES) has been introduced to make a positive impact for the benefit of Disabled people, either currently working in, or aspiring to work in, the NHS. The WDES Annual Report 2019 provides the first national review of the NHS workforce relating to workplace representation and career experiences of Disabled staff.

The WDES is underpinned by the Social Model of Disability, which proposes that people are disabled because of societal barriers, rather than a long-term health condition. With the social model in mind, the WDES will help inform year on year improvements in reducing those barriers that impact most on the career and workplace experiences of Disabled staff; driving changes in attitudes, increasing employment and career opportunities, and implementing long-lasting change for Disabled people.

The detailed data analysis provides a valuable resource that allows NHS trusts to benchmark their 10 metrics data on a trust type and trust size basis as well as on a local, regional and national level basis. The report also provides baseline data and analysis, so that in future years, trusts can use this as a measuring tool to understand where progress has taken place and where improvements need to be made.

## Key Findings

### Metric 1 - Workforce representation

Overall, 3.6% of the non-clinical and 2.9% of the clinical workforce (excluding medical and dental staff) had declared a disability through the NHS Electronic Staff Record.

For medical and dental staff, 1.94% of trainee grades, 1.2% of non-consultants career grade and 0.8% of consultants had declared a disability.

### Metric 2 - Recruitment

Disabled people are less likely to be appointed.

Non-disabled job applicants are 1.23 times more likely to be appointed from shortlisting compared to Disabled applicants.

### Metric 3 - Capability

Disabled staff are 1.1 times more likely to go through formal capability processes on the basis of performance compared to non-disabled staff.

### Metric 4 – Harassment, bullying and abuse

Disabled staff are more likely to experience harassment, bullying and abuse.

Disabled staff are 7 percentage points more likely from patients (33.8% vs 26.8%), 6.8 percentage points more likely from managers (19.8% vs 13.0%) and 8.7 percentage points more likely from colleagues (26.8% vs 18.1%) compared to non-disabled staff.

### Metric 5 - Career progression

Disabled staff are 7.4 percentage points less likely to believe that their trust provides equal opportunities for career progression or promotion, compared to non-disabled staff. (75.3% vs. 82.7%).

### Metric 6 - Presenteeism

Disabled staff are 9 percentage points more likely, compared to non-disabled staff, to be pressured to come into work despite not feeling well enough to perform their duties (32.0% vs. 23.0%).

### Metric 7 - Feeling valued

Disabled staff are 10.7 percentage points less likely to say that they feel their organisation valued their work when compared to non-disabled staff (37.2% vs. 47.9%).

### Metric 8 - Workplace adjustments

72.4% of Disabled staff felt that their employer had made adequate adjustments to enable them to carry out their work.

### Metric 9 - Disabled staff engagement

Disabled staff are less likely to feel engaged with the NHS Staff Survey engagement score of 6.64, compared to 7.01 for non-disabled staff.

### Metric 10 - Board representation

Overall 2.1% of board members declared a disability; 1 percentage point lower than the percentage of Disabled staff in the wider workforce.

## Conclusion

The WDES Annual report 2019 provides the first national review of the NHS workforce that relates to the workplace representation and career experience of Disabled staff. The data analysis clearly highlights disparities between the experiences of Disabled and non-disabled staff across the 10 WDES metrics. This evidence demonstrates the need for trusts to take robust action, with monitoring and evaluation, to ensure that progress takes place and to embed the WDES into ongoing work programmes that support positive change.

## Next steps

Over the coming 12 months, NHS England/Improvement will continue to support progress through a range of actions and activities including an innovation fund, webinars, best practice guides and the dissemination of information and evidence-based actions that will lead to further improvement.

In addition, The WDES team will also:

- review the WDES metrics and reporting process for 2020;
- work to support NHS trusts to improve their Disability Declaration rate;
- continue engagement with the CQC to include the WDES within the well-led domain inspection regime;
- work with the Model Hospital team to provide additional data resources and capability to trusts;
- review the governance of the WDES;
- include the national arms-length bodies (ALBs) in the WDES reporting framework.

The NHS People Plan commits the NHS to a range of programmes that directly relates to the WDES such as improving access to flexible working, retaining staff, reducing bullying and harassment and supporting more diverse leadership teams.

## Trust Actions

The culture of each trust and the actions that they take locally directly impact on staff experiences. Therefore, trusts are recommended to:

- use the national report to benchmark their position and discuss the results and actions with leaders, HR staff, Disabled staff and Disabled staff networks;
- establish working groups to take the lead on reviewing the trusts' data and identifying future actions (using the national report to inform any decisions);
- review other relevant datasets (such as bullying and harassment) to better understand their WDES data and explore opportunities to improve current performance;
- review and report internally and externally, on progress against the actions published in trusts' WDES action plans;
- ask leaders to communicate key messages across the workforce – data, actions, stories;
- facilitate the appointment of a Board champion for disability equality;

- talk about, and share 'what works' with peer organisations, including at a regional level;
- support Disabled staff networks to engage with other networks;
- make sure that datasets are in place for 2020 WDES reporting and publishing.

The WDES team are open to feedback about the WDES and would welcome any comments at [england.wdes@nhs.net](mailto:england.wdes@nhs.net)