# East Kent Hospital University Foundation Trust’s (EKHUFT) Workforce Disability Equality Standard (WDES) Action Plan 2023/2024

The NHS must welcome all, with a culture of belonging and trust. We must understand, encourage and celebrate diversity in all its forms (NHS People Plan 2020). EKHUFT’s aim is to become a truly inclusive organisation that eliminates the conditions where discrimination occurs. To achieve this, we must commit ourselves to better understand and address all forms of discrimination and inequality. We know this will be a challenging task given the current inequalities faced by our workforce. We are motivated to make meaningful, long lasting change.

Since 2015 all NHS organisations have been required to demonstrate how they are addressing disability equality issues in a range of staffing areas through the Workforce Disability Equality Standard (WDES).

This WDES Action Plan lists actions that EKHUFT are/ will take to improve disability equality within the organisation. This action plan was created by the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Team in collaboration and consultation with the five staff equality networks; Ethnic Diversity Engagement Network (EDEN), Staff Disability Network, Neurodiversity Network, Women’s Network, LGBTQIA+ Staff Network. This action plan supports the EDI Strategy and NHS England EDI Improvement Plan.

This document has been produced in an accessible format in accordance with the Accessible Information Standard.

## A note on language

In the pursuit of equality, diversity and inclusion, language is powerful and can help to shift attitudes and behaviours. This document acknowledges that some definitions and terminology do not always reflect the identities or lived experience of individuals.

The term ‘disability’ is used in the strategy as it is defined in the Equality Act 2010, recognising that the Act’s intention is both positive and protective for people with disabilities. The law says someone is disabled if both of these apply: they have a 'physical or mental impairment' and the impairment 'has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'. However, we recognise that ‘disability’ is a dynamic term. Under the Equality Act 2010 disability includes neurodiversity. Neurodiversity is a term used to describe a range of neurological differences including, but not exclusive, of dyslexia, dyspraxia, dyscalculia, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), autism.

Therefore, while this action plan uses these terms, it is intended to positively impact groups and individuals beyond this term. We recognise and respect that individuals, communities and groups will identify themselves differently.

## Our Approach

EKHUFT have invested in a small, dedicated EDI Team to drive this work. The team’s mission statement is; working collaboratively with our valuable staff to action meaningful change.

Seeing issues of inequality in isolation means failing to see the whole complex picture of how inequality becomes compounded by many aspects in organisations. Therefore, the EDI team are employing an evidence-based, multi-dimensional approach using Thompson’s PCS Model.

## **Thompson’s PCS Model**

This provides a multifaceted approach to understanding inequality and addressing it on three interlinked organisational layers; personal (individual behaviours and thoughts), cultural (shared norms and values e.g. in teams, services), structural (policies, processes e.g. recruitment, investigations).

The rationale is that using this systems approach promotes understanding of issues of inequality on each level and also promotes actions being completed to address each level.

## Monitoring Progress

The application and progress of this action plan will be driven by the EDI Team. The action plan will be reviewed and monitored via the Disability and Neurodiversity staff networks and EDI Steering Group and updates will be reported to the Board and Executive Team.

## Workforce Disability Equality Standard (WDES) Metrics

### Metric 1

Percentage of staff in Agenda for Change (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.

### Metric 2

Relative likelihood of non-disabled staff compared to Disabled staff being appointed from shortlisting across all posts.

### Metric 3

Relative likelihood of Disabled staff compared to non-disabled staff entering the formal capability process on the grounds of performance, as measured by entry into the formal capability procedure.

### Metric 4

Percentage of Disabled staff compared to non-disabled staff experiencing harassment, bullying or abuse from:

1. Patients/Service users, their relatives or other members of the public
2. Managers
3. Other colleagues
4. 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.

### Metric 5

Percentage of Disabled staff compared to non-disabled staff believing that the Trust provides equal opportunities for career progression or promotion.

### Metric 6

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.

### Metric 7

Percentage of Disabled staff compared to non-disabled staff saying that they are satisfied with the extent to which their organisation values their work.

### Metric 8

Percentage of Disabled staff saying that their employer has made reasonable adjustment(s) to enable them to carry out their work.

Note: Prior to 2022, the term “adequate adjustments” was used.

### Metric 9a

The staff engagement score for Disabled staff, compared to non-disabled staff.

### Metric 9b

Whether the Trust has taken action to facilitate the voices of Disabled staff in the organisation to be heard.

### Metric 10 Board representation

Percentage difference between the organisation’s board voting membership and its organisation’s overall workforce, disaggregated:

* by voting and non-voting membership of the board
* by executive and non-exec membership of the board.

## Workforce Disability Equality Standard (WDES) Action Plan

* + - 1. Develop the Disability Staff Network to provide a safe and supportive space for staff who have disabilities. Ongoing.
			2. The Staff Disability Network in collaboration with the EDI Team to engage in and promote disability events and awareness of disability. Ongoing.
			3. Develop the Neurodiversity Staff Network to provide a safe and supportive space for staff with neurodivergence and also take forward actions to increase awareness and accessible information for staff. Ongoing.
			4. The Neurodiversity Staff Network in collaboration with the EDI Team to engage in and promote disability events and awareness of disability and features of neurodivergence. Ongoing.
			5. Workplace Adjustment Policy and guidance to be created to embed the Trust’s legal responsibility to make workplace adjustments for staff with disabilities or those with long-term health conditions. Then pilot to be conducted. Pilot planned for early 2024.
			6. NHS health passports to be trialled; this is linked to the workplace adjustment pilot. Health passports allow individuals to easily record information about their condition, any reasonable adjustments they may have in place and any difficulties they face. The passport helps to ensure there is a clear record and can be used with new line managers to explain what is needed in the workplace to help them carry out their role. Pilot planned for early 2024.
			7. Campaign to encourage staff to declare their disability on their Electronic Staff Record; to be delivered via information on staff zone, disability network and neurodiversity group raising awareness. This includes the Executive Team and Board. Ongoing.
			8. Empowering staff to share their lived experience stories to raise awareness and promote meaningful culture change, including at Board Meetings. Ongoing.
			9. Active use of EDI data on the Model Health System which will include WDES and WDES data so targeted interventions can be made and evaluated on a regular basis. To start when dashboard is created by NHS England.
			10. Continue to embed Just and Learning Culture to promote and embed meaningful change. Ongoing.
			11. Launch of new Resolution Policy and approach to replace former disciplinary processes, with focus on informal, team-based early resolution. Launched November 2022, ongoing.
			12. Promotion of non-mandatory disability related training via the Disability Staff Network and other staff networks. Ongoing.
			13. EDI Team to be part of the training of the Connectors role to enable them to engage with staff across the Trust to support the EDI agenda, Disability Staff Network and all other staff networks.
			14. Holding events to educate the workforce and celebrate diversity e.g. neurodiversity awareness, UK Disability History Month. Ongoing.
			15. Active engagement in the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Scheme. Disability Staff Network to raise awareness of non-visible disabilities, signing of a Trust pledge and distribution of sunflower badges. Ongoing.
			16. Active engagement in the Culture and Leadership Programme, launched July 2023.
			17. Policy to be written requesting staff network members have protected time to engage in staff network activity. Early 2024.
			18. Continue walk in my shoes project where staff can gain understanding of disability and different roles by spending time with different members of staff.
			19. Implement Inclusion Ambassadors programme to train staff to become Inclusion Ambassadors to be on interview panels. Aim is to make the recruitment process fairer and less biased. Training started in October 2023.
			20. EDI Team are leading a Making Recruitment Fairer working group to evaluate and review recruitment processes and policies to identify bias and embed EDI in processes, started November 2022, ongoing.
			21. Promote use of the Debiasing and Value-Based Recruitment toolkit for frequent recruiters/ recruiting managers, ongoing.
			22. Review of all disciplinary and grievance processes including training to identify bias and make changes to embed EDI. Started November 2022, ongoing.
			23. Launch of new Resolution Policy and approach to replace former disciplinary processes, with focus on informal, team-based early resolution. Launched November 2022, ongoing.
			24. Examine complaints data for themes and learning, February 2024 onwards.
			25. Explore disability leadership programmes. November 2023 onwards.
			26. Promote non-mandatory training via the disability and neurodiversity staff networks, ongoing.
			27. EDI Team to work with Learning & Development Team to monitor training update and identify care groups, teams with lower uptake of EDI training so targeted approach to address this can be made, ongoing.
			28. Explore mentoring and coaching opportunities with the Learning and Development Team, to start early 2024.
			29. Active engagement in Kent and Medway programme for internationally recruited staff including cultural competency training, September 2023 onwards.
			30. Line managers and supervisors to have well-being conversation training and have regular, effective wellbeing conversations with their teams, October 2023 onwards.
			31. Identify pay gaps and action plans to address these. Ongoing.
			32. New flexible working policy launched, continue to promote this, ongoing.
			33. Examine exit interview data for themes and learning, April 2024.
			34. Celebrate successes and good practice in staff communications.
			35. Promote EDI activity and training opportunities via staff communications, ongoing.
			36. Chief executives, chairs and board members must have specific and measurable EDI objectives to which they will be individually and collectively accountable. November 2023 onwards.
			37. Board members, system leaders and those with line management responsibilities to routinely demonstrate their understanding of, and commitment to, equality and health inequalities
			38. Board/Committee papers (including minutes) to identify equality and health inequalities related impacts and risks and how they will be mitigated and managed.
			39. Board members, system and senior leaders to ensure levers are in place to manage performance and monitor progress with staff and patients.
			40. The EDI Team to deliver regular EDI learning sessions at Board Development Days.
			41. Revaluate Disability Confident Accreditation and work towards the next level of accreditation. Early 2024.
			42. Promote the Trusts Respect and Inclusion Charter. Ongoing.
			43. Bespoke training for managers about how to support staff with disabilities and health conditions to be facilitated by the Occupational Health Team. Started July 2023, ongoing.
			44. Training for staff about how to keep well at work to be facilitated by Occupational Health Team, to start early 2024.
			45. Review data by protected characteristic on bullying, harassment, discrimination and violence. Reduction targets to be set (by March 2024) and plans implemented to improve staff experience year-on-year.
			46. Ensure safe and effective policies and processes are in place to support staff affected by domestic abuse and sexual violence.
			47. Create an environment where staff feel able to speak up and raise concerns, with steady year-on-year improvements.
			48. Provide comprehensive psychological support for all individuals who report that they have been a victim of bullying, harassment, discrimination or violence (by March 2024).
			49. Have mechanisms to ensure staff who raise concerns are protected by the organisation.