



**NHS Workforce Disability Equality Standard (WDES)
Annual Report 2021**

**West Midlands Ambulance Service University
NHS Foundation Trust**



CONTENTS

- Introduction
- Executive Summary
- WDES Progress 2020-2021 Metrics Comparison
- Conclusion and Way Forward

Appendices

- Appendix 1 WDES Metrics Report 2020 - 2021
- Appendix 2 WDES Action Plan 2020 – 2021
- Appendix 3 WDES Action Plan 2021 - 2022



Introduction

WMAS serves a population of 5.6 million people covering over 5000 square miles. The region varies from rural communities to densely populated conurbations and cities.

The Trust employs 7659 staff in a variety of roles the majority being operational clinicians, 999/111 and Patient Transport Services.

Normally the 111 service would answer 20,000 calls per week this has been far exceeded with the current unprecedented demand on our services.

The demand has been across the Trust due to Covid and has placed great demands on our resources often stretched to the limit.

In relation to our workforce 5.93% of our staff declared themselves as disabled or having a long-term health condition. There are 9.81% members of staff who have not declared whether they are disabled or not. Each year a data cleanse is undertaken to encourage staff to declare their protected characteristics, what must be taken into consideration is its everyone's personal decision as to what they wish to declare.

Workforce Disability Equality Standard

The WDES is referred to in the NHS People Plan published in 2020. This plan sets out the actions to support transformation across the whole of the NHS. It focuses on how much we must continue to watch over each other and foster inclusion and belonging more so now than any other time.

The WDES is underpinned by the Social Model of Disability and the ethos of "Nothing About Us Without Us" This WDES annual report and Action Plan have been in full consultation and engagement with the Trust Disability, Carers & Advocates Network.

The WDES is based on ten metrics

- 3 focus on Workforce Data
- 5 are based on questions from the NHS Staff Survey
- 1 is based on Disability representation at Board level.
- 1 metric focuses on the voice of Disabled staff.



The social model of disability

- This model argues that it is not physical or mental impairments
- Societies failure to cope with their needs
 - Physically through the build environment
 - Mentally through disabling attitudes



What are the Benefits of the WDES?

- To help to improve understanding of any inequalities experienced by staff with disabilities.
- Create a culture which fosters the engagement, involvement and inclusivity of Disabled staff.
- Provide better workplaces and services to patients.

WMAS has already started to embrace some initiatives aimed at disability in the workplace as follows:

- Disability Confident Leader



- Time To Change Employer Pledge



- Mental Health First Aid Programme



- Employee Assistance Programmes x 2

- Members of the “National Ambulance Disability Network”



Executive Summary

This last 18 months have found the NHS to be in unprecedented times and the demand on the Trust have been at times historically the highest ever recorded.

The data we have demonstrates that the number of recorded disabled employees has remained virtually static. This could also maybe be attributed to Covid as many potential applicants may have had to shield / work from home as they would have been in the clinically vulnerable category and therefore not in a position to change careers or join the service.

The likelihood of disabled applicants being appointed is slightly less than the previous year. The number of disabled staff going through the capability process is so low to accurately measure which has been the same for both years. In relation to Bullying & Harassment, figures have fluctuated with slight reductions from colleagues and patients but an increase from managers. This has been taken into consideration in the Action plan.

Disabled staff perception was there was a drop in their view of the Trust providing equal opportunities for career progression and development. This is understandable as many were working from home and only mandatory training was taking place. Add to that to protect staff there was no face-to-face training everything was online which was very different for many.

There was a very slight increase in presenteeism, working from home would have protected our most vulnerable staff but the attitude within the Trust was that everyone wanted to support each other through uncharted times. When the time came to return to work, the Trust contacted staff who had been required to 'shield' due to COVID-19, offering and undertaking personal risk assessments along with the necessary support and adjustments to ensure they felt secure and safe to return to work.

Disabled staff felt slightly more valued than previously. Workplace adjustments had improved that maybe due to the provision of equipment and chairs that were made available for staff to work from home. Individual risk assessments were also undertaken to protect staff and monitor their wellbeing.

The NHS staff survey varied marginally, although staff had been encouraged to participate in the national annual survey, at the time there were other important and priorities ongoing. The Trust Board representation increased very slightly.



Workforce Disability Equality Standard Metrics Comparison 2020 & 2021			
	2020	2021	Difference
Metric 1 Workforce Representation	Overall, 7.18% of the non-clinical and 5.64% of the clinical workforce and 2.1% Medical & Dental declared their disability	Overall, 6.8% of the non-clinical and 5.9% of the clinical workforce and 3.0% Medical & Dental declared their disability	Although slight variations the figures have stayed the same.
Metric 2 Recruitment	The likelihood for Disabled people to be appointed is 1.04	The likelihood for Disabled people to be appointed is 1.23.	Marginally less likely from previous year by 0.19
Metric 3 Capability Process	The number of Disabled staff going through the formal capability processes based on performance are too low to determine an accurate likelihood of entering the formal capability	The number of Disabled staff going through the formal capability processes based on performance are too low to determine an accurate likelihood of entering the formal capability process.	No alteration figures are to low
Metric 4 Bullying, Harassment & Abuse	7.6% percentage points more likely from patients.	5.7% percentage points more likely from patients.	Reduction of 1.9%
	9.9% percentage points more likely from managers	13.6% percentage points more likely from managers	Increase of 3.7%
	10.2% percentage points more likely from colleagues	9.6%percentage points more likely from colleagues	Reduction of 0.6%
Metric 5 Career Progression	Disabled staff are 7.4% percentage points less likely to believe that the Trust provides equal opportunities for career progression or promotion	Disabled staff are 11.9% percentage points less likely to believe that the Trust provides equal opportunities for career progression or promotion,	This has seen a big increase of 4.5% in providing opportunities
Metric 6 Presenteeism	Disabled staff are 9.3 % points more likely, compared to non-disabled staff, to be pressured to come into work despite not feeling well	Disabled staff are 9.7 % points more likely, compared to non-disabled staff, to be pressured to come into work despite not feeling well.	Presenteeism has seen a slight increase of 0.4%
Metric 7 Feeling Valued	Disabled staff are 11.1% percentage points less likely to say that they feel the Trust valued their work	Disabled staff are 9.8 percentage points less likely to say that they feel the Trust valued their work	This has reduced by 1.3% which is positive.
Metric 8 Workplace Adjustments	56.4%% of Disabled staff felt that the Trust had made adequate adjustments to enable them to work.	61.2% of Disabled staff felt that the Trust had made adequate adjustments to enable them to work.	More disabled staff felt that the Trust had made adjustments with an increase of 4.8%
Metric 9 Disabled Staff Engagement	Disabled staff are less likely to feel engaged with the NHS Staff Survey, with an engagement score of 5.9%	Disabled staff are less likely to feel engaged with the NHS Staff Survey, with an engagement score of 5.8%	Although a slight decline too small to gain any valued information
Metric 10 Board Representation	Overall 7.0% of Board Members were Disabled.	Overall 7.14% of Board Members were Disabled.	Very small increase but slight

Conclusion

The last 12 months have shown some gains in some areas whilst in others we have declined albeit marginally. Some of the positives that the Trust has achieved.

➤ **Disability, Carers & Advocates Network [DCA]**

The staff network has gone from strength to strength with an increase in membership and a strong committee and Chair. The DCA are represented on the Disability and Inclusion: Steering and Advisory Group and provide regular updates which in turn are disseminated to Board level. The DCA are now active members of the National Ambulance Disability Network.



➤ **Disability Microaggressions**

WMAS had developed a Race Microaggressions toolkit which had been shared nationally with all Ambulance Services. It was noted in the national network that nothing had been undertaken in terms of Disability Microaggressions. As the DCA had already started to scope out this piece of work with other elements within the Trust the DCA gave a commitment to share their work nationally. The work was completed using lived life experiences of our own staff and shared with the National Ambulance Disability Network.



➤ **Disability Confident Leaders**

WMAS has achieved Disability Confident Leader status and is proud to display the logo on all our job adverts on the NHS jobs website. The Trust has a positive action statement welcoming applicants who have a disability and offering a guaranteed interview scheme if they have the appropriate entry criteria.



➤ **Mental Health First Aiders**

The Trust embraced the Mental Health First Aiders programme through MHFA England in 2019 by investing in our own instructors. So far 260 staff have been trained on the two-day Mental Health First Aiders course. This has proved to be a very popular course providing staff with knowledge and awareness of mental health and how to support someone in mental distress. All Emergency operational staff undertake the half day awareness course as mandatory. The programme is planned to recommence in January 2022 and is open to all staff regardless of position or grade.



Way Forward

The new 2021-2022 Workforce Disability Equality Standard Action Plan has been drafted in full consultation with the DCA and the network has been instrumental in the forthcoming actions on the plan.

The main focus revolves around training which will benefit all Trust staff. The “Reverse Mentoring” programme already has synergy with members of the DCA and Organisational Development.

This new action plan allows the WDES to remain focussed in these demanding times as we move to some kind of new normality.

