

Workforce Disability Equality Standard (WDES) 2023

NHS South East London (SEL) Integrated Care Board (ICB)

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Contents

1. Executive Summary	2
2. Introduction and background: Understanding disability and the Workforce Disability Equality Standard (WDES)	3
3. Understanding our WDES data	5
4. Staff engagement and evaluation	9
5. Action plan	9
6. Conclusion	15

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. Welcome to the NHS South East London Integrated Care Board (SEL ICB) Workforce Disability Equality Standard (WDES) 2023 report and action plan.
- 1.2. NHS SEL introduced the Workforce Disability Equality Standard (WDES) in October 2021 ahead of the national rollout by NHS England. This is our third year of WDES reporting, the first being as our predecessor organisation NHS South East London Clinical Commissioning Group (SEL CCG) and our second as an ICB. This helps achieve our ambition and commitment to being an organisation which champions disability equality and improves the everyday lives of our staff with disabilities.
- 1.3. The WDES is a set of ten specific measures (metrics) enabling NHS organisations to compare the workplace and career experiences of disabled and non-disabled staff. The data is used to develop an action plan for the organisation, and year on year comparison allows progress to be demonstrated against indicators of disability equality. The data for the measures is extracted from the Electronic Staff Records (ESR) and the NHS Staff Survey. Definitions of the metrics are provided in paragraph 2.2 below.

For the WDES 2022 report a robust staff engagement event was held on 18 October 2022 which 67 staff with disabilities, managers and allies attended. The event provided an opportunity to test the 2022 data and develop meaningful actions. A robust action planning process was developed to include mapping of feedback, pipeline activity, new actions and good practice recommendations from the NHS England WDES Team. Colleagues from the HR, OD and Recruitment teams were involved in considering the evidence and formulating actions. The outcome of this was a comprehensive two-year action plan covering 2023/24 and 2024/25.

- 1.4. This 2023 report summarises the workforce and staff experience data against the WDES Metrics. The 2023 findings were shared with the Age and Ability Staff network for review and feedback and the action plan for 2024/25 was updated with the recommendations from the network.
- 1.5. Key findings show disabled people make up 29.9% of the London population, and our staff representation does not align with that statistic, which means we are underrepresented at all bands. However, it should be noted that some staff prefer not to declare their disabilities.
- 1.6. Overall, the organisation shows improvement in some metrics with areas of under-performance also noted, details of which are provided in the report. As can be seen from the current metrics, actions completed during 2023/24 appear to be having a positive impact.

2. Introduction and background: Understanding disability and the Workforce Disability Equality Standard (WDES)

2.1. Understanding disability

2.1.1.

What is a disability?

- A condition that effects an individual's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.
- A mental health or physical condition.
- Disabilities can be visible or hidden.
- Can last 12 months or longer and be recurring.

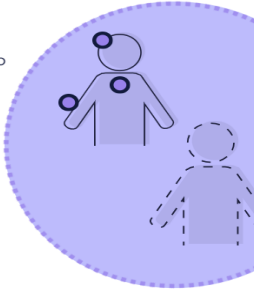


Figure 1: What is a disability? ([Source: Understanding disability infographic | NHS Employers](#))

2.1.2.

Long-term conditions which are classed as a disability












 Heart disease	 Cancer (including those with and who have survived cancer)
 Musculoskeletal conditions (including spinal-cord, arms, legs and joints)	 HIV
 Lung or respiratory conditions	 Multiple sclerosis
 Stroke	 Mental health conditions (including depression, anxiety and bipolar)
 Diabetes	 Learning difficulties and neuro-diverse conditions (including autism, dyslexia and dyspraxia)
 Visual, auditory and speech impairments	

Figure 2: Long Term conditions and disability ([Source: Understanding disability infographic | NHS Employers](#))

2.1.3.



Figure 3: Disability in the UK ([Source: Understanding disability infographic | NHS Employers](#))

Other statistics:¹

- About **22%** (14.6 million) of the UK population have a disability.
- 32% of people see disabled people as being less productive².
- 60% of people say they avoid disabled people as they do not know how to behave around them³.
- 6.4% of our staff shared that they had a disability on ESR, but nearly 21% of respondents to the national NHS Staff Survey identified as having a disability.

2.2. Workforce Disability Equality Standard (WDES) overview

Research shows that a motivated, included and valued workforce helps to deliver high quality patient care, increased patient satisfaction and improved patient safety.⁴

The WDES enables NHS organisations to better understand the experiences of their disabled staff and supports positive change for all staff by creating a more inclusive environment for disabled people working and seeking employment in the NHS.

The Workforce Disability Equality Standard (WDES) is a set of ten specific measures (metrics), which enables NHS organisations to compare the workplace and career experiences of disabled and non-disabled staff. NHS organisations use the metrics data to develop and publish an action plan. Year on year comparison enables NHS organisations to demonstrate progress against the indicators of disability equality. The table below provides details of the ten metrics.

¹ [Disability Perception Gap | Disability charity Scope UK](#)

² [Disability Perception Gap | Disability charity Scope UK](#)

³ [Disability Perception Gap | Disability charity Scope UK](#)

⁴ [NHS England » Workforce Disability Equality Standard](#)

Metric definitions

Metric No.	Metric description
1	Percentage of staff in each of the Agenda for Change Bands 1-9 OR Medical and Dental subgroups, and VSM (including executive board members) – compared with the percentage of staff in the overall workforce
2	Relative likelihood of staff being appointed from shortlisting.
3	Relative likelihood of staff entering the formal capability process
4	Percentage of staff experiencing harassment, bullying or abuse from patients, relatives or public
5	Percentage of staff believing that the CCG provides equal opportunities for career progression or promotion
6	Percentage of staff that felt pressure from their manager to come to work, despite not feeling well
7	Percentage of staff saying that they are satisfied with the extent to which their organisation values their work
8	Percentage of staff state their employer has made adequate adjustments at work
9a	Staff engagement score for disabled and non-disabled staff.
9b	Disabled staff engagement: “Facilitating the voices of disabled staff”
10	Board representation

Metrics are based on data from the Electronic Staff Records (ESR) and the NHS Staff Survey.

3. Understanding our WDES data

3.1. Key issues impacting staff with disabilities.

There are two broad themes which the WDES metrics can be grouped into - work supply and retention.

This is depicted diagrammatically in Figure 4. These are the key themes which are impacting on our staff with disabilities. The relevant WDES metrics have been included under each theme.

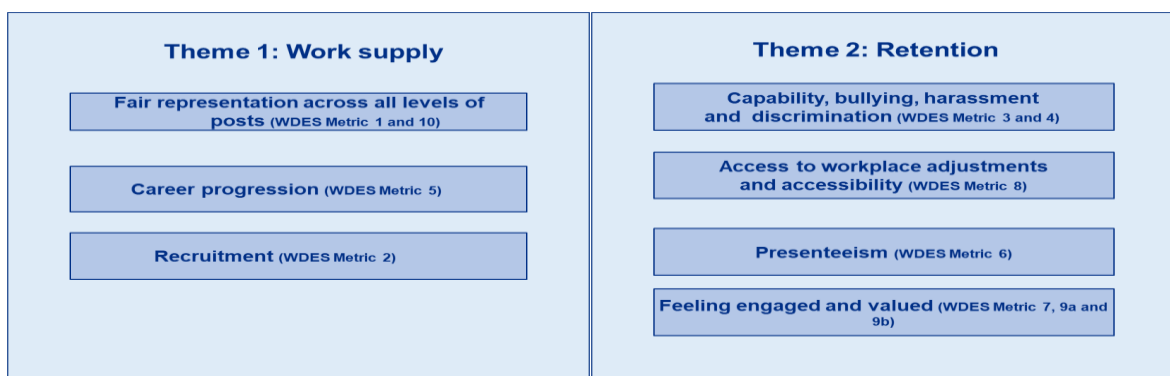


Figure 4: WDES Themes and Measures

More detailed analysis of these areas is included in paragraph 3.2.

3.2. Theme 1: Work Supply

3.2.1. Representation: Metric 1

As can be seen from Figure 5 below, at all grades, the organisation is not representative of the South East London disabled population (29.9% disability prevalence, Census 2021 ONS).

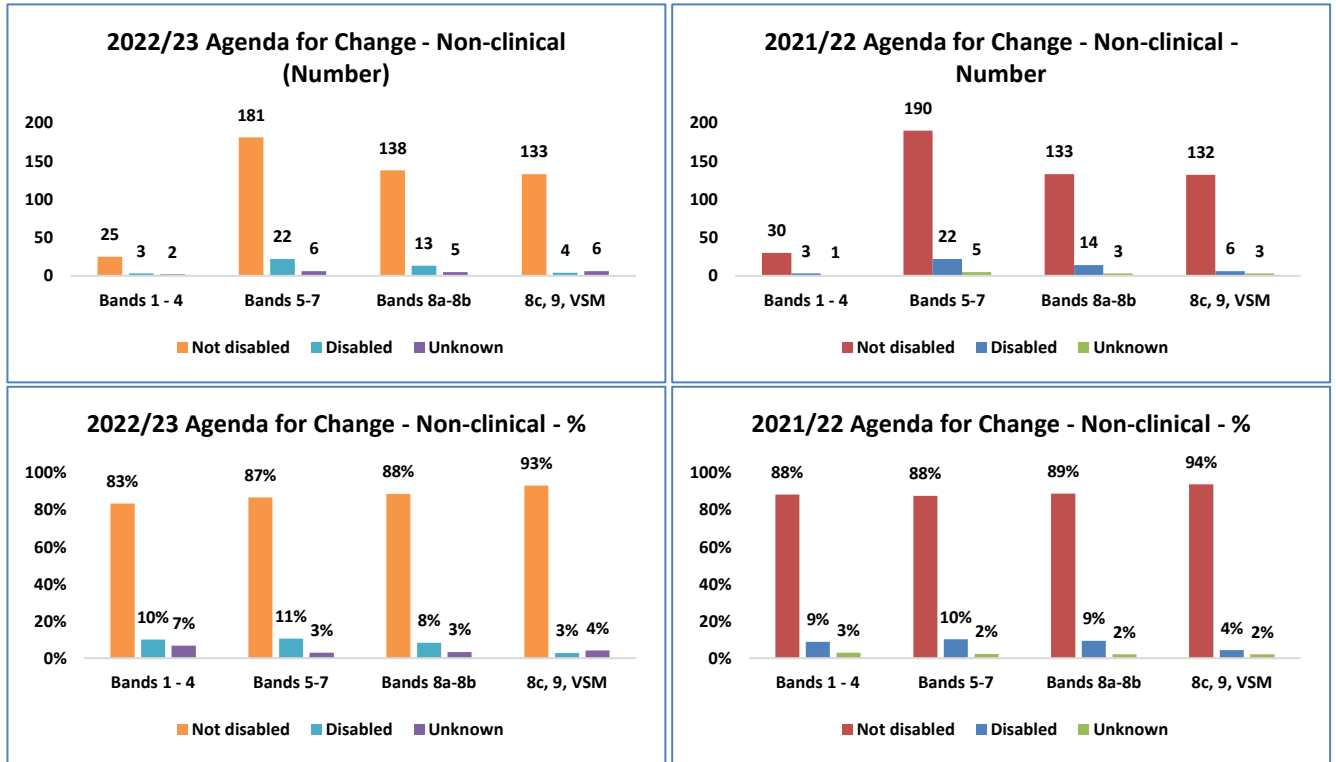


Figure 5: Disabled representation within NHS SEL ICB

3.2.2. Board Representation: Metric 10

As can be seen from Figure 6 below, there are no known disabled members on the Board and no change from 2021/22.

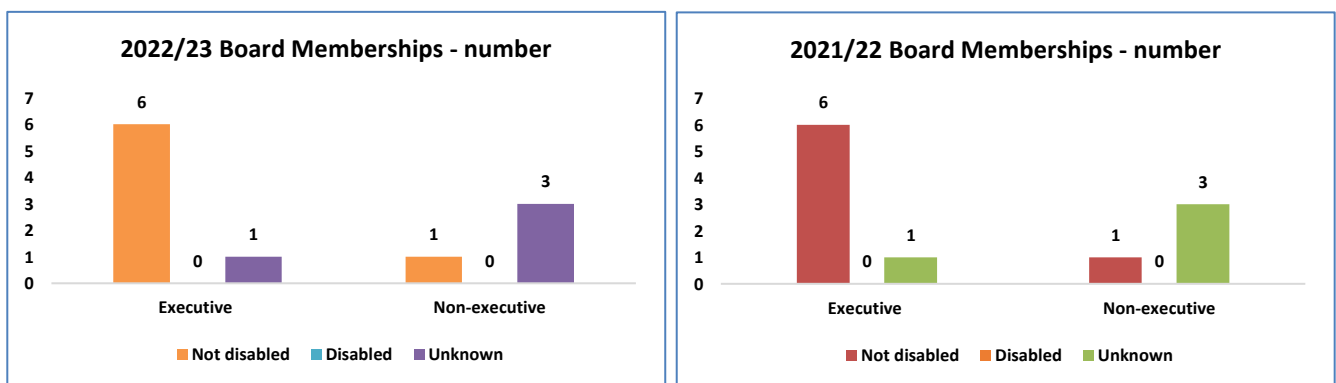


Figure 6: Board Representation

3.2.3. Career progression: Metric 5

As can be seen from Figure 7 below there is a significant decrease in disabled staff who feel the organisation provides equal opportunities for career progression or promotion, with a marginal decline for non-disabled staff from 2021 to 2022.

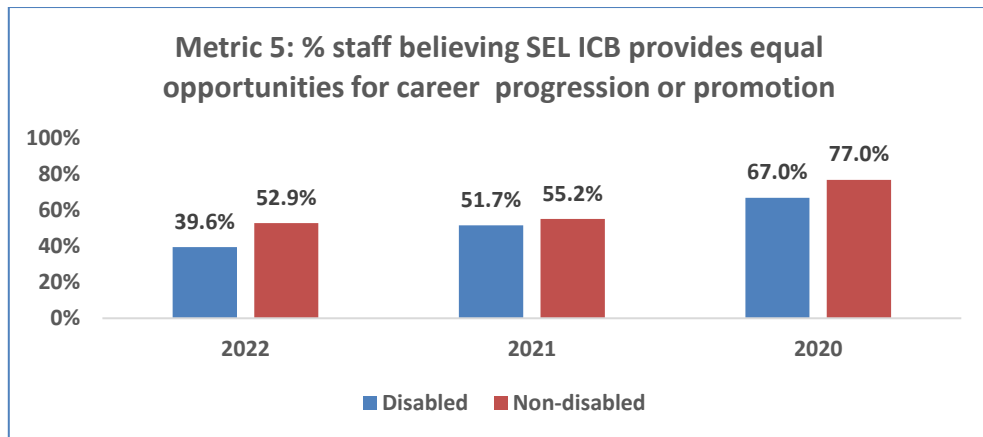


Figure 7: Career Progression

3.2.4. Recruitment: Metric 2

A relative likelihood below 1:00 indicates that disabled staff are more likely than non-disabled staff to be appointed from shortlisting. As can be seen from Figure 8C below disabled staff are more likely than non-disabled staff to be appointed. The metric includes both external and internal posts.

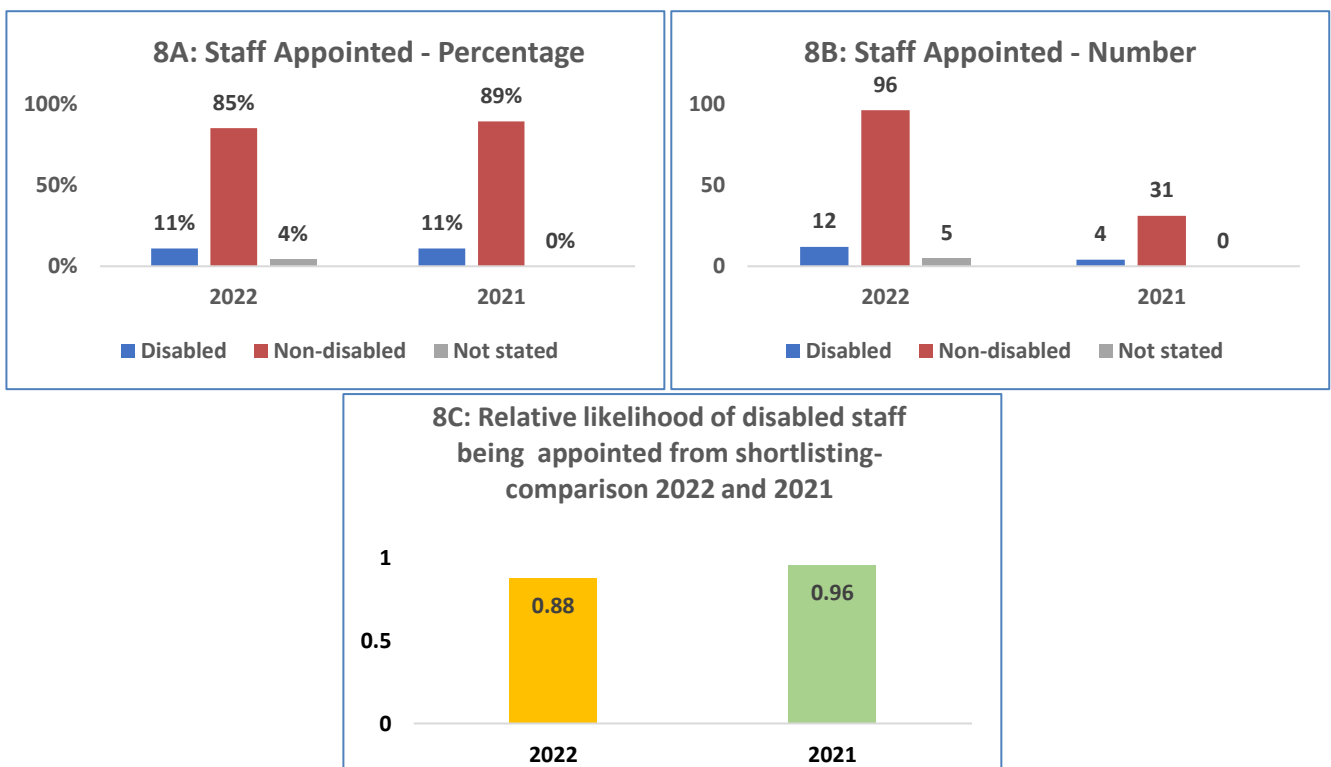


Figure 8: Recruitment likelihood of Appointment

3.3. Theme 2: Retention- Dignity and respect

3.3.1. Capability, bullying, harassment and discrimination: Metric 3

No staff faced a capability procedure during the period reviewed.

3.3.2. Bullying, harassment and discrimination: Metric 4

As can be seen from the table below,

- There is an improvement and reduction in disabled staff experiencing harassment, bullying or abuse from managers and the public but an increase in

their experiences of harassment, bullying or abuse from other colleagues. Non-disabled staff report an increase in harassment, bullying or abuse from both managers and colleagues.

- For staff experiencing harassment, bullying or abuse, there has been an increase from 34.6% in 2021 to 44.4% in 2022 in disabled staff who reported the incident. There has been a slight (marginal) reduction in the reporting of incidents by non-disabled staff, from 47.5% in 2021 to 46.2% in 2022.

WDES staff survey questions 2022 (2021)	Metric 4 % staff experiencing harassment, bullying or abuse			
	Disabled	Non-disabled	CCG Average* Disabled	CCG Average* Non-disabled
From the public: 2022 (2021)	6.2% (9.3%) ↓	5.8% (5.8%) ↔	10.7% (12%) ↓	7.3% (8%) ↓
From managers: 2022 (2021)	19.6% (19.8%) ↓	10.7% (7.9%) ↑	15.2% (12.7%) ↑	7.6% (7.2%) ↑
From other colleagues: 2022 (2021)	20.6% (16.7%) ↑	11.9% (10.9%) ↑	15.5% (15.6%) ↓	8.7% (8.1%) ↑
% staff that reported the incident: 2022 (2021)	44.4% (34.6%) ↑	46.2% (47.5%) ↓	40.9% (46.2%) ↓	42.2% (46.4%) ↓

3.3.3. Access to workplace adjustments: Metric 8

As can be seen from Figure 9 below, and up from 76.1% in the previous year, 79.2% of disabled staff feel that adequate adjustments have been made to accommodate their disability.

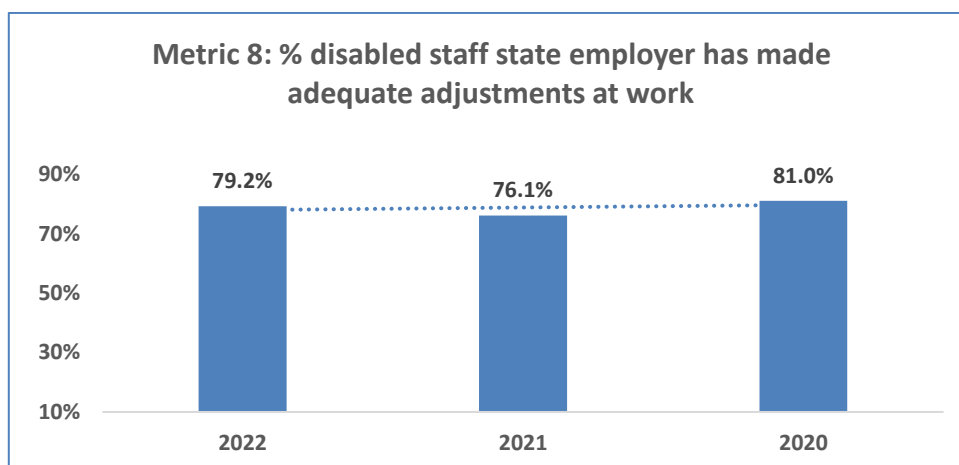


Figure 9: Access to workplace adjustments

3.3.4. Presenteeism: Metric 6

As can be seen from Figure 10 below there was a slight improvement in disabled colleagues feeling pressurised to attend work when feeling unwell. However, there was a significant increase in the percentage of non-disabled staff feeling pressurised to come to work when unwell from 7.6% to 15.5%.

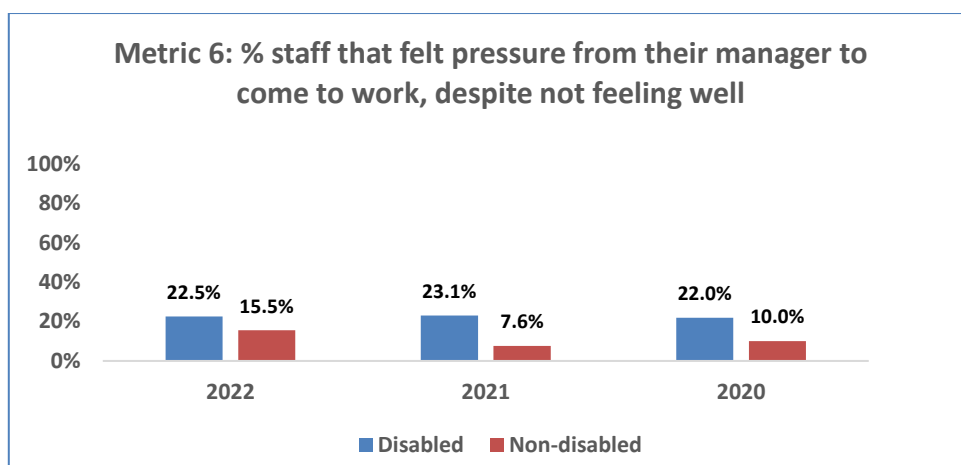


Figure 10: Presenteeism

3.3.5. Feeling engaged and valued: Metric 7 and 9a.

As can be seen from Figure 11 below There was a marginal increase from 41.1% to 44.3% of disabled colleagues who feel their work is valued by the ICB, with a slight increase in disabled staff feeling of being engaged at work, with a marginal decline for non-disabled staff.

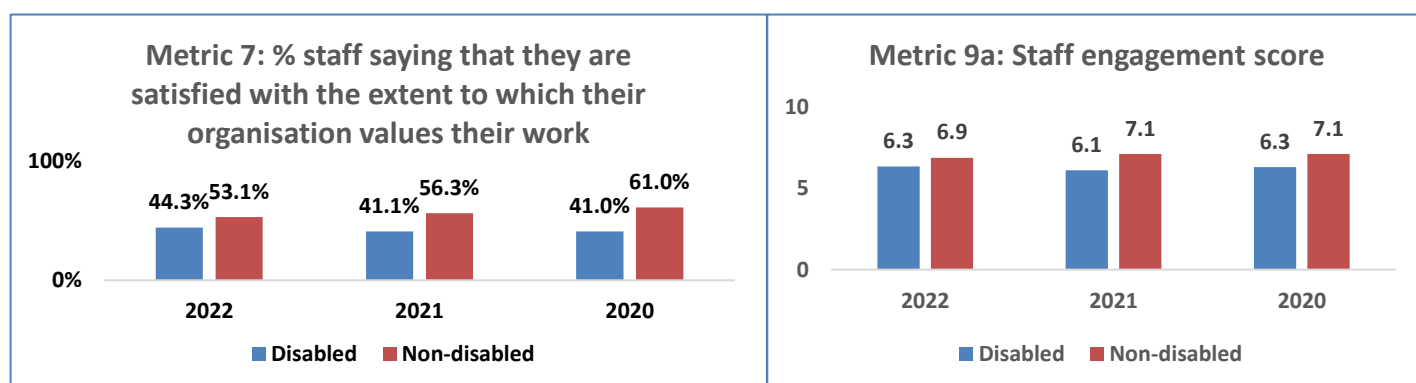


Figure 11: Feeling Valued and Engaged

4. Staff engagement and evaluation

4.1. For the WDES 2022 report a robust engagement event was held on 18 October 2022 which 67 staff with disabilities, managers and allies attended. The event provided an opportunity to test the 2022 data and develop meaningful actions. A thorough action planning process was developed to include mapping of feedback, pipeline activity, new actions and good practice recommendations from the NHS England WDES Team. Colleagues from the HR, OD and Recruitment teams were involved in considering the evidence and formulating actions. The outcome of this was a comprehensive two-year action plan, covering 2023/24 and 2024/25.

The plan and 2023 data were tested with the Age and Ability Staff network for continued relevance and further recommendations and has been updated with the feedback received.

5. Action plan

5.1. Action plan delivery during 2023/24

During the year under review, NHS SEL ICB introduced the following to promote recruitment opportunities and improve the working life and experience for disabled staff.

- Widened the selection of references and considered accepting non-formal employment references, if appropriate for the role.
- Established links with South East London Job Centres about available roles.
- Uploaded list of managers who have completed unconscious bias training into TRAC to ensure panel members have been trained and there is a record maintained.
- Completed the self-assessment evidence template for Level 2 Disability Confident Employer scheme. SEL ICB provides permanent or fixed term appointment and paid internships or support internships.
- Proactive use of Evenbreak (a disability jobs board) to:
 - Advertise jobs online to registered candidates, actively aiming to attract disabled candidates
 - Review reports from Evenbreak to identify and rectify barriers to applying.
- Publishing figures from ESR on the amount of people with disabilities in each grade.
- Flexible working particularly in relation to hours and working from home.
- Developed a management checklist/assessment for capability and other HR processes of areas for managers to consider before going into formal processes.
- Implemented a robust performance management system using data to promote and support our ambitions to:
 - undertake regular data collection throughout the year
 - run quarterly feedback sessions to assess the impact of actions on organisational EDI culture change
- Implement mediation training and have a pool of mediators to resolve issues earlier and informally.
- Having workplace advisers that specialise in harassment, bullying and abuse and producing guidance on where to go if a situation arises.
- For 2023/24, ensure that staff have a safe space to discuss a range of issues.

5.2. Action plan for 2024/25

The tables below reflect the proposed actions to be carried out in 2024/25. This work will feed into our wider EDI action plan and progress monitored by our Equality Delivery Group and Equality Sub-Committee.

Action Area: Fair representation, recruitment and career progression (Metrics 1, 2, 5 and 10)

EDP No.	Action	Timescales					Lead
		2023/24		2024/25			
		Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	
1	Review advert and JD templates with aim to attract under-represented groups and remove barriers to potential applicants		31/03/2024				Head of Recruitment
3	Provide standard template to be used for alternative references with a selection of standard specific questions e.g., how long known applicant, in what capacity, what skills/experience the individual has demonstrated which align with the role they are applying for.		31/03/2024				Head of Recruitment
4	Implement flexibility when assessing people so disabled job applicants have the best opportunity to demonstrate they can do the job.		31/03/2024				Head of Recruitment
5	More creative thinking around job roles more suitable for people with learning disabilities and dependent on use of IT.		31/03/2024				Head of Recruitment
be6	Generic texts of adverts to be reviewed and include information regarding EDI work and commitments of the ICB, which will also include adding this information on the internet page.		31/03/2024				Head of Recruitment
11	Review the current workplace adjustment process and, using learning from best practice organisations, develop a workplace adjustments guidance, which will include access to specialist equipment, provide an understanding of Access to Work, guidance on different types of adjustments Occupational Health and information on a range of disabilities and LTCs.	Amber					Senior HR business partner EDI Manager
12	Monitor to ensure the ICB demonstrates an active usage of the guidance by managers.	31/10/2023					Senior HR business partner
13	Develop framework and policy for the redistributing/recycle equipment and aids which are no longer required for workplace adjustments back into the community. This framework should take into consideration for booking and allocating specialist equipment, address the impact of hotdesking/booking on availability of needed adjustments and availability of lockers for storing equipment.		31/03/2024				Senior HR business partner
14	Development and implementation of Health Ability passports.	Green					Head of Recruitment/Organisational Development (OD) Inclusion Advisor

Action Area: Fair representation, recruitment and career progression (Metrics 1, 2, 5 and 10)

EDP No.	Action	Timescales					Lead
		2023/24		2024/25			
		Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	
15	Ensure representation of disabled people on interview panels.		31/03/2024				Senior HR business partner
16	Develop dedicated web page to share ICB ambitions and actions towards promoting equality in our processes	Green					Senior EDI Manager
18	Develop and implement a talent management programme that identifies progression pathways for all staff and opportunities for coaching/psychological support/buddying/mentoring for staff with a disability.	31/12/2023					AD-Organisation Development
19	This is an additional action added from the above which will be for the OD team to undertake a review of disabled persons entry to career development opportunities.					31/12/2024	AD-Organisation Development
20	Improve disclosure rates by: Setting an organisation-wide target on disability declaration, focusing on reducing the levels of 'Unknown'. Regular reminders on the importance of declaration rates. Consideration to be given to including disability awareness equality training in our induction process.	31/12/2023					AD-Organisation Development Senior EDI Manager Senior HR business partner
22	Disability questions to be discussed at all staff appraisals. (If applicable)	31/12/2023					AD-Organisation Development
23	Link in with ICS wide participation to promote careers in ICB and NHS generally and raise profile of SEL ICB as an employer of choice					31/12/2024	AD-Organisation Development
24	Develop an EDI policy or organisational statement of intent.					31/12/24	Senior EDI Manager
27	Establish organisational values and behavioural competencies which ensures fairness and equity for disabled staff and implement values-based recruitment process.					31/12/2024	AD-Organisation Development Head of Recruitment
44	Develop a communications campaign focused on the benefits of employing disabled people, aligning these with the NHS People Promise values			30/06/24			Senior EDI Manager

Action Area: Capability, Access to Adjustments, Bullying, Discrimination and feeling Engaged and Valued (Metrics 3, 4, 6, 7, 8 and 9)							
ED P/N o.	Action	Timescales					Lead
		2023/24		2024/25			
		Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	
17	Develop and implement focused management training/awareness sessions on: Soft skills: EDI, bullying and harassment, meaningful and compassionate conversations career progression	31/12/2023					AD-Organisation Development
25	Develop and implement more streamlined and efficient OH assessment and recommendation practices, including monitoring of assessment and waiting lists and training of OH staff in the variety of disability types, particularly hidden disabilities, and the adjustments that may be necessary					31/12/2024	Director of HR & OD
29	Review HR policies (discipline, capability, grievance, sickness and absence, performance management) to ensure disabled employees are not disadvantaged and to encourage managers to appropriately support disabled colleagues. Audit implementation and success of all policies. Implement a robust performance management system using data to promote and support disabled people and includes capability measures, factors leading to bullying, disciplinary and capability processes, appropriate action on informal complaints.	Amber					Senior HR business partner
30	Progress the appointment of FTSU Champions at borough level through place executive directors with objective to have as diverse a group as possible and from lower band staff groups, and create forums, safe spaces and networks to share tips/experiences for how to cope					31/12/2024	AD-Organisation Development
33	Implement a "zero tolerance culture" to bullying and harassment by: Launching a communications campaign focussed on reducing harassment, bullying and abuse.					31/12/2024	AD-Organisation Development Senior HR business partner
34	Adopting the practices set out in the NHS Civility and Respect Toolkit NHS England » Civility and Respect.					31/12/2024	AD-Organisation Development
37	Implementing improved process for those witnessing or experience issues to report their observations and reducing stigma					31/12/2024	AD-Organisation Development Senior HR business partner

Action Area: Capability, Access to Adjustments, Bullying, Discrimination and feeling Engaged and Valued (Metrics 3, 4, 6, 7, 8 and 9)							
ED P/N o.	Action	Timescales					Lead
		2023/24		2024/25			
		Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	
38	Hold focus group sessions with managers and staff to better understand the drivers and triggers of perceived presenteeism. Potential triggers could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> managers understanding of workplace adjustments interpretation of policy culture within teams management styles 					31/12/2024	Senior HR business partner
39	The ICB implements the Sunflower scheme which provides training and awareness on disabilities with an emphasis on hidden disabilities	Amber					AD-Organisation Development
41	Recruiting executive sponsors for each of the staff networks aligned to the protected characteristics.					31/12/2024	AD-Organisation Development
42	Staff have access to widely promoted awareness events which align to the organisation's staff groups (inc. a planned Deaf awareness session).	Green					Senior EDI Manager
43	Appoint WDES champions, establish networks for sharing tips and coping mechanisms.	31/12/2023					Senior EDI Manager
45	Develop an organisation policy for workplace adjustments.					31/12/2024	Senior HR business partner

6. Conclusion

Thank you for taking the time to read our 2023 WDES report – we will keep improving and achieving for our staff with disabilities as we strive to achieve our ambition and commitment to being an organisation championing disability equality and improving the everyday lives of our staff with disabilities.

For further information or queries about this WDES report please contact:
equality@selondonics.nhs.uk.