

Workforce Disability Equality Standard Report (WDES) 2024-25

North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board

Introduction

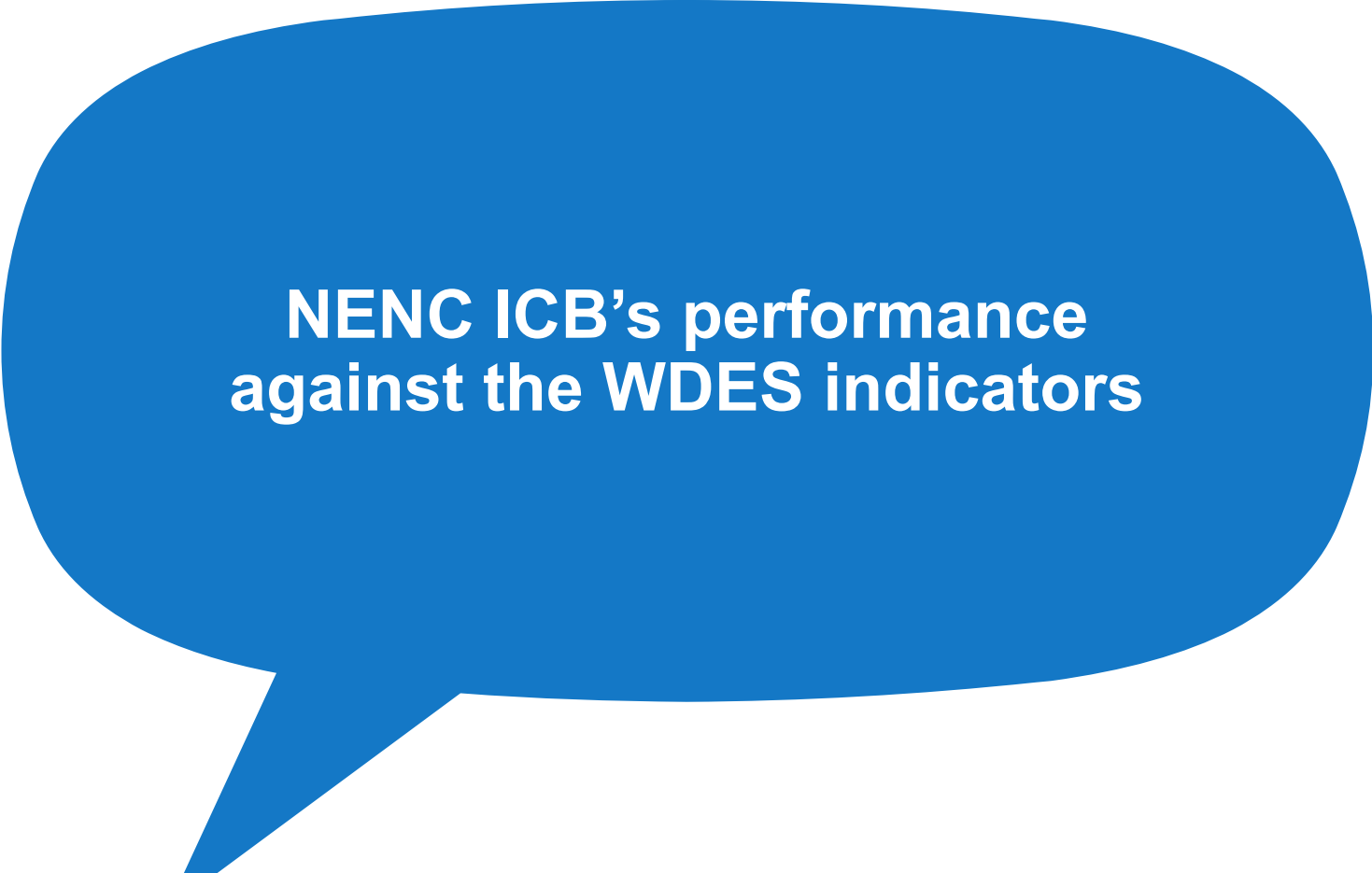
- The Workforce Disability Equality Standard (WDES) was introduced within the NHS in 2019 as a mandatory reporting tool for all NHS provider Trusts.
- The WDES comprises a set of ten specific measures (metrics) which enables NHS organisations to compare the workplace and career experiences of disabled 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.
- There is a requirement for providers to report progress on their performance by publishing their performance and progress against the WDES and submitting this information to NHS England on an annual basis.
- This report provides information on NENC ICB's performance against each of the ten WDES indicators for 2024-25. The report also highlights our key achievements, the areas we need to do better, and an overview of the 2024-2025 action plan. Comparisons have also been made with the previous year's data.
- Whilst the WDES report is **not** required to be undertaken by ICBs for 2024-25, NENC ICB has continued our commitment to WDES reporting, reviewed trends and progress against the indicators to feed into our future strategic approach of working towards a more diverse, inclusive, fair and equitable workplace and practices.
- This report contains data gathered from 31st March 2025, unless stated otherwise

WDES and ICB requirements

- Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) are not mandated to report on the WDES. However, NENC ICB has chosen to voluntarily undertake this work in line with best practice, to set a high standard, and to create transparency across key metrics linked to the public sector equality duty
- **The work of the ICB is shaped by key statutory requirements and strategic & policy drivers including:**
 - The NHS Constitution
 - The Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty
 - The NHS standard contract and associated documents
 - The Oversight Framework
 - NHS Long Term Plan and the NHS People Plan
- These national drivers and strategies will support the ICB with local actions and interventions to better our performance against the standards and thrive as a more diverse and inclusive workforce.

WDES indicators

Indicators	Workforce indicators For each of these four workforce indicators, compare the data for disabled and not disabled staff
1	Percentage of staff in each of the AfC Bands 1-9 or medical and dental subgroups and VSM (including executive board members) compared with the percentage of staff in the overall workforce disaggregated by: Non-clinical staff, Clinical staff, of which - Non-medical staff - Medical and dental staff
2	Relative likelihood of staff being appointed from shortlisting across all posts.
3	Relative likelihood of staff entering the formal capability process, as measured by entry into a formal capability procedure
	National NHS Staff Survey indicators (or equivalent) For each of the staff survey indicators, compare the outcomes of the responses for disabled and not disabled staff
4	Percentage of staff experiencing harassment, bullying or abuse from patients/service users, relatives or the public in last 12 months.
	Percentage of staff experiencing harassment, bullying or abuse from managers in last 12 months.
	Percentage of staff experiencing harassment, bullying or abuse from other colleagues in last 12 months.
	Percentage of staff saying that the last time they experienced harassment, bullying or abuse they or a colleague reported it
5	Percentage believing that trust provides equal opportunities for career progression or promotion.
6	Percentage of staff feeling pressure from their manager to come into work, despite not feeling well enough to perform their duties
7	Percentage of staff who feel their work is valued by their organisation
8	Percentage of staff who have had adequate reasonable adjustments carried out at work by their employer
9	Staff Engagement Score
	Board representation indicator For this indicator, compare the difference for disabled and not disabled staff
10	Percentage difference between the organisations' board membership and its overall workforce disaggregated: • By voting membership of the board • By executive membership of the board



**NENC ICB's performance
against the WDES indicators**

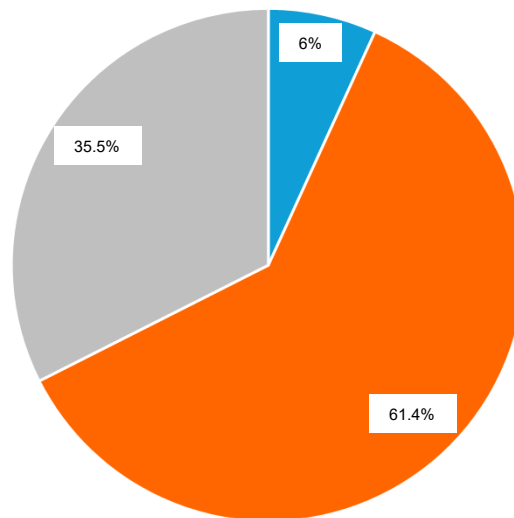
Overall breakdown of workforce data

WDES Indicator 1-Percentage of staff in each of the AfC Bands 1-9 or medical and dental subgroups and VSM (including executive board members) compared with the percentage of staff in the overall workforce

	2023-24	2024-25	2024-25 performance compared with 2023-24 (%)
Disabled	4.6%	6.0%	+ 1.4%
Non-Disabled	48.4%	61.4%	+ 13.0%
Unknown	47.0%	32.5%	- 14.5%

Workforce Disability Data

■ Disabled ■ Non-Disabled ■ Unknown



Overall breakdown of workforce data

WDES Indicator 1-Percentage of staff in each of the AfC Bands 1-9 or medical and dental subgroups and VSM (including executive board members) compared with the percentage of staff in the overall workforce

Ethnicity split for each banding level								
	2023-24				2024-25			
	Bands 1-4	Bands 5-7	Bands 8a-8b	Bands 8c-VSM	Bands 1-4	Bands 5-7	Bands 8a-8b	Bands 8c-VSM
Disabled	5.4%	5.4%	3.7%	4.3%	14.4%	7.8%	3.7%	5.8%
Non-disabled	62.5%	58.5%	44.7%	33.2%	68.5%	67.9%	66.9%	50.0%
Unknown	32.1%	36.2%	51.7%	62.5%	17.1%	24.3%	29.4%	44.2%

There has been a +2.2% overall increase in declarations of disabled colleagues since 2023-24. While this could be due to recruitment, it is more likely to be attributed to increases in disability disclosure rates, as there was limited recruitment in 2024/25. This positive change is evidenced by a reduction of 14.5% in colleagues with an undisclosed disability status and a 12.3% rise in non-disabled colleagues declaring on ESR since 2023-24. This is a positive outcome and indicates there may have been an increase in psychological safety within the organisation. It also shows that the ESR disclosure rates campaign as part of last year's EDI strategy has been well received.

While there is a positive increase in disclosure rates, the percentage of disabled colleagues within the ICB (6.8%) is still lower than disabled population in the North East (21.1%, 2021 Census).

In terms of banding representation, there has been increases, or no reduction, in the number of disabled colleagues for each banding level, since 2023-24, which is a significant improvement since the previous year. A particular highlight is in bands 1-4 which have seen an increase in disabled people by 9%.

Recruitment

WDES Indicator 2: Compare the data for disabled and non-disabled staff: Relative likelihood of staff being appointed from shortlisting across all posts

NENC ICB recruitment summary						
	2023-24			2024-25		
	Shortlisting	Appointment	Relative Likelihood of non-disabled candidates being appointed	Shortlisting	Appointment	Relative Likelihood of non-disabled candidates being appointed
Disabled	15	3	1.62	18	10	0.65
Non-Disabled	260	84		216	78	
Unknown	16	6		8	8	

As a result of the ICB 2.0 change process, recruitment was paused for a period of time. This meant that fewer roles were available, subsequently there has been lower appointment to roles. This is similar to the situation of the previous year, there has been a significant negative impact on the relative likelihood of appointment.

In the previous year, disabled applicants were less likely to be appointed to a role than non-disabled applicants. At present, disabled applicants are significantly more likely to be appointed to a role than non-disabled applicants, with a relative likelihood of appointment for disabled applicants of 0.65.

However, it should be noted that the ICB switched from NHS Jobs to TRAC in 2024-25. This meant that some shortlisting data was lost during this time. As such, the relative likelihood is likely to be higher than at present, as the shortlisting data is likely to be different.

The appointment data is correct as sourced from new hires data, available on ESR for the period of 2024-25.

Formal capability processes

WDES Indicator 3: The Relative likelihood of staff entering the formal capability process, as measured by entry into a formal capability investigation

- The ICB records and monitors all capability cases based on protected characteristics and makes note of the reason behind the case
- This indicator looks at the number of capability cases over a two-year period and considers whether they might be on the grounds of ill health.
- Where the number of staff entering a formal capability process is 5 or less, the ICB will not disclose or publish the information for reporting purposes to maintain confidentiality and anonymity of individuals subject to such processes
- The total number of staff that entered a formal capability process across NENC ICB for the period 01 April 2023 to 31 March 2025 is 3, or an average of 1.5 over the two year period.

WDES staff survey questions

WDES Indicators 4-9

NB the data provided below comprises the percentage of ICS staff that said 'YES' to the WDES questions in the 2024 Staff Survey

Staff Survey indicator (WDES)	Disability Status	Survey results	
		2023	2024
Indicator 4a. Percentage of staff experiencing harassment, bullying or abuse from patients/service users, their relatives or the public in the last 12 months	Disabled	8.6%	9.9%
	Not Disabled	8.3%	4.5%
Indicator 4b. Percentage of staff experiencing harassment, bullying or abuse from managers in the last 12 months	Disabled	10.3%	7.1%
	Not Disabled	6.4%	7.2%
Indicator 4c. Percentage of staff experiencing harassment, bullying or abuse from other colleagues in the last 12 months	Disabled	13.3%	15.2%
	Not Disabled	8.7%	10.0%
Indicator 4d- Percentage of staff saying that the last time they experienced harassment, bullying or abuse at work, they or a colleague reported it	Disabled	50.0%	50.0%
	Not Disabled	45.3%	48.9%
Indicator 5. Percentage of staff who believe that their organisation provides equal opportunities for career progression or promotion	Disabled	46.6%	57.1%
	Not Disabled	52.4%	57.9%
Indicator 6. Percentage of staff who have felt pressure from their manager to come to work, despite not feeling well enough to perform their duties	Disabled	9.5%	11.0%
	Not Disabled	6.9%	9.0%

Negative change in experience when compared with previous year 

No change in experience when compared with previous year 

Positive improvement in experience when compared with previous year 

WDES staff survey questions cont...

WDES Indicators 4-9

NB the data provided below comprises the percentage of ICS staff that said 'YES' to the WDES questions in the 2024 Staff Survey

Staff Survey indicator (WDES)	Disability Status	Survey results	
		2023	2024
Indicator 7. Percentage of staff satisfied with the extent to which their organisation values their work	Disabled	45.3%	41.1%
	Not Disabled	38.9%	41.0%
Indicator 8- Percentage of staff with a long-lasting health condition or illness saying their employer has made reasonable adjustment(s) to enable them to carry out their work	Disabled	79.3%	81.3%
Indicator 9a. Staff engagement score (0-10)	Disabled	6.4	6.3
	Not Disabled	6.6	6.0
Indicator 9b. Has your organisation taken action to facilitate the voices of your disabled staff to be heard? (yes) or (no)	-	Yes	Yes

Negative change in experience when compared with previous year 

No change in experience when compared with previous year 

Positive improvement in experience when compared with previous year 

WDES staff survey questions cont...

WDES Indicators 4-9

- Overall, staff experience has worsened in 5 out of 10 indicators for disabled colleagues, when compared with the previous year. It has also worsened in 4 out of 10 indicators for non-disabled colleagues when comparing the 2024 staff survey results with the 2023 results
- For Indicator 4a, "Percentage of staff experiencing harassment, bullying or abuse from patients/service users, their relatives or the public in the last 12 months"
 - Experience has improved for non-disabled colleagues with 4.5% of colleagues reporting this in 2024, a reduction from 8.3% the previous year
 - In 2023, 8.6% of disabled colleagues reported experiencing this, in the 2024 staff survey results show 9.9% of disabled colleagues having experienced this. This is a 1.3% increase for disabled colleagues when compared with the previous year
 - While a similar proportion of both disabled (8.6%) and non-disabled (8.3%) colleagues had a similar experience in 2023, disabled colleagues have a significantly worse experience than non-disabled colleagues in 2024, with 5.4% more disabled colleagues experiencing this than non-disabled colleagues
- For Indicator 4b, "Percentage of staff experiencing harassment, bullying or abuse from managers in the last 12 months"
 - There has been an improvement in experience of 3.2% for disabled colleagues, with 7.1% of disabled colleagues experiencing this in 2024 compared with 10.3% in the previous year
 - Experience has worsened for non-disabled colleagues with 0.8% more non-disabled colleagues experiencing this, 7.2% in 2024, compared with 6.4% in 2023
 - While there has been an improvement in disabled colleagues experience for this indicator, the number of disabled (7.1%) and non-disabled (7.2%) colleagues experiencing this is almost equal

WDES staff survey questions cont...

WDES Indicators 4-9

- For indicator 4c, “Percentage of staff experiencing harassment, bullying or abuse from other colleagues in the last 12 months”
 - Experience has worsened for disabled colleagues, with 1.9% more disabled colleagues reporting this in 2024 (15.2%) compared with 2023 (13.3%)
 - The number of non-disabled colleagues experiencing this has risen by 1.3%, with 10.0% of non-disabled colleagues experiencing this in 2024, compared with 8.7% in 2023
 - While both disabled and non-disabled colleagues are reporting this, the percentage of colleagues experiencing this has increased since last year, disabled colleagues experience is worse than non-disabled colleagues experience for both 2024 (+5.2%) and 2023 (4.6%)
- For indicator 4d, “Percentage of staff saying that the last time they experienced harassment, bullying or abuse at work, they or a colleague reported it”
 - There has been no change in the percentage of disabled colleagues (50%) reporting this since last year
 - There has been a positive trend in the percentage of non-disabled colleagues reporting this, with 3.6% more non-disabled colleagues reporting this, 48.9% in 2024, compared with 45.3% in 2023
 - In general, more needs to be done to encourage reporting of incidents from both disabled and non-disabled colleagues. While it is positive that the percentages have either remained the same or improved, reporting rates are linked to psychological safety, and 50% or more colleagues do not feel comfortable speaking up if they are subjected to these negative behaviours

WDES staff survey questions cont...

WDES Indicators 4-9

- For indicator 5, “Percentage of staff who believe that their organisation provides equal opportunities for career progression or promotion”
 - Experience has improved for disabled colleagues, with an increase of 10.5% more disabled colleagues reporting this in 2024 (57.1%) compared with 2023 (46.6%)
 - The number of non-disabled colleagues experiencing this has also improved by +5.5%, with 57.9% of non-disabled colleagues experiencing this in 2024, compared with 52.4% in 2023
 - This is a really positive change as it shows that a similar proportion of disabled and non-disabled colleagues believe this (difference of 0.8%), where in 2023 less disabled colleagues believed this with a difference of 5.7%
- For indicator 6, “Percentage of staff who have felt pressure from their manager to come to work, despite not feeling well enough to perform their duties”
 - There has been a negative change, with an increase of 1.5% in the percentage of disabled colleagues (11%) reporting this since last year (9.5%)
 - There has been a negative change, with an increase in the percentage of non-disabled colleagues reporting this, with 2.1% more non-disabled colleagues reporting this, 9% in 2024, compared with 6.9% in 2023
 - This indicates that there may be a rise in presenteeism for both disabled and non-disabled colleagues. While a higher proportion of disabled colleagues experience this than non-disabled colleagues, there has been a bigger increase in the proportion of non-disabled people reporting this since last year.

WDES staff survey questions cont...

WDES Indicators 4-9

- For indicator 7, “Percentage of staff satisfied with the extent to which their organisation values their work”
 - Experience has worsened for disabled colleagues, with 4.2% less disabled colleagues feeling less satisfaction in 2024 (41.1%) compared with 2023 (45.3%)
 - The number of non-disabled colleagues feeling this has improved (by +2.1%), with 41.0% of non-disabled colleagues feeling this in 2024, compared with 38.9% in 2023
 - While the proportion of disabled (41.1%) and non-disabled (41.0%) is almost equal (0.1% difference), the reported experience has worsened for disabled colleagues as overall.
- For indicator 8, “Percentage of staff with a long-lasting health condition or illness saying their employer has made reasonable adjustment(s) to enable them to carry out their work”
 - There has been a positive change, with 2% more disabled colleagues (81.3%) saying this than last year (79.3%)
- For indicator 9a, “Staff engagement score (0-10)”
 - Fewer disabled (-0.1) and non-disabled (-0.6) colleagues are engaging with the staff survey, with 6.3 in 2024 and 6.4 in 2023 for disabled colleagues and 6.0 in 2024 and 6.6 in 2023 for non-disabled colleagues

Board membership representation

WRES Indicator 9: Percentage difference between the organisations' Board membership

ICB Board Membership								
	2023-24				2024-25			
Disability	Disabled	Non-disabled	Unknown	Total	Disabled	Non-disabled	Unknown	Total
Count	1	10	5	16	1	12	5	18
Percentage	6.2%	62.5%	31.3%		5.6%	66.7%	27.8%	

ICB Workforce								
	2023-24				2024-25			
Disability	Disabled	Non-disabled	Unknown	Total	Disabled	Non-disabled	Unknown	Total
Count	36	384	373	793	49	436	233	718
Percentage	4.6%	48.4	47.0%		6.8%	60.7%	32.5%	

There is a lower percentage of disabled board members than colleagues within the workforce. Additionally, while there have been improvements in disclosure rates, more work needs to be done to further improve disclosure rates at board and workforce levels.



Summary and Next Steps

Positive highlights of 2024-25

- Looking at the workforce data, there has been a positive increase in disclosure rates, with 14.5% more colleagues choosing to share their data with us in 2024-25. We ran a campaign to increase declaration rates has clearly worked and more of this needs to continue in the ICB.
- This indicates a potential increase in psychological safety, however, 32.5% of the workforce still choose not to share their data with us, indicating there is more work to do.
- In terms of banding, the percentage of disabled staff has increased for bands 1-4 (+9%), bands 5-7 (+2.4%), and bands 8c-VSM (+1.5%). For bands 8a-8b, the percentage of disabled colleagues has remained the same.
- The Relative Likelihood of non-disabled candidates being appointed from shortlisting, compared with disabled candidates is 0.65. This indicates that disabled colleagues are more likely to be appointed to a role than their non-disabled colleagues. However, it should also be noted that the ICB switched from NHS Jobs to TRAC in 2024-25. This meant that some shortlisting data was lost during this time. As such, the relative likelihood is likely to be higher than at present, as the shortlisting data is likely to be different. We will continue to monitor this going forward.

Positive highlights of 2024-25 cont...

- Disabled colleague experience has improved for 3 of 10 staff survey indicators, since the previous year. The percentage of staff experiencing harassment, bullying or abuse from managers in the last 12 months (-3.2%), percentage of staff who believe that their organisation provides equal opportunities for career progression or promotion (+10.5%), and percentage of staff with a long-lasting health condition or illness saying their employer has made reasonable adjustment(s) to enable them to carry out their work (+2%) have all had positive changes for disabled colleagues, when compared with the previous year. This is positive as more work has been put into support disabled colleagues and their managers from the HEI team.
- Non-disabled colleague experience has improved for 4 of 10 staff survey indicators. The percentage of staff experiencing harassment, bullying or abuse from patients/service users, their relatives or the public in the last 12 months (-3.8%), Percentage of staff saying that the last time they experienced harassment, bullying or abuse at work, they or a colleague reported it (+3.6%), percentage of staff who believe that their organisation provides equal opportunities for career progression or promotion (+5.5%), and percentage of staff satisfied with the extent to which their organisation values their work (2.1%)

Key Areas for Improvement

- Based on the WDES indicators it can be seen that:
 - While the proportion of undisclosed disability status data has reduced, it is still high, with 32.5% of the workforce and 27.8% of the board choosing not to share their disability status with us. This indicates that there is still work to be done to improve psychological safety and further improve disclosure rates, which will continue as part of the 5 Year EDI strategy.
 - Disabled colleagues experience has worsened for 5 out of 10 of the staff survey indicators and remained unchanged for 1, since the previous year. The percentage of staff experiencing harassment, bullying or abuse from patients/service users, their relatives or the public in the last 12 months (+1.3%), percentage of staff experiencing harassment, bullying or abuse from other colleagues in the last 12 months (+1.9%), percentage of staff who have felt pressure from their manager to come to work, despite not feeling well enough to perform their duties (+1.5%), percentage of staff satisfied with the extent to which their organisation values their work (-4.2%), and staff engagement (-0.1) have all had negative changes for disabled colleagues, when compared with the previous year. There has been no change in the percentage of disabled staff saying that the last time they experienced harassment, bullying or abuse at work, they or a colleague reported it (50%)
 - Non-disabled colleagues staff experience has worsened for 4 out 10 of the staff survey indicators, since the previous year. The percentage of staff experiencing harassment, bullying or abuse from managers in the last 12 months (+0.8%), percentage of staff experiencing harassment, bullying or abuse from other colleagues in the last 12 months (+1.3%), percentage of staff who have felt pressure from their manager to come to work, despite not feeling well enough to perform their duties (+2.1%), and staff engagement (-0.6) have all had negative changes for disabled colleagues, when compared with the previous year
 - There has been a percentage reduction board representation of disabled colleagues since 2023-24, as the board has grown, however the absolute number has remained the same.

Actions to improve experience and representation of Disabled staff

As part of the new ICB EDI Strategy we expect to see further improvements based on the following actions

Action	Specific Goal	Measurable Target	Responsible Lead	End date
Improve ESR Declaration rates and reduced Disability "prefer not to say"	- Comms campaign - Embed prompts in appraisals and 1:1s	10% reduction in 'prefer not to say' and 10% improvement in disability declarations	EDI and Comms team	Q3 2026
Increase Health & Wellbeing Passport usage	Support line managers to promote usage among people who require reasonable adjustments	50% uptake in people formalising passport usage.	EDI / HR / OD and Comms team	During 2026
Create best in class flexible working and Agile Working policies	New policies and staff guidance for Agile and Flexible working for a new ICB operating model	New products designed, consulted and published by March 2026	EDI / HR / OD Team	Q1 2026
Support LTS returners to the workplace	- Promote new Mental health and wellbeing offers - Equip line managers to support staff returning to work	25% uplift in staff accessing workplace MH and Wellbeing offers.	OD Team	End of 2026
Inclusive recruitment	- Strengthening and de-biasing each stage of the recruitment - Advertise all vacancies internally first	- Reduction in pay gaps by 5% - Equitable outcome for recruitment as measured in the WDES.	EDI / HR / OD Team	During 2026