North Tees and Hartlepool
NHS Foundation Trust

NHS Workforce Disability Equality Standard 2026



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1. Introduction

The Workforce Disability Equality Standard (WDES) programme was established in 2019. It requires organisations to report against ten indicators of disability equality and supports continuous improvement through robust action planning to tackle the root causes of discrimination.

Inequalities in any form are at odds with our values. Research shows that the fair treatment of our staff is directly linked to better clinical outcomes and better experience of care for patients.

This report represents the eighth publication of the Workforce Disability Equality Standard (WDES) since its introduction. It is encouraging to report a number of positive outcomes within the 2026 findings, particularly in relation to increased disability declaration rates across the trust.

Improvements have also been observed in several staff survey indicators, including a reduction in the proportion of staff reporting experiences of harassment, bullying or abuse at work from managers, a reduction in staff who have felt pressure to come to work despite feeling unwell. While these improvements are welcome, further analysis is required to fully understand the underlying factors influencing the results and to identify any emerging trends or areas of concern.

The trust remains committed to addressing disability-related inequalities and reducing disparities in staff experience, opportunity and career progression across our diverse workforce. The detailed analysis and presentation of WDES data to relevant governance groups and workstreams will continue to be a key mechanism for identifying areas requiring targeted action, enabling the development and implementation of evidence-based interventions to improve outcomes for disabled staff.

2. Trust requirements

This report is intended to provide the high-level detail, to confirm the data collection deadline was 31 May 2026, which is where the WDES metrics were uploaded to NHS England via the Data Collection Framework (DCF) portal.

Work will then commence to produce the trust's annual WDES report, which will be published on the trust's internet site no later than 31 October 2026.

3. WDES indicators 2026

A summary of the results for North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust is shown in the table below. This includes comparison of the trust's results covering a five-year period (2022 to 2026).

The baseline data has been extracted from ESR, workforce databases and the Trac recruitment system to calculate a response to each of the ten WDES indicators.

North Tees and Hartlepool - WDES Indicators 2026			2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
1	Percentage of staff with a disability or long term health condition	Overall	3.0%	4.0%	4.9%	6.3%	6.7%
		Non-Clinical	3.0%	4.0%	5.2%	6.3%	6.9%
		Clinical	3.0%	3.0%	4.8%	6.5%	6.6%
2	The relative likelihood of Disabled staff being appointed from shortlisting compared to Non-Disabled staff		0.98	1.25	0.9	0.98*	0.99*
3	The relative likelihood of Disabled staff entering the formal capability process compared to Non-Disabled staff		0	0	0	0	1.75
			2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
4a	Percentage of staff experiencing harassment, bullying or abuse from patients, relatives or the public in the last 12 months	Staff with a disability or LTC	28.6%	30.7%	28.1%	26.0%	28.0%
		Staff without	26.3%	23.5%	20.1%	21.1%	21.8%
4b	Percentage of staff experiencing harassment, bullying or abuse from manager in the last 12 months	Staff with a disability or LTC	14.2%	12.5%	10.5%	12.2%	10.4%
		Staff without	7.6%	6.3%	5.1%	4.9%	5.6%
4c	Percentage of staff experiencing harassment, bullying or abuse from other colleagues in last 12 months	Staff with a disability or LTC	19.9%	23.2%	21.1%	19.6%	20.3%
		Staff without	13.3%	12.7%	11.9%	12.0%	12.8%
4d	Percentage of staff saying that the last time they experienced harassment, bullying or abuse at work, they or a colleague reported it	Staff with a disability or LTC	46.2%	53.2%	50.3%	50.8%	47.1%
		Staff without	47.3%	48.1%	49.3%	50.2%	48.7%
5	Percentage of staff who believe that their organisation provides equal opportunities for career progression or promotion	Staff with a disability or LTC	57.6%	57.3%	55.6%	53.3%	47.8%
		Staff without	65.5%	65.3%	64.8%	58.7%	57.9%
6	Percentage of staff who have felt pressure from their manager to come to work, despite not feeling well enough to perform their duties	Staff with a disability or LTC	27.8%	26.9%	26.7%	26.8%	26.0%
		Staff without	21.0%	18.0%	15.8%	14.3%	15.4%
7	Percentage of staff satisfied with the extent to which their organisation values their work	Staff with a disability or LTC	37.4%	34.6%	36.3%	35.5%	32.0%
		Staff without	47.6%	48.4%	50.8%	48.8%	46.1%
8	Percentage of staff with a long lasting health condition or illness saying their employer has made adequate adjustment(s) to enable them to carry out their work	Staff with a disability or LTC	74.1%	72.9%	75.4%	74.3%	74.3%
9	Staff Engagement Score (0-10)	Staff with a disability or LTC	6.6	6.6	6.6	6.5	6.2
		Staff without	7.1	7.2	7.1	7.1	6.9
		Overall	6.9	7	6.9	6.9	6.7
			2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
10	Disabled/LTC Board Membership		7.1%	0.0%	3.0%	0.0%	4.0%

*Remains postive as 1.00 would indicate equal experience of both Non-Disabled and Disabled staff

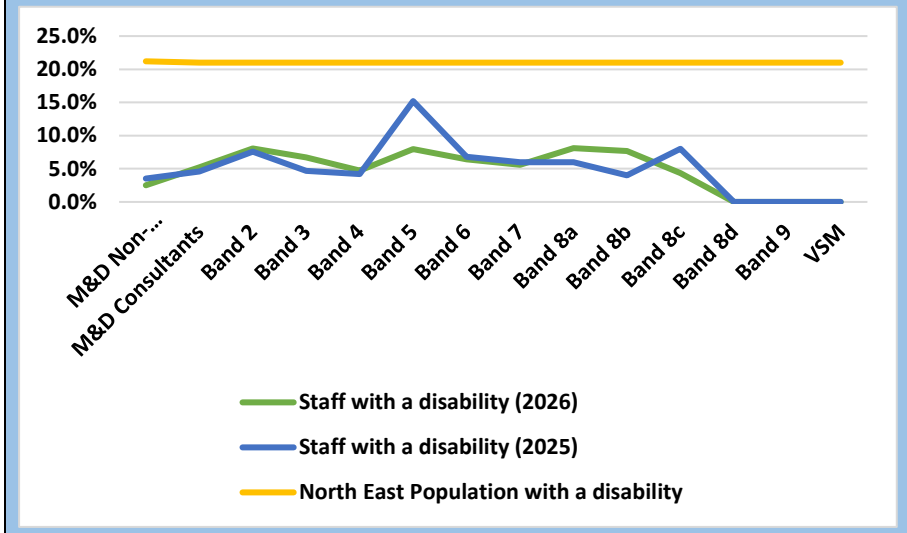
4. Key findings for 2026

The key findings in respect of the ten WDES indicators for 2026 are summarised below.

We are currently only able to undertake benchmarking for those areas which relate to the staff survey (indicators 4-9). Full benchmarking information is published by the national WDES team and this is expected for March 2027. The data for the UK Census which took place in 2021 is now available for analysis and reporting and this provides us with a more accurate picture of the UK's disability profile, which can also be broken down by Region and Local Authority Area.

- UK Population: 17.8% disabled and 82.2% non-disabled
- North East Population: 21.2% disabled and 78.8% non-disabled
- Stockton Population: 20.2% disabled and 79.8% non-disabled
- Hartlepool Population: 22.9% disabled and 77.1% non-disabled

Indicators 1 and 10 – Percentage of staff with a disability or long term health condition



Representative workforce across all protected characteristics at all levels.

This information is obtained from the trust's ESR system as at 31 March 2026.

There has been a positive increase in the number of staff who have reported their disability status on ESR - an increase of 0.4% from 6.3% in 2025 to 6.7% in 2026. This is a result of continued staff campaigns, on how to use the online self-declaration service on ESR and also by raising awareness of this during relevant disability and staff network events and the importance of trust workforce data. The North East's disability data (2021 census) is reported at 21.2% therefore representation within the trust is significantly lower.

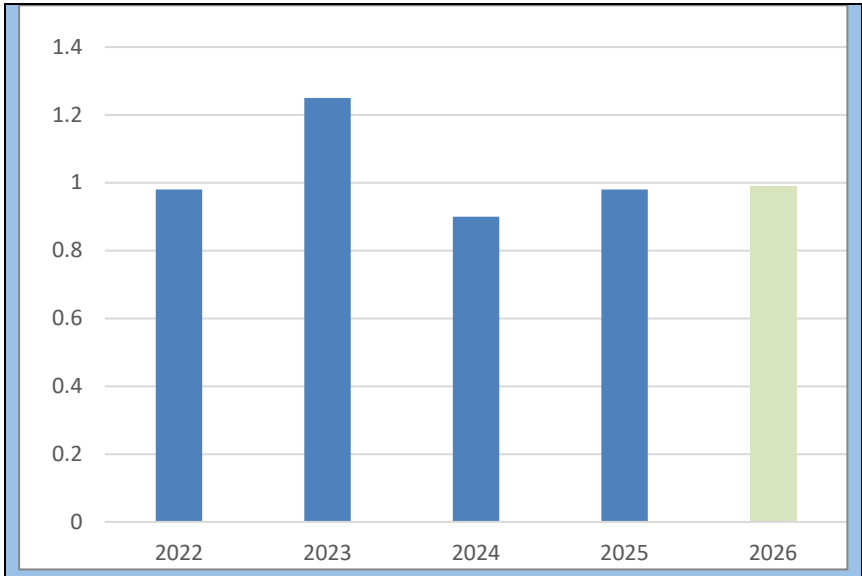
Representation is highest at Bands 2, 5 and band 8a for 2026. Although band 5 is one of the highest representations, we have seen a decrease of 7% since 2025. There are no disabled staff employed at Bands 8d, 9 and VSM.

Representation of disabled staff at Board and senior management levels.

For reporting purposes, we are only able to report on Board members who are directly employed by North Tees and Hartlepool Foundation Trust (NTH).

There is a total of 10 employees reported on the Board for NTH, with Disability at Board level currently reported at 4%, which has shown a positive increase from 0% reported in 2025, however this still remains lower than the overall workforce figure of 6.7%. We have seen a positive increase at Bands 8a and 8b.

Indicator 2 – The relative likelihood of disabled staff being appointed from shortlisting compared to non-disabled staff



Equity of experience.

This information is obtained from the trust's Trac Recruitment system for the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025 and considers a ratio showing the likelihood of being appointed following shortlisting. A figure of 1 indicates equal experience between disabled and non-disabled applicants.

The current figure for 2025 is reported as 0.99 which indicates shortlisted disabled applicants are more likely to be appointed following shortlisting than non-disabled applicants.

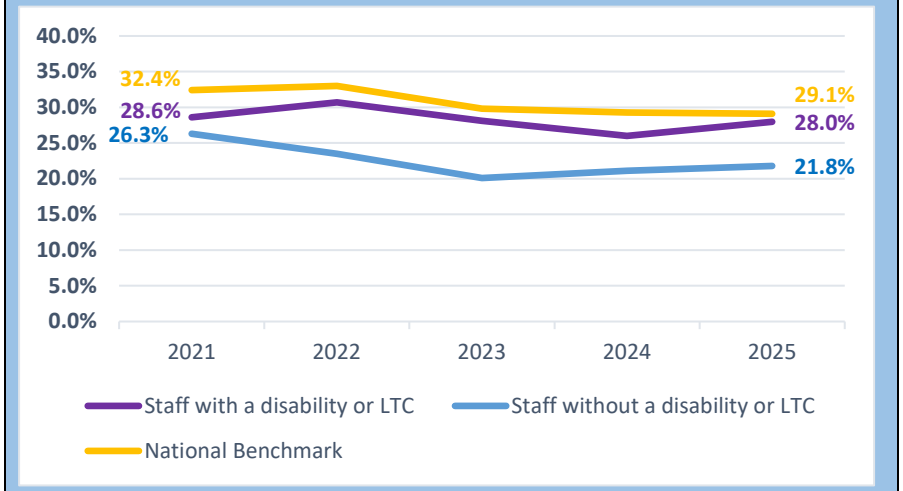
(A figure below 1:00 indicates that disabled staff are more likely than non-disabled staff to be appointed from shortlisting)

Indicator 3 – The relative likelihood of disabled staff entering the formal capability process compared to non-disabled staff

This information is obtained from the trust's workforce databases and considers a ratio showing the likelihood of entering formal capability processes. A figure of 1 indicates equal experience between disabled and non-disabled staff.

There have been 8 formal capability cases in total with 1 involving staff with a disability or long-term condition, therefore the relative likelihood of disabled staff entering the formal capability process compared to non-disabled staff is reported at 1.75. This has seen a increase from previous years where no cases were reported, therefore staff with a disability or long term condition are more likely to enter a formal capability process.

Indicator 4a - Percentage of staff experiencing harassment, bullying or abuse from patients, relatives or the public in last 12 months



Staff Survey key findings - B&H public

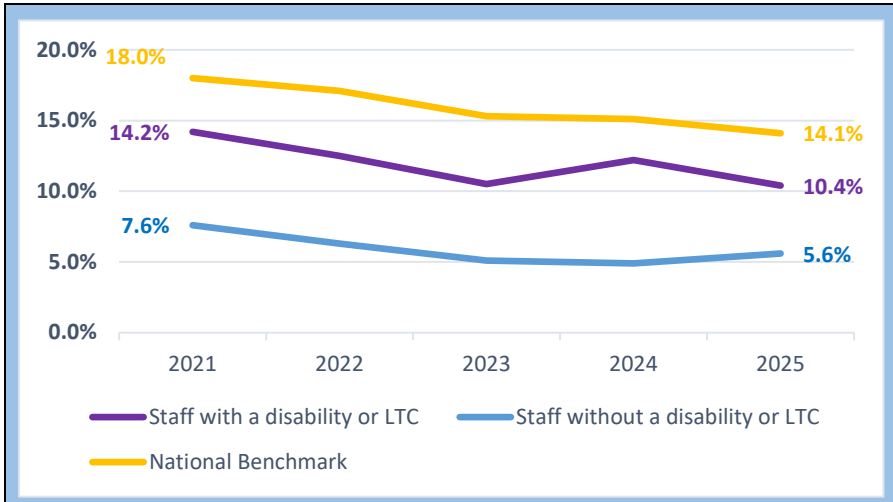
This information is derived from the 2025 Staff Survey.

Staff survey results show a negative increase in the number of disabled staff who have experienced harassment, bullying and abuse from patients, relatives/public (28% compared to 26% for 2024).

Staff with a disability/LTC continue to be more likely to experience harassment, bullying/abuse from patients than staff who do not have a disability and the gap is reported as 6.2%.

Staff are required to log all incidents of service user violence and harassment via InPhase. The trust's Keeping People Safe group reviews this information on a regular basis to identify trends and this includes analysis of related themes where available.

Indicator 4b – Percentage of staff experiencing harassment, bullying or abuse from manager in last 12 months



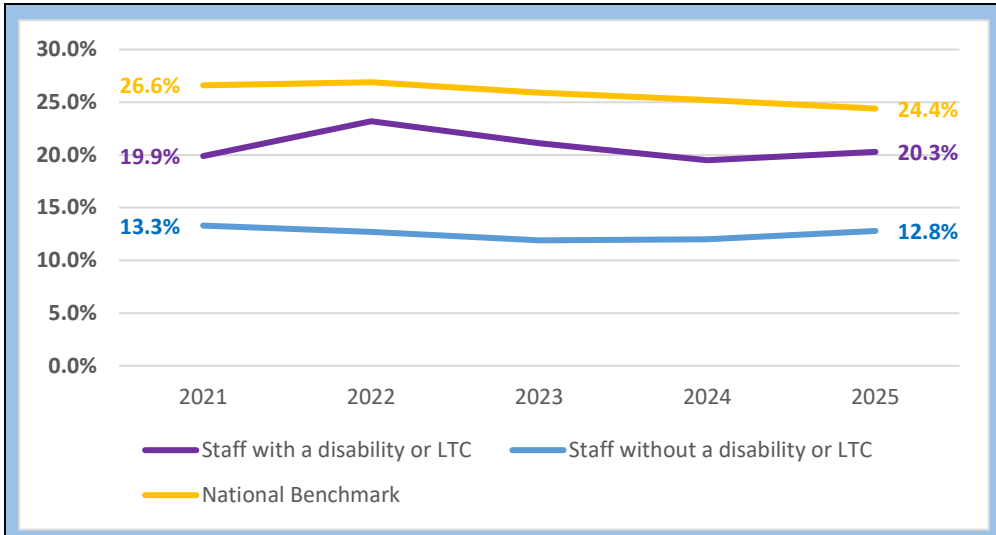
Staff Survey key findings - B&H manager

This information is derived from the 2025 Staff Survey.

Staff survey results show a positive decrease in the number of disabled staff experiencing harassment, bullying and abuse from a manager (10.4% compared to 12.2% for 2024).

Staff with a disability/LTC continue to be more likely to experience harassment, bullying/abuse from a manager than staff who do not have a disability, the gap has decreased for 2025 and this is currently reported as 4.8% compared to 7.3% in 2025.

Indicator 4c – Percentage of staff experiencing harassment, bullying or abuse from other colleagues in last 12 months



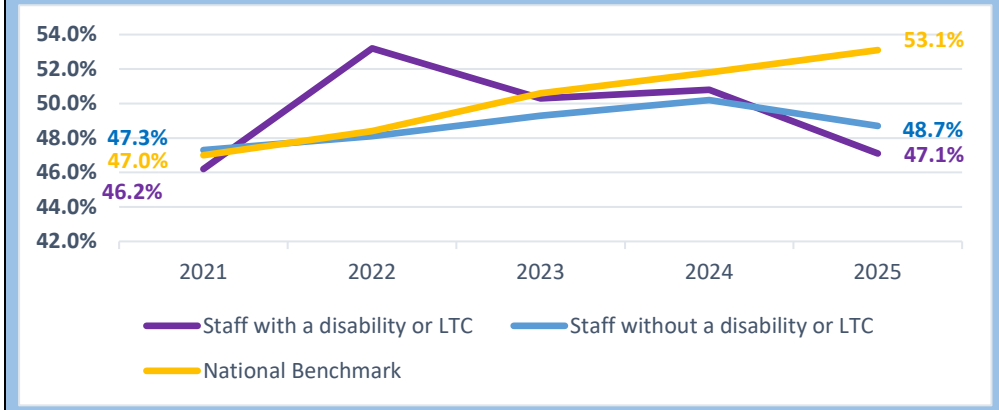
Staff Survey key findings - B&H colleagues

This information is derived from the 2025 Staff Survey.

Staff survey results show an increase in the number of disabled staff experiencing harassment, bullying and abuse from a colleague (20.3% compared to 19.6% in 2024).

Staff with a disability/LTC continue to be more likely to experience harassment, bullying/abuse from a colleague than staff who do not have a disability. The gap has slightly decreased for 2025 and this is reported as 7.5% (compared to 7.6% for 2024).

Indicator 4d – Percentage of staff saying that the last time they experienced harassment, bullying or abuse at work, they or a colleague reported it



Staff Survey key findings - reporting

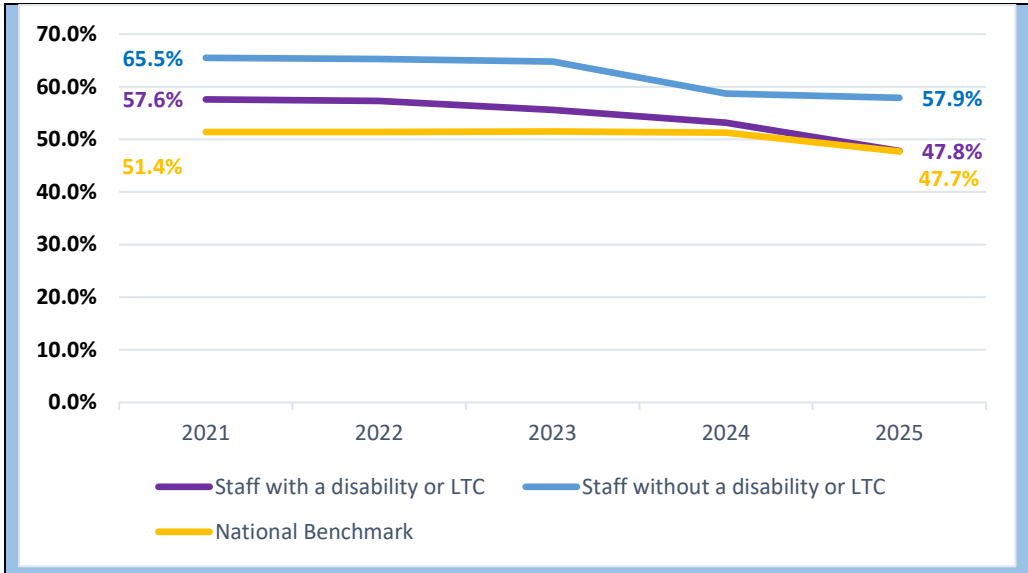
This information is derived from the 2025 Staff Survey.

Staff survey results show a decrease in the number of disabled staff who have reported harassment, bullying and abuse (47.1% compared to 50.8% for 2024).

Staff with a disability/LTC are less likely to report harassment, bullying/abuse than staff who do not have a disability, with a reported gap of 1.6%.

It is important that our staff feel supported to report concerns regarding bullying and harassment and all cases are logged and monitored by the workforce team.

Indicator 5 – Percentage of staff who believe that their organisation provides equal opportunities for career progression or promotion



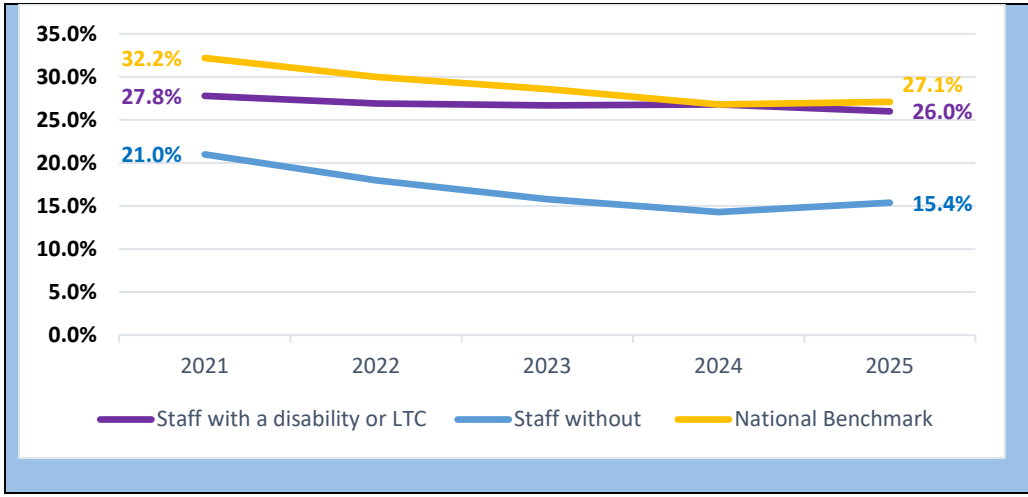
Staff Survey key findings - equal opportunities

This information is derived from the 2025 Staff Survey.

The results have decreased in terms of the percentage of both disabled and non-disabled staff who believe the organisation provides equal opportunities for career progression or promotion. The disabled staff figures are reported as 47.8% compared to 53.2% for 2024 and non-disabled staff is reported 57.9% compared to 58.7% for 2024.

Staff with a disability/LTC continue to report lower levels of equal opportunities than staff who do not have a disability. The gap in experience is currently reported as 10.1%.

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



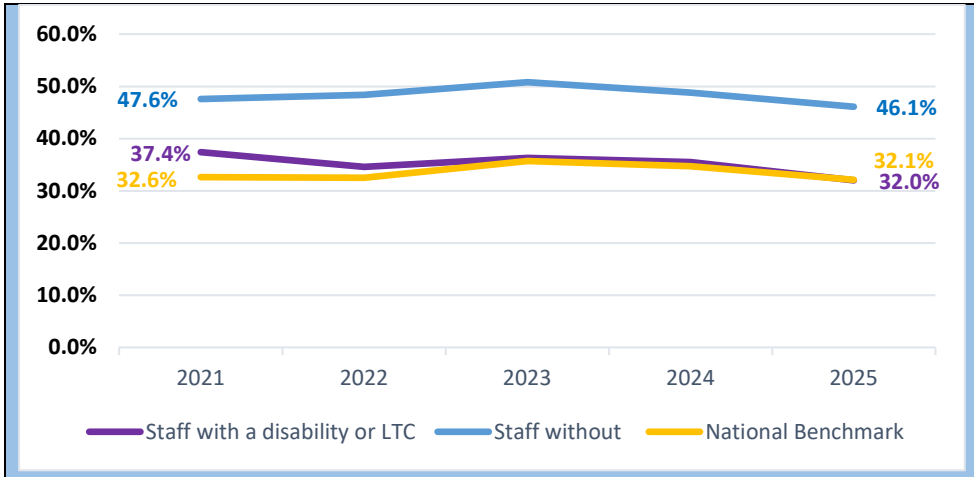
Staff Survey key findings - attendance at work whilst unwell

This information is derived from the 2025 Staff Survey.

The results show a slight positive decrease in the number of disabled staff who have felt pressure from their manager to come to work whilst unwell (26% compared to 26.8% for 2024).

Staff with a disability/LTC continue to be more likely to report pressure to attend work whilst unwell than staff who do not have a disability. The gap has decreased for 2025 and this is reported as 10.6%, compared to 14.5% for 2024.

Indicator 7 – Percentage of staff satisfied with the extent to which their organisation values their work



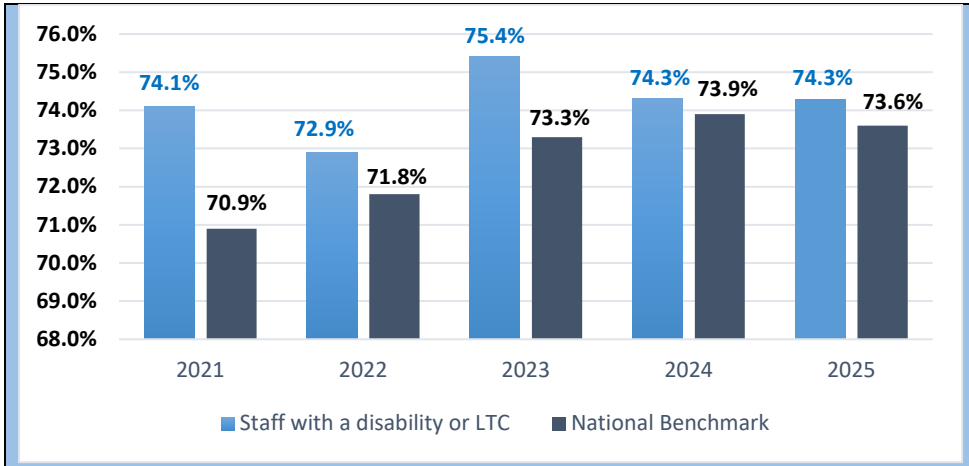
Staff Survey key findings - feeling valued

This information is derived from the 2025 Staff Survey.

The number of disabled staff who feel satisfied that the organisation values their work has decreased for 2024 at 32.0%, compared to 35.5% for 2024.

Staff with a disability/LTC continue to be less likely to feel valued than staff who do not have a disability and the gap is reported at 14.1% which is a increase of 0.8% (13.3%) from 2024.

Indicator 8 – Percentage of staff with a long-lasting health condition or illness saying their employer has made adequate adjustment(s) to enable them to carry out their work



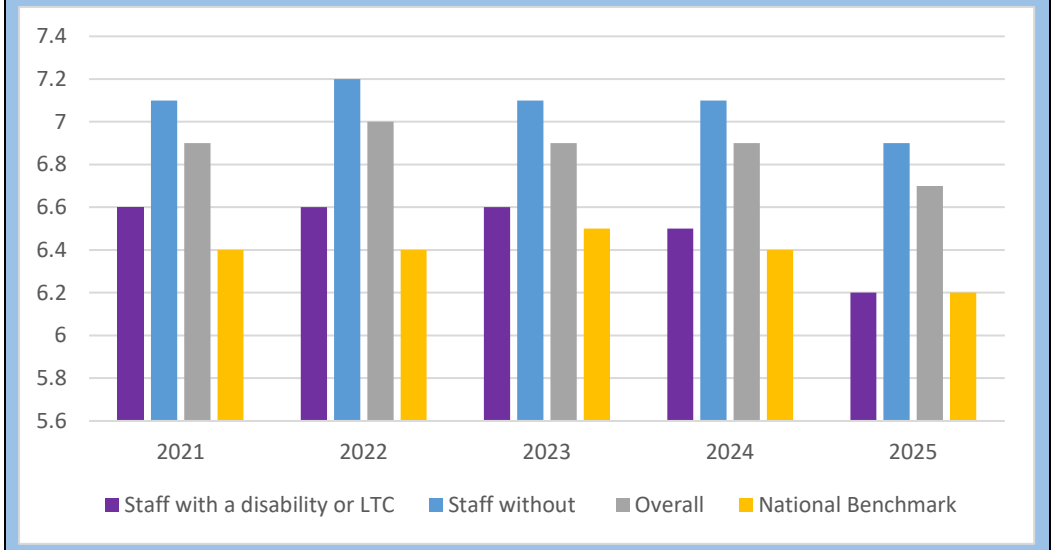
Staff Survey key findings - reasonable adjustments

This information is derived from the 2025 Staff Survey. his information is derived from the 2025 Staff Survey.

Staff survey results have remained static in terms of the number of disabled staff who have reported that the trust has made adequate reasonable adjustments to enable them to carry out their work, the figure still remains above the national average for this question.

Training continues to be delivered to managers on the application of the policy in practice.

Indicator 9 – Staff engagement score (0-10)



Staff Survey key findings - engagement

Staff survey results show that the staff engagement score for disabled staff is 6.2 out of 10. This has shown a slight decrease of 0.3 when compared to 6.5 in 2024

Staff with a disability report lower report lower levels of staff engagement than staff who do not have a disability. Staff with a disability/LTC report on a comparable with national benchmarking data which indicates that the engagement score for disabled staff is 6.2.

5. Conclusion and next steps

Our actions to improve the trust's workforce Disability Equality Standard (WDES) metrics are aligned with the Group's People Values, particularly the value of respect, and support our commitment to the ambitions set out within the NHS People Plan.

We are pleased to report improvements across some of WDES indicators for 2026. These positive outcomes reflect the impact of our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) programme of work, alongside increased investment in workforce data analysis and targeted interventions designed to enhance staff experience and reduce inequalities across all protected characteristics.

The trust will continue to promote and embed the initiatives and good practice already in place, including the delivery of fair and transparent recruitment processes, civility and respect training, unconscious bias training, and the promotion of leadership and development opportunities available to staff across the organisation. The trust continues to hold Disability Confident Leader (Level 3) accreditation and remains committed to working in partnership with the Ability Network to drive continuous improvement and strengthen support for colleagues across the organisation. In addition, we are introducing a new Employee Disability Passport as part of the revised appraisal policy. This initiative aims to support disabled employees and those with long-term health conditions by facilitating discussions about workplace adjustments, ensuring appropriate support is in place, and enabling individuals to enter, remain in, and thrive within work.

The trust is committed to advancing disability equality and fostering an inclusive working environment where all staff are able to succeed. While a range of initiatives and practices have already been implemented to support this objective, we recognise that achieving sustainable improvement will require continued organisational focus and long-term cultural change.

Although changes to the workforce disability profile are likely to be gradual, it is encouraging to note a continued increase in the number of staff declaring a disability or long-term condition. This greater level of disclosure is an important indicator of growing confidence among staff and supports our ability to better understand and address workforce needs. We also acknowledge the importance of further developing the Disability and Long-Term Conditions Staff Network to ensure the voices and experiences of disabled staff are effectively represented and continue to inform organisational priorities and improvement activity.

It should be noted that this report provides a high-level overview of the trust's overall WDES performance and workforce metrics. The next phase of the reporting process will focus on engagement with staff and key stakeholders to review the findings, gain further insight into the underlying themes, and collaboratively develop a targeted action plan. This action plan will form part of the trust's WDES Annual Report to be published in October 2026 and will support our ongoing commitment to improving outcomes and experiences for disabled staff.