

Inclusion and Belonging Annual Report 2024



Our Activity, Achievement and Ambitions

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**This report should be read in conjunction with
our 2024 Trust Inclusion and Belonging Data Book**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2023-24 has been a roller-coaster year for inclusion at North Staffordshire Combined Healthcare NHS Trust. Through it all we have demonstrated relentless commitment and passion for growing greater inclusion and belonging for all of our people.

Aims of this Report

This report sets out our Trust activity, achievements and ambitions on Inclusion and Belonging – our new name for this workstream - in line with our new Inclusion and Belonging Strategic Plan 2024-28. It sets out the key ways in which we have delivered against our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) responsibilities for the period 2023-24.

Highlights

We are proud of the continued and ever-increasing focus on Inclusion and Belonging, and how deeply this is becoming embedded into 'how we do things' at North Staffordshire Combined Healthcare NHS Trust. Key to our approach in 2023-24 has been a process of re-focussing our efforts on Inclusion to maximise impactful and sustainable change.

It is exciting to see the great level of activity within our clinical and non-clinical services in this period to advance both workforce and service user Inclusion and Belonging. This encompasses a wide range of work programmes to address local health inequalities, through our Community Health Transformation Programme, Veteran Aware project and development of the Health Equity Framework. It has also included application of new technologies to make our services more inclusive by design, including development of our EDI dashboard and application of tools such as AccessAble, Recite Accessibility Toolbar, Digital Translation, Video Interpretation, MindView and more to support the diverse accessibility needs of our service users and workforce.

Throughout the year, there has additionally been a continued focus on continuing to raise awareness and educating at a deeper level to support development of our culture of inclusion, with a particular emphasis on development of inclusive and compassionate leadership and through continuation of our positive action of race approach.

Challenges and Risks

Despite our clear continued progress and successes, it is concerning to note that there has been a slowing of pace in progress on a range of core measures of Inclusion and Belonging for the Trust. In addition, the experiences of our diverse individuals in our organisation and the abhorrent racist and Islamophobic events locally and nationally in August 2024 mean that we recognise without reservation that we have much to do to deliver on our ambition of providing a great place to work for all our colleagues and offering Outstanding Inclusion for all.

Opportunities / Solutions

The Trust recognises and is responding to the need to re-focus and deepen our impact on inclusion through a change in approach, maximising access and benefits realisation on a smaller, consolidated range of schemes and key actions with measurable outcomes. We will work to recognise, challenge and **eliminate bias** in our Trust processes; **reduce equality and health inequalities** and communicate widely our **anti-racist** and **anti-discriminatory** approach. Education and awareness raising will underpin this work.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Building a culture of inclusion and belonging is central to everything we do, supporting provision of a stable, vibrant workforce with the right skills, enthusiasm and experience and in the right numbers, and ensuring **all** our 1,935 staff (1,712 WTE) have a great experience at work. That is why inclusive and representative is the first and most important pillar of our Combined People Plan.



We understand that realising our ambition to be the best place to work in the NHS can only be achieved through ensuring everyone can feel a collective pride, inclusion and the sense of belonging. We are committed to creating a work environment where all people can flourish and thrive, to be their best selves at work.

Outstanding
Our journey continues...

Outstanding	
Safe	Good ●
Effective	Good ●
Caring	Outstanding ☆
Responsive	Outstanding ☆
Well-led	Good ●

At Combined Healthcare, we are a leading provider of mental health, social care, learning disability and substance misuse services in the West Midlands, providing care and support to people predominantly living in Stoke-on-Trent and North Staffordshire. We are on an ambitious journey to deliver our vision to be Outstanding – in all we do and how we do it and delighted to be one of only 5 mental health trusts in England with a Care Quality Commission (CQC) “Outstanding”.

***“We are a small Trust with big ambitions
– to be “Outstanding in All That We Do and How We Do It”***

All our colleagues at Combined Healthcare work tirelessly to provide the best possible care. We are rightly proud of the CQC rating which recognises the really excellent compassionate and responsive way we support service users and carers day-in and day-out. It is clear that compassionate and responsive care can only be provided with inclusion and respect at its heart.

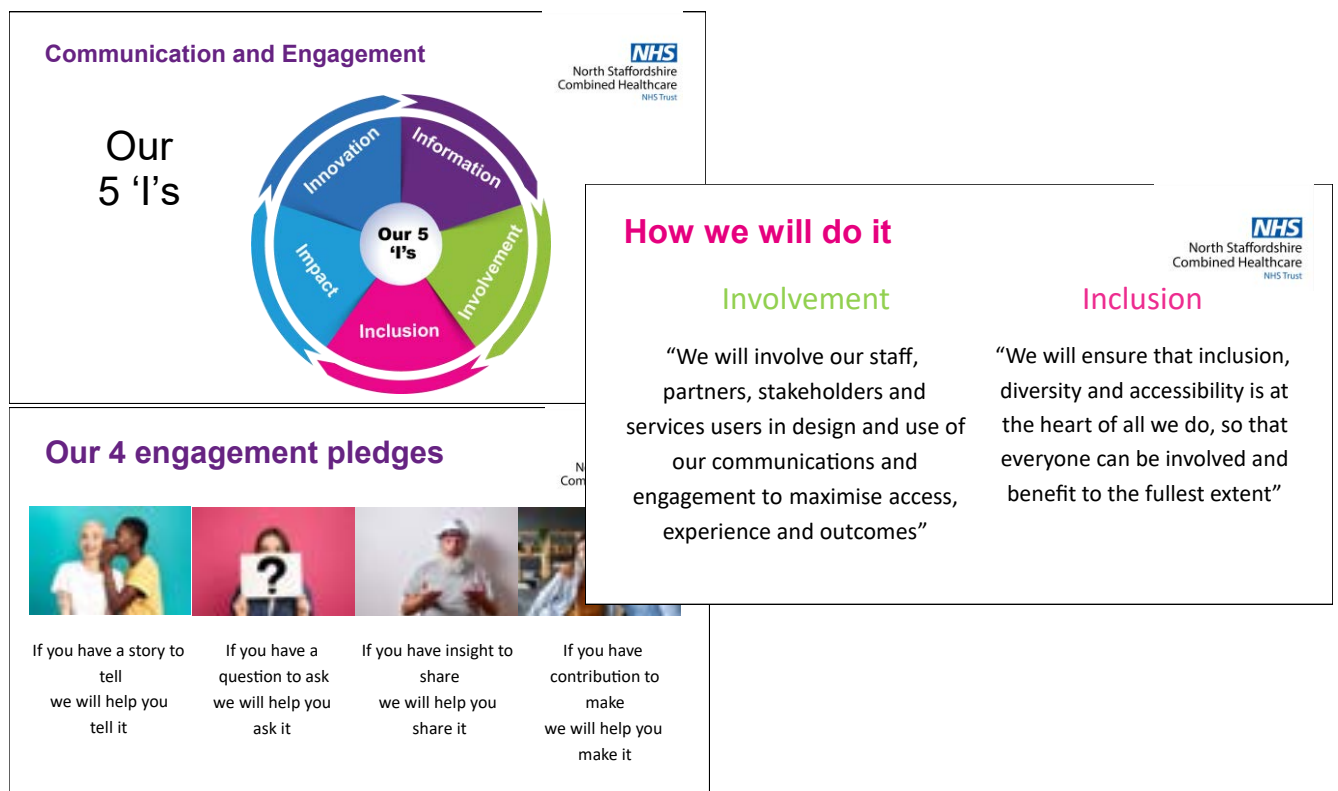
The Trust provides essential services to people with a wide range of mental health and learning disability needs. Sometimes our service users need to spend time in hospital, but much more often we are able to provide care in community settings and in people’s own homes. We also provide specialist mental health services such as child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS), substance misuse services and psychological therapies, plus a range of clinical and non-clinical services to support University Hospitals of North Midlands NHS Trust (UHM).

We operate from approximately 30 community-based sites, providing services to around 464,000 people of all ages and diverse backgrounds in Stoke-on-Trent and across North Staffordshire, with some of our teams providing services across Staffordshire, the West Midlands and beyond.



Inclusion and Belonging is fundamentally at the heart of all we do across the Trust, as reflected in our Combined People Plan (2023), our Trust Communications Strategy (2024) and our new Inclusion and Belonging Strategic Plan (2024). We have an unrelenting desire to be Outstanding in the effective, inclusive and compassionate experiences we provide to our patients, service users, carers and those who work with and for us. This ambition is galvanised within our *Proud to CARE* Trust Values and our SPAR Quality Priorities.

This 2024 Inclusion and Belonging Annual Report sets out our Trust activity, achievement and ambitions on EDI and how we have delivered against our key responsibilities in this field.



2.0 INCLUSION & BELONGING STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND REGULATION

2.1 Inclusion Structure

2.1.1 Trust Board

Our Trust Board is passionate about inclusion. Under the leadership of our Chair, Janet Dawson, and Chief Executive, Dr Buki Adeyemo, the Trust has taken bold steps in 2023-24 to create a more inclusive culture where action and outcomes 'speak louder than words'. Our Executive Board committed to our Anti-Racism Statement in January 2024 and all executive directors have set meaningful personal and directorate inclusion objectives for 2024-25.



NSCHT Trust Board and others in attendance

Dr Adeyemo is Chair of our Trust Inclusion Council and sets a high bar for all that we do to develop inclusion. Only **Outstanding** will do..! In 2023-24 Buki has championed inclusion with our Trust Board and our developing anti-racist and anti-discriminatory approach. Buki has spoken on inclusion at national and local events, including Black History Month, International Women's Day and South Asian Heritage Month, and has led the development of executive inclusion objectives in 2024.

Very sadly, the Trust lost a dear colleague and impactful inclusion ambassador in January 2024, when our Executive Chief People Officer, Paul Draycott, passed away suddenly. Paul made inclusion central to his work and was passionate about championing inclusion and allyship. Paul's contribution to Inclusion and the wider People profession was recognised in a posthumous award for **Excellence in Executive Inclusive Leadership of the Year Award** at the Midlands Inclusivity and Diversity Awards Scheme (MIDAS) Awards in April 2024.

In October 2023, Paul wrote a personal blog for Black History Month, which has formed a key part of his legacy on inclusion. Now known as '**Paul's Promise**', the Trust is committed to turning Paul's personal pledges on race inclusion into reality within the organisation. This will be fully enacted and embedded in process as a priority when we recruit substantively to the Chief People Officer role.

Kerry Smith, our Interim Chief People Officer, is equally committed to creating a more inclusive future for all our Combined people. In addition to her strong HR / People Team background within the Trust and wider NHS, Kerry sought to strengthen her skills in inclusion by undertaking the HPMA Anti-Racist Leadership Programme in 2023-24 and is committed to applying this through her leadership across the Trust. Kerry is also leading our **#InclusiveHR** change programme, focussed on delivering measurable inclusive culture change within our Trust People function.

Our Chief Medical Officer, Dr Dennis Okolo, was substantively appointed in 2024. Dr Okolo is the Executive Sponsor for the Trust Equality Network for Race Inclusion and Cultural Heritage (ENRICH).

Our Chief Operations Officer, Ben Richards is our Executive Sponsor for the Trust LGBT+ Network and in 2023 additionally took on the role of Trust Executive Sponsor for the WRES Champions programme. Ben also participates in the LGBT+ Leaders Network nationally.

Chief Nursing Officer, Kenny Laing, is Executive Sponsor for our Combined Ability Network.

Eric Gardiner is working to ensure that inclusion is embedded within our Trust financial decisions and our supply contracts, as well as through our Finance, Information and Estates functions.

Our Staff Side Chair and attendee of Trust Board, Jenny Harvey, is a strong advocate of all forms of workforce inclusion and specifically an ambassador and activist for trans inclusion locally and nationally within her Trust, system and UNISON roles. Jenny is also a trustee of the charity *Beyond Reflection*.

2.2.1 Trust Inclusion Structures and Roles

The Trust has a Diversity and Inclusion Lead who works 3 days leading and coordinating this area of work across both patient/service user and workforce responsibilities.

From February 2022 to March 2024, a Differently Abled Buddy Scheme Project Manager joined the team on a fixed term basis. This role was initially to deliver the innovative Differently Abled Buddy Scheme within Combined Healthcare. The was extended in 2023-24 to additionally encompass ICS partner organisations.

Over the period to January to July 2024, the Inclusion and Belonging function was additionally supported by 0.2 WTE Internal OD Consultant.

The Diversity and Inclusion Lead is supported by 3 Staff Network Leads who carry out their network lead roles with much energy, drive and commitment. Network Leads are funded 2 days per month for their network duties, working flexibly to deliver the maximum impact possible for their network members.

At the time of writing, a business case is being considered for additional support for the EDI function, which has seen very significant growth in terms of the legal and NHS expectations and core requirements of the function, and the increasingly political nature of the work, over the past ten years.

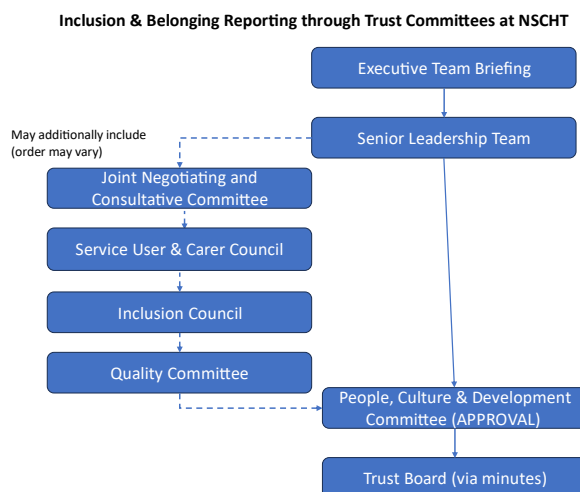
2.2 **Trust Committee and Group Structure**

Both service user and workforce-related Inclusion matters are discussed at the Trust's **Inclusion Council** which is chaired by the Chief Executive and Deputed by our Chief People Officer. Membership of Inclusion Council is drawn from pertinent leadership roles together with individuals representing different workforce groups and characteristics. To amplify the voice of minoritised groups within our workforce, our Staff Network Leads have a seat on Inclusion Council and feedback about issues raised, action taken and support needed.

Inclusion related reports and hot-topics are discussed, quality assured and approved at the Trust People, Culture and Development Committee (PCDC) which meets monthly (except August). PCDC is a sub-group of Trust Board. Our key Inclusion-related reports are additionally discussed and socialised through the organisation via our Senior Leadership Team meetings. Core workforce-related inclusion matters are also discussed, consulted on and agreed with staff and staff-side representatives at our Joint Consultative and Negotiating Committee (JNCC).

Meeting notes and key papers from Inclusion Council are approved at PCDC, including this Inclusion and Belonging Annual Report, Equality Delivery System (EDS), the Workforce Race Equality Standard (WRES), Workforce Disability Equality Standard (WDES), annual Gender Pay Gap report and more. The key documents are published on the Trust's external Inclusion and Belonging page.

In addition, our Patient Advisory and Liaison Service (PALS) provides support and gathers feedback from patients, service users and carers about experiences of the Trust and this is fed into the above meetings. This includes coordinating feedback from compliments and complaints, Friends and Family Test, Discharge Survey and other feedback/surveys.



2.3 Freedom to Speak Up

The Trust has a robust Freedom to Speak Up (FTSU) structure which is well publicised, and colleagues encouraged to raise concerns through this route. We have a strong team of FTSU Champions, who work with the FTSU Guardian and Being Open Lead, Marie Barley (joint role, along with her role as OD & Engagement Lead).



Our FTSU Champions help to promote a positive culture here at Combined, where we aim to create space for staff to feel comfortable and supported to share their voice and feel heard about anything that may concern them. We have FTSU Champions working across all Trust localities who include colleagues with diverse characteristics and from across the range of staff and professional groups. Our aim is to give staff a choice of who they may be most comfortable with when speaking up. The FTSU Champions role is to support staff to speak up and help to identify themes and trends emerging from the frontline, sharing this information with the Freedom to Speak Up Guardian.

In 2024, the Trust is working on introducing a new fully anonymous form of reporting to FTSU in response to feedback from our staff networks.

2.4 Staff Networks and System Staff Networks

The Trust is proud to support three staff networks, illustrated below, which do an important role providing colleagues from typically minoritised groups a place to come together, connect and share experiences and concerns, providing collective voice on this to the organisation. Our networks are empowered to improve policies and practices across the Trust and to help implement change. These networks are mirrored at Integrated Care System (ICS) level with three corresponding system networks.

Each staff network is run by its members with a range of meetings sharing upcoming webinars and training events, social events and learning opportunities. Each network has a Network Lead, who usually assumes the role for one to two years to enable others to gain skills and experience and share the load. It was agreed to provide dedicated paid time in which to undertake network duties from April 2022. Each network may additionally appoint a deputy. Each of our Trust networks have an Executive Lead providing executive sponsorship, championing and 'unblocking' of issues where required.

We continue to invest in, develop and embed the role of our Trust and ICS Staff Networks to enable them to develop their influence and impact for our staff and our patients and service users. In 2023-24, we have particularly focussed on developing the links between our Network Leads and their respective executive sponsors, and also in strengthening joint-working across our 3 staff networks.

In addition to our 3 Staff Networks, the Trust has developed 2 new staff groups in 2023-24.

Our Menopause 'Café' has created a group of interested individuals in holding monthly discussions and guest speakers on peri- and post-menopause related topics. The group has also supported a scheme for free period products in Trust staff toilets and is looking at provision of spare clothing for colleagues who have been caught short, causing blood staining to clothing.

Our Men's Health Group launched in January 2024 and aims to:-

- provide a safe and supportive environment where men can comfortably share experiences and feelings without judgement.
- create a collaborative space for men to discuss challenges, share thoughts, and build new connections, foster relationships and strengthen community bonds.

Further new staff interest groups are being planned for 2024-25.





Combined Ability Network (CAN)

Network Lead – Deb Rich, Deborah.Rich@combined.nhs.uk

Executive Lead – Kenny Laing, Chief Nursing Officer



Equality Network for Race and Cultural Heritage (ENRICH)

Network Lead – Boluwatife.Adeoye@combined.nhs.uk

Executive Lead – Dr Dennis Okolo, Chief Medical Officer



Lesbian, Gay, Bi and Trans + (LGBT+) Network

Network Lead – Stevan.Thompson@combined.nhs.uk

Executive Lead – Ben Richards, Chief Operating Officer



4.0 INCLUSION AND BELONGING KEY ACHIEVEMENTS 2023-24

We are proud to have delivered another year where our sustained focus and belief in the centrality of Inclusion and Belonging to all that we do was highly evident across the Trust and beyond. Continued improvement has been achieved across many aspects of our Inclusion work, whilst we recognise that in some areas improvement has slowed or even slipped back a little.

We have been working to build our culture of Inclusion and Belonging and ensuring that this is at the heart of everything that we do, ensuring a stable, vibrant workforce with the right skills, enthusiasm and experience, in the right numbers, to ensure that all our colleagues have great experiences at work. We are committed to creating a work environment where all our people share a sense of collective pride and are able to flourish and thrive, and to authentically be their best selves at work.

Key Achievements

- ✓ The Trust has continually **improved overall representation** for Global Majority heritage, disability and LGBT+ and colleagues with veteran history on an almost monthly basis, virtually matching our Global Majority local population rate (subsequently exceeding this in 2024 Q1) and made some improvement in equitable representation through the organisation hierarchy . For further detail, see 2024 Inclusion and Belonging Data Book.
- ✓ Corresponding improvements have been made in **service user representation** through Trust Directorates and services. Significant gaps remain in our ethnicity, LGB+ and religion data which we will continue to address through 2024-25.
- ✓ The Trust continues to be a **leading performer on the WRES and WDES** and it is anticipated that we will retain a top 10% position on numerous measures within these frameworks when national results are released.
- ✓ We have continued to progress our **RACE Equality Code** and **NHS Rainbow Badge** Action Plans through the year.
- ✓ We have made a number of improvements using information technology and new software to support **service user and staff accessibility**, including progressing our AccessAble programme, introducing the Recite Web Accessibility Tool, developing provision of digital translation through application of the Office 365 suite, providing software and equipment to support a number of neurodiverse / differently abled colleagues and agreed to support neurodiverse Trust learners with MindView mind-mapping software.
- ✓ Delivered 3 more successful **Inclusion School sessions for our ICS and beyond**, deepening understanding of inclusion related matters, as well as a range of education and awareness raising sessions to recognise key events, including Black History Month, South Asian History month, LGBT+ History Month, Pride Month and Disability History Month.
- ✓ Continued to grow and strengthen our commitment to our **Staff Networks** and developing the work of these groups as powerful vehicles for positive change, to the benefit of staff and our service users and strengthening executive sponsorship links and partnership working within the Trust and across the ICS.

- ✓ Concluded our fifth **New Futures** programme cohort and our **Differently Abled Buddy Scheme** programme and delivered a number of other positive action on race development opportunities for Trust and ICS colleagues. We have also agreed a change in approach to move away from direct positive action programmes, to development that creates and sustains an inclusive working environment, addressing the root causes of bias and embedding processes to ensure more equitable decision making going forwards
- ✓ Progressed our **Veteran Aware** programme and achieved the **Silver Award** of the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS).
- ✓ For 2023 - 2024 **Step On** supported 914 people within secondary mental health services Staffordshire-wide to access IPS (Individual Placement and Support). Of these 253 clients were successfully supported into paid work. Within both the Employment Specialist and Peer Support Worker roles within the team, existing Step On clients with their own lived experience have been successfully recruited.
- ✓ Progressed a range of change programmes to address health inequalities through our Community Health Transformation Programme & **Health Inequalities Co Lab**
- ✓ Worked on creating a robust Trust **EDI Dashboard** to drive and monitor measurable change at Trust, Directorate and Service Line levels for implementation in 2024-25
- ✓ Committed to and begun development against the **#InclusiveHR** framework
- ✓ The Trust has championed the use of more **inclusive language**, including ceasing use of the term 'BAME'
- ✓ We have launched our Trust **Anti-Racist Statement** and will progress communication, visibility and action on this approach through 2024-25
- ✓ Trust colleagues have received **inclusive leadership development** through our Anti-Racist Leadership, WRES Champions, Developing Me:Developing You, Comfortable Being Uncomfortable, and Reciprocal Mentoring programmes in 2023-24 in addition to inclusion education being core within our leadership development programmes
- ✓ We have **delivered on all our EDI legal and NHS requirements**, despite growing pressure and demands in the EDI field and recognised shortage of the EDI resource for the EDI function
- ✓ **Engaged with our local communities** in a variety of recruitment and inclusion events, including our Community Stakeholder Engagement Event, Stoke Pride and Armed Forces Day.
- ✓ Continued to extend our network of **Rainbow Badge wearers** and introduced our **See ME First Badges** (171 sign-ups in the first 6 months).

Further details of our achievements and progress on Inclusion and Belonging in 2023-24 are set out in Appendix One.

4.0 PERFORMANCE AGAINST STATUTORY INCLUSION & BELONGING DUTIES

4.1 The Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)

The Equality Act 2010 is the primary piece of legislation around equalities in the UK, bringing together the previously multi-stranded equalities legislation. The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) forms part of the Equality Act 2010 (section 149) and is directly applicable to NHS.

The Trust is aware of and compliant with the general and specific duties of the Equality Act and PSED in 2022-23. Our work against our associated Equality Objectives is outlined in s4.3 below. We also demonstrate 'due regard' to the Act through applying a process of Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) to new and updated policies and when making service changes.

The Trust recognises its duty to engage with the communities it serves and to work with Integrated Care System (ICS) partner organisations to understand, mitigate and remove any potential discrimination and to demonstrate our shared commitment to improving health equalities and removing health inequalities, as articulated in the Health and Social Care Act 2012 and as summarised in the four key aims for all ICSs as illustrated below.



The four key aims of all ICSs

4.2 Pay Gap Reporting

A snapshot of our Gender Pay Gap data for 2023 is provided below (2022 figures in brackets). It is noted that there is a lag in the reporting period for Gender Pay Gap according to Government timescales and the Trust will be producing its 2024 Gender Pay report very shortly.

The Trust's Gender Pay Gap data (including the 2023 data) can be found on the [government website](#). Our Gender Pay Gap Report as at 31.3.23 is on the Trust's public website [here](#).

	31.03.2023	31.03.2022
Mean gender pay gap	14.0%	16.6%
Median gender pay gap	2.1%	3.3%
Mean bonus gender pay gap*	38.2%	35.9%
Median bonus gender pay gap*	0.0%	-10.0%
Proportion eligible males receiving bonus payment*	3.4%	1.6%
Proportion eligible females receiving bonus payment*	0.4%	0.2%

*relates only to consultant medical staff; no other staff in receipt of bonus pay



The chart above illustrates relatively equitable gender representation at all levels of the organisation hierarchy (through the 4 pay quartiles). The Trust has consistently slightly under-represented males in the lower quartile and under-represented females in the upper quartile. Female under-representation is slowly reducing, but male representation in the lower quartile has not improved over the 7 years since Gender Pay Reporting was introduced. The Trust will shortly commence work on our Gender pay Reporting for the period to 31st March 2024. This year, we have additionally undertaken to investigate and report on its Ethnicity and Disability Pay Gaps in 2024-25. Unlike the Gender Pay Reporting, these areas are not currently mandated in employment law.

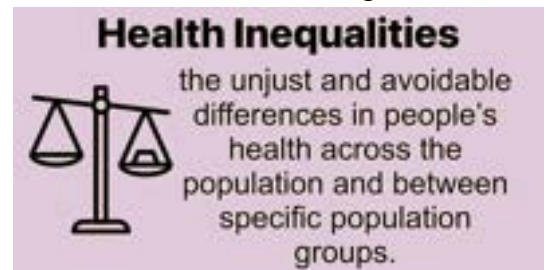
4.3 Health Inequalities and Under-Served Groups

Health inequalities are systematic, unfair and avoidable differences in health across the population, and between different groups within society. They arise because of differences in the conditions in which we are born, grow, live, work and age. These conditions influence how we think, feel and act and can affect both our physical and mental health and wellbeing.

Healthcare inequalities are part of wider inequalities and relate to inequalities in the access people have to health services and in their experiences of and outcomes from healthcare. Tackling inequalities in outcomes, experience and access is one of the four key purposes of Integrated Care Systems. NHS England's vision is for the NHS to deliver "exceptional quality healthcare for all, ensuring equitable access, excellent experience and optimal outcomes".

NHS trusts have statutory duties to report on and address health inequalities as part of their legal and operational responsibilities, and must work proactively to reduce health disparities by identifying and addressing systematic inequalities and implementing targeted interventions. These duties are grounded in the broader framework of the Equality Act 2010 and the Health and Social Care Act 2012, which require public sector bodies, including NHS trusts, to have due regard to reducing health inequalities in their services.

At Combined, our services are increasingly focussed on identifying and addressing such inequalities and barriers to equity resulting in some groups being under-served, through conscious inquisitive analysis of service data. We are mindful of the higher-than-average levels of deprivation in parts of Staffordshire and particularly in the City of Stoke-on-Trent. This is likely to have been further exacerbated by the financial and other effects of the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent 'Cost of Living Crisis' for our localities.



Population Health Management and Health Equity Framework (HEF)

Population Health Management is a data-driven tool or methodology that refers to ways of bringing together health-related data to identify a specific population that health and care systems may then prioritise for particular services. It advocates for equitable access to local services, targeted towards those with disproportionate need.

The Trust's Health Equity Framework is a key tool to enable the Trust to monitor the effectiveness of interventions and actions to reduce inequity at a Trust and local level. Reports are provided in response to evidence of the differential access, experience and outcomes in mental health services highlighted in the available national literature and the best available evidence locally.

Quarterly monitoring reports, introduced in 2023-24, provide a summary of the key areas of concern and the framework is developed as new pathways and interventions are implemented as part of Trust quality improvement and transformation.

Trust Services and Health Inequalities

Our Trust teams have really begun to embrace the challenge of health inequalities in 2023-24, with a range of programmes and initiatives designed to target identified inequity.

Community teams continued to work in partnership with our local ICS partners and local communities to progress the second year of our **Health Inequalities Co. Lab** to better understand the barriers and solutions to access, experiences and outcomes for people in our local population needing access to mental health services, with a focus on under-represented groups. This 3-year **Community Health Transformation Programme** seeks to transform community mental health care by creating fully integrated teams of health, social care and voluntary and community staff to work in new ways, with the support of people with lived experience to deliver services that more effectively meet the needs of local communities. This change programme is delivered in partnership with Midlands Partnership University Foundation Trust and community organisations, including Stoke City and Port Vale Football Clubs.

Other programmes and achievements in 2023-24 include the following:-

Community Grants

In 2022 a total of £900,000 was made available as part of the transformation of adult and older adult community mental health care across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent to enable adults with severe mental illness to access care and support in a new, more joined up and effective way. The grant scheme is managed by The Community Foundation for Staffordshire on behalf of North Staffordshire Combined Healthcare NHS Trust and Midlands Partnership NHS Foundation Trust.

The grants aim to support those with a severe mental illness (SMI) and in addition to this have a specific area of focus designed to address health inequalities.

- Grant round 1 = SMI and co-occurring needs.
- Grant round 2 = SMI and young adults.
- Grant round 3 = SMI and digital engagement and inclusion.

Each grant has a value of up to £20,000 per award and typically has a duration of 12 months from the point of award to project closure.

Grant round 3 was launched in November 2023. Two VCSE organisations were awarded and have now mobilised sessions aiming to improve service users digital skills and share information around PatientAide and The Wellbeing Portal.

Early discussions have commenced to plan grant round 4 to ensure that the area of focus will be one that meets the needs of the local service user population.

Voluntary and Community Sector Enterprise (VCSE)

As part of the Community Transformation Programme, North Staffordshire Combined Healthcare (NSCHT) has contracted arrangements with Voluntary and Community Sector Enterprise (VCSE) commissioned providers and has also funded a number of Community Grants. There are now four services successfully implemented and in their third year of operation.

- Health & Lifestyle Service (H&L) delivered by Everyone Health to promote health, weight management, nutrition and wellbeing via an 18-week programme.
- Future Focus (FF) delivered by Changes aims to address the social stressors relating to mental illness.
- Peer Recovery Coaches (PRC) delivered by Changes seeks to provide a lived experience support offer to individuals where an expert by experience input would be of benefit for recovery.
- Financial Wellbeing (FWB) delivered by Potteries Moneywise provides bespoke financial and benefit advice for individuals known to our adult community teams.
- Each partnership is founded on shared values and the mutual aim to improve service users' life. Many of the staff within the PRC and FF services bring lived experience to their roles which has strengthened the service offer. The Health & Lifestyle service recognises the link between and importance of good physical health promoting good mental health. The Financial Wellbeing service has supported service users mental health by helping work through financial difficulties.
- The four services regularly receive compliments and share positive case studies from service users. Social value information is collected on an annual basis via TOMs light. Some examples of the social value return for 2023/24 linked to these contracts are:
- NSCHT is currently using a range of information both qualitative and quantitative to help shape commissioning intentions for 2025/26. Where possible co-production will be supported to help shape service specifications before a tender process is launched.

Preparing for Adulthood (PFA)

The preparing for adulthood project was a work stream of the Community Mental Health Transformation Programme and aimed to support and improve the transition for young adults with a focus on 3 pathways –

1. Young Adults who are transitioning from CAMHS to Adult Mental Health Services
2. Young Adults in CAMHS who do not meet the threshold for Adult Mental Health Services
3. Young Adults with emerging Mental Health needs at the age of transition.

A consultation with young adults and clinicians had been undertaken which highlighted that transition was inconsistent, services not as accessible as they needed to be and barriers included long waiting times, communication issues, lack of clarity for young adults around service provision and a lack of understanding between clinicians in services.

A project group was established to ensure that the action plan arising from the consultation and transition workshops were delivered. A number of key actions and priorities were achieved. The work of the PFA Project Group increased awareness of the need to improve transitions for young people and facilitated the prioritisation and planning of actions required to do this. Communication between CAMHS and AMHS has significantly improved which has strengthened relationships and the understanding of service offers. Transition conversations are now taking place with the young person much earlier in their journey helping

with earlier identification of needs, providing a more integrated approach to support and managing expectations.

Safer Surgeries initiative

General Practices in the Trust's Primary Care Directorate have, in 2023/24, taken part in the Safer Surgeries initiative from Doctors of the World. A Safe Surgery practice committing to taking steps to tackle the barriers faced by many migrants in accessing healthcare. The practices have declared that they are a 'Safe Surgery' for everyone and ensuring that lack of ID or proof of address, immigration status or language are not barriers to patient registration. As part of this work, training events have been held with practice teams and a welcome board has been developed for our waiting rooms.

Veteran Inclusion

In 2023, North Staffordshire Combined Healthcare NHS Trust were proud to be awarded Veteran Aware Accreditation. This accreditation recognises our commitment to identifying and sharing best practice across the NHS, as an exemplar of the best standards of care for the Armed Forces Community.

Since 2023, we are proud to have worked together with our Teams from across the Trust - and in close collaboration with those who have lived experience, towards achieving several accomplishments and raising the awareness of veterans. These include:

- ongoing development of specialist clinical training, in co-production and supported by people with lived experience
- roll-out of our "Help for Heroes Veterans Moving Forward" course facilitated via the North Staffordshire Wellbeing College
- implementation and ongoing development of dedicated GP slots for veterans within our Primary Care Services

In June 2024, we were proud to receive the **Silver Award** of the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS). The Defence Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS) encourages employers to support defence and inspire others to do the same. The scheme encompasses Bronze, Silver and Gold awards for employer organisations that pledge, demonstrate or advocate support to defence and the armed forces community, and align their values with the Armed Forces Covenant.

***Edge of Reality* video**

The Edge of Reality – ADIE video, launched in 2024, was funded through community transformation funding and is a stand-out exemplar of co-production. Each and every aspect has been truly co-produced.

Trust Recognition for work to tackle health inequalities

- **Peer recovery coach service**
The Peer recovery coach service was shortlisted by HSJ in the VCSE partnership MH category in recognition of the bold approach we have taken to commissioning a service that looks to harness the expertise of individuals with lived experience of SMI.

- **Best Not for Profit Working in Partnership with the NHS** (silver HSJ award) was awarded to the Trust alongside PVFC and SCFC under the banner of 'Football Communities Combined'. This award recognises our partnership approach to delivering support service for Men 40+, Older people (specifically those with organic MH and anxiety and depression).

Future plans to be delivered in 2024-25

Priorities for the Community Transformation Group for 2024 / 2025 are to:

- To further develop our training offer across inpatient services, crisis services, the Wellbeing college and primary care
- To continue to develop Veteran access to services within Primary Care
- To continue to develop relationships with VCSE partners as part of our commitment to expanding our community offer to Veterans (which will include a dedicated Angling group for Veterans, free of charge using donated equipment for 2024/2025)
- We continue to develop a devoted section on our Wellbeing Portal for Veterans
- To continue to demonstrate our commitment to the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme in supporting the Armed Forces Community as an employer.

As the ***Inpatient Quality Transformation*** work gathers pace throughout the course of this year it is anticipated that it will be cross-cutting and will generate opportunities for workforce and service user inclusion projects. The Inpatient Quality transformation programme is a 3-year quality improvement strategy which sets out our approach to improving outcomes related to health inequalities, race/ethnicity and for patients with a Learning Disability or Autism (LDA). This will be supported by our Culture of Care programme which will support LDA patients through enhanced engagement and co-production of care-plans and services.

Keep Warm Keep Well

Targeting patients with CYP asthma within Moorcroft and Moss Green GP Practices with front-line affordable warm home services for vulnerable people. This is an exciting innovation as it sees us partner not only with Beat the Cold to provide this support to families but also with UHNM and Graphnet (the providers delivering One Heath & Care – OH&C record system). Complex data analysis across multiple domains in OH&C allows 10 families to be targeted per month with plans to expand this on the horizon. This is an exciting and innovative piece of work that is being operationalised from May 2024.



Stoke Attrition Project

The Talking Therapies team have developed the Stoke Attrition Project to look at attrition rates and potential trends in relation to our patient population. A number of recommendations have been identified that the team will be developing during the year, including reviewing service literature to consider health literacy.

4.4 Sexual Safety in the NHS

On 4 September 2023, NHS England launched its first ever Sexual Safety Charter in collaboration with key partners across the healthcare system. More recently, the **Worker Protection Act 2023** (Amendment to UK Equality Act 2010) comes into force from October 2024, imposing a duty on employers to take reasonable steps to proactively prevent sexual harassment in the workplace.

As a Trust we were among the earlier implementers committing to sign the Charter, identify individuals to support with its implementation and begin working towards the 10 standards outlined in the Charter. The Charter was formally adopted by the Trust in June 2024. Further information is available [HERE](#).



In July, a letter was issued to all staff (by e-mail) clearly communicating our absolute commitment to taking and enforcing a **zero-tolerance** approach to any unwanted, inappropriate and/or harmful sexual behaviours within the workplace.

Those who work, train and learn within the healthcare system have the right to be safe and feel supported at work. We all have a responsibility to ourselves and our colleagues and must act if we witness these behaviours.

We are committed to the 10 principles of the Sexual Safety Charter to help to achieve this:

1. We will actively work to eradicate sexual harassment and abuse in the workplace.
2. We will promote a culture that fosters openness and transparency, and does not tolerate unwanted, harmful and/or inappropriate sexual behaviours.
3. We will take an intersectional approach to the sexual safety of our workforce, recognising certain groups will experience sexual harassment and abuse at a disproportionate rate.
4. We will provide appropriate support for those in our workforce who experience unwanted, inappropriate and/or harmful sexual behaviours.
5. We will clearly communicate standards of behaviour. This includes expected action for those who witness inappropriate, unwanted and/or harmful sexual behaviour.
6. We will ensure appropriate, specific, and clear policies are in place. They will include appropriate and timely action against alleged perpetrators.
7. We will ensure appropriate, specific, and clear training is in place.
8. We will ensure appropriate reporting mechanisms are in place for those experiencing these behaviours.
9. We will take all reports seriously and appropriate and timely action will be taken in all cases.
10. We will capture and share data on prevalence and staff experience transparently

Colleagues who have any concerns with regard to sexual safety within the Trust, are strongly encouraged to raise these concerns with either your line manager, Freedom to Speak Up Guardian or Champion, union representative, senior manager or a member of the People Directorate.

The Trust will be developing a detailed communications plan, including distribution of resources and education materials to support implementation and embedding of the Charter during 2024-25. A virtual conference is planned for 2 October 2024 and here is now an intranet page on CAT with local and national resources, [HERE](#).

5.0 PERFORMANCE AGAINST MANDATORY NHS INCLUSION DUTIES

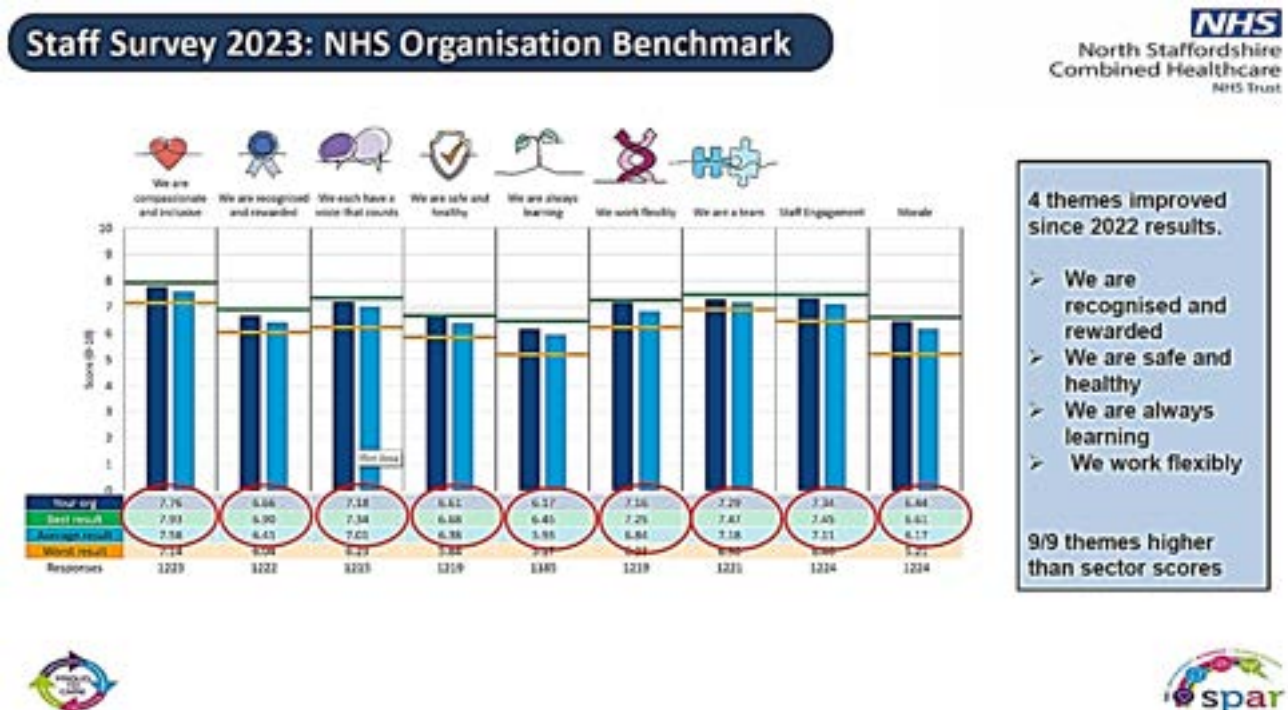
5.1 NHS Staff Survey

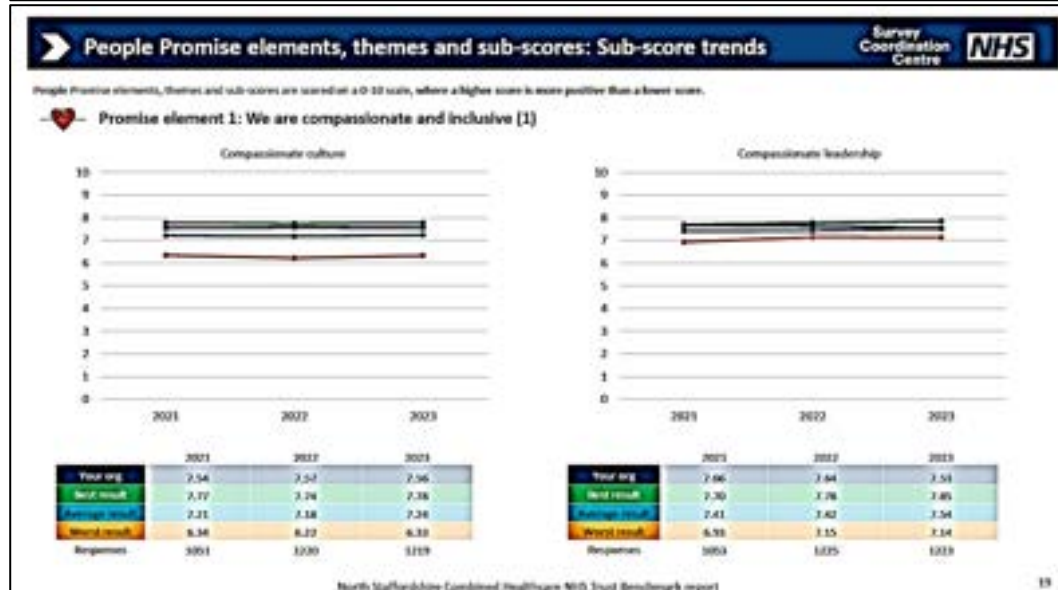
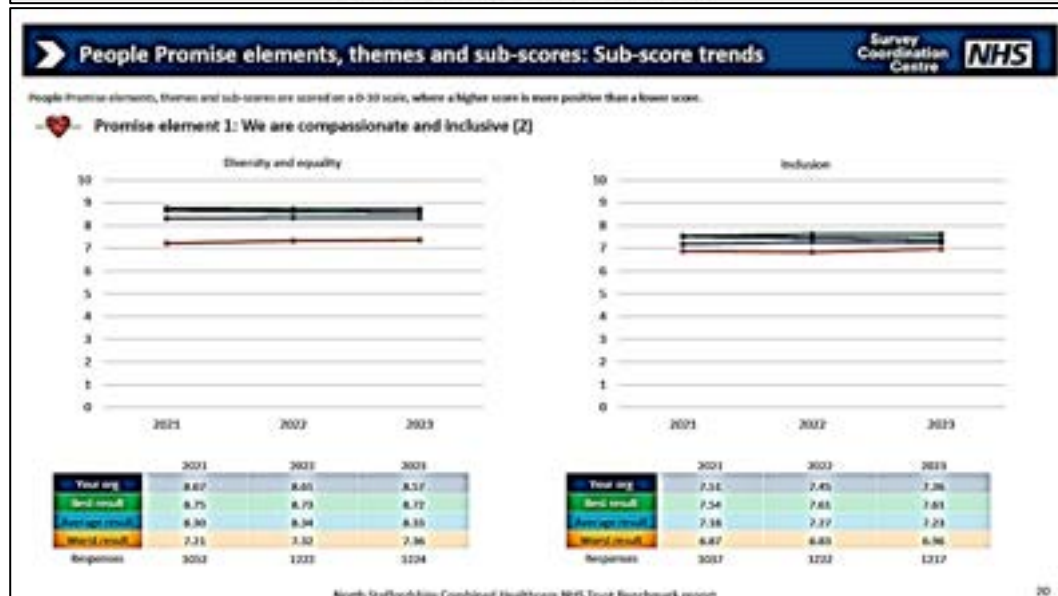
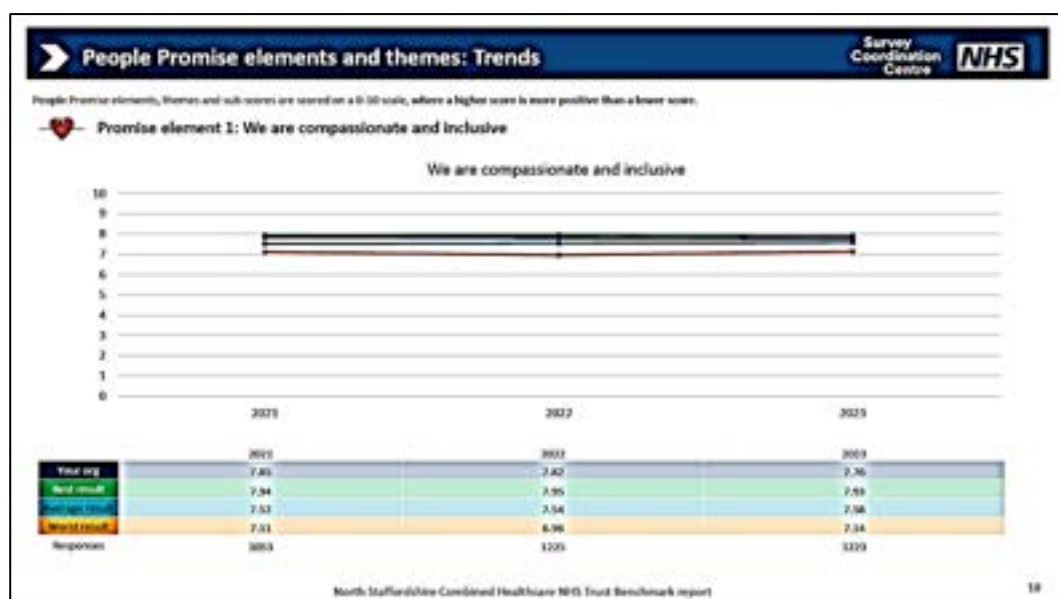
Once again, the Trust again achieved a strong set of results in the NHS Staff Survey (2023) compared with other trusts nationally. Generally, there was minimal movement in a majority of scores, providing relatively consistent feedback from the previous year's excellent results. The response rate of 66% was only slightly lower than the Trust's best rate ever (69%) in 2022.

The 2023 results provide evidence to show the impact of Trust's continued focus on workplace experience, with improvement evidenced as follows:

- **24 out of the 40** questions from 2022 show improvement.
- **1 out of the 40** questions show the same score.
- **15 out of 40** questions show a decline in score.

From the People Promise themes, the Trust showed the movement summarised below. It is noted that the Trust's performance was consistently within a small range of the best performing survey scores and trusts, including for We are Compassionate and Inclusive (illustrated overpage). All the areas below are relevant from an Inclusion and Belonging perspective, but it was a significant concern that a number of our diversity and inclusion indicators showed slowing of progress or a decline in performance in the 2023 survey. This is a key focus for 2024-25 to ensure that this decline does not continue and that the Trust truly advances its journey towards Outstanding inclusion and belonging.





NSCHT Staff Survey 2023 results: 'We are compassionate and inclusive' theme and sub-theme

5.2 Implementation of the NHS Equality Delivery System (EDS)

The EDS is an improvement tool for patients, staff and leaders of the NHS. It supports NHS organisations in England - in active conversations with patients, public, our staff, staff networks, community groups and trade unions – to review and develop their approach in addressing health inequalities through three domains: Inclusive Services, Workforce Health and Wellbeing and Inclusive Leadership. Through 2022-24, the Trust has focussed on the following services for the EDS (Domain One only):

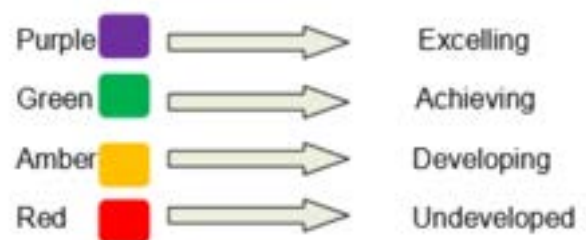


1. Interpretation and Translation Services
2. Learning Disabilities Services
3. Physical Health Checks in Severe Mental Illness Service

Domain One focusses on the following 4 key aspects:

- 1A: Patients (service users) have required levels of **access** to the service.
- 1B: Individual patients (service users) **health needs are met**.
- 1C: When patients (service users) use the service, they are **free from harm**.
- 1D: Patients (service users) report **positive experiences** of the service

Each of the above services was graded on their performance against the EDS, with each service being rated in 2024 scores as **2 – Achieving**, and also overall as a Trust. Each service has identified areas of good practise and areas for action / improvement.



Examples of resulting action taken are:-

- Developing a system for improved service user feedback on interpretation services.
- Expanding the Physical Health and SMI Team to include service users under the age of 18.
- Promoting an increase in demographic recording from first the point of contact.
- Developing a Learning Disability digital portal to give increased access to refer into services.

The Trust's 2024 EDS report is published on our [Trust Inclusion and Belonging page](#)

The Trust will review 3 further service areas in 2024-25, as well as reviewing Trust performance against Domains 2 and 3 (Workforce Health and Wellbeing and Inclusive Leadership).

5.3 Implementation of the NHS Workforce Race Equality Standard (WRES)

The WRES is designed to help trusts understand and actively address differences in the experience between Global Majority heritage staff and white staff. Our 2024 WRES report is published on our public website and shared with NHS England and our local Integrated Care Board, as well as being reviewed as part of any CQC inspection processes as may be required. Key achievements in the 2024 WRES are:

- ✓ Further **improved Global Majority representation** (to 11.11%) to almost match our local population (11.17%)
- ✓ **Improved Board representation**, including non-executive representation
- ✓ **Reduced Harassment, Bullying and Abuse** of Global Majority colleagues from Service Users / Public significantly, from 40.5% to 30.2%

Unfortunately, 4 key measures saw a decline in performance in 2023-24:

- ! **Recruitment score** worse [up from 1.14 to 1.21]
- ! **Disciplinary measure** worse [up from no cases to 1=score of 1.83]
- ! **Belief in equal opportunities** for career progression (down from 67.4% to 63.8%)
- ! **Discrimination at work** from a manager/team leader or other colleagues [worse (up) from 12.8% to 16.0%]

5.4 Implementation of the NHS Workforce Disability Equality Standard (WDES)

The WDES is a set of ten specific measures that enable NHS organisations to compare the experiences of staff with disabilities with that of staff without disabilities. Our 2024 WDES report is published on our public website and shared with NHS England and our local Integrated Care Board, as well as being reviewed as part of any CQC inspection processes as may be required. Key achievements in the 2024 WDES are:

- ✓ Further **improved workforce disability representation** (8.68%, against a 2023 national average of 4.49%)
- ✓ **Reduced presenteeism** (feeling pressure to attend work when not feeling well) reported by staff with disabilities (down to 16.6% from 20.6%)

Unfortunately, the Trust saw a decline in performance for some WDES indicators:-

- ! Our **capability measure** score rose dramatically to 11.26 (extreme outlier)
- ! Our **Board Membership** with disabilities / long term conditions has reduced (from 23.1% to 14.29%) with changes in membership
- ! **Perceptions of equal opportunities** for career development and progression fell from 64.3% to 58.3% for disabled staff
- ! Staff with disabilities in receipt of **workplace adjustments** fell slightly to 83% (from 86%)

Whilst the slowing of improvement and decline in some measures in the WRES and WDES is a concern, it is noted that the Trust's performance is still anticipated to be among the best performing trusts when national results are revealed.

5.5 NHS Accessible Information Standard (AIS)

The AIS places 5 responsibilities on NHS providers to ensure that they cater appropriately for the accessible information and communication needs of service users with disability, as illustrated to the right. Trust colleagues apply these standards when working with new and existing services users with disability/ies.

A review of performance against the AIS across Trust services was undertaken in Winter 2023-24. Twenty-three Trust services took part in the review which found considerable variation in knowledge and awareness of the AIS. There was some confusion around terminology, although most staff were aware of accessibility and demonstrating the correct processes. There was a lack of consistency around recording accessible information needs.

The Trust worked to raise awareness of the AIS in quarter 4 of 2023-24 and promoted education and awareness raising materials.

A new programme of work has been launched nationally around recording service user 'reasonable adjustments' from Autumn 2024. This will more widely encompass disability-related accessibility needs, in addition to information and communication-related needs. At the time of writing, work is underway to review implementation of the new requirements.



5.6 Mandatory Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Training for all Trust Staff

The Trust utilises the Skills for Health (SfH) Equality, Diversity and Inclusion E-learning package. This is mandatory for all employees and completed three-yearly.

As at 31st March 2024, 1,858 Trust employees were compliant with their mandatory **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion** training. Seventy seven were non-compliant, ie a percentage rate of **compliance of 96%**. This is within the context of an overall statutory and mandatory compliance rate for the Trust of 90% as at 31.03.24.

96%

In addition, 96 of 101 senior managers had completed **Public Sector Equality Duty and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion** for managers e-learning (95%) compliance. Having an understanding of the duties under the PSED is important for managers as they have a key role in delivering on the expectations for those working in their area of responsibility.

5.7 Provision of Interpretation and Translation Services

As part of our Proud to CARE approach, we're committed to ensuring that our service users receive the support and information they need to access services, communicate with healthcare staff and make informed decisions about their care and treatment. Offering and ensuring appropriate translation and interpretation services for service users and carers who require them is vital to facilitate this.

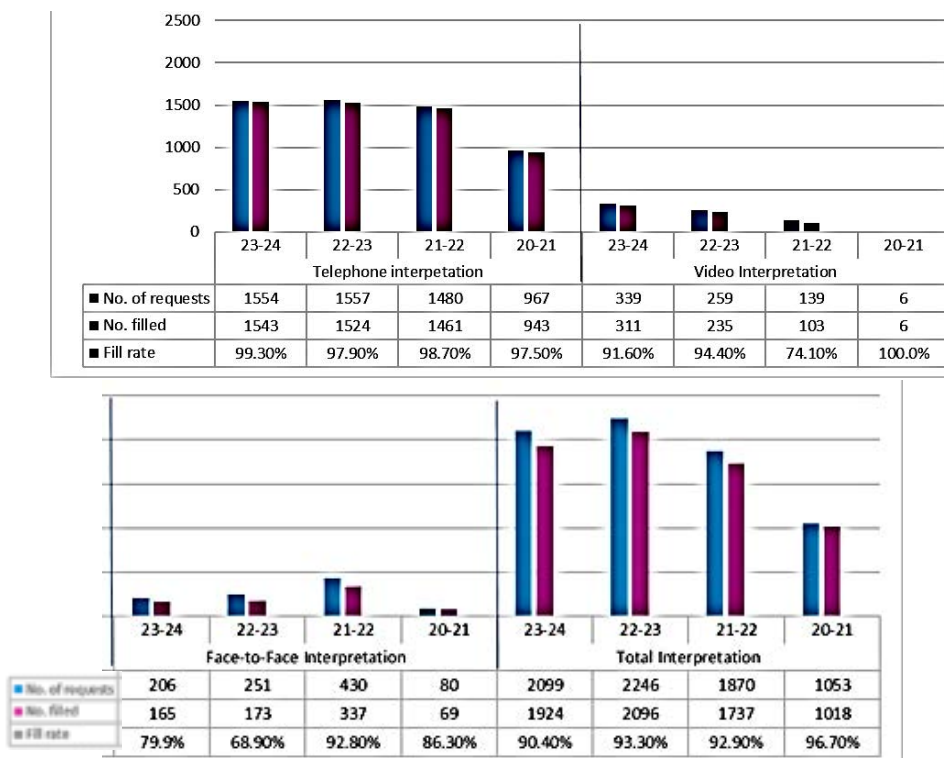
Our teams are asked to allow extra time for appointments where an interpreter will be supporting communication, to ensure that equitable experiences and outcomes are provided, compared to those for service users not requiring interpretation services.

The Trust achieved an overall fill rate of **90%** for international language interpretation in 2023-24. 99% of calls were answered within 60 seconds. The rate of fill for telephone interpretation (1,554 requests) in this period was 99%, compared to 92% for video (339 requests), and 80% for face-to-face interpretation (206 requests).

Demand for interpretation services had been increasing annually over recent years (see chart below) but appeared to stabilise in 2023-24. The variation seen previously is likely to have been largely due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on attendances. Interpretation services covered 36 languages, the top five languages being Urdu, Slovak, Oromo, Kurdish (Surami) and Polish.

Digital translation since April 2024 has been provided using Office 365. Due to the nature of this service (provided to Trust colleagues as part of the MS Office suite), it is no longer possible to provide data on usage rates.

Trust International Languages Interpretation 2020-24:



British Sign Language (BSL) interpretation was provided by Deaflinks and ASSIST. In 2023-24, the Trust utilised ASSIST services on 22 occasions (69.5 hrs) for ASSIST and 75 occasions for Deaflinks.

6.0 PROGRESS IN DELIVERING AGAINST THE TRUST EQUALITY OBJECTIVES

Action and progress in 2023-24 against the Trust's 2018-23 Equality Objectives is outlined below:

✓ Objective 1: Developing our Governance for Greater Diversity and Inclusion:

Since 2018, we have been working to proactively embed diversity and inclusion through all our services (clinical and non-clinical), our governance arrangements, our planning, decision making, and through visible and consistent board level and wider leadership visibility on inclusion. Key examples of how we have done this in 2023-24 are:-

- ✓ Commencing work to develop a robust EDI dashboard to measure and monitor performance across a broad range of inclusion indicators at Trust, Directorate and Service Line levels
- ✓ Progressing an integrated network of core Trust change programmes and projects with inclusion, belonging, civility and respect at their heart
- ✓ Reaching 250 people with Inclusion Leadership education as a core element of our Trust and ICS Leadership Development programmes and a further 143 through our ICS Leadership Alumni masterclasses

✓ Objective 2: Delivering on our Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Requirements

As evidenced throughout this report, the Trust has undoubtedly continued to ensure that it meets its responsibility under the Equality Act 2010 and associated 'Brown principles' to demonstrate 'due regard' to meeting the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) and other equality legislation, including the Gender Pay Reporting requirement and other requirements that may emerge.

Principally in 2023-24, this includes delivery of AIS, WRES, WDES, Gender Pay reporting and the Equality Delivery System (EDS) for the Trust, in addition to various Equality Impact Assessments and a growing number of equality-related Freedom of Information Act request responses as required through the year.

✓ Objective 3: Delivering on Reducing Health Inequalities, including for under-served and seldom heard groups

Our work to reduce health inequalities is captured in detail in section 4.3 above. Our focus in 2023-24 has been on:

- ✓ Delivering our **Community Health Transformation Programme** through a range of change projects in conjunction with ICS and community partners
- ✓ Developing **Veteran Inclusion** through application of the Veteran Aware accreditation and working to gain the Silver Award of the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS), awarded to the Trust in June 2024.
- ✓ **Reaching 250+ community members** through our Trust conferences, careers fairs, recruitment events and school careers engagement events.
- ✓ Introducing the **Health Equity Framework** as a key tool to identify local health equity and inequalities, monitoring changes in these.

✓ Objective 4: Delivering on our Annual Inclusion Priorities

We delivered on our promise in 2023-24 to re-focus EDI and develop a new Inclusion and Belonging Strategy and consolidated Inclusion Plan, based on the following programmes of work:-

- Inclusive Recruitment, Development and Talent Management
- RACE Equality Code
- NHS Rainbow Badge Phase 2
- Anti-Racist Organisation

New Equality Objectives for 2024-28

New Equality Objectives for 2024-28 were approved as part of the development of our new Trust [Inclusion and Belonging Strategic Plan 2024-28](#). These are as follows.

Progress against these objectives will be reported on annually through this report. Our new **2024-28 Trust Equality Objectives** are to:

<p>1. Deliver overall continuous improvement in performance on our EDI Core Annual Responsibilities, becoming and sustaining our position as one of the best NHS employers in relation to a range of workforce race, disability, LGBT+ and gender inclusion measures. This will be supported by an effective accountability and monitoring framework for leaders at service level and above.</p> 	<p>2. Make demonstrable progress in significantly reducing health inequalities for our local population, including removing barriers to equitable access, experience and outcomes through all our services.</p> <p>This will be demonstrated through improved health outcomes, as measured by a range of patient/service user metrics.</p> 
<p>3. Advance our position as a leading inclusive organisation by improving service user and staff experience and outcomes on a wide range of inclusion measures, including across key protected characteristics groups.</p> 	<p>4. Deliver on our ambition to become truly an inclusive, anti-racist and anti-discriminatory organisation by 2028.</p> 

In delivering these Equality Objectives 2024-28, we will give due regard to the nine protected characteristics of the Equality Act 2010 (figure 4) and other equality groups. These Equality Objectives will be supported by further detail and measurable targets and milestones, and performance monitored and reviewed against these annually in our Trust Inclusion and Belonging Annual Report.

7.0 CONCLUSION

During 2023-24 we have made significant strides across the 3 People Plan workstreams of 'Inclusive and Representative', 'A Great Place to Work' and 'Achieving Potential' on route to achieving our ambition of Outstanding Inclusion and Belonging. Our activities have contributed to fostering a more inclusive and supportive workplace, developed our leaders, supported the development of system talent and ensured our people continue to feel supported and valued.

While we are proud of the progress we have made, we recognise that there is still much work ahead. As we continue to build on these foundations, our commitment to ongoing improvement and excellence remains steadfast, driving us toward even greater organisational success in the coming year.

7.1 Our People Plan priorities

Our People Plan priorities over the next 4 years will include a continued focus on:

1. Creating a diverse, inclusive and representative workforce where all our people are comfortable and psychologically safe to be their authentic selves
2. Becoming one of the best NHS workplaces, where all our people are treated with kindness and compassion, feel they belong, and are valued and supported to flourish in the workplace
3. Improving the Health and Wellbeing of all our workforce and addressing health inequalities
4. Delivering equitable Talent Management and Career Development and Progression for all
5. Ensuring Inclusive People Systems and Processes by Design

7.2 Our 2024-25 Inclusion and Belonging priorities

Our Inclusion and Belonging priorities for 2024-25 will include a focus on:

1. **Debiasing our Trust recruitment processes**
- leading to greater representation and parity and more inclusive talent management

Key metrics – improvement in Recruitment Scores at service, directorate and trust levels by ethnicity, disability and LGB and particularly in relation to outlier scoring services

2. **Reducing inequalities & health inequalities for service users and staff**
– leading to measurable reduction in gaps in access (focus on access to services in year 1, experience yr 2, outcomes yr 3)

Key metrics – introduction of dashboard monitoring of service user representation/participation in all services by ethnic group and religion, with additional focus at trust level on developing awareness and access for people with in particularly marginalised equality groups, including the homeless, traveller community, looked after children and care leavers

3. **‘High visibility’ focus around anti-discriminatory approach**

- supporting delivery against our RACE Code and Rainbow Badge action plans and associated accreditation, and development of our tangible and unmistakable culture of inclusion and belonging

Key metrics - improvement in a range of EDI indicators around belief in equal opportunities, Trust advocacy scores, reduced experiences of discrimination and HB&A, again at service, directorate and trust levels

7.3 Inclusion and Belonging Action Plan 2024-25

A detailed action plan has been developed, encompassing our various Inclusion and Belonging workstreams, including those emerging from our core EDI requirements (PSED, EDS, WRES, WDES, Gender Pay etc) and our wider commitment to advancing Inclusion and Belonging for both our workforce and our service users and carers.

This Action Plan is included at Appendix 3.



END

**This report should be read in conjunction with our
2024 Trust Inclusion and Belonging Data Book, which should be seen as an
Addendum to this report, and our EDS, Gender Pay,
WRES and WDES reports for the period 2023-24
as published on the Trust's Diversity and inclusion webpage:
[North Staffordshire Combined Healthcare Inclusion and Belonging](#)**

Outstanding Inclusion Examples at Combined Healthcare in 2023-24

Key examples of how we are developing outstanding inclusion at are spotlighted below:

Developing Accessibility

AccessAble

AccessAble provides detailed surveys and expert advice on changes that can be made to improve access to our buildings for people with disability. Our 35 'Detailed Access Guides' for each Trust clinical service are published on the [AccessAble](#) platform and on our Trust website for each of our service user locations/premises.



These guides are shared on our Trust website, on the AccessAble portal and in our service user appointment letters and other communications. Each guide is updated at least annually. The Trust have committed to AccessAble for a minimum period of 3 years and will review this position in 2024-25, along with considering creating new Access Guides for new Trust services and our Trust headquarters. The Improvement Reports that the Trust has received has enabled us to prioritise and deliver a number of changes to Trust buildings to aid accessibility, with further recommendations pending action in 2024-25. The Trust has been working to continue to raise awareness about AccessAble with staff and service users in 2023-24.

Recite Accessibility Toolbar and Web Accessibility

The Trust added the Recite Accessibility Toolbar to its internet and intranet pages in 2023, with a commitment to build in by design equivalent compliance with web accessibility standards into the new website and intranet platforms in development for launch late in 2024-25.



MindView Business Case

The Trust approved a business case to trial the MindView mind-mapping software for students and staff with neurodiversity in late 2023-24, for application in 2024-25. MindView is an innovative and intuitive tool that is used to help with visualizing and brainstorming ideas, defeating 'writer's block', simplifying task management and supporting with some of the difficulties of neurodiverse conditions.

Inclusion School

Our *Inclusion School* approach has now brought personal story and conversation-based learning to a growing alumni of over 500 individuals from the Trust, ICS, and other public and private sector organisations. The concept is to provide a safe space for the development of deeper understanding of inclusion related issues and inclusive emotions, learning and action in the short and long term.



Our 2023-24 Inclusion School classes were:-

- **No More Tick Boxes: Putting EDI at the Heart of our ICS People & Processes** (in-person, April 2023) – 80 participants
- **Why Veteran Aware?** (June 2023) – circa 50 participants. **Score 8.33/10**
- **Carrying the Ball: Our ICS Journey to Disability Inclusion** (November 2023) – circa 60 participants. **Score 8.75/10**

All 3 sessions received excellent feedback. For example:

“Hearing all the stories for ex-service members gave me a better understanding of what it’s like being a veteran of the armed services. Jo’s story was really powerful and gave me alternative view to think about which is not always highlighted. I loved to hear how the different NHS trusts are supporting veterans moving forward into the future which gave me hope and motivation to help my trust in being veteran aware. Every part was extremely important and everyone should be more “veteran aware” in everyday life and in the NHS. I will carry on completing my ESR training to be veteran aware and make sure any online or physical events I can attend and show my support for the veterans.”

“Aaron Phipps is an amazing speaker and his 'can do' attitude is truly inspirational. It was all useful information and it is always helpful to hear other people's experiences. Truly inspiring. The lived-experience are always the most powerful stories. Thank you!”

Additional resources and learning materials were shared after each session.

In addition to Inclusion School, the Trust ran a special session for Black History Month, **‘An Hour with Baroness Floella Benjamin at CombinedNHS’**. **There were 114 participants to this highly popular session.**



Positive Action on Race Development Programmes

Thirty-three ICS colleagues (3 from NSCHT) with Global Majority heritage participated in our fifth cohort of **New Futures** – our local version of the Stepping Up programme, built around 3 modules delivered over 5 days delivered as an interactive online education programme. The Trust additionally participated in a new pilot programme in conjunction with NHS England (Midlands Nursing Team) and Leicestershire and Rutland NHS called **Developing You Developing Me (DYDM) Talent Acceleration Programme**, designed to take a dual approach to changing organisation culture and supporting the individual progression of selected ethnic diverse candidates. Two SSOT ICS pairings commenced in October 2023, one pair from North Staffordshire Combined and one from Royal Derby Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust.

Our ICS also delivered a pioneering **WRES Champions** programme, developing 25 motivating and influential individuals from across the system to become WRES Champions. Ben Richards is our Trust WRES Champions Executive Sponsor. An ICS programme of **Reciprocal Mentoring** was also commenced in 2023 through to early 2025, establishing 12 new pairings. North Staffordshire have 2 mentees participating in this programme, but unfortunately no mentors on this occasion. Additionally, ICS People Professionals have participated in the **HPMA Anti-Racist Leadership Programme**, including 3 leaders from the Combined Healthcare People Directorate.

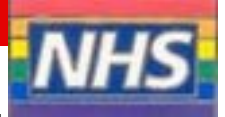
Individuals undertaking the above programmes have all been included within our growing **New Futures-Stepping Up Alumni and Allies** for the provision of onwards support and progress monitoring. A focus for the Trust in 2024-25 will be in ensuring the longevity of the investment made in the above programmes, by monitoring and supporting the progression of these individuals and utilising allies and Champions to support wider and deeper development and culture change within the Trust and ICS.

Comfortable Being Uncomfortable with Race and Difference

Delivered with Enact Solutions Ltd, this programme provides immersive education on race and wider inclusion for ICS leaders at every level as part of our anti-racist system ambition. The programme encourages leaders at all levels to become acquainted with having crucial conversations on race to drive positive change. Approximately 300 ICS colleagues participated in this development over the period 2022-24, including 102 in 23-24.



NHS Rainbow Badge Phase 2 Implementation



The Trust launched its NHS Rainbow Badge campaign in 2019. Since then, the Trust has maintained about a third of its workforce being signed up as allies and champions proud to wear the NHS Rainbow Badge as a symbol of their commitment to LGBT+ inclusion. **935** staff have signed up for an NHS Rainbow Badge since we launched the scheme in 2019, including **139 new sign-ups in 2023-24**.

The Trust is additionally proud to be an early implementer of the **NHS Rainbow Badge Phase 2 programme**. The Rainbow Badge (Phase 2) framework is assisting us to develop as a best practice organisation on LGBT+ inclusion for both our service users and carers and our workforce. The Trust was awarded Bronze accreditation under the NHS Rainbow Badge (Phase 2) project in November 2022, with Silver in our Policies section. The Trust have worked to progress a range of actions in 2023-24 against our Phase 2 Action Plan. This includes: sharing materials and posters to raise awareness about the Rainbow Badge scheme and LGBT+ inclusion; reviewing our standard service user letters to ensure language is gender neutral; encouraging staff to ask rather than make hetero-normative and binary-gender assumptions about service user relationships; senior management communicating a strong message on LGBT+ equality, including bi-equality and trans and non-binary equality; promoting the use of pronouns and why this is helpful and enabling pronouns to be included on staff name and ID badges, and continuing to educate on trans inclusion.

See ME First Badges



The NHS See Me First Badge is a visible symbol of your commitment to race inclusion. The Trust launched the **See ME First Badge campaign** in October 2023 at our Show Racism the Red Card event, as part of Black History Month 2023. Over 50 people signed up on the first day, and 171 by the end of 2023-24.

See ME First requires colleagues to challenge and work together towards ending racism and discrimination in the workplace. The aim is to make real change to our organisation's culture, creating a more inclusive, compassionate and non-judgemental workplace where we are all treated with dignity and respect. We are asking colleagues to pledge to support anyone that experiences discrimination, by encouraging them to speak up, and to safely challenge the behaviour through our speaking up channels.

Our NHS Staff Survey results have identified that Global Majority colleagues experienced more inappropriate behaviours and have a less positive experience overall while working at compared to white colleagues.

Trust Differently Abled Buddy Scheme (DABS)

Our successful DABS scheme was launched in February 2022 and subsequently extended in 2023-24 across the wider Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent ICS.

Over the duration of the scheme, **15** buddies were trained in Combined and in Primary Care. **15** buddies were linked with differently abled staff and 6 individuals were buddied directly by the DABS programme manager. Over **86** people received DABS presentations about the This is Me Health Passport, menopause policy, domestic violence, workplace adjustments and disability support. **91** people received confidential support and discussion with regard to their disability / neurodiversity / long term health condition. **Over 450** interactions documented.

A range of benefits were realised in Combined Healthcare, including a continued increase in disability declarations in 23-24 and a reduction in presenteeism. Full details available on request in DABS Evaluation Report 2024.

This scheme has clearly contributed strongly changed attitudes and behaviours with regard to disability, impacting positively on individual, teams and home-lives. Differently abled staff, who have the support and development required, thrive to continue to be and become compassionate leaders within our organisations who want to stay because they know their organisation takes inclusion seriously and passionately wants to get it right for their people.

Feedback from those receiving support has been resoundingly positive:

“I felt alone, isolated and out of my depth. When I heard about the buddy scheme, it felt like a lifeline.”

“I am absolutely loving the buddy scheme. I enjoy my time with the person I am buddying and feel like I am making a difference to another staff member.”

“Contacting Angela was one of the best uses of my time, recently having just had a new member of my team discover they were dyslexic. I now feel that I can effectively support members of my team who are differently abled.”

Funding for our Differently Abled Buddy Scheme programme came to an end in 2023-24. Interim support continues to be provided by the Combined Ability Network who will oversee the offer of buddying or other assistance to colleagues who require this support through 2024-25 to ensure we continue to build on the excellent progress and impact achieved by the programme.



North Staffordshire Wellbeing College: Together we learn... with you, by you, for you



The North Staffordshire Wellbeing College has had a busy second year.

The primary focus for the Wellbeing College is the provision of a wide range of FREE co-produced workshops for people in Stoke-on-Trent, Newcastle-under-Lyme, and the Staffordshire Moorlands covering any topic related to wellbeing. Workshops cover an ever-increasing range of topics and can help in a variety of ways, from physical health and wellbeing, to education and more. The team also provide a range of resources, including guides, contacts, news and events. The College is managed in partnership with over 32 local organisations, including public, private and third sector partners.

The aim of the Wellbeing College is to provide learning opportunities for people who have or have had mental and physical health challenges, their family members, staff who support them and members of the public with an interest or involvement in mental and physical health. These learning opportunities are all focused on increasing understanding, confidence, coping strategies and behaviour to enable people to manage their own lives, conditions and treatments as far as possible, so that they can live the lives they wish to lead.

In 2023-24, the team have our creating Pride workshop and attended Stoke Pride 2024 with artwork produced in the workshops. The team partnered with a group called Newcastle Pride for this. The Wellbeing College also recently created and hosted a wellbeing showcase called *Decades Reloaded* which is a dance workshop for all (including those with all types of disabilities).

All Wellbeing College team members are part of one of the Trust's inclusion staff networks.

Each member has pursued a special interest in relation to an inclusion theme:-

- ✓ Klaudia has completed ImRoc PSW training for people with ASD
- ✓ Sherrine has done the supervising PSWs with ASD course
- ✓ Chiara led the Pride Workshops and engaged with the community at Stoke Pride 2024
- ✓ Jessica co-produced a successful Dragons Den pitch for a handbike for the Harplands gym and other items to improve disability inclusive and accessibility

Download the [2024 Prospectus](#).

The Wellbeing College were Winners of the REACH 2023 Partnership Award. Well done to all the Wellbeing College team and a HUGE THANK YOU to all our fabulous community partners!



REACH Partnership Award Winners 2023

APPENDIX 2: Progress with Inclusion and Belonging Workstreams 2023-24

Background to key Inclusion & Belonging Workstreams

Inclusion is integral to how we do all that we do @CombinedNHS, but we are never complacent and continually strive to grow greater inclusion and to foster a sense of belonging for all our staff and service users, enabling individuals to flourish, feel safe, supported and cared about.

Inclusive and Representative Great & Healthy Place to Work

- Our intention is to create a diverse, inclusive & representative workplace, where all our people are comfortable and psychologically safe to be their authentic selves. One of the best NHS workplaces, where people feel they belong and are supported to flourish.

Key Metrics:

- Equitable representation at all levels across key inclusion areas
- Recommendation as a place to work 85% or more from key inclusion groups
- Presenteeism score <46% 2028 and 'We are safe and healthy' score 7+ across inclusion groups
- Violence and abuse towards staff equitable across key inclusion groups
- Harassment, Bullying and Abuse from managers <5% across inclusion groups
- Discrimination from managers / other colleagues <5% across inclusion groups
- My organisation takes positive action on health and wellbeing, equitable across key inclusion groups
- Staff Engagement Score >8 across key inclusion groups

Inclusive Leadership, Talent Management & Career Development for All

- Our aim is to deliver equitable and inclusive Talent Management and Career Development and Progression for all, in which all groups can achieve their potential and aspirations. One of the ways we achieve this is through role modelling and developing inclusive and compassionate leadership.

Key Metrics

- Equitable workforce representation across staff groups and all levels, including senior roles
- Compassionate leadership score 8+ across inclusion groups
- Belief in equality of opportunity for development and career progression score 8+ across inclusion groups
- My organisation takes positive action on health and wellbeing, equitable across key inclusion groups
- Staff Engagement Score >8 across key inclusion groups
- Reducing Gender Pay Gap annually and minimal pay gaps across other groups (race, disability, LGBT)
- Recommendation of the Trust as a Place to Work 85%+ across inclusion groups

Outstanding (Inclusive) People Systems and Processes

- We understand that it is more effective to focus primarily on debiasing our processes and secondarily on debiasing our people.
- We are working to debias our people processes to ensure that we have truly Outstanding People Systems and Processes that are Inclusive by Design, through which all groups are equitably supported to flourish and succeed.
- In May 2023, we have delivered an Inclusion School with Roger Kline focused around Putting EDI at the heart of our People Processes, built around 'No More Tick Boxes' (BRAP and Kline, 2023).
- We additionally ran a session for ICS CEOs and Chairs and a Board Development Session for NSCHT Board Members in early 2024, with a focus on Board Accountability for inclusive process
- We are developing a new Inclusive Recruitment Toolkit and new monitoring processes to ensure inclusive process and outcomes
- (Key metrics as per boxes 1 and 2)



Key EDI Performance Indicators (1)

We have this year developed an EDI dashboard to aid the baselining and tracking of our EDI data and performance indicators and better inform our priorities and activities.



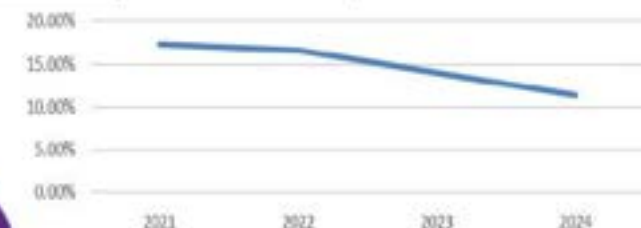
- Improving representation annually and in line with local population / national estimates.
- Still need to achieve equity across different levels, roles and staff groups



Improving (reducing) gender pay gap. Seek to reduce to 7% or less by 2028

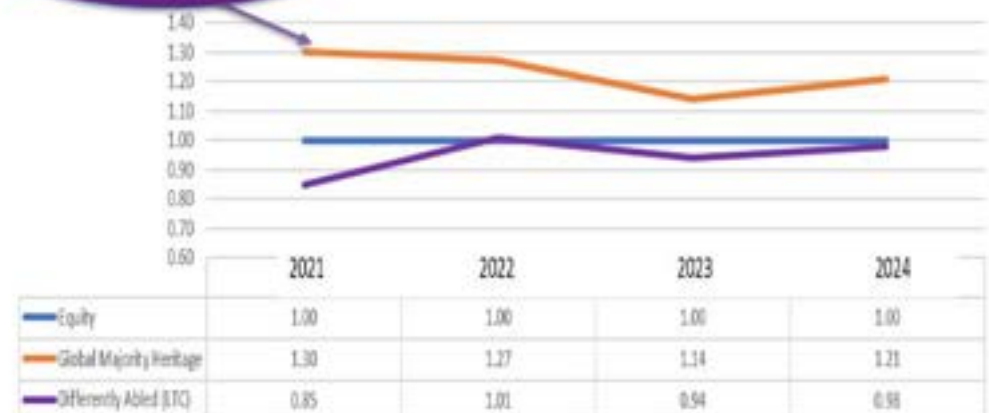
GENDER PAY GAP
11.37%
(March 2024)

Mean Gender Pay Gap:
Women's mean hourly rate in relation to men's



Recruitment score of 1.00 = equity. Our Race Recruitment score remains too high, and we aim to bring this down to 1.00 or less by 2028

Recruitment score



Key EDI Performance Indicators (2)

Slightly lower belief in equality of opportunity for Global Majority Heritage and Differently Abled colleagues, compared to overall Trust workforce

Experience gap greater (wider variation) across inclusion groups for perspectives on the Trust taking positive action on health and wellbeing and in advocacy of the Trust as an employer.

Belief in Equality of Opportunity for Development & Career Progression



My organisation Takes Positive Action on H&W



Recommendation of the Trust as a Place to Work



Developing Inclusion and Belonging at NSCHT

We continue to support and lead EDI activities across the SSOT system. Our achievements for this year have focused on changing mindsets and culture, positive action and delivering change.

Changing Mindsets and Culture

Overview

- Challenging blind-spots and established ways of thinking is a key requirement for delivering meaningful and sustainable change on inclusion.
- Over 2023-4 we have been educating our Trust and System workforce and leadership to deepen insight and understanding on inclusion and, crucially, how to use this to bring about change.
- This includes our **Inclusion School** approach (over 200 attendances - which included both in person and online sessions in 23-24) and our **Comfortable Being Uncomfortable** programme (around 300 leaders participated with 95% saying it increased their confidence in having conversations on race, to be a race ally and to make positive difference at work).
- Actively working to change language towards **more inclusive terminology**, including ceasing use of term BAME
- Developing our **Inclusive Recruitment** approach with a focus on batch recruitment and debiasing process

Taking Positive Action on Inclusion

Overview

- Delivering on inclusion necessitates addressing historical inequities to level the playing field and inspire confidence in minoritised groups. In 23-24 we:
- Delivered a further round of our ICS **New Futures** positive action on race development programme (36 Global Majority Heritage colleagues participated).
- Rolled out our **Differently Abled Buddy Scheme** and a range of disability-focused education across the ICS (450 people educated on disability inclusion; at least 91 confidential discussions taken place)
- Launched our ICS **WRES Champions** (20 champions) and **Reciprocal Mentoring** approaches (12 pairings)
- Engaged with our **local communities** in a variety of recruitment and inclusion events including our Community Stakeholder Engagement Event, Stoke Pride and Armed Forces Day.
- Continued to extend our Rainbow Badge wearers and introduced our See ME First Badges (171 people signed up in first 6 months)

Delivering Change

Overview

- Delivering on Inclusion means focusing on the **outputs** as well as the inputs
- We made significant progress in **improving representation** in our Trust, including:
 - Further increasing the proportion of our workforce that are confident to declare disabilities and neuro-difference to 8.5%
 - and our Global Majority Heritage workforce to 11.1%
- Delivering a range of further improvements in our 2024 **WRES & WDES performance**
- Implemented improvements from our **RACE Code and Rainbow Badge action plans**
- Improving accessibility for service users and staff, including improved **web accessibility** and **AccessAble** usage
- New **Inclusion and Belonging Strategy** developed and published to guide action and progress over the next 3-4 years



Our EDI priorities and deliverables for 2024/25 are identified in our Trust Inclusion and Belonging Strategy – illustrated to right:



Celebrating our diverse colleagues: Spotlight on Black History Month 2023

We work with our communications and engagement colleagues to regularly recognise and celebrate a wide variety of cultural events. Some highlights are presented below from our Black History Month celebrations and achievements and activities to improve the experience for Global Majority Heritage staff.



Joining in a local and national programme of discussion and learning events



SHOW
RACISM
THE
RED
CARD



Over 50 participants at our fantastic in-person event celebrating **Black History Month** and **Showing Racism the Red Card**



Engaging and inspiring guest speakers and Exec Blogs to **raise awareness, increasing understanding and sharpen our thinking**



Commencing our work on the **Inclusive HR Toolkit** so we 'practise what we preach' on inclusion within People Services



Listening to and committing to addressing **difficult to hear messages** from our Trust Global Majority ethnicity workforce



Committed to ceasing use of the term BAME and adopting more inclusive language



Launching our **See ME First Badges** and signing up our first 50 proud Ambassadors / badge wearers



Publishing our Trust **Anti-Racist Statement** and progressing our work on our Trust **RACE Equality Code Action Plan**

WRES Champions



Recruiting to our ICS **WRES Champions** and **Reciprocal Mentoring** programmes



Published our **2023 WRES Report and action plan**, celebrating progress and highlighting work needed

New Futures

Celebrating and supporting the achievements and progression of our Trust **New Futures** participants



Differently Abled Buddy Scheme

We also led the system on the successful development and delivery of the 'Differently Abled Buddy scheme' which significantly improved the experience of differently abled colleagues joining our Trust and the wider system.

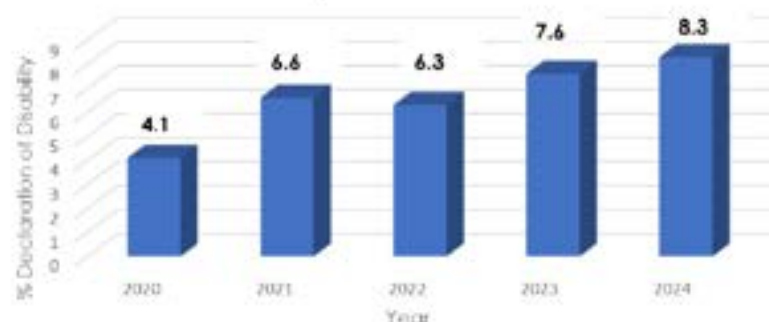
Buddy Information



Innovative project to improve support Differently Abled colleagues through a Buddy Scheme and an improving understanding and support - programme completion March 2024

- Effectively promoted disability awareness and inclusion across departments and organisations, over 450 individuals actively participated in information sharing
- Scheme introduced across ICS, continuing in Primary Care to 2025
- NSCHT were additionally part of the NDEI (Neurodiversity Employment Index) Pilot Scheme

Disability Declarations NSCHT



Disability % of Workforce Disabled 8.34%



Differently Abled Buddy Scheme Impact

WDES 2023

Trust placed **7th nationally** (Top 5% of Trusts) with **8 measures in the top 10%** nationally - including 5 Top 5% measures:-

- ✓ Indicator 5 'Career Progression' - 3rd nationally (**Top 2%**)
- ✓ Indicator 8 'Satisfaction with workplace adjustments' – 4th nationally (**Top 2%**)
- ✓ Indicator 4d 'Reporting Harassment, Bullying & Abuse' - 6th nationally (**Top 3%**)
- ✓ Indicator 7 'feeling valued' - NSCHT ranked 9th nationally (**Top 5%**)
- ✓ Indicator 9a 'Staff engagement' - 9th nationally (**Top 5%**)

WDES 2024

Ranking data not yet available

- ✓ **Continued performance improvement** on 5 measures, including: workforce disability declarations, HBA from patients/public and managers and from colleagues, and (reduced) presenteeism
- ✓ **Held strong position** on 4 measures including Recruitment Measure, Reporting of HBA, Feeling Valued and Staff Engagement



Testimonials from staff show the significant impact of the Differently Abled Buddy Scheme

Can I say a huge thank you for the opportunity? I am absolutely loving the buddy scheme. I enjoy my time with the person I am buddying and I feel like I am making a difference to another staff member.
Buddy

'I felt alone, isolated and out of my depth. When I heard about the buddy scheme it felt like a lifeline'
Buddied staff Member

Contacting Angela was one of the best uses of my time recently having just had a new member of my team discover they were dyslexic. Her time and support has meant that now as a team lead I can effectively support the members of my team that are differently abled, not just the new team member but also someone who has worked for the trust for a number of years and wasn't aware of changes around the support that can be offered to them in the workplace to make sure that they are able to perform in their role with other members of the team on an even footing. Completing the health passport with them will also mean that their needs are always met if they choose to move roles in the future.

Team Manager



Publications and Reports

During 2023-24 we published a number of plans and reports to set and track our intentions and objectives, report on our progress and ensure we continue to meet our statutory obligations.



We published our
Diversity and
Inclusion Annual
Report 2023



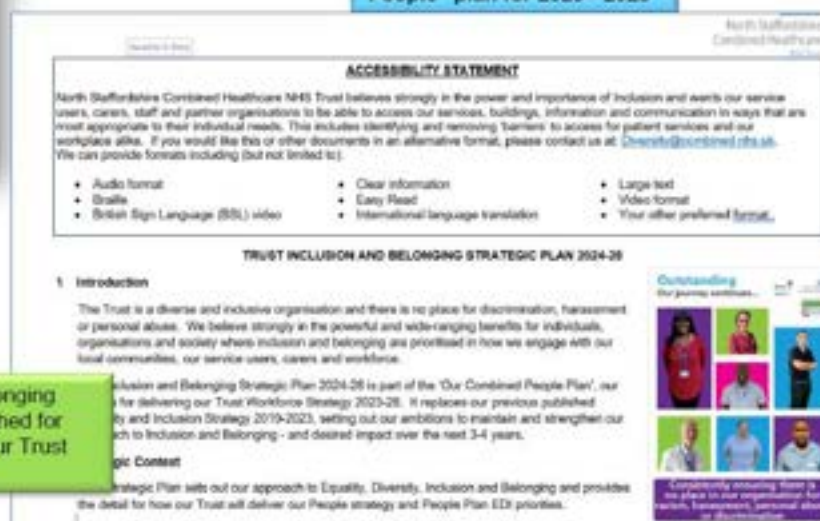
Engagement, production &
launch of "Our Combined
People" plan for 2023 - 2028



NHS
North Staffordshire
Combined Healthcare
Trust

**RACE
EQUALITY
MATTERS**

We published our Anti-
Racism Statement and
commitment to becoming an
anti-racist organisation



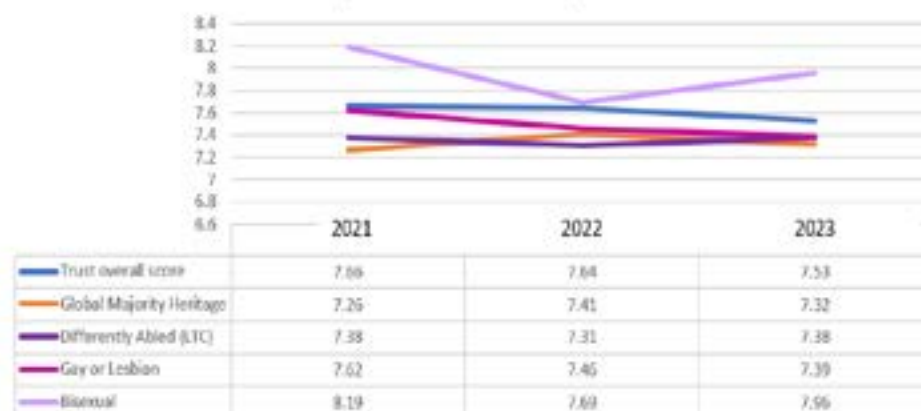
New Inclusion & Belonging
Strategic Plan published for
2024-28, including our Trust
Equality Objectives



Key Leadership Performance Indicators (2023 Staff Survey)

Our new EDI dashboard has aided us in baselining and tracking key leadership performance indicators from our staff survey data helping us to be more data driven in prioritising our inclusive leadership activities.

Compassionate Leadership Score



Staff Engagement Score



Harassment, Bullying and Abuse from Managers



Discrimination from Manager / other colleague



Corporate Induction: Providing a Sense of Belonging to Newly Recruited Staff

Corporate Induction

- Content review with delivery more interactive with opportunity for engagement
- Model developed to following people through their 90 day probation journey providing information and engagement opportunities.
- Positive evaluation.

Next Steps

- To review existing standard and content of local induction
- To work in collaboration with leaders to develop message consistency through supportive resource development
- Align clinical education team local induction delivery
- Update Induction policy

"Induction was very informative"

"It is refreshing to have such a focus on mental health and well-being and have action plans in place to support staff as much as possible. Thank you for a brilliant induction, I feel very welcomed".

"Induction was fab and a real boost – thank you"

"Very informative induction. Friendly and approachable facilitators- thank you"



Staff Recognition Schemes 2023

April - June 2023



Annual Long Service
Award Staff Recognition
Scheme

May - July 2023



NHS 75th
Celebration with St
George Cross
Recognition

Nov - December 2023



Annual Christmas
HWB Thank you
Scheme

2023 ongoing



Combined
Compassion Scheme

APPENDIX 3 - INCLUSION AND BELONGING ACTION PLAN 2024-25

Key action to develop Inclusion and Belonging in 24-25, incorporating action across all inclusion workstreams, is outlined in the table below:

Action	Links to Equality Objectives 24-28	Links to 24-25 EDI Goals	Must / Should / Could	Action Lead	RAG rating (as at 09.24)
1. Deliver key milestones to implement, ensure and embed an effectively debiased inclusive recruitment process change programme					
1.1 Develop Inclusive Recruitment Toolkit and Inclusive Recruitment Development package utilising theory / approach of 'No More Tick-Boxes' and 'If Your Face Fits' (Kline, 2023)	4	1	Must	AS	Oct 2024
1.2 Undertake analysis of applications-shortlisting/interview-appointment for posts at band 8A and above to better understand the issues / reasons behind lack of diversity in appointments at this level, and implement action based on findings	4	1	Should	People Team	Dec 2024
1.3 Respond effectively to feedback from staff about experiences of recruitment process from a protected characteristics perspective	4	1	Should	AS	Oct 2024
1.4 Develop a plan to roll-out of Inclusive Recruitment development (considering the needs of both new recruiting managers and existing recruiting managers)	4	1	Should	AS	Dec 2024
2. Reducing inequalities and health inequalities for our service users and staff					
2.1 All services to undertake a review of service user ACCESS analysed with a race lens in 2024-25 and present findings to Directorate committee (3 services to do deeper review via EDS framework – see 2.5 below))	2 & 3	2	Should	All Service Leaders	March 2025
2.2 Equitable access to health and wellbeing offers for all staff (our workforce as a microcosm of our local population). Review take-up by diverse characteristics colleagues.	2	2	Should	Dawn Ainsworth	Dec 2024
2.3 Implement new guidance on recording gender codes in Electronic Patient Record (Lorenzo) and in Electronic Staff Record when available When in place, action needed to analyse the data and identify next steps	1	2	Must	Vicky Boswell / Lauren Cartwright	Dec 2024

2.4 Launch and embed new guidance and approach to RADF (Reasonable Adjustment Digital Flag) as mandated through ISN re-recording disability/ accessible information needs in Electronic Patient Record	1	2	Must	Lauren Cartwright with LF	Dec 2024
2.5 Three services to be reviewed and rated under the EDS framework for 2024-25 (detailed review of Access, Experience, Safe from Harm, Outcomes)	1	2	Must	Identified Service Mgrs / LF	March 2025
2.6 Review business case for AccessAble and make decision on potential extension for years 4 and 5 (if approved, commission inclusion of Keele Medical Practice and consider inclusion of Lawton House into surveyed premises)	4	2	Should	Lesley Faux	Nov 2024
2.7 Support inclusive talent management and career development / progression for all , through promotion of our career development workshops and career conversations - see Career devt link . This offer to be specifically targeted to staff with diverse characteristics (focus on race and disability. Encouraging take-up of coaching and mentoring by diverse characteristics colleagues)	4	1 & 2	Should	Jody Nicholls	Mar 2025
2.8 All executive directors to agree and deliver against personal and Directorate EDI objectives in 2024-25	1-4	1 - 4	Must	BA / Execs	Oct 2024
2.9 Introduce and embed an HR / EDI Dashboard for all services and Directorates Monthly, Quarterly and Annual Monitoring and RAG rating of good / poor performance of (minimum by Dec 24), supporting identification of issues, ownership, prioritisation of action and progress monitoring of action in each service:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce ethnicity, LGB+ and disability profile • Snr leadership representation. (Band 8A,8C upwards) – ethnicity, disability, LGB+, & gender • Diversity in shortlisted candidates (Global Majority / Differently Abled / LGB+ candidates) • WRES / WDES and LGB+ Recruitment score by service (x2 annually TBC) • Bullying & Harassment (NSS) rates from line mgrs/colleagues 	2 & 3	2 & 3	Should	Dave Hewitt, CIO with LF	Phase thru' 24-25

2.10 Deliver the Trust's first Ethnicity Pay Gap and Disability Pay Gap reports and identify and commit to appropriate action, alongside the Gender Pay Gap report for data to end March 2024	1	2	Must	Lesley Faux, EDI Lead	Dec 2024
3. To progress our high-visibility anti-racist and anti-discriminatory approach, delivering against tangible key milestones including:-					
3.1 Development and delivery of a targeted high-profile and impactful communications plan around anti-racist and anti-discriminatory approach (including refreshed posters & promotional campaign). To include anti-abuse message in conjunction with Craig Stone work.	4	1-4	Should	Comms team with LF	March 2025
3.2 Share outcomes and taking meaningful action from learning emerging from staff speaking up reviews , including FTSU, Dear Buki etc	4	2 & 3	Must	AD of OD	March 2025
3.3 Review application of Trust Disciplinary Procedure and Trust Supporting Staff to Improve Performance Procedure through case review, taking a critical race and disability perspective. Propose and implement changes to debias process based on findings.	4	1 & 3	Should	Laura Reynolds / People Ops Team	March 2025
3.4 Begin work to review and debias access to Flexible Working and Flexible Retirement with an EDI lens	4	1 & 3	Should	Laura Reynolds/ People Ops Team	March 2025
3.5 Review Workplace Adjustments and Access to Work process to eliminate delays and barriers to support for differently abled colleagues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Ensure all job applicants are aware of the Trust's approach to supporting differently abled colleagues and workplace adjustments ii. Share guidance and awareness raising around 'This is Me' Health Passport. Consider implementing a timeframe whereby all new staff have a discussion with their line manager about the 'This is Me' health passport within x weeks of commencing work 	4	3	Could	Laura Reynolds, Laura Ross & Laura Reynolds	Jan 2025
3.6 Continue to embed EDI as everyone's responsibility , core to Trust & NHS Values	4	1-4	Should	Lesley Faux	March 2025

3.7 Listen and respond effectively to the voiced concerns of our global majority workforce / ENRICH members following civil unrest of Aug 24 i. Listening session held with ENRICH members ii. Manager and staff guidance developed and issued iii. One Combined / Parade of Flags video developed & launched	4	2	Should	Kerry Smith BA RC JMcC	08.24 09.24 10.2024
3.8 Continue to encourage and support culture of inclusion, openness, authenticity and psychological safety at work through development of the Trust as a great place to work for all & celebration of diverse talent	4	3	Should	OD & Inclusion Team	Ongoing
3.9 People Ops Team to proactively seek to review protected characteristics at the outset of all employee relations processes and to gain agreement for these to be updated where applicable.	2	1 & 3	Should	Laura Reynolds, People Ops Team	From Sept 2024
4. Educate for Inclusion					
4.1 Shift of focus away from positive action development programmes, & towards:- i. Ensuring equitable access / positive skew for take-up of development and leadership development opportunities for diverse talent ii. Development programmes focussed on creating an inclusive working environment , ie educating wider workforce for deeper understanding of inclusion and the reality of experience for minoritised groups iii. All trust leadership offers to include core inclusion component geared to audience level of responsibility	4	1-4	should	OD & Inclusion Team / service managers	ongoing
4.2 Programme of education around responding effectively to incidents of abuse, discrimination, incivility, understanding race & racism , including the need for active bystander/upstander response and the mechanisms available for reporting and addressing such behaviours.	4	1-4	Could	DETAIL TO BE DEVELOPED	
4.3 Deliver an Executive development session on the learning from NHS discrimination cases and setting EDI objectives	3, 4	1-4	Should	PG & LF	Jun 24
4.4 Trust Leadership Academy inclusion-themed session (TBC Nov 2024) :-	3, 4	1-4	Should	PG, LF & JN	Nov 24

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the problem? Staff survey feedback and WRES/WDES/EDI outcomes for the Trust (including dashboard) How will we address this situation? Focus on anti-racist / anti-discriminatory approach, inclusive recruitment, development and progression (link to new inclusive recruitment process, training and guidance) Why? Learning from the NHS discrimination cases etc, benefits of an inclusive workplace and great place to work in terms of staff engagement and sense of belonging and ultimately service user satisfaction and outcomes Reiterate: What are the expectations / deliverables for all leaders 					
<p>4.5 Programme of activities to celebrate and educate around inclusion, following national/international awareness calendar, particularly (link to Newsround, Exec Exchange, Combined TV, podcasts, Inclusion School, Trust/system conferences and other comms opportunities):-</p> <p>Race Inclusion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. 18 July – 17 August: South Asian Heritage Month ii. September: East and South Asian Heritage Month iii. October: Black History Month iv. 3-9 February 2025: Race Equality Week <p>Disability Inclusion:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. 14 Nov – 20 Dec: Disability History Month ii. 17 - 23 Mar / April: Neurodiversity Celebration Wk/ Awareness Mth <p>LGBT+ Inclusion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. February : LGBT+ History Month ii. June: Pride Month <p>Gender equality:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. 8 March International Women's Day 	3, 4	1-4	Should	Staff Network Leads with EDI Lead	ongoing
<p>4.6 Build on investment in established programmes (HPMA Anti-Racist Leadership Programme, WRES Champions, Reciprocal Mentoring, etc). This might involve enlisting these individuals to support design and delivery of planned interventions.</p>	1-4	1-4	Could	DETAIL TO BE DEVELOPED	Mar 25

Equality Objectives 24-28 and EDI Goals 24-25

The numbers in columns 2 and 3 in the table above relate to the below.

Our Inclusion and Belonging Strategic Plan Equality Objective Priorities 24-28

- 1. Deliver overall continuous improvement in our actual and benchmarked performance on our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Core Annual Responsibilities (see Appendix 2) to become and sustain our position as one of the best NHS employers in relation to a range of workforce race, disability, LGBT+ and gender inclusion measures, supported by an effective accountability and monitoring framework for leaders at service level and above.
- 2. Make demonstrable progress in significantly reducing health inequalities for our local population, including removing barriers to equitable access, experience and outcomes through all our services and demonstrating improved health outcomes, as measured by a range of patient/service user metrics.
- 3. Advance our position as a leading inclusive organisation by improving service user and staff experience and outcomes on a wide range of inclusion measures, including across key protected characteristics groups.
- 4. Deliver on our ambition to truly become an inclusive, anti-racist and anti-discriminatory organisation by 2028.

Our Inclusion and Belonging Priorities for 2024-25

- 1. Debiasing our Trust recruitment processes - leading to greater representation and parity and more inclusive talent management
- 2. Reducing health inequalities for our service users and staff - leading to measurable reduction in gaps in access (focus on access in year 1, experience yr 2, outcomes yr 3)
- 3. 'High visibility' focus around anti-discriminatory approach
- 4. Educating for inclusion

↑ --- Educate for Inclusion --- ↓