



South East Coast
Ambulance Service
NHS Foundation Trust



WORKFORCE DISABILITY EQUALITY STANDARD REPORT 2025

Version 3.0 – 15 Oct 2025



A message from our CEO

I am pleased to introduce this year's Workforce Disability Equality Standard (WDES) report, which reaffirms SECamb's commitment to creating a workplace where equality, diversity, and inclusion are at the heart of everything we do. As an organisation serving a diverse population across the South-East, we recognise the importance of building a workforce that truly reflects and understands the communities we care for. This report offers an honest view of our progress, challenges, and the actions we are taking to ensure that every colleague, especially those with a disability, feels valued, respected, and supported.

This year we set out clear priority areas to guide our Trust-wide approach to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI). They were shaped through genuine engagement, including Board Development Days that brought together senior leaders, staff network chairs and colleagues from across the Trust.

From these conversations and lived experiences, four themes emerged: supporting and empowering our staff networks, strengthening inclusive recruitment, developing our staff, and improving our analytics and reporting. These priorities now form the foundation of our EDI delivery plan and reflect where we believe we can achieve the most meaningful and lasting change.

While we are encouraged by improvements, such as better access to reasonable adjustments and increased confidence in career progression, we recognise there is still more to do. Disabled colleagues continue to report lower levels of engagement and feeling valued and are more likely to experience bullying from peers or feel pressured to work when unwell. Reported representation at senior leadership and Board level also remains below that of the wider workforce.

We remain committed to addressing them with urgency and accountability. By continuing to listen, learn, and act, we aim to create an inclusive culture where every colleague can thrive and contribute fully to our shared purpose.

Simon Weldon

South-East Coast Ambulance NHS Trust



A MESSAGE FROM OUR ENABLE NETWORK



enABLE is our Disabilities, Neurodiversity and Carer Staff Network, created to bring people together, to shine a light on every experience, and to make sure that no one feels alone in their journey.

WDES helps SECamb see how well we support colleagues with disabilities. It shows where we are doing well and where we need to improve.

What it means

- *WDES is about people, not just reports*
- *Everyone should have fair chances to learn, grow, and succeed*
- *We want a workplace where everyone is treated with dignity and respect*

Who it supports

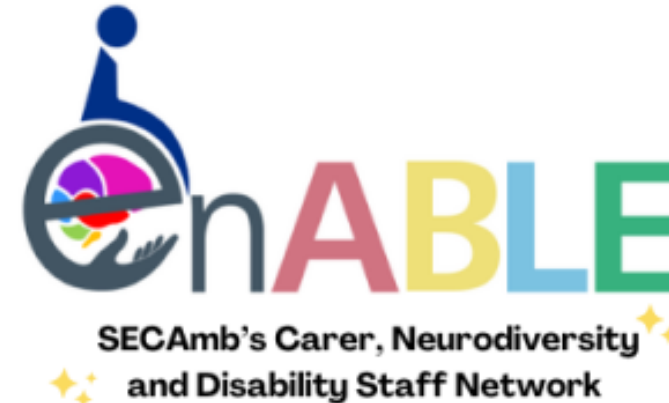
- *Colleagues with physical or sensory disabilities*
- *Neurodiverse colleagues*
- *Colleagues with long-term health conditions*

Why it matters

- *When people feel valued, teamwork and care improve*
- *A workforce that reflects the community can give better care*

Sadie Ghinn-Morris & Mathew Allwright

Co-Chairs of SECAMB's enABLE Network



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INTRODUCTION

The Workforce Disability Equality Standard (WDES) is a mandated, evidence based standard, required for all NHS organisations with over 250 staff. the WDES measures **the workplace experiences of disabled and non-disabled colleagues**. The purpose is to **identify inequalities, monitor progress** and **drive positive change in how organisations support disabled staff**.

WDES provides a year-on-year comparison against previous reporting periods and highlights where progress has been made, where disparities persist, and the actions we are taking through our Trust's EDI Action Plan.

As with previous years, this WDES analysis draws on two core datasets:

- Workforce data extracted from the **Electronic Staff Record (ESR)** as of 31 March 2025, including headcount by disability status, pay band, recruitment and capability processes
- Staff experience data from the **2024 NHS Staff Survey**, published in spring 2025, which captures the lived experiences of staff across areas such as bullying, harassment, discrimination, career progression and reasonable adjustments.

The two data sources together provide a balanced picture of both the structural and cultural aspects of disability equality within SECamb.

Percentages are based on staff self-declaration of disability or long-term health condition. Staff who select “prefer not to say” are excluded from comparative calculations.

The WDES covers ten indicators, grouped into three broad areas:

- **Workforce composition and processes:** representation by pay band, recruitment, and capability outcomes
- **Staff experience:** perceptions of bullying/harassment, discrimination, career progression, presenteeism, feeling valued, reasonable adjustments and staff engagement
- **Leadership:** representation at Board level

WDES is integrated into SECamb’s wider EDI plan, aligned to the EDI four focus areas:

- **Staff networks:** stronger enABLE leadership, clear objectives, and effective sponsorship
- **Inclusive recruitment:** fairer processes, improved progression pathways, and stronger senior representation
- **Staff development:** targeted programmes, including mentoring
- **Data insights:** the People Scorecard and Board oversight to track progress

KEYS & SYMBOLS & DEFINITIONS

 Positive trend, evidence of improvement

 Negative trend, area for improvement

 No significant improvement/deterioration

KEY FINDINGS

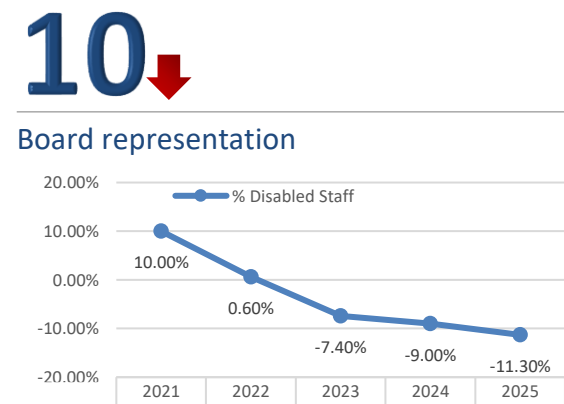
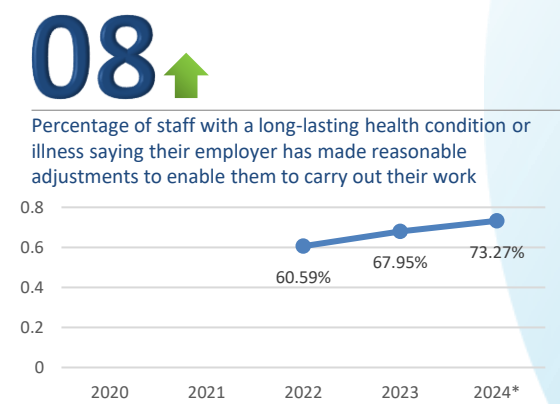
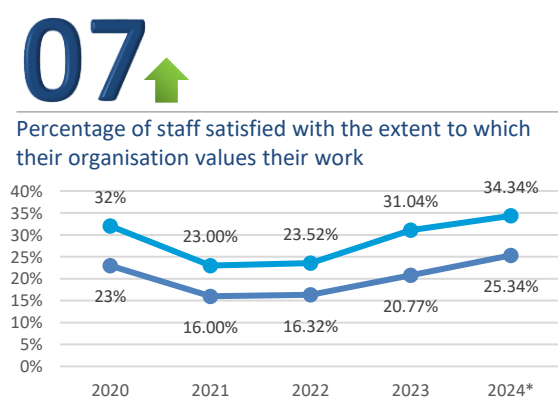
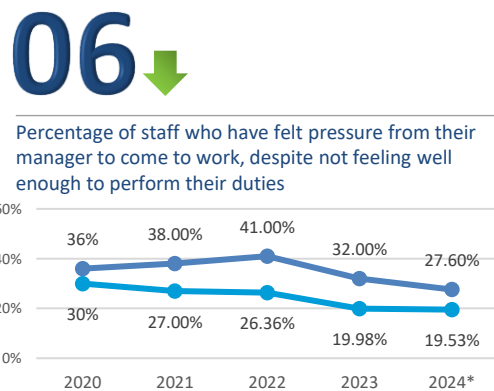
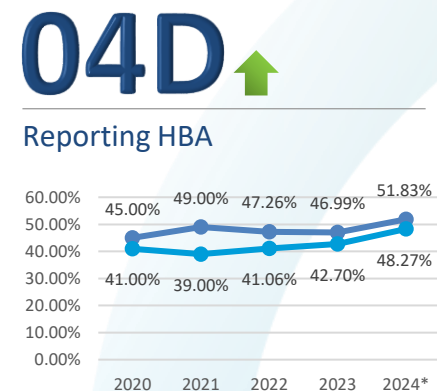
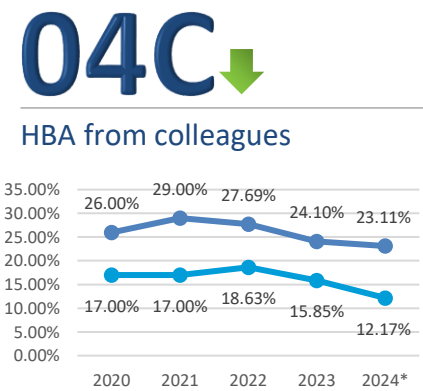
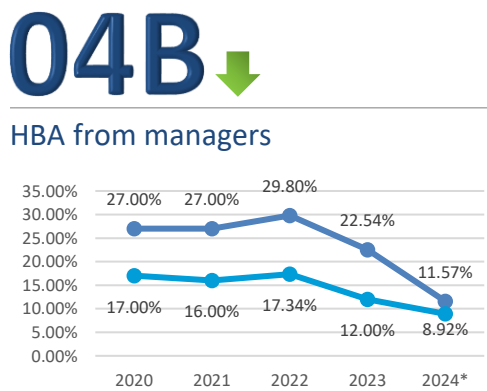
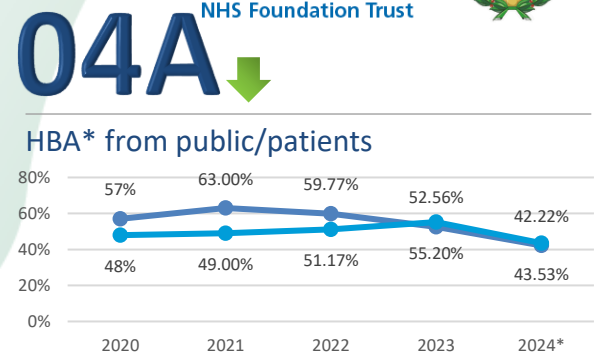
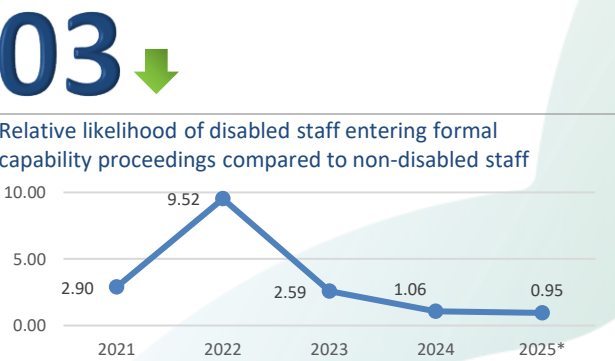
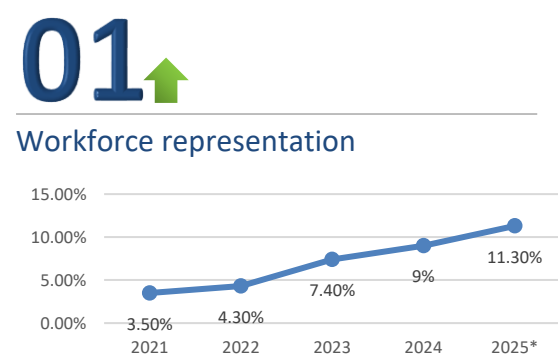
Data for indicators 1-3 and 10 are taken from the Employee Staff Record (ESR) and indicators 4 – 9 from National Staff Survey



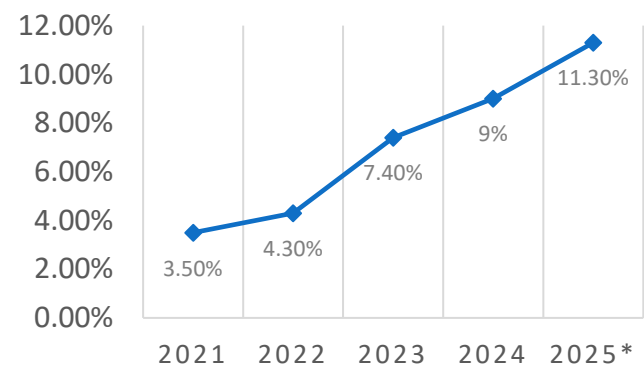
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Colleagues with a disability Colleagues with no disability Overall organisation *HBA = Harassment, Bullying or Abuse

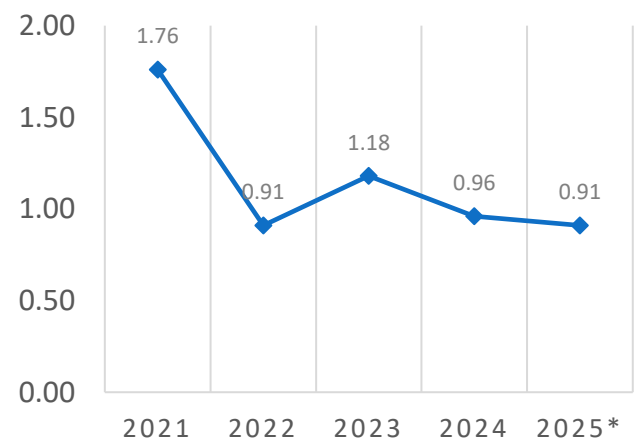


Indicator 1 | Disabled Staff Representation



Percentage of disabled staff in the last year, according to ESR declarations, has increased to 11.3% from 9% the previous year. This positive trend suggests greater disclosure confidence and/or improved recruitment and retention. Disclosure rates still vary, with around 4–5% non-disclosure, however SECamb remains below the national average for non-disclosure, which was 14.3% in 2024.

Indicator 2 | Relative likelihood of disabled staff compared to non-disabled staff being appointed from shortlisting across all posts



This indicator compares the relative likelihood of disabled and non-disabled applicants being appointed after shortlisting. A ratio of 1.0 indicates equity, while indicators over 1.0 suggest non-disabled applicants are more likely to be shortlisted. In this case, the current indicator of 0.91 is close to equity, which has been the case since 2022 although a significant improvement compared to 2021, when disabled applicants were 1.76 times less likely to be appointed. The Trust is in line with national and regional benchmarks, reflecting improvements in inclusive recruitment processes.



ACHIEVED TO DATE

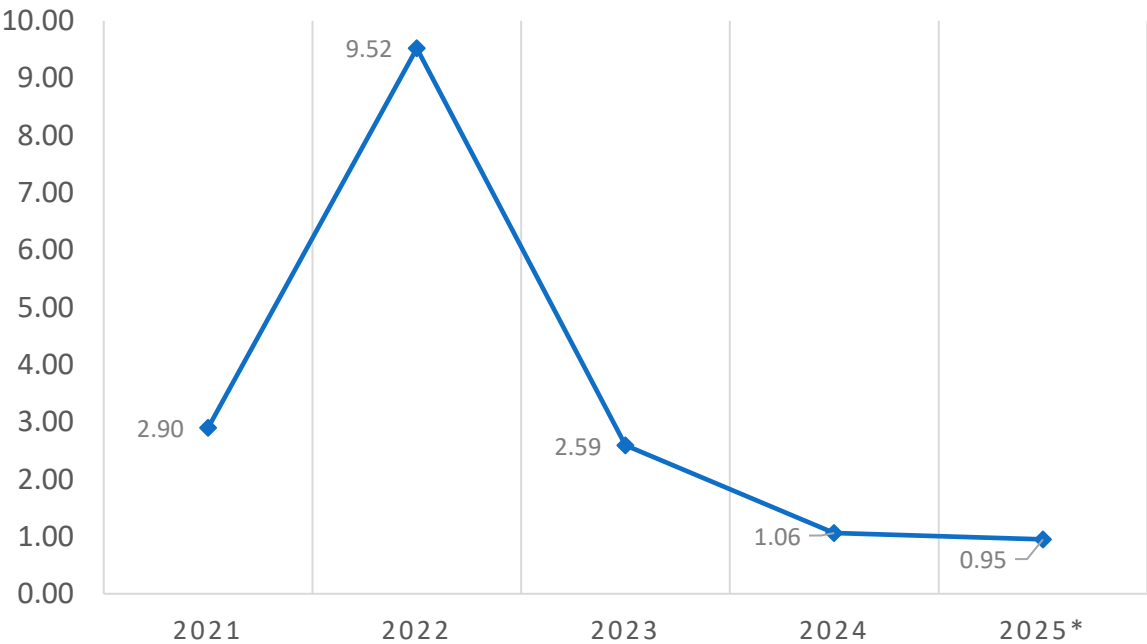
- Disabled colleagues are now nearly as likely to be appointed as non-disabled peers, an 8% increase in representation since 2021
- The Trust has achieved Disability Confident Level 1, which means SECamb has pledged inclusive practices, including guaranteed interviews for eligible disabled applicants and tailored support for employees with disabilities
- Reasonable Adjustments processes have been improved for both colleagues and line managers
- The enABLE network and Board development days have strengthened EDI awareness and engagement
- Equality Impact Assessment completion rates have improved, supporting more inclusive decision-making
- Recruitment team have received trained on implementing Reasonable Adjustments as part of the recruitment process

ACTIVITY PLANNED

- To secure Disability Confident Level 2 by March 2026
- Reduce non-disclosure rates through awareness campaigns and staff network engagement
- Strengthened training for recruiting managers across divisions to include assessing candidates with declared disabilities
- Implement Reasonable Adjustments toolkit and Policy for line managers from November 2025 onwards
- Attend outreach career fair events in October 2025 to promote opportunities to local communities

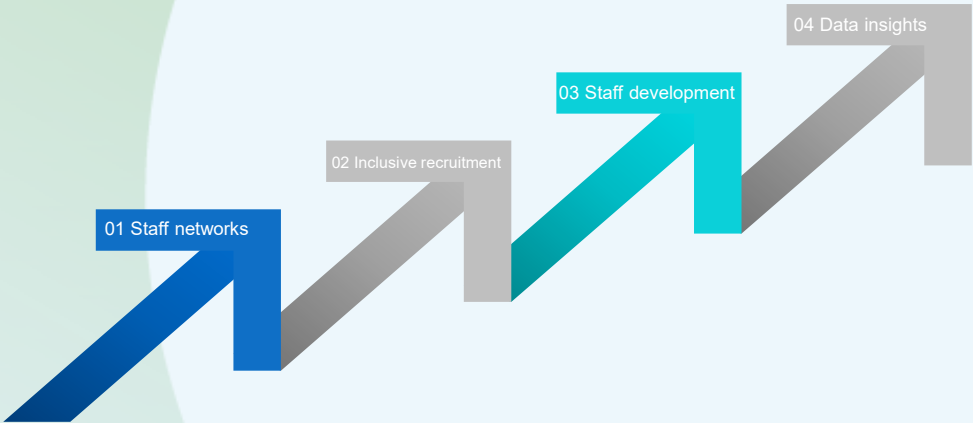
*Workforce data (ESR) from 31 Mar 2025

Indicator 3 | Relative likelihood of disabled staff entering formal capability proceedings compared to non-disabled staff



This indicator measures the relative likelihood of disabled staff entering formal capability procedures (excluding ill-health) compared to non-disabled staff. There has been a significant improvement in the likelihood of disabled colleagues entering formal processes in 2025 (0.95) which represents almost parity with non-disabled colleagues.

**Workforce data from 31 Mar 2025
A ratio of 1.0 indicates equity; higher values show disproportionate impact on disabled staff.*



ACHIEVED TO DATE

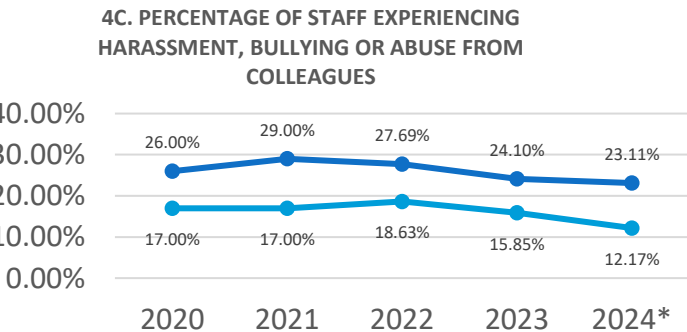
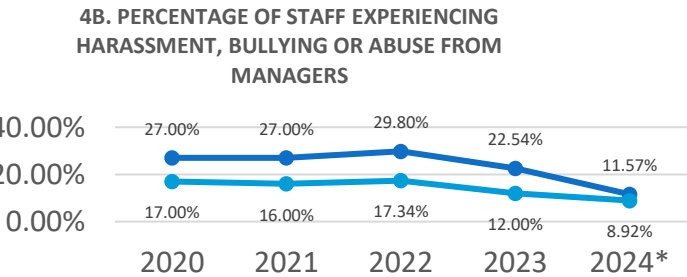
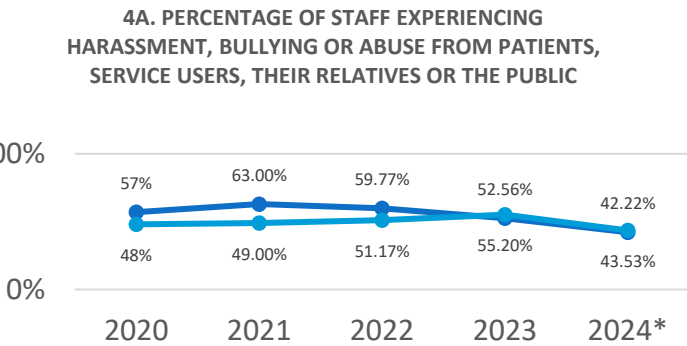
- Achieved parity in likelihood of disabled or non-disabled staff entering capability proceedings
- Preventative support being used more proactively, e.g. improved reasonable adjustments process
- Enhanced support mechanism for colleagues through the Neurodiversity café, run by the Enable network

ACTIVITY PLANNED

- Review, gain approval for and launch refreshed Capability Policy due in Q4 2026
- Further implement ‘Beyond Bias’ training to line managers across divisions
- Continue to raise awareness of disabilities and long-term health conditions through staff network activities and divisional teams

Indicators 4A – 4C | Harassment, Bullying or Abuse (HBA)

Colleagues with a disability Colleagues with no disability



*Staff Survey results published in 2025 (2024 survey)

Reduction in HBA from patients for both colleagues with and without disabilities. Decline in rates indicates positive cultural shifts and better staff experience. On average, SECamb remains aligned to other organisations, where the national average is 49.67%. This reflects continuing challenges of work in patient-facing environments.

This indicator reflects workplace culture, management accountability and leadership behaviours. Disabled staff reporting bullying or harassment has significantly reduced from 30% in 2022 to 11.57% in 2024, however the data (see 4D) also shows that more colleagues with a disability are reporting HBA than those without .

This indicator highlights peer-to-peer culture and inclusivity within teams. Slight reduction since 2020, but disabled staff still report higher rates than peers. Steady decline indicates improved relationships and inclusive team dynamics, but still much work to be done.



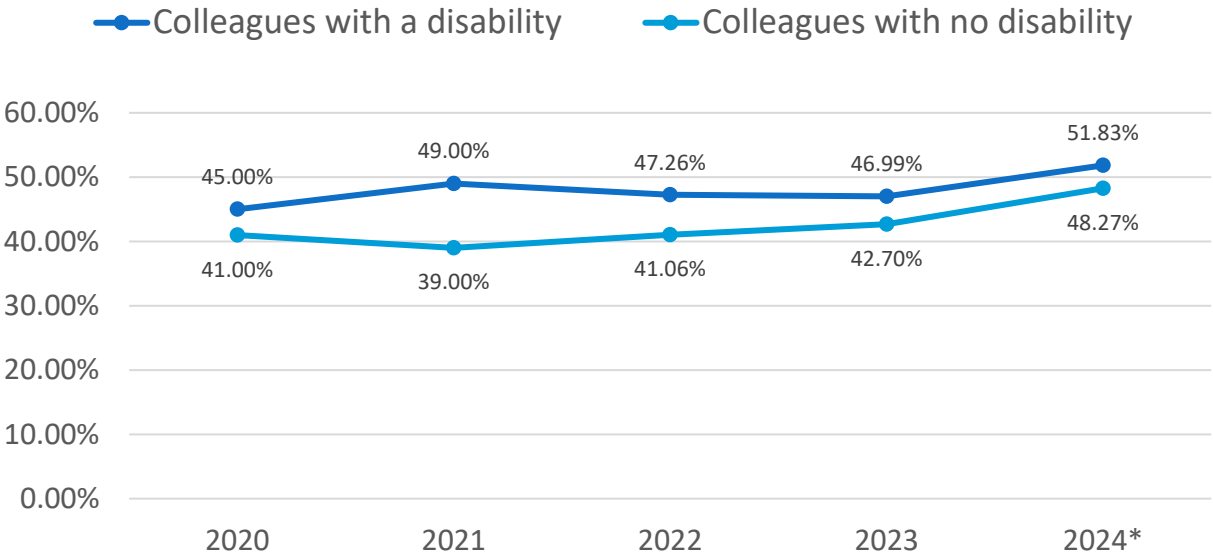
ACHIEVED TO DATE

- Increased use of body-worn cameras as part of our violence reduction initiatives
- Further implementation of leadership training programmes for staff at all levels to strengthen inclusive and compassionate leadership practices
- Staff safety initiatives (e.g., body-worn cameras, lone worker policies and procedures) introduced to reduce risks of HBA
- Active local engagement with the Assaults on Emergency Workers Act, led by the government and the NHS updated Violence Prevention Reduction Standards
- Collaboration with ‘Operation Cavell’, a joint workstream with Police, NHS Trusts and the Crown Prosecution Service tackling violence and aggression against staff
- Conflict resolution training introduced as part of key skills in April 2024, with excellent feedback. Training provides theory, breakaway techniques, and clinical restraint to help staff manage challenging behaviours. 86.34% colleagues completed the training as of 1 Oct 2025

ACTIVITY PLANNED

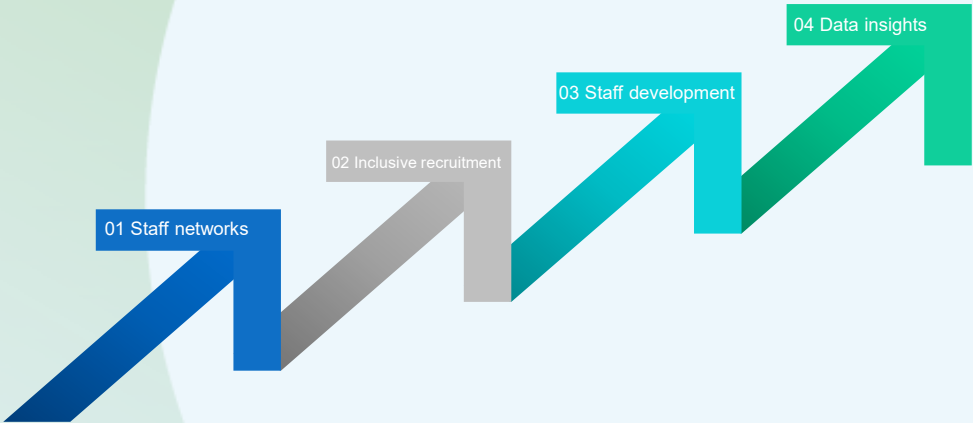
- Maintain focus on violence reduction initiatives and further embed inclusive and compassionate leadership training by refreshing the Trust’s Leadership Framework and ensuring divisional teams have access to inclusive leadership development opportunities
- Explore targeted resilience and wellbeing support for disabled colleagues
- Strengthen escalation and feedback processes to ensure confidence in responses
- Co-design peer-led awareness campaigns with the enable staff network
- Enhance reporting feedback to demonstrate tangible outcomes when staff speak up
- Launch new Values & Behaviour Framework to embed Integrity, Kindness, and Courage, supporting inclusion and culture change across SECamb.
- Continued collaboration between FTSU and Staff networks to bridge the gap for communities who are less likely to speak up

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



Increase in reporting reflects growing confidence in internal processes and support systems, suggesting enhanced awareness and trust in organisational response. However, with over half of those who responded to the survey indicating that they did not report incidents, there is still more work to do.

*Staff Survey results published in 2025 (2024 survey)



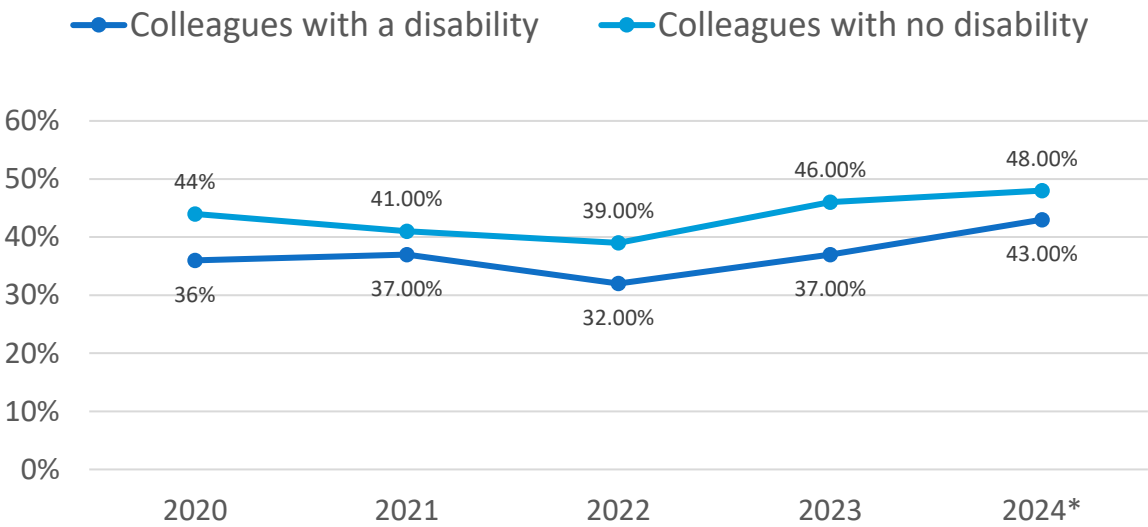
ACHIEVED TO DATE

- Improved visibility of reporting routes (e.g. FTSU)
- FTSU workshops delivered to 2nd and 3rd year university students
- Overview of the FTSU process and sexual safety training provided to Year 1 college students
- Engaged with staff networks to provide a brief overview and update on FTSU
- Sessions now incorporated at Induction and onboarding days to cover ways to speak up at the Trust

ACTIVITY PLANNED

- Expand awareness of informal and formal support options through trust-wide communications and engagement and at a local level in divisional and directorate teams
- Track trends via EDI dashboard and escalate longstanding issues with senior leaders as appropriate

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



This indicator reflects slightly increased confidence in equal opportunities. Both groups have experienced improvements since 2020 and the gap between groups has reduced. However, with only half of the staff that completed the survey indicating that they believe the organisation provides equal career progression there is still more work to do.

*Staff Survey results published in 2025 (2024 survey)



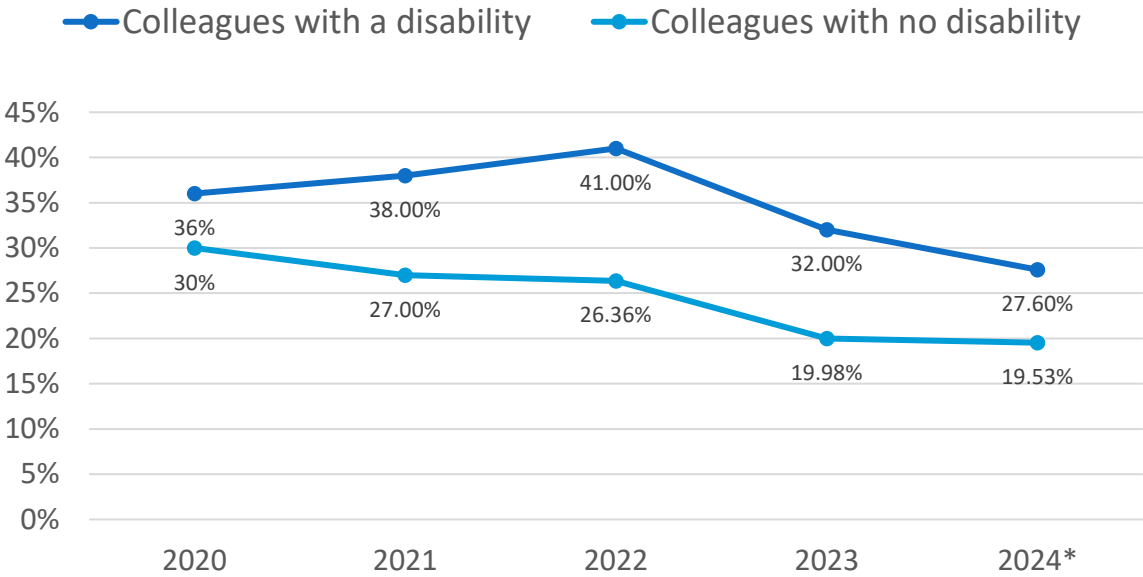
ACHIEVED TO DATE

- Access to Reverse Mentoring programme for colleagues who have disabilities (mentees supporting mentor with career progression advice)
- Training and Education panel implemented to support with access to the Training and Education Bursary application and budget for those staff with disabilities

ACTIVITY PLANNED

- Monitor progression data by disability status through the EDI dashboard and divisional reporting
- Future cohorts for Reverse Mentoring will be designed for wider accessibility, enabling colleagues from a broader range of staff groups to participate

Indicator 6 | Percentage of staff who have felt pressure from their manager to come to work, despite not feeling well enough to perform their duties



This indicator measures the percentage of staff who feel pressured from their manager to attend work despite not feeling well enough. It reflects improved organisational culture and wellbeing. Disabled staff reporting pressure to come to work declined from 41% in 2021 to 27.6% in 2024 which is positive, but there is still much work to do to support staff wellbeing.

*Staff Survey results published in 2025 (2024 survey)



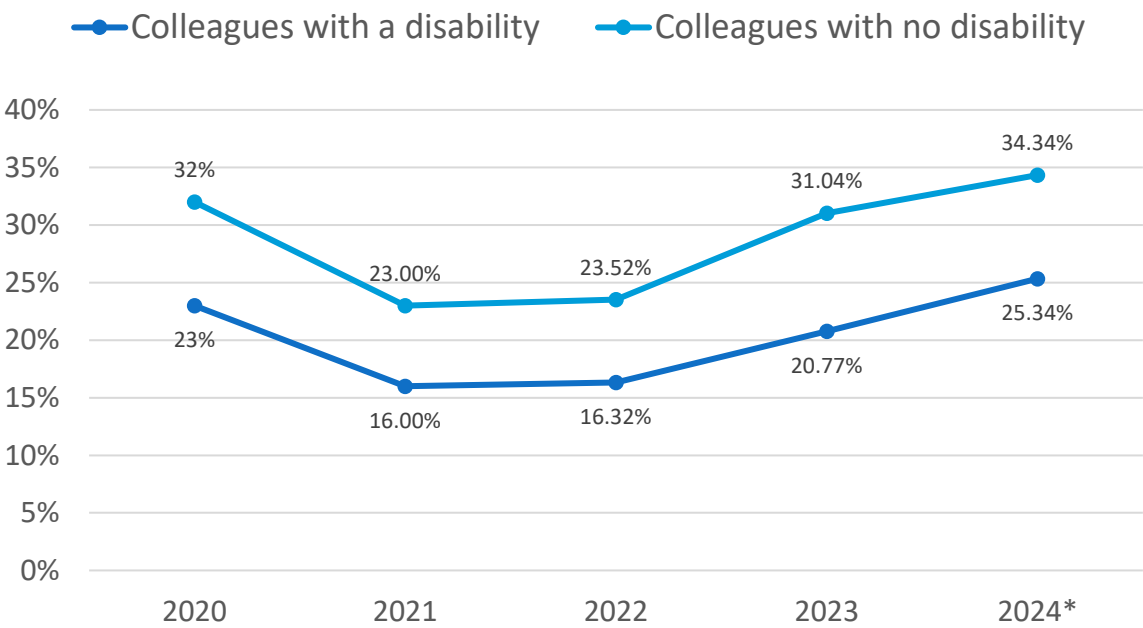
ACHIEVED TO DATE

- Wellbeing Strategy launched
- Reasonable adjustments monthly clinics launched to support line managers through the reasonable adjustments process
- 50+ wellbeing volunteers supporting the delivery of the Wellbeing agenda

ACTIVITY PLANNED

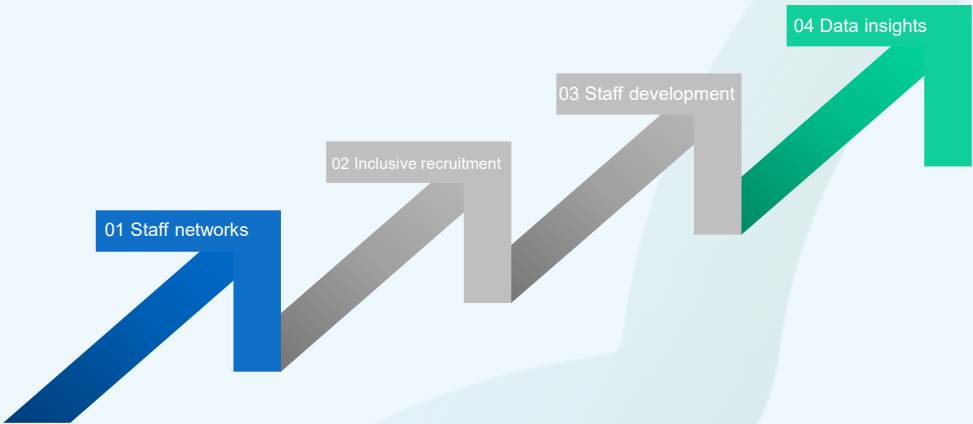
- Continue to promote a wellbeing centric culture through the implementation of the Wellbeing Strategy and further development of the wellbeing advocates role
- Strengthened Leadership and Management development provision to ensure compassionate and inclusive leadership practices across divisions
- Development and improved access of tools for line managers managing absence effectively. Launch of new policy Dec 2025
- Establishing a Wellbeing Forum to ensure that issues are addressed openly and transparently with clear lines of responsibility and accountability. This will be a forum where colleagues can discuss ideas about wellbeing, share their own lived experiences and work collectively on how to improve and prioritise wellbeing across the organisation
- The introduction of a Wellbeing Charter

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



Improvement in feeling valued from colleagues with a disability reflects positive cultural change, though scores remain lower overall and compared to those without disability. Despite improvement, satisfaction levels still remain low, suggesting further work is needed to embed recognition and appreciation across teams.

*Staff Survey results published in 2025 (2024 survey)



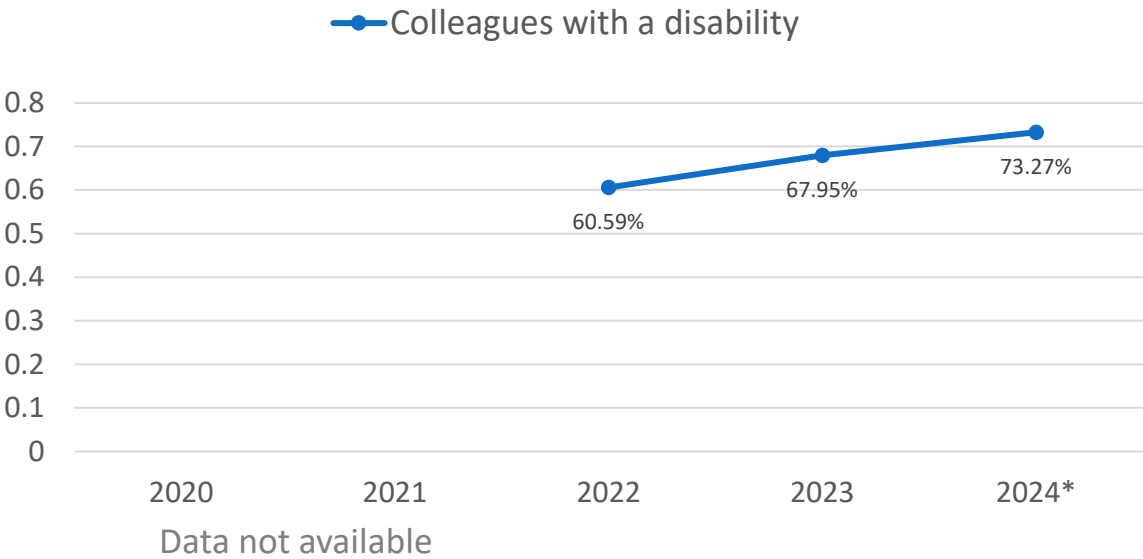
ACHIEVED TO DATE

- Recognition initiatives for all staff expanded across the Trust, with improved inclusion of diverse staff experiences
- Protected groups encouraged to participate in senior-level discussions as part of the newly launched Shadow Board
- Staff networks increasingly recognised as vehicles for staff voice and contribution
- A new Engagement Framework was launched in December 2024, offering multiple channels for staff to share their views and engage with senior leaders with over 1,500 colleagues (1/3 workforce) engaged face-to-face
- The Engagement Framework includes: Big Conversations, Shadow Board, NHS Staff Survey, NHS Pulse Survey, Local Engagement, Staff Networks, Connect with the Chief, Engage with the Execs and Town Halls

ACTIVITY PLANNED

- Formalise staff voices in decision-making forums, which will help with building belonging
- Track satisfaction of activity through staff survey and network feedback
- Continue to engage through the Engagement Framework to hear first hand from colleagues with lived experience

Indicator 8 | Percentage of staff with a long-lasting health condition or illness saying their employer has made reasonable adjustments to enable them to carry out their work



This indicator measures the percentage of disabled staff who state their employer has made reasonable adjustments to enable them to carry out their work and reflects compliance with equality legislation. This indicator started being tracked through the National Staff Survey in 2022 and is already showing significant improvement with an upward trajectory.

*Staff Survey results published in 2025 (2024 survey)



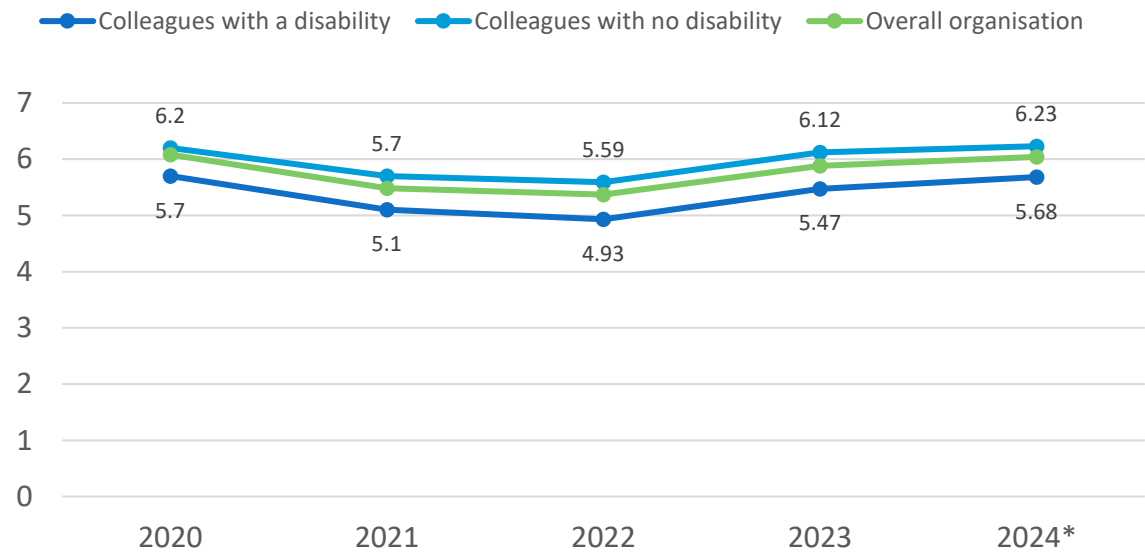
ACHIEVED TO DATE

- Significant improvement in provision and recording of adjustments
- Streamlined reasonable adjustments process and referral pathways
- Launched reasonable adjustments clinics for line managers and colleagues
- Since launching the improved process for requesting reasonable adjustments in early 2024, the Inclusion team have provided support for over 273 adjustment requests (note: staff may submit multiple adjustment requests)
- Locally managed reasonable adjustments passports have been used as a support tool by line managers since 2022

ACTIVITY PLANNED

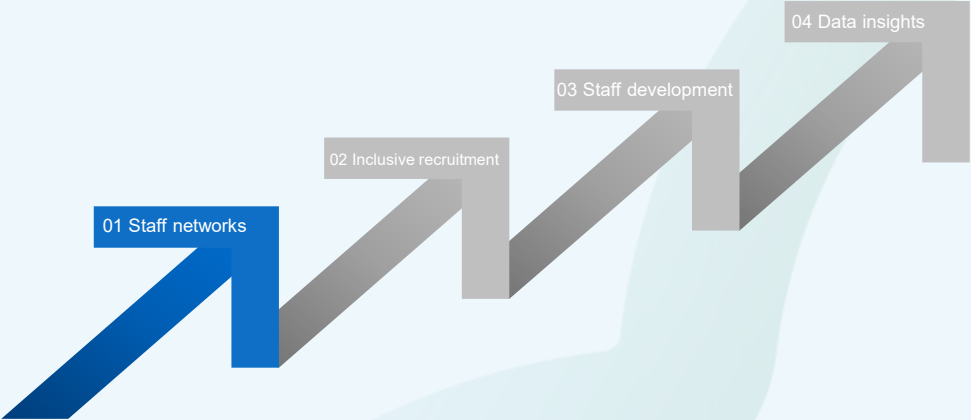
- Improve consistency and timelines of reasonable adjustments across all teams and divisions
- Gain approval from Joint Partnership Forum to launch Reasonable Adjustments Policy and support managers in applying policy.
- Monitor adjustments delivery via RA dashboard
- Improve reporting to capture the number of colleagues being supported with reasonable adjustments
- Launch an updated Managing Attendance Policy Q4 2025
- Beyond bias training to be further implemented across the Trust

Indicator 9 | Staff engagement score (0-10) (aggregated score calculated from nine specific questions grouped into three themes: motivation, involvement and advocacy)



This is an aggregated score (0-10) based on motivation, involvement and advocacy from the NHS staff survey. It reflects overall staff engagement. The staff engagement score for those who declared a disability has improved from 2022 to 2024, and the gap is smaller between disabled and non-disabled staff. The score for the overall organisation is 6.04 and comparable with neighbouring Ambulance Trusts.

*Staff Survey results published in 2025 (2024 survey)



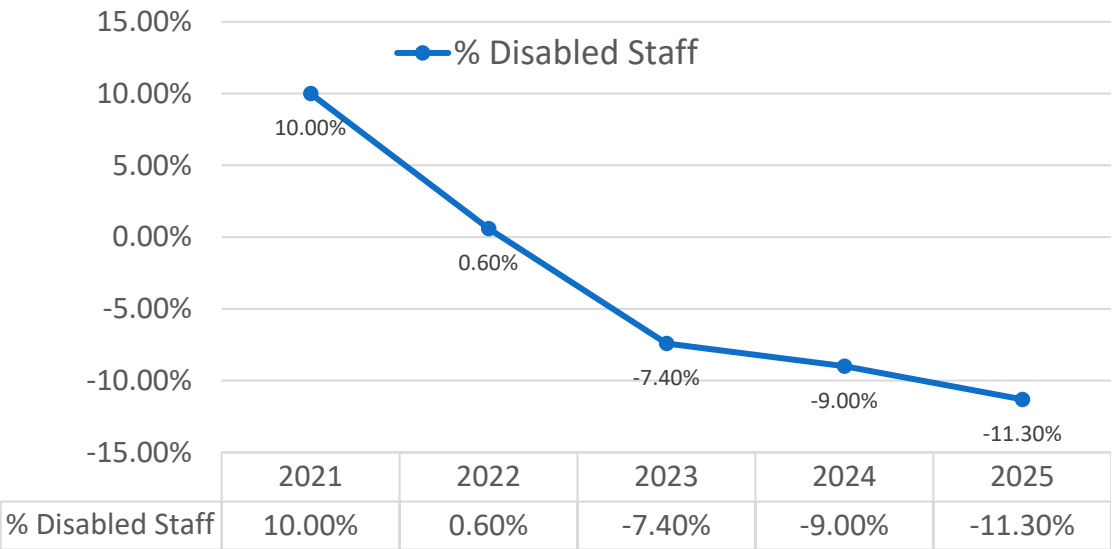
ACHIEVED TO DATE

- A new Engagement Framework launched, offering multiple channels for staff to share their views and engage with senior leaders
- The Engagement Framework covers: Big Conversations, Shadow Board, NHS Staff Survey, NHS Pulse Survey, Local Engagement, Staff Networks, Connect with the Chief, Engage with the Execs and Town Halls

ACTIVITY PLANNED

- Foster engagement through further embedding the Engagement Framework with involvement of staff networks and divisional teams
- Enhance communication of actions taken in response to staff feedback

Indicator 10 | Board representation



This indicator measures whether the composition of the Board is proportionate to the workforce in terms of declared disability status. As at 31 March 2025, 11.3% of the workforce had recorded a disability on ESR, compared to 0% of the Trust Board (14 members reported no disability and one chose not to declare). This creates a representation gap of 11.3 percentage points; meaning the Board currently has no disabled members.

While the wider workforce has seen steady year-on-year growth in disability disclosure and representation, this has not yet been mirrored at Board level. Closing the gap remains a key priority, with actions focused on inclusive succession planning, strengthening leadership pipelines, and embedding measurable EDI objectives for Board members. It is also important to encourage Board members to keep ESR data up to date and accurate.



ACHIEVED TO DATE

- Increased focus on Board-level EDI objectives, including reverse mentoring
- Executive and non-executive sponsors identified for all staff networks
- Board development days included lived experience contributions from staff with a disability with the support from Staff Networks.

ACTIVITY PLANNED

- Strengthened talent pipeline and succession planning for colleagues with a disability who aspire to develop into senior leadership roles
- Encourage Board Members and colleagues across the Trust to ensure ESR data is updated and accurately reported

Activities planned

Focus area	Next steps / activities planned	Linked WDES indicator(s)
1. Staff networks	• Further raise awareness of disabilities and long-term health conditions through staff networks • Co-design peer-led awareness campaigns with enable • Formalise staff voices in decision-making forums • Continued collaboration between FTSU and staff networks • Enhance communication of actions taken in response to staff feedback • Reduce non-disclosure rates through awareness campaigns and staff network engagement • Continued collaboration between FTSU and Staff networks to bridge the gap for communities who are less likely to speak up • Staff networks increasingly recognised as vehicles for staff voice and contribution • Continue to foster engagement through further embedding the Engagement Framework with involvement of staff networks	1, 3, 4, 7, 9, 10
2. Inclusive recruitment	• Secure Disability Confident Level 2 • Recruiting managers training to include module on assessing candidates with disabilities • Launch community outreach events (Oct 2025) • Roll out Beyond Bias training to line managers and all Directorates • Strengthen talent pipeline and succession planning for disabled colleagues aspiring to senior leadership • Encourage Board and wider Trust to update their ESR data • Access to Reverse Mentoring programme for colleagues who have disabilities (mentees supporting mentor with career progression advice)	1, 2, 5, 10

Activities planned

Focus area	Next steps / activities planned	Linked WDES indicator(s)
3. Staff development	• Roll out Reasonable Adjustments toolkit and policy for line managers (Nov 2025) • Review, gain approval for and launch refreshed Capability Policy due in Q4 2026. • Maintain focus on violence reduction initiatives and embed inclusive leadership training • Explore targeted resilience and wellbeing support for disabled colleagues • Launch new Values & Behaviour Framework (Jan/Feb 2026) • Encourage colleagues with disabilities to access reverse mentoring cohorts • Reverse Mentoring - future cohorts designed for wider accessibility • Promote a wellbeing-centric culture through further development of the wellbeing advocates. • Ensure line managers have tools, knowledge and confidence for managing absence supportively • Launch Updated Managing Attendance Policy (Dec 2025) • Expand awareness of informal and formal support options through trust-wide communications and engagement and at a local level in divisional and directorate teams relating to HBA • Gain approval from Joint Partnership Forum to launch Reasonable Adjustments Policy and support managers in applying policy • Launch an updated Managing Attendance Policy Q4 2025 • Beyond bias training to be further implemented across the Trust	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8
4. Data insights	• Reduce non-disclosure rates from 4–5% to <3% through campaigns and engagement • Strengthen escalation and feedback processes to ensure confidence in responses relating to HBA • Enhance reporting feedback loop to show tangible outcomes • Track trends via EDI dashboard and escalate long-standing issues • Monitor progression data by disability status • Track satisfaction of initiatives via staff survey and network feedback • Continue engaging staff through Engagement Framework • Monitor reasonable adjustments delivery and support to colleagues via EDI dashboard • Increased focus on Board-level EDI objectives, including reverse mentoring	1, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10