

WDES REPORT 2024

Introduction

The Workforce Disability Equality Standard (WDES) is a set of ten specific measures (metrics) which enables NHS organisations to compare the workplace and career experiences of disabled (including long term conditions) and non-disabled staff. The metrics data is used to develop and publish an action plan, building on high impact actions shared in the EDI improvement plan.

The information presented in this report is drawn directly from the Electronic Staff Record (ESR – as of March 2024) and from the National Staff Survey database (results 2023). Where the numbers of staff for a category are below five the detail has been redacted and represented by the symbol ‘-’; this is to ensure anonymity and that individual members of staff cannot be easily identified. If there were no counts at all the number zero is kept in the data.

Bedfordshire Luton and Milton Keynes (BLMK) Integrated Care Board (ICB) is committed to continually improving our approach equality and equity and use year on year comparison data to measure progress against the indicators. The WDES is important to help us understand the experiences of our staff and how we can improve their working environment. This will enable us to create the cultures of belonging and trust that will improve retention, recruit from the widest possible talent pool, and provide sustainable careers.

The workforce data and findings within this report are a snapshot of BLMK ICB on 31st March 2024 and any data trend comparisons with previous years will be an amalgamation of the previous Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG).

There are 10 WDES metrics, three focus on workforce, six are based on questions from the NHS Staff survey, which includes a focus on voices of disabled staff, and one focuses on disability representation at board. The detailed metrics are below

1. Percentage of staff with disability in each of the Agenda for Change Bands 1-9 OR Medical and Dental subgroups, and VSM (inc Executive Board members) – compared with the percentage of staff in the overall workforce.
2. Relative likelihood of staff with disability compared to staff without disability being appointed from shortlisting across all posts.
3. Relative likelihood of staff with disability compared to staff without disability entering the formal capability process.
4. Percentage of staff with disability compared to staff without disability experiencing harassment, bullying or abuse from patients/service users, their relatives or other members of the public, managers, other colleagues.

5. Percentage of staff with disability compared to staff without disability believing that their organisation provides equal opportunities for career progression or promotion.
6. Percentage of staff with disability compared to staff without disability saying that they have felt pressure from their manager to come to work, despite not feeling well enough to perform their duties.
7. Percentage of staff with disability compared to staff without disability saying that they are satisfied with the extent to which their organisation values their work.
8. Percentage of staff with disability saying that their employer has made adequate adjustment(s) to enable them to carry out their work.
9. The staff engagement score for staff with disability compared to staff without disability and the overall engagement score for the organisation.
10. Percentage difference between the organisation's Board voting membership and its organisation's overall workforce.

BLMK population and workforce

BLMK ICB employs 400 people. The disabled declaration rate for the ICB on the Electronic Staff Record (ESR) is 8.25%, however, 26.7% of staff have declared a disability on completing the anonymous NHS Staff Survey. This may reflect that staff do not wish to declare their disability on ESR and further work is required to encourage declaration.

The BLMK overall population with limiting long term illness or disability is: 14.75% (Census 2021).

Overall, 94% of staff declared their disability status on ESR as of 31 March 2024. This leaves 6% of staff who have not disclosed their status ethnicity an increase of 2% compared to last year.

Summary of WDES and RAG rated table of the data.



2021	2022	2023		
			Metric 1	Metric 1 workforce – Information obtained from ESR Non-Clinical staff: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There had been an increase of 3.6% in the declaration rate of those living with a disability from 6.4% in 2023 to 10% in 2024. This is now more representative of the local population at 14.8%. 5.8% of staff have not declared their disability status. Clinical staff: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On average 4.8% have declared they live with a disability. This is slightly lower than 2023 at 5.4%. Compared to the BLMK population living with a disability at 14.8%, there is an under representation at all levels in clinical staff. The non-declaration rate is worsening, increasing from 11.7% in 2023 to 14.4%. This is due, in the main, to the very high non-declaration rate of 33.3% of clinical staff in bands 8c and above.
			Metric 10	Metric 10 workforce – Information obtained from ESR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board Members: At 16.7%, the number of people living with a disability on the Board is representative of the BLMK population at 14.8%.
			Metric 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Candidates without a disability were 2.5 times more likely to be appointed from shortlisting compared to candidates with a disability which is an increase in the disparity compared to last year where, at 1.19, it was much closer to the desired likelihood of 1.
			Metric 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As over the last two years, there were no staff (disabled or non-disabled) entered the formal capability process during the financial year.
			Metric 4 (a,b,c,d)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At 10.4%, there has been a decrease of 0.6% in the overall average percentage of staff living with a disability who have experienced harassment, bullying and abuse from service users and colleagues compared with 2022 when it was at 11%. There has however, been an increase of 4.4% in the percentage of staff living with a disability experiencing harassment, bullying and abuse from managers from 9.1% in 2022 to 13.5% in 2023. At 35.7%, there has been an increase of 12.2% of colleagues living with disabilities reporting these incidents compared to 2022 when it was at 23.5%; BLMK ICB are now at 2.77% below the national average for ICBs for reporting of such incidents.
			Metric 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There has been a 10.8% decrease in the percentage of colleagues living with a disability believing that the ICB provides equal opportunities for progression at 47.37%. There is also a reduction of 7.23% in colleagues without a disability believing the ICB provides equal opportunities for progression at 46.57%.
			Metric 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There has been a consistent reduction in colleagues living with a disability feeling pressure from their manager to come to work despite not feeling well, now at 10.4%; below the ICB median at 14.29%.
			Metric 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At 38.96%, there is a significant reduction, of 13.9%, in colleagues living with a disability feeling that the ICB values their work compared to 2022 when it was at 52.9%.
			Metric 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At 78.95%, there is a reduction of 6.75% of colleagues living with a disability satisfied that the ICB have made adequate adjustments at work compared to 2022 when it was at 85.7%.
			Metric 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The staff engagement score for the organisation was 6.29 which was not statistically different for disabled and non-disabled colleagues.

Key Findings

<p>In 2023 35.7% of staff declaring a disability reported incidents of bullying, harassment and increase of 12.2% compared to 2022.</p>	<p>There has been an increase of 4.4% in the percentage of staff living with a disability experiencing harassment, bullying and abuse from managers compared to 2022.</p>	<p>Candidates without a disability were 2.5 times more likely to be appointed from shortlisting compared to candidates with a disability</p>	<p>There has been a 10.8% decrease in the percentage of colleagues living with a disability believing that the ICB provides equal opportunities for progression.</p>
<p>Further data analysis is needed to see if this signals staff being more confident and safer to report incidents or if it relates to an increase of the number of incidents experienced by staff.</p>	<p>This is a negative increase and further analysis, and triangulation of HR data is required to understand the experiences of staff.</p>	<p>This is a negative increase compared to 2023. Further analysis is needed to understand the level of inequity and put processes in place to address it.</p>	<p>This finding could be linked to the previous finding regarding shortlisting. Further investigation is required to understand where and when staff are experiencing inequity</p>
<p>There is an increasing and high non declaration rate of clinical staff in bands 8c and above</p>	<p>A negative decrease of 6.75% for staff living with a disability believing that the ICB has made adequate adjustments at work compared to 2022.</p>	<p>There has been a consistent positive decrease in staff living with a disability feeling pressure from their manager to come to work despite not feeling well.</p>	<p>NHS Staff Survey data shows experiences appear to have declined in many areas in 2023 for both people living with a disability and those without.</p>
<p>Action needs to be taken to understand the high level of non-declaration and work with clinicians to improve the declaration rate.</p>	<p>This needs further analysis to understand the lack of adjustments to understand if it is due to recent organisational restructuring or lack of awareness of support available.</p>	<p>This improve is likely to be a result of the 2023 WDES plan which had several actions and initiatives put in place to support staff and managers to address this concern.</p>	<p>This may reflect the period of change since the ICB formed in July 2022 and subsequent restructuring of the organisation.</p>

Data Breakdown and Analysis

Metric 1 (Workforce Data)

Percentage of staff with disability in each of the Agenda for Change Bands 1-9 OR Medical and Dental subgroups, and VSM (inc Executive Board members) – compared with the percentage of staff in the overall workforce.



Non-Clinical	2022						2023						2024							
	Disabled	% Disabled	Non-disabled	% Non-disabled	Unknown	Total	Disabled	% Disabled	Non-disabled	% Non-disabled	Unknown	% Unknown	Total	Disabled	% Disabled	Non-disabled	% Non-disabled	Unknown	% Unknown	Total
Bands 1 - 4	0	0.00%	26	89.70%	0	29	0	0%	26	89.7%	0	0%	0	0	0%	22	84.60%	0	0%	0
Bands 5-7	8	7.90%	90	89.10%	0	101	13	10.8%	103	85.8%	0	0%	0	17	16%	83	79.30%	0	0%	0
Bands 8a-8b	7	8.40%	70	92.10%	6	83	0	0%	81	90%	7	7.80%	0	6	7%	80	87.90%	0	0%	0
8c, 9, VSM	0	0%	48	90.60%	0	53	0	0%	49	86%	0	0%	0	0	0%	63	87.50%	0	0%	0
Total	17	6.40%	234	88.00%	15 (5.6%)	266	19	6.40%	259	87.5%	18	6.10%	296	28	10%	248	84.60%	17	5.80%	293

Clinical	2022						2023						2024							
	Disabled	% Disabled	Non-disabled	% Non-disabled	Unknown	Total	Disabled	% Disabled	Non-disabled	% Non-disabled	Unknown	% Unknown	Total	Disabled	% Disabled	Non-disabled	% Non-disabled	Unknown	% Unknown	Total
Bands 1 - 4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0
Bands 5-7	0	0	42	91.3	0	46	0	0%	35	87.5%	0	0%	0	0	0%	30	93.80%	0	0%	0
Bands 8a-8b	0	0	41	93.2	0	44	0	0%	38	88.4%	0	0%	0	0	0%	33	84.60%	0	0%	0
8c, 9, VSM	0	0	35	85.4	0	41	0	0%	19	67.9%	8	28.60%	0	0	0%	21	63.60%	11	33.30%	0
Total	4	3.1	118	90.1	9 (6.9%)	131	6	5.4%	92	82.9%	13	11.70%	111	5	4.80%	84	80.80%	15	14.40%	104

What is the data telling us?

8.25% of all BLKM ICB staff declared their disability.

Non-Clinical

- There had been an increase of 3.6% in the declaration rate of those living with a disability from 6.4% in 2023 to 10% in 2024.
- 5.8% of staff have not declared their disability status which is a slight improvement on previous years.

Clinical staff:

- There has been a slight decrease of clinical staff 4.8% declaring a disability compared to 2023 at 5.4%.
- The non-declaration rate is worsening, increasing from 11.7% in 2023 to 14.4%. There is very high non-declaration rate of 33.3% of clinical staff in bands 8c and above.

What we have completed	What we are progressing this year
Review of appraisal system and process to focus on talent conversations .	Implement new appraisals system and process

Development of an ICB Talent Management Framework	Sign off and roll out of ICB Talent Management Framework
Attained Disability Confident accreditation for Level 1	Progress Disability Confident accreditation to Level 2
Explored options and structure for an ICB Shadow Executive committee	Recruit and implement an ICB Shadow Executive committee with the intention of learning lessons on how to improve the diversity of our decision making and provide learning and development for leaders from diverse backgrounds.
Completion of the NHSE Health and Wellbeing toolkit	Development of an ICB Wellbeing Strategy and action plan

Metric 2 (Workforce Data)

Relative likelihood of staff with disability compared to staff without disability being appointed from shortlisting across all posts.



	Metric 2: Relative likelihood of staff without disabilities being appointed from shortlisting		
	2022	2023	2024
With disability	3 appointees (4.9%)	6 appointees (8.3%)	2 appointees (4.7%)
Without disability	58 appointees (95.1%)	66 appointees (91.7%)	41 appointees (95.3%)
Likelihood	1.89	1.19	2.5

What is the data telling us?

- Candidates without a disability were 2.5 times more likely to be appointed from shortlisting compared to candidates with a disability, a significant increase in the disparity compared to last year.

What we have completed	What we are progressing this year
Developed and Launched ICB Inclusive recruitment guidance/ tool	Training sessions to support navigating through the ICB Inclusive recruitment guidance/ tool
	Development of Inclusion Champions to be included in all 8a and above Recruitment

Metric 3 (Workforce Data)

Relative likelihood of staff with disability compared to staff without disability entering the formal capability process.



Metric 3: Relative likelihood of staff without disabilities entering the formal capability process		
2022	2023	2024
0	0	0
0	0	0

As with last year and the previous year, there were no staff entering the formal disciplinary process this year or last year.

Metric 4 (NHS Staff Survey)

Percentage of staff with disability compared to staff without disability experiencing harassment, bullying or abuse from patients/service users, their relatives or other members of the public, managers, other colleagues.



Percentage of staff of staff experiencing harassment, bullying or abuse from:	With Long-Term Condition			Without Long-Term Condition			ICB Benchmark Median With Long-Term Condition			ICB Benchmark Median without Long-Term Condition		
	2021	2022	2023	2021	2022	2023	2021	2022	2023	2021	2022	2023
4a) patients / service users, relatives or the public,	12.8%	11.90%	9.46%	9.0%	7.70%	4.93%	12%	10.70%	10.44%	8%	7.30%	6.91%
4b) managers,	12.8%	9.10%	13.51%	7.1%	4.90%	6.90%	12.7%	15.20%	13.51%	7.2%	7.60%	7.47%
4c) other colleagues,	17.00%	12.10%	8.22%	8.1%	7.40%	7.96%	15.6%	15.50%	15.42%	8.1%	8.70%	9.55%
4d) Percentage that reported the incident	50.0%	23.50%	35.71%	42.9%	47.20%	38.71%	46.2%	40.90%	48.48%	46.4%	42.20%	43.64%

What is the data telling us?

- There has been a steady decrease in the percentage of staff living with a disability or long-term condition experiencing harassment, bullying and abuse from service users, relatives and the public and from colleagues.
- There has been an increase of 4.4% in the percentage of staff living with a disability experiencing harassment, bullying and abuse from managers from 9.1% in 2022 to 13.5% in 2023.

- In 2023 35.7% of staff declaring a disability reported incidents of bullying, harassment and increase of 12.2% compared to 2022 (23.5%).
- BLMK are below the national average for ICB staff reporting incidents.

What we have completed	What we are progressing this year
Completed the Civility and Respect Toolkit for the ICB and development of Civility and Respect programme modules.	Implementation of a Civility and Respect Programme
FTSU working group has been established. Covering 5 workstreams: FTSU Organisational Self-Assessment, Review and update Whistleblowing & FTSU Policy, Relaunch and Promote the FTSU Service, Recruitment and Training of FTSU Champions and FTSU Reporting Arrangements & Governance.	Hosting webinar on FTSU
ICB has signed up to NHS Sexual safety charter.	
Development of system Wellbeing Festival with partners	Host system Wellbeing Festival in Oct/Nov
	Development of micro aggressions awareness sessions and training. This is also included in the modules of the Civility and respect programme.
	Roll out of Allyship awareness on how to be an effective Ally training and resources

Metric 5, 6, 7, 8 & 9 (NHS Staff Survey)



Metric 5



Metric 6



Metric 7



Metric 8



Metric 9

WDES staff survey questions	Metric 5 Percentage of staff believing that the ICB provides equal opportunities for career progression or promotion.		Metric 6 Percentage of staff that felt pressure from their manager to come to work, despite not feeling well		Metric 7 Percentage of staff saying that they are satisfied with the extent to which their organisation values their work		Metric 8 Percentage of staff saying that employer has made adequate adjustments at work	Metric 9 Staff engagement score out of 10	
	Disabled	Non- disabled	Disabled	Non- disabled	Disabled	Non- disabled	Disabled	Disabled	Non-disabled
Year									
2021	52.1%	54.3%	18.5%	20%	38.8%	48.6%	91.3%	6.84	6.92
2022	58.20%	53.80%	15.60%	10.50%	52.90%	50.20%	85.70%	6.92	6.93
2023	47.37%	46.57%	10.71%	9.38%	38.96%	47.32%	78.95%	6.29	6.59
ICB Median 2023	47.83%	52.52%	14.29%	9.38%	38.89%	48.57%	80.23%	6.28	6.72

What is the data telling us?

- There has been a 10.8% decrease in the percentage of colleagues living with a disability believing that the ICB provides equal opportunities for progression. This negative decrease is also reflected in staff without a declared disability.
- At 38.96%, there is a significant reduction, of 13.9%, in colleagues living with a disability feeling that the ICB values their work compared to 2022.
- Compared to 2022 there is a negative decrease of 6.75% for staff living with a disability believing that the ICB has made adequate adjustments at work.
- There has been a consistent and positive decrease in colleagues living with a disability feeling pressure from their manager to come to work despite not feeling well, now at 10.7%.
- The staff engagement score for the organisation was 6.29 which was not significantly different for disabled and non-disabled colleagues.
- Where improvements had been seen to scores in metrics 5 – 9 in 2022 compared with 2021, experiences appear to have declined in many areas in 2023 for both people living with a disability and those without. This may reflect the period of change and restructure the ICB has been through since forming in July 2022 and will need further analysis.

What we have completed	What we are progressing this year
Review of staff intranet to ensure clear signposting to resources and information relating to EDI	Continue to maintain and resource the staff intranet
EDI mapping exercise enabling the ICB to consolidate all EDI activities from the various PSED reports, thus creating a single repository to progress EDI actions.	Work with ICB stakeholders to ensure progress and evidence recording across all EDI activities
EDI awareness sessions delivered by AGEM CSU EDI colleagues	Executive/ leader development on Inclusion. Interactive sessions with a focus on Inclusion and how to influence and drive change throughout the organisation to encourage deeper thinking and accountability.
Leadership Programme for STT and Place Leaders	Further develop Leadership Programme considering feedback and roll out across the ICB
Participated in the Diversity in health and care partners programme with representation from ICB leaders and senior managers on the core modules	Diversity in health and care partners programme 24/25. Encourage leaders and senior managers to participate in training and resources offered through this programme

Reviewed model of current staff Diversity Network	Support staff in forming staff led Networks/ safe spaces for underrepresented staff groups.
Development of a Staff awards event	Host the ICBs inaugural staff awards in September.
	Workshops on Race and other protected characteristics to enable and encourage better understanding, and the building of improved psychological safety for staff.

Metric 10

The percentage difference between the organisation's Board voting membership and its organisation's overall workforce.



Board	2022						2023						2024							
	Disabled	% Disabled	Non-disabled	% Non-disabled	Unknown	Total	Disabled	% Disabled	Non-disabled	% Non-disabled	Unknown	% Unknown	Total	Disabled	% Disabled	Non-disabled	% Non-disabled	Unknown	% Unknown	Total
Executive	0	0	7	100.0%	↕	↕	0	0	↕	83.30%	↕	↕	↕	↕	↕	6	85.71%	↕	↕	↕
Non-executive	0	0	↕	↕	↕	↕	0	0	↕	↕	↕	↕	↕	0	0%	5	83%	0	0%	5
Difference (Total Board – overall workforce)								-6%		-3%		9%			-1%		1%		-1%	
Difference (Executive membership – overall workforce)								-6%		-9%		15%			-8%		2%		6%	

What is the data telling us?

- Due to small numbers the data for this metric is redacted to ensure anonymity. However, our data does show that the number of people living with a disability on the Board is representative of the BLMK population.
- Not all members of the Board have made their declarations.

Conclusion

There is still disparity between the experience of staff declaring a disability or long-term condition compared to staff without, in particular the NHS Staff Survey results around staff experience. There are some areas of improvement such as not feeling pressure to come to work when ill, which could reflect more supportive and inclusive managers and culture. The other positive increase is in reporting incidents of bullying and harassment which again could reflect staff feeling more confident and supported. However, there was also an increase in the number of incidents of bullying and harassment from managers which could also account for the higher rate of reporting incidents. Further investigation is required.

It is worth noting that ICB staff have gone through a significant period of change and transition since forming in July 2022 followed by restructuring during the last 12-18 months which could have had an impact on some of the metrics dropping compared to previous years.

Action Plan

There are several initiatives and programmes of work in place to address the issues raised in the WDES data. These fall into the following themes

- Workforce Data
- Recruitment, retention, and career progression
- Staff Experience and Wellbeing

Metric	Theme	Action	Outcome	Review
1	Workforce Data	Increase the number of staff who feel confident to declare disabilities/long term conditions on ESR.	Gain a better insight and make positive staff for change.	Quarterly
2 & 5	Recruitment, Retention & Career Progression	<p>Implement fair and inclusive recruitment practices to attract and select diverse candidates including equality representatives on interview panels.</p> <p>Implement a Talent Management Programme with focus on ensuring fair representation and access.</p> <p>Development of short bitesize workshops supporting staff to apply for jobs.</p>	<p>Equity in likelihood of appointment.</p> <p>Improvement in percentage of staff believing that the ICB provides equal opportunities for career progression or promotion.</p>	Quarterly
4, 7 & 8	Staff Experience a Wellbeing	<p>Implementation of a Civility and Respect Programme for all staff to creating a culture where staff feel valued, supported, and respected.</p> <p>Refresh and relaunch of staff networks.</p> <p>Majority of staff to complete Tier 1 Oliver McGowan Training and a select number of teams complete Tier 2 who can influence training, communications etc.</p> <p>Senior leader development programme on Inclusion.</p> <p>Provide clear information about the ICBs commitment and approach to reasonable adjustments and support for staff with a disability.</p>	<p>Reduce incidents of harassment, bullying and abuse.</p> <p>Supporting staff voice and creating safe spaces.</p> <p>A disability and neurodiverse friendly employer.</p> <p>Leaders and managers more confident to provide support to staff.</p> <p>A compassionate and caring workforce where all staff feel a sense of belonging and inclusion.</p>	Quarterly



Trust



Respect



Integrity



Accountability



Care and Compassion



Trust



Respect



Integrity



Accountability



Care and Compassion