



**Meeting:** Trust Board Meeting in Public

**Date:** 29 October 2025

### Assurance Report

<b>Agenda item</b>	Annual Workforce Equalities report
<b>Board Lead</b>	Chief People Officer, Bridget O'Kelly
<b>Author</b>	Director of Education, OD & Inclusion, Amir Khaki
<b>Appendices</b>	Annual Workforce Equalities Report 24-25 slides
<b>Onward governance</b>	Published on our website

#### Report overview

As a publicly funded organisation, Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust (BHT) is required to publish information annually on how it has met the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) and taken steps to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity for people with protected characteristics and foster good relations between those who share protected characteristics and those who do not. The information provided demonstrates how we have considered how our services and activities, both as an employer and a service provider, affect people with different protected characteristics.

Our progress against f/y 2024/25 objectives:

For f/y 2024/25 we set 2 objectives in line with our WRES and WDES data. We have partially achieved both objectives.

1. Embed fair and inclusive recruitment processes and talent management strategies that target under-representation and lack of diversity.
  - a. While our likelihood of appointing white candidates compared to BME is at 1.56, we have increased the overall % of BME colleagues across the Trust by 1.4%
2. *Reduce occurrence of bullying and harassment from managers and other colleagues by a minimum of 2% per year.*
  - a. Whilst we have reduced the percentage of BME colleagues experiencing bullying and harassment from colleagues by 3.2%, from 26.0% in 2022/23 to 22.8% in 2023/24, more work is required to improve the experiences of discrimination. Reducing bullying, harassment and discrimination is a Trust objective for 2025-26.

Based on the EDS2 outcomes, data from our WRES and WDES report and in consultation with our Networks, we have set two EDI objectives over the next two years 2024-26:

- Embed fair and inclusive recruitment processes and talent management strategies that target under-representation and lack of diversity.
- Create a working environment that eliminates the conditions in which bullying and harassment occur.

Based on feedback from Executive Management Committee (EMC) on 16<sup>th</sup> September and the Strategic People Committee (SPC) on 22<sup>nd</sup> September, the target for increasing representation of BME colleagues at B8a+ will be modified to 5% per year due to low rate of turnovers.

This paper will be published on our website upon approval.

<b>Level of assurance</b>				
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Substantial assurance</b> High level of confidence in delivery of objectives	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Acceptable assurance</b> General confidence in delivery of objectives	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Partial assurance</b> Some confidence in delivery of objectives	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>No assurance</b> No confidence in delivery of objectives	
<b>Previously considered</b>	ED&I Steering Group September 2025 Executive Management Committee 16 September 2025			
<b>Decision</b>	The Board is requested to take acceptable assurance from the report, as above.			
<b>Relevant strategic priority</b>				
Outstanding Care <input type="checkbox"/>	Healthy Communities <input type="checkbox"/>	Great Place to Work <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Net Zero <input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Relevant breakthrough objective – 2025/26</b>				
<input type="checkbox"/> Reduction in emergency admissions <input type="checkbox"/> Reduction in elective waiting times	<input type="checkbox"/> Supporting people to live healthier lives	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Zero tolerance to bullying	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Governance / Statutory Requirement	
<b>Implications / Impact</b>				
<b>Quality</b>	Colleagues feeling safe, included and engaged will deliver better quality of care.			
<b>People (BHT colleagues)</b>	Focus on equality, diversity and inclusion is paramount to making BHT a great place to work			
<b>Risk: link to Board Assurance Framework (BAF) and local or Corporate Risk Register</b>	Principal Risk 7: Failure to provide adequate buildings and facilities Disengaged colleagues, high turnover, and poor quality of care			
<b>Financial</b>	Risk of disengaged colleagues which impacts retention & sickness absence leading to increase temp colleague spend			
<b>Compliance CQC Standards Staffing</b>	NHS People promise NHSE ED&I Improvement plan NHS Workforce Race Equality Standard (WRES) NHS Workforce Disability Equality Standard (WDES)			
<b>Partnership: consultation / communication</b>	Colleague Networks			
<b>Equality</b>	This report covers all areas of our equality, diversity and inclusion work. Included is our ED&I Action plan, key KPIs in ensuring we meet ED&I standards across the Trust in addition to our ethnicity pay gap reporting.			

## Executive Summary

This report provides an update on our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion work during the period of April 2024 to March 2025.

The report includes details about how we are meeting our annual Public Sector Equality Duty obligations for our colleagues, alongside an overview of our Workforce Race Equality Standards (WRES), Workforce Disability Equality Standards (WDES), Gender Pay Gap (GPG) and Ethnicity Pay Gap (EPG) programmes.

- WRES - Continuous improvements have been made in relation to representation of BME colleagues in the workforce, however underrepresentation in leadership roles remains an area of development. An increase in the relative likelihood of BME colleagues entering formal disciplinary processes compared to white colleagues, and the disparity between BME colleagues and white colleagues experiencing bullying and harassment are targeted areas for development.
- WDES – This is our fifth consecutive year of increasing disability declaration rates and third consecutive year of parity in recruitment outcomes for disabled and non-disabled colleagues. Disparity between disabled and non-disabled colleagues experiencing bullying and harassment, and underrepresentation in leadership roles are areas for development.
- GPG – There has been a reduction in the mean and median fixed pay gap between men and women, although a pay gap still remains in favour of men.

EPG – This is our first year of reporting ethnicity pay gap, our data shows that whilst the overall mean pay gap favours BME colleagues, Black colleagues are disproportionately negatively impacted. BME colleagues are primarily concentrated in lower to mid-level bands (Quartile 2 and Quartile 3 of pay band), with underrepresentation in senior roles (Band 8a+), indicating barriers to progression. We have continued to make progress this year toward building a more diverse and inclusive environment for our colleagues, patients, and visitors. Looking ahead, we are dedicated to addressing the inequalities our colleagues face and remain committed to building a sense of inclusivity and belonging within the Trust. We especially acknowledge the growing diversity of our workforce, and we value the contributions these new colleagues make to both their peers and our patients, as well as our obligation to support and develop them.

We have also made significant progress in achieving the high impact actions outlined in the NHSE EDI Improvement Plan, published in June 2023. The outstanding actions are pulled through into our EDI Action Plan.

We have used the Equality Delivery System (EDS 2) outcomes under domain 2 (Workforce health and wellbeing), and domain 3, inclusive leadership) to inform our activities and objectives. EDS2 reviews will be carried out annually from 2025/26.

Based on the EDS2 outcomes, data from our WRES and WDES report and in consultation with our Networks, we have set two EDI objectives over the next two years 2024-26:

- Embed fair and inclusive recruitment processes and talent management strategies that target under-representation and lack of diversity.
- Create a working environment that eliminates the conditions in which bullying and harassment occur

- **Purpose**

This report provides assurance to the Trust Board and to the Public that BHT is meeting its PSED obligations and continuing to promote an inclusive culture across the organisation. The report summarises our workforce equality, diversity and inclusion activity in 2024/25 alongside our PSED requirements and Equality Standards data. A separate report is published annually in relation to the PSED requirements for our service users

- **Current Position**

### **What is our Equalities Data telling us?**

Workforce Race Equalities Standard (WRES): In 2024/25, our data shows a decline in recruitment parity, with white colleagues now 1.56 times more likely to be appointed from shortlisting compared to BME colleagues (deterioration from 1.26 in 2023/24), this is mainly due to a successful international recruitment campaign in previous years leading to more BME colleagues both applying and being shortlisted for roles. BME representation within the Trust continues to grow, now making up 39.2% of our workforce. Following this increase in the diversity of our workforce, we need to do more to increase representation in leadership roles, which is at 22.8% (of Band 8a+ positions held by BME colleagues). This will be one of our EDI Objective for f/y 2025-26. As part of our efforts in implementing just culture, the likelihood of BME colleagues entering formal disciplinary processes has decreased, from 1.48 in 2023/24 to 0.99 in 2024/25. While there has been some improvement in the experiences of bullying and harassment reported by BME colleagues, disparities with white colleagues persist. To target this disparity, reducing bullying and harassment is now a Trust Objective for 2025-26.

Workforce Disability Equality Standard (WDES): The representation of disabled colleagues has increased for the sixth consecutive year, highlighting ongoing work to increase psychological safety and empower colleagues to declare. However, underrepresentation in leadership roles remains, with disabled colleagues making up near 12% of the workforce according to our staff survey data (5.7% declared). There are only 5.3% of colleagues in Bands 8a+ who have declared a disability. Recruitment parity for disabled and non-disabled colleagues has been maintained for the fourth consecutive year. While there has been some improvement in the experiences of bullying and harassment reported by disabled colleagues, disparities with non-disabled colleagues remains prevalent. To target this disparity, reducing bullying and harassment is a Trust Objective for 2025-26.

Gender Pay Gap (GPG): There has been a slight increase in the gender pay gap, with the mean hourly fixed pay gap increasing from 22.9% in 2024/25 to 23.8% in 2024/25, and the median hourly fixed pay gap improving from 13.9% to 12.6%. The mean bonus gap also saw an increase from 21.0% in 2023/24 to 27.5% in 2024/25. A higher proportion of male colleagues continue to occupy roles in the top pay quartile, particularly in Medical & Dental positions, which contributes to the overall gender pay gap. We are confident that male and female colleagues are paid equally doing equivalent jobs across the Trust and our aim is to reduce the gender pay gap throughout the organisation. However, we accept that this may take several years to achieve.

Ethnicity Pay Gap (EPG): This is the first year that the Trust has produced an ethnicity pay gap report. The data indicates there is no ethnicity pay gap disadvantaging BME colleagues; in fact, BME colleagues have a slightly higher mean rate and equal median pay compared with White staff. The data suggests that pay gaps exist between different ethnic groups, not simply between BME and White colleagues.

- **Progress against f/y 2024/25 objectives**

For f/y 2024/25 BHT set two priority objectives.

- a. Embed fair and inclusive recruitment processes and talent management strategies that target under-representation and lack of diversity going forward
- b. Create a working environment that eliminates the conditions in which bullying and harassment occur. (This objective is in line with the Trust objective for 2024-26)

We have partially achieved the first objective and the second is a 2 Year objective with a deadline of 2026:

An associated Action Plan to achieve these objectives is included at the end of this document.

The 2025/26 and 2026/27 EDI objectives based on data from our staff surveys and Network feedback will be:

- Reduce BME & disabled colleague's experiences of bullying, harassment and discrimination by 4% respectively (inline and to continue with our existing 2-year Trust objective)
- Improve BME representation at B8a+ over the next two years by 5% per year (from 22.8% in 2025 to 27.4% in 2027)
- **Action required from the Board or Committee**

The Board is requested to take acceptable assurance from the report.