Workforce Disability Equality Standard (WDES)

The WDES is a set of ten specific measures (Metrics) that will enable NHS organisations to compare the career and workplace experiences of disabled and non-disabled staff.

First reports must be published by 1 August 2019 and based on the data from the 2018/19 financial year.

What is the purpose of the WDES?

* Results of the annual NHS staff survey show that Disabled staff consistently report higher levels of bullying and harassment and less satisfaction with appraisals and career development opportunities. The purpose of the WDES is to improve the experience of Disabled staff working in, and seeking employment in, the NHS.
* The WDES mandates all NHS Trusts and Foundation Trusts to publish the results of their Metrics, together with an action plan, outlining the steps the organisation will take to improve the experiences of Disabled staff.

QVH will be reporting on its workforce disability standard using the national submission form. The evidence highlights that:

* 5.2% of the QVH workforce have disclosed a disability (n = 53), which is slightly lower than the national average of those in employment of around 7%. However, there are high numbers of staff with ‘Unknown’ or ‘Non declared’ disabilities totalling 16.3% of the overall workforce which greatly impacts on data quality and accuracy of the information.
* There are less staff disclosing a disability in Bands 8a and above. Consultants within the medical and dental staff group have over double the non-disclosure rate compared to other staff categories (34% non-disclosure)
* There is a variation in the number of disabled shortlisted applicants being appointed, with only a 2.18 comparative likelihood of disabled applicant being appointed. Approximately 1:4 non-disabled applicants are successful from being shortlisted to being offered the role, compared to 1:8 disabled applicants being appointed.
* From National Staff Survey findings:
  + The percentage of staff reporting perceptions of harassment, bullying or abuse from patients, relatives or the public in last 12 months has an almost equal score of 24.7% for disabled and 24.9% for non-disabled staff
  + There is a negative variation regarding the perceptions of harassment, bullying or abuse from their manager / team leader or other colleague with 19.5% for disabled and 10.2% for non- disabled staff. Although the total number of disabled staff reporting at least one such incident is statistically small (n = 17), the Trust zero-tolerance approach to such instances means this is an area of concern, more so with the apparent disproportionality.
  + There is a negative variation regarding the percentage of staff reporting perceptions of harassment, bullying or abuse from other colleagues in the last year with 24.1% (n = 21) for disabled and 16% for non-disabled staff (n = 63). With the Trust’s zero-tolerance approach to such instances means this is an area of concern, more so with the apparent disproportionality.
  + The percentage of staff believing that QVH provides equal opportunities for career progression or promotion has a gap of 4.9% (disabled staff declaring 85.5%, non-disabled 90.4%). This is based on a small cohort of staff that responded to the question (n=55) compared to non-disabled staff (n=271). This means statistical significance is questionable as the perception difference is based on 2-3 individuals.
  + 77.4% of disabled staff has declared that their employee has made adequate adjustments to enable them to carry on their work, demonstrating there is considerable room for improvement

**What we will do in 2019/20**

The Trust is already a level 1 Disability Confident employer, and will continue work towards achieving level 2 status. To achieve this we will:

* Support proactive discussion around disabilities (both physical and mental health) to encourage improvement of disclosure rates to improve data quality
* Connect with local and national disabled people's organisations (DPO’s) to access networks of disabled people to attract disabled people to apply for jobs at QVH
* Help managers build a wider understanding of the WDES metrics that are relevant to recruitment and retention, making sure people involved in the interviewing process understand the Disability Confident commitment and know how to offer and make reasonable adjustments
* Actively involving Trust board in providing clarity on their governance role and the NHS Workforce Disability Equality Standard. Sharing activities and approaches that can be adopted to demonstrate board effectiveness in overseeing the WDES implementation. Highlighting the personal contribution they can make as a leader/board member

