

Voluntary reporting – Disability

NHS Lothian is committed to eliminating discrimination and improving equality of opportunity. This means improving the way we deliver our services and the way we employ our staff. We want to be at the level of Scotland's best NHS Boards in our work to address health inequalities and as a welcoming, caring employer.

During 2022/23, the Board developed and approved a Statement of Intent, which we are now using on our recruitment materials and other relevant documents. Our Statement of Intent is:

We continue to learn and build on our inclusive culture to make NHS Lothian a great place to work where our staff feel respected and valued. We are committed to recruiting a workforce that fully reflects and embraces the diverse make-up of our society. At NHS Lothian, we take a zero tolerance approach to discrimination and provide our staff with the leadership, tools and confidence to challenge discrimination and prejudice. We are a place where everyone can thrive and have good and respectful relationships with different groups of staff. Where everyone can develop and succeed based on their skill, knowledge and talent, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, socio-economic background, care experience or anything else that can be used to differentiate people from one another. We offer first-class flexible working benefits, excellent employee well-being support and a great pension. We are fortunate to have a range of excellent Staff Networks and are proud to be a Disability Confident, Carer Positive and Living Wage Accredited employer with a partnership agreement with Trade Unions. We will fully support candidates with a disability, long-term condition or who are neurodivergent, and require adjustments in our recruitment process. We actively welcome applications from anyone who shares our commitment to equality and inclusion.

As at February 2024, 27,889 staff and 2,238 staff that only hold a bank contract were covered by the equality monitoring process in some capacity. In line with the Equality Duty 2010, employers are required to gather information on the following:

- a) the composition of the authority's employees (if any); and
- b) the recruitment, development and retention of persons as employees of the authority, with respect to, in each year, the number and relevant protected characteristics of such persons.

In line with the General Duty of the Equality Act 2010, NHS Lothian's objectives are to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act

- advance equality of opportunity between different groups (i.e., people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not)
- foster good relations between different groups

The purpose of gathering and publishing the information in our Equality & Diversity Monitoring Report is to support better performance of this duty.

Beyond that, good practice in equality and diversity is vital in making NHS Lothian a good place to work.

The table below shows those members of staff who, during the recruitment process or when updating their staff record, answered yes when asked either:

- *“Do you have a condition/disability that has lasted/may last 12 months or more?”* (updating staff record)
- *“Do you have a physical or mental health disability that has a substantial effect on your ability to carry out day to day activities and has lasted or is expected to last 12 months or more?”* (recruitment)

Table 1: Employees who have declared themselves as having a Disability by Job Family

	Declared Disability	% Declared Disability	Distribution of declared disability between Job Families
Admin Services	167	3.8%	27.1%
Allied Health Professional	51	2.0%	8.3%
Healthcare Sciences	31	2.8%	5.0%
Medical & Dental	13	0.5%	2.1%
Medical & Dental Support	5	1.3%	0.8%
Nursing/Midwifery Band 1-4	80	2.1%	13.0%
Nursing/Midwifery Band 5+	182	2.1%	29.5%
Other Therapeutic	37	3.1%	6.0%
Personal & Social Care	4	7.1%	0.6%
Senior Managers	2	3.6%	0.3%
Support Services	44	1.5%	7.1%
Grand Total	616	2.2%	100.0%

Table 1 shows that a total of 616 individuals declared themselves as having a disability. In comparison with 2022-2023, there has been an increase from 562 to 616 individuals, i.e., up from 2.1% to 2.2% of the total workforce. In terms of the wider Lothian population, 21.1% of adults reported a limiting long term physical or mental health problem in 2019 and 25.9% in Scotland (Source: Statistics.Gov.Scot).

NHS Lothian has a Disabled Employee Network (DEN), and we continue to work with this Network to understand and address any barriers these staff may have in terms of their employment and what additional support/processes we may need to put in place so that we can create an inclusive environment for all staff. Following feedback from DEN, during 2022/23 we developed and implemented Reasonable Adjustments Guidance for managers to assist them in providing greater support to disabled staff joining our organisation or who become disabled during their employment. A Disability Passport was implemented in December 2023 in consultation with DEN which provides a framework for disabled staff to have a structured supportive conversation with line managers with reference to Reasonable Adjustments Guidance.

Actions Planned for 2024-26

Working with the Lothian Partnership Forum, our Staff Networks and the HR and OD Equality and Diversity Group, an Advancing Equalities Action Plan has been agreed and the key actions that will be undertaken during 2024-26 which impact disabled staff will include the following:

- Continue to encourage staff to update their protected characteristics on eESS
- Produce a draft report on the disability pay gap in preparation for required reporting in 2027
- Review and improve the reporting and responding to discrimination and harassment complaints
- Continuing promotion and training on reasonable adjustments and the Disability Passport
- Review and update Fair Recruitment Training resources including a module on understanding bias and encourage completion by all recruiting managers

Mental health and wellbeing

Staff have confidential access to the Occupational Health service. Information is available via the intranet and externally on the Support for Teams and Managers page. There is also an email contact for staff health accessible on the external website, as well as a Staff Wellbeing Teams channel.

A Fast Access page for peer support (trained volunteer staff), Here 4 U (run by the NHSL Psychology Department) and listening service (run by NHSL Chaplaincy) is available on the external website. Longer term staff psychology, counselling and physiotherapy services can be accessed by all staff on the Staff Support pages of the website.

Information on Coaching for Wellness, staff cervical screening clinics, and the Staff Wellbeing Programme is available on the Future Focus and Prevention page.

Information about externally provided resources for staff wellbeing and mental health, such as NHS 111, The Samaritans, Breathing Space, and National Wellbeing Helpline, is available on the External Support for Staff page. Staff can also access the National Wellbeing Hub, which offers resources for dealing with stress, anxiety, low mood, insomnia/poor sleep, and resilience, from this page. Staff who are regulated practitioners in health and social care can access the National Workforce Specialist Service [here](#).

The Vocational Rehabilitation service is available via self-referral or management referral to all staff to assist in staying in work or returning to work after absence. Information is available via the intranet and externally on the Support for Teams and Managers page.

The Wellbeing Lothian page has tools/apps for wellbeing and mental health.

Staff who are experiencing workplace concerns can access the Speak UP Service, staff associations such as unions, staff networks, or Employee Relations.

These resources can all be found on the NHS Lothian external website so they can be accessed by staff without the need to be on an NHS Lothian computer.