

15 March 2019

Dear colleague,

The NHS Long Term Plan commits us to becoming a model employer for disabled people and we are pleased to confirm the launch of the Workforce Disability Equality Standard (WDES).

The WDES is a set of measures that will enable your organisation to compare the employment experiences of disabled and non-disabled staff, and will apply to all NHS Trusts and Foundation Trusts from April 2019.

NHS organisations will be expected to publish data for each of the metrics and use this information to develop local action plans to improve the experience of disabled staff. Year-to-year comparisons will demonstrate progress and challenges for individual employers.

Just as the Long Term Plan commits to further investment in the Workforce Race Equality Standard to ensure fair treatment for colleagues from all ethnic groups, improving the working experience of our disabled members of staff is not just good for those individuals but important to guarantee the highest standard of care for our patients. The WDES is important because a well-motivated, inclusive and valued workforce helps to deliver high quality patient care, increased patient satisfaction and improved safety for the people we care for.

The WDES has been commissioned and developed by the Equality and Diversity Council (EDC) supported by key stakeholders, including trade unions and staff networks, and based on extensive consultation to pilot the programme's work.

In order to prepare and support NHS Trusts and Foundation Trusts, the metrics and a suite of WDES resources and guidance have been published on NHS England's website (<https://www.england.nhs.uk/about/equality/equality-hub/wdes/>).

The Equality and Diversity Council are also taking the opportunity to review the Equality and Diversity System (<https://www.england.nhs.uk/about/equality/equality-hub/eds/>) which was last updated in 2013 (EDS2) to ensure it is aligned with the development of the new system architecture and takes into account recent developments including the publication of the Workforce Race Equality Standard and the WDES.

EDS2 helps NHS organisations improve the services they provide for their local

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communities and provide better working environments, free of discrimination, for those who work in the NHS, while meeting the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. If you have any comments to make in relation to review please email [edc@nhs.net](mailto:edc@nhs.net).

Yours sincerely,



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NHS Confederation and Co-Chair of the Equality and Diversity Council



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**Contact:**

For further information on the WDES please email: [england.wdes@nhs.net](mailto:england.wdes@nhs.net)  
<https://www.england.nhs.uk/about/equality/equality-hub/wdes/>