

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Annual Report 2025

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Introduction

Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust is committed to promoting equality of access, experience and outcomes for people who use our services, their carers, and our workforce. We understand that everybody's journey through life is unique and individual to them, and value the importance of diversity and inclusion across our services, our workforce, and the wider Worcestershire community.

Our actions to improve staff experience in relation to Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) align with the Trust's wider organisational strategic goals, specifically our Strategy.

They also support our commitments to the NHS People Plan and the People Promise: 'We are compassionate and inclusive.'

The information in this report represents the actions and progress undertaken throughout 2024/25 in compliance with our public sector duties to:

1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and other conduct prohibited by the act.
2. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share protected characteristics and those who do not.
3. Foster good relations between people who share protected characteristics and those who do not.

It provides information about the work we have undertaken as a Trust with our EDI High Impact Actions and within our core services, and outlines our priorities and plans for the year ahead.



Foreword



I am proud to present our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Annual Report for 2025. This report demonstrates our ongoing commitment to addressing inequalities in our workforce and the communities we serve, and fostering a culture where every patient, carer, and colleague feels valued, respected, and empowered to thrive.

This year, we have continued to make positive strides in this area, supported by the development of our new Trust values which - thanks to a major piece of work involving more than 500 colleagues – truly reflect what matters to our workforce and provide the foundation for the way we provide care, and interact with our patients, the public and each other.

Over the last 12 months we've achieved positive movement in our Workforce Race Equality Standard (WRES) and Workforce Disability Equality Standard (WDES) indicators, with increased representation of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) and disabled colleagues in senior roles, and improvements in staff engagement and access to development opportunities.

Our commitment to staff wellbeing was recognised with a Health and Wellbeing in the Workplace Award, and we have expanded our health and wellbeing support, launched the 'My Health and Wellbeing Passport', and provided new wellbeing spaces and resources across our hospitals.

Our Staff Networks continue to evolve and grow, while our reciprocal mentoring programme and new Neurodiversity Hub are helping to build understanding, break down barriers, and ensure every voice is heard.

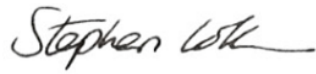
Our annual NHS Staff Survey and Big Quality Conversation ensure that feedback from all communities shapes our future, and we have continued to work closely with our Patient and Public Forum, co-producing solutions to improve accessibility and patient experience.

We have invested in apprenticeships, supported internships, and T-Level placements, opening doors for local people from diverse backgrounds to join our workforce.

While we celebrate our progress, we recognise there is more to do. In the year ahead, we look forward to launching our Anti-Racism Charter, further enhancing support for disabled colleagues, while strengthening leadership development to ensure our leaders are compassionate, inclusive, and role models for our values.

Equality, diversity, and inclusion are at the heart of our mission to being the best team we can be for our patients, each other and partners. I am grateful to our dedicated staff, volunteers, partners, and community members who have contributed to our journey so far. Together, we are committed to building a Trust where everyone feels safe, supported, and able to flourish.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment and support.



Stephen Collman
Chief Executive

Duties of the Trust under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) under the Equality Act 2010 applies to Worcestershire Acute Hospitals Trust and other public bodies that carry out public functions.

It supports good decision-making by ensuring public bodies consider how different people will be affected by their activities. This helps them deliver services that are efficient and effective, accessible to all, and meet the needs of different people.

This applies to the Trust as a service provider and employer.

The PSED requires the Trust to have due regard (think about and act) to the: “Need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations for people with a protected characteristic when developing its policies, services or when carrying out day-to-day functions and activities.”

The protected characteristics covered by the Equality Act are age, disability, sex, race, religion and belief, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, sexual orientation, and gender reassignment.

Specific Duties

The PSED is supported by specific duties, which require public bodies to publish relevant, proportionate information demonstrating their compliance with the PSED; and to set themselves specific, measurable equality objectives.

Publishing relevant equality information will make public bodies transparent about their decision-making processes and accountable to their service users. It will give the public the information they need to hold public bodies to account for their performance on equality. The specific duties require public bodies to:

- Publish information to show their compliance with the Equality Duty, at least annually (i.e., this report)
- Set and publish equality objectives, at least every four years
- Publish Gender Pay Gap information

The information published must include:

- Information relating to employees who share protected characteristics (for public bodies with 150 or more employees)

- Information relating to people affected by the Trust's policies and practices who share protected characteristics (for example, patients, service users, and staff)

This EDI Annual Report provides information on the Trust's annual activity in relation to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, in compliance with all of the above and with due regard to all other statutory and mandatory reporting frameworks for NHS Trusts, with which the Trust complies.

How we use equality data

Throughout this report, we refer to important equality monitoring information about the people who use our services, our workforce, and the Worcestershire population.

When people join our organisation, either for care and treatment or employment, we ask questions about personal details, including protected characteristics such as age, ethnicity, and sexual orientation. This is known as equality monitoring information.

We want to ensure that people consistently receive high quality, effective services that meet their individual needs. To do this, we need to ensure we continue to understand what that range of needs is across our population so we can enhance and develop our services in order to meet growing and changing needs.

The Data Protection Act 2018 sets out strict rules in managing and using people's personal information. Any information people provide to the organisation is held securely and confidentially on our electronic patient or staff record systems. When data is extracted for analysis in reports such as this one, it is anonymous. We analyse the anonymised information to identify and respond to any issues affecting groups of patients or staff which share certain protected or other characteristics or identify as part of certain groups.

We use this data and information to comply with a range of national NHS-mandated standards relating to workforce equality that, as part of our standard contract, we are required to meet annually.

These are currently:

- Workforce Race Equality Standard (WRES) report and action plan
- Workforce Disability Equality Standard (WDES) report and action plan
- Gender Pay Gap (GPG)

We are also using this data to work towards the Equality Delivery System report (EDS2022) for NHS England.

Equality Delivery System 2022

The Equality Delivery System (EDS) is a system that helps NHS organisations improve the services they provide for their local 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. The EDS was developed by the NHS, for the NHS, taking inspiration from existing work and good practice.

Implementation of EDS 2022 is a requirement of both NHS commissioners and NHS provider organisations. In light of the inclusion of EDS 2022 in the NHS standard contract, NHS organisations should use the EDS 2022 reporting template to produce and publish a summary of their findings and implementation.

The reporting template for EDS 2022 requires us to score ourselves against 3 Domains which are broken into 11 separate outcomes. Domain 1 focuses on how Trust services meet our population's needs. Domains 2 & 3 focus on the Trust workforce.

Domain 1 – Commissioned or provided services

Outcomes:

- 1A – Patients (service users) have required levels of access to the service.
- 1B – Individual patients (service users) health needs are met.
- 1C – When patients (service users) use the service, they are free from harm.
- 1D – Patients (service users) report positive experiences of the service

Domain 2 – Workforce Health and Wellbeing.

Outcomes:

- 2A – When at work, staff are provided with support to manage obesity, diabetes, asthma, COPD, and mental health conditions.
- 2B – When at work, staff are free from abuse, harassment, bullying and physical violence from any source.
- 2C – Staff have access to independent support and advice when suffering from stress, abuse, bullying harassment, and physical violence from any source.
- 2D – Staff recommend the organisation as a place to work and receive treatment.

Domain 3 – Inclusive Leadership

Outcomes:

- 3A – Board members, system leaders (Band 9 and VSM) and those with line management responsibilities routinely demonstrate their understanding of, and commitment to, equality and health inequalities.
- 3B – Board/Committee papers (including minutes) identify equality and health inequalities related impacts and risks and how they will be mitigated and managed.
- 3C – Board members and system leaders (Band 9 and VSM) ensure levers are in place to manage performance and monitor progress with staff and patients.

NHS Workforce Race Equality Standard (WRES)

The Workforce Race Equality Standard (WRES) is a set of nine measures (indicators) that has been developed as a tool to measure improvements in the workforce with respect to Black & Minority Ethnic (BME) staff to ensure BME staff



are treated fairly and their talents valued and developed. NHS organisations use the data to develop and publish an action plan. Year-on-year comparison enables NHS organisations to demonstrate progress against the indicators as part of the NHS national contract. Additionally, it allows our Trust to benchmark ourselves on all Trusts and national healthcare organisations.

WRES Indicators:

- 1 to 4 Workforce Indicators
- 5 to 8 Staff Survey Indicators
- 9 Board Representation Indicator

The report has the following key roles:

- To enable organisations to compare their performance with others in their region and those providing similar services, to encourage improvement by learning and sharing good practice.
- To provide a national picture of WRES in practice to colleagues, organisations, and the public on the developments in the workforce race equality agenda.

Our Trust WRES submission for 2025 shows that we have improved or maintained on:

- Indicator 1:
 - % BME staff in AFC bands 1-9, medical and dental & VSM has increased from **24.2%** in 2024 to **26.2%** in 2025
 - BME % in Band 8a & above has increased from **8.2%** in 2024 to **10.6%** in 2025
- Indicator 3: Relative likelihood of BME staff entering the formal disciplinary process compared to White staff has decreased from **0.68** in 2024 to **0.45** in 2025
- Indicator 4: Relative likelihood of White staff accessing non-mandatory training and CPD compared to BME staff has decreased from **0.90** in 2024 to **0.80** in 2025
- Indicator 5: % of BME staff experiencing harassment, bullying or abuse from patients, relatives or the public in the last 12 months ; the staff survey result was **24.7%** in 2023 and has maintained at **24.7%** in 2024
- Indicator 8: % of BME staff experiencing discrimination at work from manager/team leader or other colleagues in the last 12 months ; the staff survey result has decreased from **14.9%** in 2023 to **14.1%** in 2024

The 2025 WRES submission has highlighted the following areas for improvement for the Trust:

- Indicator 2: Relative likelihood of White staff compared to BME staff being appointed from shortlisting has increased from **1.43** in 2024 to **2.27** in 2025
- Indicator 6: % of BME staff experiencing harassment, bullying or abuse from staff in the last 12 months; the staff survey result has increased from **20.8%** in 2023 to **24%** in 2024



- Indicator 7: % of BME staff believing that the organisation provides equal opportunities for career progression or promotion ; the staff survey result has decreased from **50.5%** in 2023 to **49.7%** in 2024
- Indicator 9: % difference for BME board membership and the overall workforce. Voting membership has decreased from **-24%** in 2024 to **-26%** in 2025 . Executive Membership has decreased from **-24%** in 2024 to **-26%** in 2025

The actions we are taking to improve our staff experience can be found here: [Workforce Equality Standards](#)

NHS Workforce Disability Equality Standard (WDES)

The Workforce Disability Equality Standard (WDES) is a set of ten specific measures which enable NHS organisations to compare the workplace and career experiences of disabled and non-disabled staff. NHS organisations use the metrics data to develop and publish an action plan as part of the national contract. Year-on-year comparison enables NHS organisations to demonstrate progress against the indicators of disability equality. Additionally, it allows our Trust to benchmark ourselves on all Trusts and national healthcare organisations.

WDES Indicators:

- 1 to 3 Workforce Indicators
- 4 to 8 Staff Survey Indicators
- 9 Staff Survey Engagement Indicator
- 10 Board Representation Indicator

Our Trust WDES submission for 2025 shows that we have improved or maintained on:

- Indicator 1: % of Disabled Staff in AfC bands 1-9, medical and dental & VSM has increased from **3.96%** in 2024 to **4.91%** in 2025
- Indicator 3: Relative likelihood of Disabled staff entering a formal capability procedure compared to Non-Disabled staff has decreased from **3.93** in 2024 to **2.10** in 2025
- Indicator 4: % of Disabled staff experiencing harassment, bullying or abuse from:
 - B) Managers in the last 12 months; the staff survey result has decreased from **14.4%** in 2023 to **13.4%** in 2024
 - D) % of Disabled staff saying that the last time they experienced harassment, bullying or abuse at work, they or a colleague reported it; the staff survey result has increased from **47.7%** in 2023 to **59.5%** in 2024
- Indicator 5: % of Disabled staff believing that the organisation provides equal opportunities for career progression or promotion; the staff survey result has increased from **52.9%** in 2023 to **56.4%** in 2024

- Indicator 6: % of Disabled staff who have felt pressure from their manager to come to work, despite not feeling well enough to perform their duties; the staff survey result has decreased from **31.1%** in 2023 to **29.8%** in 2024
- Indicator 7: % of Disabled staff satisfied with the extent to which their organisation values their work; the staff survey result was **29.9%** in 2023 and has maintained at **29.9%** in 2024
- Indicator 8: % of Disabled staff saying their employer has made reasonable adjustments to enable them to carry out their work; the staff survey result has increased from **70%** in 2023 to **76.1%** in 2024
- Indicator 9: Staff Engagement Score; the staff survey for Non-Disabled staff has increased from **6.8** in 2023 to **7.0** in 2024, for disabled staff it has increased from **6.1** in 2023 to **6.4** in 2024

The 2025 WDES submission has highlighted the following areas for improvement for the Trust:

- Indicator 2: Relative likelihood of Disabled staff compared to Non-Disabled staff being appointed from shortlisting has increased from **1.12** in 2024 to **1.24** in 2025
- Indicator 4: % of Disabled staff experiencing harassment, bullying or abuse from:
 - A) Patients, relatives or the public in the last 12 months; the staff survey result has increased from **28.9%** in 2023 to **30.6%** in 2024
 - C) Other colleagues in the last 12 months; the staff survey result has increased from **23.4%** in 2023 to **26.6%** in 2024
- Indicator 10: % difference for Disabled board membership and the overall workforce. Voting membership has decreased from **-4%** in 2024 to **-5%** in 2025. Executive Membership has decreased from **-4%** in 2024 to **-5%** in 2025

The actions we are taking to improve our staff experience can be found here:

[Workforce Equality Standards](#)

Workforce Sexual Orientation Equality Standard (WSOES)

Although not a nationally mandated standard, the Trust has published data for WSOES since 2023/24.

The WSOES mirrors similar indicators from the NHS mandated standards WRES and WDES. This data is taken from data held in ESR and our 2025 annual NHS Staff Survey data.

As ESR only provides a binary selection for gender identity, we cannot provide analysis based on an employee's gender identity. Colleagues can now declare their gender identity on the NHS Staff Survey.

Our Trust WSOES submission for 2025 shows that we have improved or maintained on:

- Indicator 1: % of LGB+ Staff in AfC bands 1-9, medical and dental & VSM was **3.1%** in 2024 and has maintained at **3.1%** in 2025
- Indicator 2: Relative likelihood of Heterosexual Staff compared to LGB+ staff being appointed from shortlisting has decreased from **0.97** in 2024 to **0.90** in 2025
- Indicator 7: % difference for LGB+ board membership and the overall workforce was **5%** in 2024 and has maintained at **5%** in 2025

The 2025 WSOES submission has highlighted the following areas for improvement for the Trust:

- Indicator 3: Relative likelihood of Heterosexual staff accessing non-mandatory training and CPD compared to LGB+ staff has increased from **0.83** in 2024 to **0.95** in 2025
- Indicator 4: % of LGB+ staff believing that the organisation provides equal opportunities for career progression or promotion; the staff survey result has decreased from **69%** in 2023 to **63.6%** in 2024
- Indicator 5: % of LGB+ staff experiencing harassment, bullying or abuse from managers in the last 12 months; the staff survey result has increased from **13.8%** in 2023 to **18.3%** in 2024
- Indicator 6: % of LGB+ staff experiencing harassment, bullying or abuse from other colleagues in the last 12 months; the staff survey result has increased from **23.8%** in 2023 to **29.2%** in 2024
- Indicator 8: % of LGB+ staff experiencing discrimination at work from manager/team leader or other colleagues in the last 12 months; the staff survey result has increased from **10.2%** in 2023 to **15.8%** in 2024
- Indicator 9: % of LGB+ staff experiencing harassment, bullying or abuse from patients, relatives or the public in the last 12 months; the staff survey result has increased from **22.5%** in 2023 to **31.6%** in 2024
- Indicator 10: % of LGB+ staff believing that the organisation respects individual differences; the staff survey result has decreased from **70.8%** in 2023 to **70.6%** in 2024
- Indicator 11: % of LGB+ staff saying that the last time they experienced harassment, bullying or abuse at work, they or a colleague reported it; the staff survey result has decreased from **55%** in 2023 to **54%** in 2024

Gender Pay Gap

Large employers are legally required to publish Gender Pay Gap data both on their own website and the government website under the [Equality Act 2010 \(Specific Duties and Public Authorities\) Regulations 2017](#) which came into force on 31 March 2017.

It is important to note that the Gender Pay Gap is not the same as unequal pay, which is paying men and women differently for performing the same (or similar) work. Unequal pay has been unlawful since 1970.

The Gender Pay Gap is the difference between men's and women's average (mean or median) earnings across a workforce. Gender Pay Gap calculations are based on

employer payroll data drawn from a specific date each year (the snapshot). The snapshot date is set as 31 March each year. As a Trust, we must publish this data by 30 March the following year.

The data below provides this year's (31 March 2025) data and highlights the changes in our Gender Pay Gap from 31 March 2024 (last year's data). The data also provides this year's (31 March 2025) data on bonus payments. The data shows an improvement within the **median** figure from the previous year, and although this figure can be considered more representative of the average male or female employees pay, it does not consider the pay gap accurately when there is a concentration of higher male earners within an organisation. Therefore, the **mean** average pay is more representative of the gender pay gap and for the Trust, there has been a slight deterioration in this measure for 2025 compared to the previous year, as the higher the positive percentage score, the wider the pay gap is for female employees.

The snapshot for Gender Pay Reporting is 31 March 2025. Gender Pay Gap data for the Trust is:

- The Trust's mean gender pay gap is **27.7%**
- The Trust's median gender pay gap is **11.6%**
- The Trust's mean bonus gender pay gap is **49.2%**
- The Trust's median bonus gender pay gap is **58.3%**
- The proportion of males receiving a bonus payment is **3.79%**
- The proportion of females receiving a bonus payment is **0.33%**

The gender pay gap shows the difference between men's and women's average (mean or median) earnings. This is expressed as a percentage of men's earnings, used to its full potential, gender pay gap reporting is a valuable tool for assessing levels of equality in the workplace, female and male participation in out-of-hours services, and how effectively talent is being maximised. The Trust aims to reduce our gender pay gap, with the intention to create greater equality in our pay framework.

Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust Gender Pay Gap Comparison Data						
Snapshot Date	31st March 2020	31st March 2021	31st March 2022	31 March 2023	31 March 2024	31 March 2025
Mean Gender Pay Gap	31.7%	31.7%	30.8%	29.9%	27.3%	27.7%
Median Gender Pay Gap	15.8%	16%	18.3%	18.8%	13.4%	11.6%
Mean Bonus Gender Pay Gap	42.8%	39.7%	45.2%	42.6%	46.0%	49.2%

Median Bonus Gender Pay Gap	52.5%	40.1%	35.6%	41.1%	40.8%	58.3%
Males Receiving Bonus Payments	6.30%	5.90%	4.57%	3.93%	4.18%	3.79%
Females Receiving Bonus Payments	0.50%	0.50%	0.44%	0.39%	0.36%	0.33%

The Trust does not pay bonuses besides Clinical Excellence Awards as a rule. In the period covered by this report, 300 payments were made to consultants in the form of a Clinical Excellence Awards. Of these 100 payments were made to females. This is 33.3%, which is a slight reduction in terms of percentage from last year when 35% of CEA recipients were female. This remains an area for Medical Leaders to focus on encouraging Clinical Excellence Award applications from female consultants. We are also mindful that not all roles within the Trust attract enhancements which can distort the data, but this will affect all Trusts.

Our Gender Pay Gap had shown a consistent improvement in percentage terms from March 2020, until the slight dip this year. We aim to continue to reduce our gender pay gap year on year, to create greater equality in our pay framework.

Reducing our gender pay gap implies increasing the proportion of men in the organisation and continuing the focus on creating pay equity across pay bands. Effective policies for closing the gender pay gap seek to address factors and barriers common to all women (such as the number in lower-grade jobs with lower pay) and target inequalities faced by women belonging to specific groups based on characteristics such as ethnicity, age and profession.

Work undertaken to improve the flexible working opportunities for our staff will enable more women to progress in their careers, reflecting positively on our Gender Pay Gap.

As with previous years, the Trust acknowledges that there could be greater female representation in its senior medical roles. However, the consultant workforce generally has a greater proportion of males than females across the NHS, which limits the pool of available applicants to these types of roles.

We continue to implement our leadership development training and increase the number of leadership apprenticeships available to strengthen the skills of its existing staff and support career development within the Trust. The introduction of career conversations and career conversation training will equip our staff with the knowledge and skills to promote equality, diversity and inclusion, along with providing opportunities for succession planning.

Our Board representation as of 31st March 2025, shows we have the following:



Role	Number	Percentage
Executive Directors	6 Male	55% Male
	5 Female	45% Female
Non-Executive Directors	4 Male	44% Male
	5 Female	56% Female

Noting the advice in the Government Equalities Office document “Actions to Close the Gap”, the Trust:

- Recruits through NHS jobs and it is our policy to remove any personal information from applications which helps to avoid gender or other bias at the shortlisting stage.
- We provide training to our recruiting managers in equality, diversity & inclusion to emphasise the need to ensure that all applicants are recruited fairly, openly and transparently.
- Has implemented a Recruitment Champion role which is required to take part in all Band 8A and above recruitment.
- Work to the national NHS Agenda for Change pay scales and job matching processes, which are open and transparent.
- Ensure all staff undertake mandatory equality and diversity training with a 95% compliance as of 31st March 2025. All of our Divisions meet the 90% target for this training.
- Promotes flexible working for all staff through the Timewise Project
- Offers access to coaching & mentoring for all colleagues.

Our Freedom to Speak Up (FTSU) Guardian role, supported by FTSU Champions, has been embedded to encourage staff to Speak Up if they have any concerns in relation to any aspect of their employment, including pay equity.

At the beginning of 2025 a Women’s Staff Network was launched across the Trust with the aim of encouraging a stronger and more inclusive Trust culture, and improved gender equality, more opportunities for women to excel, and stronger allyship. The network members identified career progression as a key focus area, and the network aims to empower women to feel confident and supported to apply for senior roles.

Flexible Working Requests

Between April 2024 to September 2025, 583 staff members (7.2% of our 8058 workforce) formally requested flexible working arrangements. Flexible working is monitored by protected characteristics to ensure fairness and to meet our Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) obligations. Further work is needed to ensure the available data is up to date and accurate.

This will, in turn, allow us to understand if we are achieving the Trust's objectives to offer the opportunity to work flexibly. Continuous monitoring and transparency demonstrate our commitment to eliminating indirect discrimination (such as any systemic barriers to flexible working) and to advancing equality of opportunity for all staff, which ultimately contributes to a more diverse, inclusive, and engaged workforce.

Chaplaincy Services

As part of our Trust, we have a chaplaincy service which helps our Trust ensure that the privacy, dignity and religious and cultural beliefs of patients are respected. The chaplaincy teams work alongside other staff to provide holistic care, which includes not only physical health but also a person's social, emotional, spiritual and health or well-being, irrespective of whether they have a faith background or not.

Revd Dr David Southall, Chaplaincy Team leader has expanded the service with support from our Trust charitable funds. This has resulted in the creation of a multi-faith chaplaincy hub. The multi-faith hub currently comprises four honorary chaplains from different faith groups. Kusumavarsa represents Bhuddism; Jatinderpal – Sikhism; Timothy – Hinduism; and Nahid – Islam. These honorary faith chaplains are 'experts by experience' and provide information on the religious needs of patients. They are available for staff who have specific questions regarding meeting their own or the patient's need. They also provide a network of others from their own communities and with the aim of increasing volunteers from hard-to-reach communities.

Tim
Hinduism



Jatinder
Sikhism



Nahid
Islam



Kusumavarsa
Buddhism



We will be further expanding the team with a chaplain representing Judaism; and will also appoint a Jehovah's Witness chaplain given the specific needs relating to blood products for patients of this faith group. Additionally, the creation of the hub will provide a more resilient out-of-hours service to patients with specific religious needs.

Staff Health and Wellbeing

At Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust, wellbeing means more than support—it's a culture of kindness, respect, and inclusion. Wellbeing at the Trust means feeling safe, supported, and able to bring your whole self to work, not just sometimes, but always.

Through our Health and Wellbeing Steering Group, we take a multi-disciplinary approach to supporting health and wellbeing, including psychological, physical, financial and social.



This was recognised when the Trust won the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce Health and Wellbeing in the Workplace Award in 2024.

This fantastic achievement recognises the wide range of health and wellbeing initiatives on offer for colleagues across our hospitals.



Staff have access to tailor-made health and wellbeing support, information, webinars, signposting and events. Over the last 12 months, this has been further expanded, including free confidential physical health checks available to staff at all sites, development of a Wellbeing Matters Hub, and various staff wellbeing events across the year, including self-care week and men's health week.

This has been further complemented by the development of 'My Health and Wellbeing Passport'.

This aims to support all staff to reflect their individual needs and support them to undertake their role effectively within a supportive environment where their diversity is celebrated.

Partners across the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Integrated Care System (ICS) have worked together to enable staff to take their passport with them should they move employers.

The Staff Psychological Wellbeing Service and 24/7 counselling service offer a safe and confidential space for staff who are experiencing emotional distress. Further support is offered by a comprehensive Occupational Health and Wellbeing Service, which aims to promote and maintain the health of all staff and prevent ill health arising out of, or in connection with work. The service offers pre-employment health screening, assessment of fitness to work, rehabilitation, immunisation and fast-track physiotherapy.

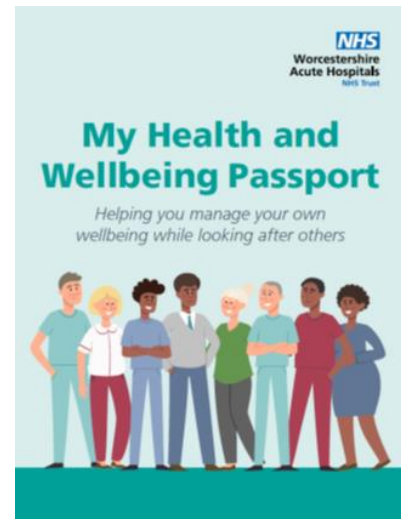
We recognise the importance of regular discussions about health and wellbeing, and to support this, we encourage regular Wellbeing Conversations, which are offered by managers or trained wellbeing conversation facilitators. Support and mentoring is also offered to those providing wellbeing conversations by a specialist Staff Wellbeing Clinical Psychologist, and we have a bespoke "How are you Really?" app to record wellbeing conversations.

Worcestershire Acute Hospitals Charity and NHS Charities Together have funded dedicated staff wellbeing spaces at the Alexandra Hospital, Kidderminster Treatment Centre and Worcestershire Royal Hospital, enabling staff to access a quiet, safe and relaxing space during the working day. The Trust Charity also funds a number of projects to further improve health and well-being within the workplace, including a menopause support programme, workplace massage provision, working carers support programme and a Financial Wellbeing Hub.

Education and Training

We offer our staff the opportunity to improve their knowledge and skills through education and training. We want our people to develop their careers in a supportive environment.

We have strong links with our local and regional universities, so we can offer a diverse career pathway with opportunities to progress in specialist areas, professional development, and clinical education.



Corporate Induction

Colleagues joining the Trust will undertake a corporate induction day to welcome them to the team and introduce them to our way of working. During the induction, colleagues will complete their mandatory Fire Safety training, and during their induction period, they will be guided through their mandatory and essential-to-role training.

Mandatory Training

Mandatory training is the core training which all staff must complete when they join the Trust and at regular intervals throughout their employment. This training will give you the skills and knowledge to keep our patients, staff, and everyone's information safe.

Clinical Education

Our clinical education covers everything our staff on the front line will need to give patients safe, efficient, high-quality care. From our Nursing, Allied Health Professionals and Midwifery development to clinical skills programmes and simulation facilities, the Trust offers comprehensive development for all clinical staff.

Career development

We focus on developing our people, with numerous routes into careers with the Trust, including apprenticeships and graduate programmes.

All staff will complete annual appraisals to maintain progress and identify opportunities for development for the coming year.

Those who wish to take their careers to the next level can take advantage of mentorship programmes and leadership development packages to help them grow within the organisation.

More training and education

Colleagues who have any further training requirements during their time with us are encouraged to ask about the training funds often available to fund external courses, including degrees and other qualifications.

Libraries

We have modern libraries based across the county, such as Rowlands Library at Worcestershire Royal Hospital, Redditch Health Library at the Alexandra Hospital, Kidderminster Health Library at Kidderminster Treatment Centre, and Evesham Health Library at Evesham Community Hospital.



The library team is made up of information professionals dedicated to providing a responsive evidence-based information service to Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust staff.

These facilities offer support for all staff and students in finding high-quality, evidence-based information to support patient care, research, and education.

The libraries are open 24/7 (accessible with a Trust ID card), with counters open during office hours. Many of our libraries' resources are available online, accessible from any device.

Education Centres

The on-site education centres at Worcester, Redditch and Kidderminster Hospital sites provide modern facilities where we can provide ongoing training to our staff.

The centres host much of the education and training that takes place for Trust staff, as well as undergraduate and postgraduate students and trainees. All lecture theatres and seminar rooms are equipped to provide the best education and are designed to offer innovative ways of teaching.

Online Platforms

ESR is our online learning tool and provides a convenient way for staff to access their mandatory training records, book training and receive reminders. ESR will also give you access to hundreds of education resources to further your development wherever you are and at a time that suits you.

Allied Health Professionals (AHPs)

The Corporate Allied Health Professionals are committed to creating an inclusive and supportive environment across all AHP professions. Working closely with the Education Team to deliver a range of impactful staff and student-focused initiatives to improve staff experience and workplace culture.

Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) International Preceptorship Programme

Specifically tailored for internationally recruited staff including Allied Health Professionals (AHPs) and nurses.

Structure & Delivery

- Mixed induction days that unite AHPs and nurses—building cross-professional bonds and understanding.
- Dedicated professional-specific days providing focused training on regulatory requirements, clinical protocols, and role-specific skills.



Additional Support: Language Café

To support effective integration and communication, we have introduced a voluntary Language Café – a relaxed, conversational space where staff can practice clinical English, clarify everyday language nuances, and overcome communication barriers.

Impact

This initiative embodies our commitment to:

- Promoting equality of opportunity for all staff, regardless of background.
- Fostering interprofessional understanding and peer support.
- Enhancing confidence and integration for internationally recruited staff.
- Elevating patient care quality through improved communication and teamwork.

International AHP Forum

An inclusive, participant-led space for all AHP staff, both registered and unregistered, to connect, share experiences, and build a sense of belonging.

Leadership & Dialogue

- The forum is staff-led, empowering attendees to identify topics and guide conversations on matters that best support them.
- Discussions cover real-world challenges faced by new staff, such as navigating NHS pay and pension structures, understanding NHS systems, UK driving regulations, and finding community support.

Purpose & Benefits

Through open dialogue and peer support, the forum helps to:

- Alleviate stress and uncertainty for staff adjusting to life and work in the UK.
- Improve wellbeing, confidence, and long-term staff retention.
- Foster genuine inclusivity and camaraderie, reinforcing our shared values.

Recognising Inclusion in Practice: AHP Awards & Celebration Week

Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust proudly celebrated our Allied Health Professionals through the annual AHP Awards & Celebration Week (13th-15th October 2025). A dedicated week highlighting the impact, innovation, and leadership of AHPs across the organisation.

This year, the event included an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Award to formally recognise AHPs who have made significant contributions to fostering a more inclusive and equitable workplace.

EDI Award for AHPs

The newly introduced award celebrates individuals who have demonstrated a strong commitment to advancing equality, diversity, and inclusion through their everyday work. This includes:

- Leading or supporting EDI-focused initiatives
- Advocating for underrepresented colleagues or patients
- Promoting inclusive communication and culturally sensitive care



- Creating safe, supportive environments for learning and discussion

Celebration and Impact

As part of the broader celebration week, the awards ceremony served to highlight the value of inclusive practice in healthcare delivery. The introduction of an EDI-specific award reinforced the Trust's recognition that fostering inclusion is integral to delivering high-quality care and supporting staff wellbeing.

The week also featured a range of activities, including:

- Recognition events showcasing AHP achievements
- Educational sessions focused on professional development
- Opportunities for peer engagement and cross-team collaboration

Promoting Professional Advocacy Training for Allied Health Professionals

Aligned with the Trust's updated AHP Workforce Strategy, we are expanding access to professional advocacy training tailored specifically for our Allied Health Professional workforce. This initiative supports AHPs to develop essential skills in leadership, representation, and workforce advocacy – enabling them to influence decision-making and champion the interests of their professions and patients.

Strategic Alignment

The advocacy training programme is designed to complement the existing nursing professional advocacy offer, creating a consistent, integrated approach across disciplines. This alignment promotes cross-professional collaboration and strengthens collective workforce voices within the Trust.

Training Objectives

Through this programme, AHPs will gain:

- Confidence to represent colleagues and patients effectively
- Skills to navigate organisational structures and contribute to policy development
- Knowledge to advocate for equitable working conditions and inclusive practices
- Opportunities to develop leadership capabilities aligned with career progression

Impact and Next Steps

By equipping AHPs with advocacy skills, the Trust aims to:

- Enhance professional engagement and representation
- Support a culture of inclusion, equity, and shared leadership
- Foster sustainable workforce development through empowered staff

Future plans include expanding training availability, integrating feedback from participants, and ensuring ongoing alignment with broader workforce and equality strategies.



Widening Access and Participation Programmes

We are committed to fostering a diverse and inclusive workforce that reflects the communities we serve.

To achieve this, in recent years we have implemented and grown various widening access and participation programmes, including:

- Apprenticeships
- Work experience
- Supported internships
- T-Levels
- Outreach careers guidance to local young people and job centres

These initiatives aim to provide opportunities for local individuals from diverse backgrounds to gain valuable skills, experience, and to apply for jobs in the healthcare sector. There is evidence that when the NHS recruits from the communities it serves, and reflects its diversity, care improves.

Apprenticeships: delivering a culture of lifelong learning.

Apprenticeships offer a structured pathway for individuals to gain hands-on experience while earning a qualification. They are a key method for both new starters to the NHS and existing staff members to learn on the job, allowing learners to gain qualifications and apply their learning while continuing to earn a salary.

To celebrate the hard work and success of our apprentices, we held our third annual Leadership & Apprenticeship Celebration Event in September 2025.



Celebrating Success: Apprenticeship Celebration Event 2025

Preparation for Work Programmes:

Work Experience

Work experience placements are crucial for individuals considering a career in the NHS. These placements offer a glimpse into the day-to-day operations of the healthcare sector, allowing participants to gain practical experience and understand the various roles within the NHS. By offering work experience opportunities to local

young people, we aim to inspire and motivate the next generation of healthcare professionals from our communities.

The feedback was overwhelmingly positive from students, schools and staff in the Trust, with comments such as: “It was eye-opening to see how much happens behind the scenes.”



Supported Internships

Now into its third year, the Trust’s Supported Internship programme offers local young people aged 16–24, with learning disabilities and an Education, Health and Care Plan, the chance to join departments across the Trust to develop their work experience and employability potential.

This year, our interns joined teams from Pathology, Pharmacy, Facilities, Digital and Clinical Effectiveness, but our interns aren’t just shadowing they’re contributing meaningfully to real work and learning new skills.

The success of our supported internship also relies on the support from teams across the Trust and we work closely with them to raise awareness about the benefits of working with people from diverse backgrounds and creating environments and reasonable adjustments which support this. All of our interns from our 2023/24 cohort are still employed within the Trust and continue to grow and thrive in their careers.

Pharmacy Team – Supporting Ethan



This year our Pharmacy Team supported Ethan with his internship. Lisa Daly, Distribution & Stores Manager and Lead Pharmacy Technician, said:

“Ethan joined the Pharmacy Distribution & Stores team at The Alexandra Hospital earlier this year. From the start, his positivity, precision, and willingness to learn made him a valued part of the team.

Having Ethan on the team has not only been a joy, it's helped us grow. His attitude and commitment exceeded expectations, and we've come away with a deeper understanding of inclusion and adaptability. This experience inspired both Philip and me to take neurodiversity training — and opened our eyes to how much support the Trust really offers.”

Partnering for Success: Our work wouldn't be possible without strong partnerships. Worcestershire County Council's All Age Disability Service, and Learning Services Worcestershire provide vital wraparound support to ensure each intern's success.

T-Levels

Introduced by the Government in September 2020, T-Levels are an innovative post-16 qualification, providing a high-quality alternative to A Levels and apprenticeships. Each T-Level is equivalent to three A Levels, with 80% of learning taking place in the classroom and the remaining 20% delivered through a substantial 45-day industry placement. These qualifications are designed to equip students aged 16–18 with the vocational skills and experience needed for skilled employment, further study, or progression to an apprenticeship.

T-LEVELS

RCN Cadets Scheme

In January 2025, our Trust played a pivotal role in delivering the Prince of Wales Nursing Cadet Scheme, in collaboration with the Royal College of Nursing (RCN) and Heart of Worcestershire College, Redditch Campus. Funded by the ICS, this programme was part of a broader initiative to support local young people as they explore careers in nursing and Allied Health Professions (AHPs), thereby contributing to the development of our future healthcare workforce.

Supported by HRH Prince of Wales, the scheme helped 20 local young people develop their skills and support them towards a career in nursing. It is intended to “inspire” young people, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, by giving them access to opportunities for academic study and hands-on experience in the health sector with a one-week work experience opportunity on a ward at the Alexander Hospital Redditch. Additionally, clinical apprenticeship career pathways were discussed, which offer a fully funded alternative to university, enabling cadets to gain qualifications without the burden of university fees or debt.

The RCN Cadets Scheme was funded for one cohort only, but the scheme has now been superseded by our engagement with T-Levels, which provide longer work placements and greater opportunities for us to engage with students.





Promotion of NHS Careers across Worcestershire

Collaboration with Local Partners: Department for Work & Pensions & Worcestershire County Council

The NHS collaborates with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) through the Youth Hub at The Hive, regularly attending their jobs fairs to promote roles within the NHS. In August 2025 we led two bespoke NHS Jobs workshops supporting over 60 DWP clients to engage with entry-level NHS Jobs and making successful applications.

Additionally, we participate in Worcestershire County Council's biannual career fairs, hosted at Sixways Stadium by Careers Worcestershire. They offer a platform for local school-age students and their parents to interact with NHS professionals, learn about different roles, and understand the pathways available to them.

By working closely with Worcestershire County Council, DWP, and local job centre partners, we aim to reach a wider audience and encourage more individuals to consider a career in the healthcare sector.

Reciprocal Mentoring

Our new Reciprocal Mentoring Programme, launched in September 2025, is a dynamic approach to professional development where two individuals, typically from different levels of an organisation, engage in a mutually beneficial learning relationship. Unlike traditional mentoring, reciprocal mentoring is a two-way process and an equal partnership where both parties act as mentors and mentees and work to understand each other's lived experiences, create trust, champion change, and inform decision-making.

The programme offers a powerful tool for our Trust to enhance professional development, bridge organisational gaps, and foster a culture of continuous improvement and inclusivity. By implementing such programmes, the Trust can ensure a more cohesive, engaged, and effective workforce, ultimately leading to better patient care and staff satisfaction.

By promoting understanding and appreciation of diverse perspectives, Reciprocal Mentoring can advance the NHS goals for diversity and inclusion and enhance cultural competence amongst staff.

Our Senior Leaders will gain insight into the “real-life” social and professional experiences of a range of staff from underrepresented groups and have the opportunity to appreciate the value of having access to the different perspectives they bring.

Staff Inclusion Networks

Diverse Ability Working Network (DAWN)

DAWN: Driving Inclusion Across the Trust

In 2025, the Trust’s Disability Network, chaired by Donna Scarrott with Sue Hayes as Vice Chair, adopted a new name: DAWN (Diverse Ability Working Network). This change reflects a positive, forward-thinking approach, recognising that disability is not a barrier and that colleagues bring valuable skills, knowledge, and perspectives to our organisation.

What We’ve Achieved

1. Reasonable Adjustments

Working with key stakeholders, DAWN helped design a step-by-step guide for managers to implement adjustments effectively. This practical resource promotes better working environments and flexible opportunities for disabled staff.

2. Return-to-Work Support

We reviewed and updated return-to-work documentation to make it inclusive and compassionate, replacing rigid language with wording that considers individual circumstances and supports smoother transitions back to work.

3. Neurodiversity Hub

Led by Sue Hayes, the Hub provides education, advice, and guidance for neurodivergent colleagues, managers, and teams. It includes:

- A practical toolkit for staff and managers
- Guidance on workplace adjustments
- A safe space for learning and sharing experiences

Sue’s openness about her lived experience with ADHD and Autism reinforces our commitment to neuroinclusion and sets the tone for a more supportive workplace.

Why It Matters

These initiatives mark a significant step toward creating a workplace where everyone can thrive, removing barriers, embracing diversity, and fostering inclusion for individuals with protected characteristics.

Ethnic Minorities Broadening Racial Awareness and Cultural Exchange (EmbRACE) Network (formerly known as BAME)

Commitment and Values

EmbRACE is an inclusive network with a zero-tolerance stance on racism. We are dedicated to ensuring all staff, patients, and visitors are treated with dignity and



respect. Our work is underpinned by positive representation, meaningful engagement, and full alignment with the Trust values:

- Being open and honest
- Ensuring people feel cared for
- Showing respect to everyone

Network Growth and Engagement

- Updated Terms of Reference (TOR) to reflect evolving objectives.
- Continued growth in membership across the Trust.
- Shifted focus to face-to-face meetings, with bespoke sessions for departments requiring tailored support and guidance.
- Maintained active collaboration with other EDI networks, ICS colleagues, and the People and Culture Committee.

Achievements in 2024/25

- Delivered interview coaching sessions, which proved highly popular with colleagues.
- Aligned with Organisation Development team to revise and strengthen the Reciprocal Mentoring Programme.
- Celebrated cultural events such as Diwali and promoted social awareness through communications on key events.
- Partnered with Trust Executives to prioritise staff safety in response to national concerns around hate crime and uncertainties.
- Actively participated in the Big Inclusion Conversation and ICS Big Inclusion Conference.
- Facilitated widening participation initiatives through collaboration with Worcester University, offering leadership development opportunities for MSc healthcare students and delivering comprehensive induction support for international students.
- In collaboration with Trust charitable funds and key stakeholders, and with £49,697 secured from NHS Charities Together Workforce Wellbeing Fund, the International Staff and Students Integration Programme (ISSIP) is being launched to enhance the wellbeing and integration of international colleagues.
- Collaborated with the Hospital Chaplaincy team to obtain charitable funding and partner with Estates, providing WUDU facilities for Muslim colleagues to support workplace inclusivity and staff wellbeing.

Priorities for 2025/26

- Launch the Anti-Racism Charter: Collaborate with the Trust to introduce an Anti-Racism Charter in November 2025, with Leaders and Executives pledging commitment and undertaking related training.
- Anti-Racism training: Develop and roll out an Anti-Racism and cultural awareness module as required training for Trust Board colleagues, extending across the network and incorporating intersectionality to ensure inclusive understanding of diverse staff experiences.
- Embed Trust values: Promote and embed the Trust's refreshed values across all network operations, ensuring alignment with day-to-day practices.



- Bespoke cultural awareness sessions: Continue providing tailored cultural awareness sessions within the Trust and ICS, responding to departmental needs and fostering inclusivity.
- Enhance communication and collaboration: Share learning with ICS network chairs and strengthen divisional communication by appointing network champions, ensuring wider impact and consistent engagement across the organisation.

The Faith and Spirituality Network

This network has established itself following the very successful Worcester Cathedral Faith celebration in 2023, featuring a great range of performances from singers, dancers, and musicians. All celebrating and expressing their spiritual light in the surroundings of Worcester Cathedral. It was an extremely moving experience, and I would like to thank David Ryan, the previous chair, for organising this with support from Melanie Stinton and the other networks.

This year has seen our Terms of Reference standardised and agreed with the other networks, as well as the appointment of a new interim chair. We are also involved in the new Trust Anti-Racism charter and are looking at how we can support overseas employees.

Our aims and objectives remain the same with a philosophy of inclusion and expression of our unique selves within the workplace. We also offer a safe haven where people can express their experiences. We also aim to make the Trust aware of some of our spiritual needs that can be met by the organisation.

We continue to meet monthly and arrange presentations and displays as needed. This year we had guest speakers from the Honorary Chaplains on their faith and practice from Sikhism, Hinduism and Buddhism and were given a perspective on daily living in those faiths and the sacred texts that support them. Again, thank you to the speakers for their time and clear inspiration.

On a personal note, it is an honour to chair such a group and to discuss in a friendly and open manner our uniqueness and similarities. I would like to thank the Trust and the people who make up our Trust for this opportunity.

LGBTQ+ Network

2025 has seen challenges for members of the LGBTQ+ community following the UK Supreme Court Ruling made in April. The network's priority has been to support any staff affected by the ruling. We held a dedicated meeting to provide reassurance that the Trust will always remain an inclusive place and the network has been a space for staff to access support and a safe environment.

The network provided a comprehensive response to the consultation that took place in regard to the Equality and Human Rights Commission guidance. We have been part of the working group looking at changes that may need to be made as a result of new guidance.

December 2024 saw the election of Kate Haddigan as Vice Chair. Kate has been a vital support to the network, offering her unique perspective and determination to ensure everything we do is accessible. Amy Startin was also elected as Network Communication Officer.

In October 2025 another round of Vice Chair elections began as Kate stepped down to focus on establishing and Chairing the Women's Staff Network. This has provided the opportunity for other network members to serve in the Vice Chair role, and ensure intersectional working between the two networks.

We now have over 420 NHS Rainbow Badge Champions within the Trust. These are staff members, both allies and members of the LGBTQ+ community, who have undertaken training on LGBTQ+ Healthcare Awareness. We have also delivered a number of bespoke sessions including training for our Theatre teams on all three sites.

We recognised both LGBT History month and Pride month.

The Trust continues to publish the Workforce Sexual Orientation Equality Standard. We have mirrored similar indicators from the NHS Mandated Standards, i.e. WRES & WDES. This data is taken from a combination of data held in ESR and our 2023 NHS Annual Staff Survey results. As ESR only provides a binary selection for gender identity, we cannot provide analysis based on an employee's gender identity. Colleagues can now declare their gender identity on the NHS Staff Survey.

The next 12 months will see progress made on the NHS Rainbow Badge action plan and continued delivery of essential awareness training.

Our main focus will be continuing to provide support to both our staff and the Trust regarding the UK Supreme Court Ruling.

We are committed, as a network, to making the Trust an inclusive and safe place to be.

Women's Network

The Women's Staff Inclusion Network was established in February 2025 by Ali Koeltgen, Chief People Officer. Ali serves as the Executive Sponsor for the Network, with Kate Haddigan elected as Network Chair in March 2025.

The network is dedicated to creating a supportive and inclusive environment for all women. It serves as a friendly, safe space where staff can connect, share experiences, and champion positive change. Network members are passionate about promoting equality and raising awareness of the unique challenges women may encounter in their daily lives.

Their mission is to create a workplace where all women feel valued, heard, and empowered. The network is committed to working collaboratively with all staff networks to ensure they offer intersectional support and help build an equitable culture for all women.



Highlights so far:

Clear direction for the year ahead

The Network has established its Terms of Reference, Strategy on a Page, and Action Plan for 2025/26, ensuring activities are focused, impactful, and aligned with Trust and National priorities.

Ensuring Network Members are heard

A membership survey was carried out to identify key themes and priorities. These insights have shaped the action plan and will guide the Network's ongoing work.

Empowering women to overcome imposter syndrome and lead with intention

In September 2025, the Network hosted a well-received panel event with Dr Heidi Napier, Lead Clinical Consultant Psychologist, and Dr Jules Walton, Chief Medical Officer. The two leaders spoke candidly, answering network members questions, and shared wisdom and insights with attendees.

Celebrating achievements and sharing stories

This year, the network has showcased the inspiring journeys of women across the Trust through published features, including showcases about:

- Rachel Lund - Senior Rotational Physiotherapist at WAHT and key player for Gloucester-Hartpury, Allianz Premiership Women's Rugby team, on balancing a clinical role with academic pursuits and a professional sporting career
- Dr Sherin Jos Payyappilly - Clinical Director of Pathology Services, Consultant Histopathologist, trained classical singer and dancer, music teacher, YouTuber and food blogger on balancing two demanding passions, medicine and music.
- Claire Moses - Clinical Procurement Lead Nurse on her career journey from soldier, to nurse, to working mother.

Raising visibility and awareness

The Network hosted International Women's Day stands at WRH and ALX, connecting with staff and celebrating women's contributions across the organisation.



The Network Chair has also been leading on the creation of a Networks Introduction video that showcases the incredible work of all staff Networks, that can be shared in Preceptorship training and the Trust Induction.

Contributing to policy and education

The Network has also enjoyed the opportunity to review and feedback on a number of Trust policies and Tool Kits, including the upcoming Menopause Tool Kit,

Neurodiversity Tool Kit, PREVENT policy, Appeals policy, Equality Impact Assessment and others.

Looking ahead:

Building on this momentum, the Network has an exciting programme of activity planned, including:

- Career development sessions in partnership with Organisational Development, focusing on career pathways and the range of training and apprenticeship opportunities available across the Trust.
- Collaboration with the Endometriosis team to explore how shift workers and patient-facing staff can be supported through appropriate adjustments when living with conditions such as endometriosis and adenomyosis.
- Fundraising activity – the Network will host a bake sale in October 2025 to raise money for the Worcestershire Breast Unit Haven.
- Vice Chair elections – the Network will be running elections for Vice Chair in late 2025.

Neurodiversity Hub

This project has been a system wide collaboration and the content of the Hub will be shared across the ICB in order to support neurodiverse colleagues from across our local healthcare system.

The banner features the title 'Neurodiversity Hub' in large white text on a purple background. To the right is the logo for 'WORCESTERSHIRE ACUTE HOSPITALS CHARITY'. Below the title is a tagline: 'A supportive space where every unique mind is valued, understood, and empowered to thrive together.' At the bottom right of the banner, it says 'This project was proudly funded by Worcestershire Acute Hospitals Charity.' Below the banner are three cards with images and text:

- Neurodiversity in the workplace**: Find out how to recognize and support different forms of Neurodiversity within the work place and what it means to be neurodivergent.
- Neurodiversity Toolkit support for staff**: This toolkit gives simple tips and resources to make the workplace more supportive for neurodiverse employees.
- Support for managers**: To help managers understand and support neurodiverse employees with practical advice on how to adjust ways of working and how to build an inclusive team culture.

The Hub itself has been developed by Lead Consultant Clinical Psychologist Heidi Napier, Head of Occupational Health and Wellbeing, Helen Wealthall and Worcestershire Acute Hospitals Charity's Hospital Engagement Officer, Susan Hayes.

As a Trust we want to create an environment where it is easier to bring the best version of yourself to work, where you feel empowered and encouraged to do the work you do, and find ways of improving that work.

The Hub is intended to support neurodiverse colleagues, managers and teammates and offers education and information on the full spectrum of neurodiverse conditions. There is a support for staff section, a support for managers section and a wealth of resources, both local and National. The information around reasonable adjustments and the use of the Health and Wellbeing Passport offers key resources for both staff and managers and provides the most up to date guidance, both from a Trust perspective and the Equality Act 2010.

In order to further support our neurodiverse colleagues, a '**Neurodiversity Forum**' has been created, which will be chaired by Helen Wealthall, Head of Occupational Health and Wellbeing. The focus of this group will be to provide peer support, share resources and ideas and give the opportunity to connect with like-minded people and a safe space to share experiences without judgement.

Freedom to Speak Up (FTSU)

Following the failings at Mid Staffordshire NHS Hospital Trust, the subsequent inquiry led by Sir Robert Francis determined that each and every Trust in England should have a Freedom to Speak Up Guardian who staff could speak to in confidence and without risk of detriment. This Guardian would not be a part of the formal organisation of each Trust but should be part of the National Freedom to Speak Up network.

I was appointed as the Trust's Freedom to Speak Up (FTSU) Guardian in 2020. I have worked in the Trust for over 27 years - most recently in a clinical capacity as Matron in Maternity, I am now full-time in my FTSU role, and this incorporates the cultural agenda within the Trust including Active Bystander training. I am also Mental First Health trained, professional workplace mediator, a professional midwifery advocate and an Advanced Organisational Development Practitioner.

My role is supported by FTSU champions spread across our three sites, and all divisions, and together we promote the Freedom to Speak Up programme and listen attentively to any member of staff who has any concern about any form of inappropriate behaviour within our Trust. Champions play an important role in promoting the agenda at a department/ward level. We meet every other month and discuss the themes in the organisation as well as update on the FTSU agenda. Speak Up training for all staff was mandated last year for all staff and is currently sitting at a 95% compliance rate. Listen Up training for specific roles launched earlier this year and Follow Up training for senior leaders will be introduced in the new year.

The key benefits for staff are principally two-fold. The first is the therapeutic support of the Guardian or Champion, who, as an independent person, is pro-actively listening and supporting the staff member's concern. Staff can often find it difficult to raise a concern and to have someone who can share and understand it is a major help. The second benefit is that the Guardian will agree with the member of staff on a process to support the resolution of their concern. This may entail obtaining support



and assistance from relevant senior managers. The obvious result here is to seek to resolve the issue and enable the staff member to return to a more stable and enjoyable work environment. We have had over 550 cases raised in the last five years and we endeavour to continually update each member of staff raising the concern on the progress and the resolution of their concern. Some cases can be resolved quite quickly; others - particularly if there is a link into an existing investigation which can take more time. The predominant theme continues to be attitudes and behaviour. The information provided on the portal regarding protected characteristics has seen an increase in concerns related to race and disability. The Guardian continues to work with the staff networks to help promote speaking up in these groups and break down the barriers. The Guardian also undertakes monthly walkabouts with the non-executive director for FTSU, this enables us to target areas that might not be aware or have little knowledge of the process.

We launched our Freedom to Speak up portal in October 2020, which has given staff greater accessibility and ease to report concerns. This has seen an increase in reporting and enables staff to confidentially raise their concerns and track the progress of them via a unique code. We have also added protected characteristics to the portal at the request of the staff networks which enables us a deeper dive and gives greater intelligence. We now have a feedback form for the portal so that we can capture any improvements that we can make to give us. A QR code has been developed to also enable staff greater access. The profile of FTSU has grown considerably over the last few years and the FTSU continues to work in partnership with the organisation to tackle barriers, promote speaking up and link it into the Trust values and on everyone's agenda

NHS Staff Survey

The annual NHS Staff Survey provides a detailed insight into what our employees think about the work they do and the organisation they work for. It covers all aspects of the employee experience, grouped by themes and also against the NHS People Promise.



The results help to inform, influence, and shape the approach of the Trust when looking to improve the experience of employees, ultimately contributing to improving employee engagement and morale. As such, it is important that we hear from as many colleagues as possible, so that a representative employee voice can be heard.

2023 saw one of the Trust's lowest response rates for the annual survey, just 31%. This was 15% below the national average. A key objective for the 2024 staff survey was to increase the response rate and to encourage more employees to take part.

By working closely with stakeholders and developing a pre-planned and successfully implemented survey campaign, involving a variety of promotional activities aimed at reaching as many employees as possible, we saw high levels of engagement and increased response rates for the 2024 survey for the Trust and across all divisions.

We achieved an overall response rate of 46%, an increase of 15% on the previous year, which equated to over 50% more surveys being completed, our highest number of responses ever.

Response rates for underrepresented groups saw significant improvements, with a 54% increase in responses from employees who reported having a disability and a 114% increase from underrepresented ethnic groups. We intend to build on the successes of last year's campaign and continue to increase the response rates for all groups this year.

Overall scores for the People Promise showed improvement across all seven themes, including 'We are compassionate and inclusive', with significant improvement in all areas except 'We are recognised and rewarded'. 'We are always learning' and 'We work flexibly' improved the most.



Engagement and Morale both improved, with 'Morale' scoring above the national average.

These improved results are even more significant when considering the national picture which has remained broadly unchanged when compared to 2023. The Trust's overall results showed significant improvement, with 42 questions providing significantly better responses compared to just 14 questions in the benchmark group.

This year, the Trust also had one of the highest, most improved overall positive scores within its benchmark group.

The results have been used to inform action plans at an organisational and local team level, including the introduction of Trust-wide values and behaviours, together with the roll-out of a 'kindness into action' approach, helping to create a culture of kindness, safety and wellbeing for everyone.

Trust Values

Over 500 colleagues worked together to co-develop a shared set of values. The values are what matter to the staff and focus on the behaviours they want to see more of in the future.

These values are essential in shaping the way we provide care and the way we interact with our patients, the public and each other.


**Worcestershire
Acute Hospitals**
NHS Trust

Our shared values and behaviours

Being open and honest

Collaborating and learning from each other

- Communicate honestly and consistently, giving timely and clear information
- Make it easy for people to share ideas and concerns
- Ensure we give constructive and kind feedback and act on the feedback we receive
- Ask for support when we need it and take responsibility for our actions

Ensuring people feel cared for

Acting with kindness and compassion

- Make sure we take care of ourselves and each other
- Listen to understand and address people's individual needs
- Proactively offer support to each other and patients, showing empathy and kindness
- Appreciate and celebrate everyone's role and contribution

Showing respect for everyone

Treating each other with fairness and civility

- Encourage and value all voices and perspectives
- Create welcoming spaces and acknowledge and support different needs
- Be accountable for the impact of our words and actions on those around us
- Acknowledge our mistakes and apologise if we get things wrong



Our values:

- shape our day-to-day work
- embody our culture and what we believe in
- are the standards we aspire to every day, guiding our decisions, mindset and the actions we prioritise
- matter because they set the standards for our culture

Our values will be embedded into the following HR Processes:

- Recruitment
- Induction
- Education and Training
- PDR
- Staff Survey

Values-led Culture Programme

Our Values-led culture programme features training, toolkits and support. Education and training for teams on the importance of kindness in teamwork has been developed. This focuses on how kindness in our everyday work improves trust between individuals and creates better results for patients.

The Trust Values are used throughout to help anchor and reinforce the approach.

Anti Racism Charter

We are proud to announce the development of our new Anti-Racism Charter, developed in partnership with Unison, Royal College of Nursing, our Staff Networks (EmBRACE, LGBTQ+, Faith and Spirituality, DAWN and Women's Network), and our recognised trade unions. This marks an important step in strengthening our commitment to equality, diversity, fairness, and respect for everyone in our workplace.

The Anti-Racism Charter is a clear and powerful statement of the Trust's commitment to fostering an inclusive, respectful, and equitable workplace for all.

Racism has no place in our organisation. We have made a commitment to a zero-tolerance approach to any form of racism, whether overt or subtle, intentional or unconscious. This Charter outlines our shared values and expectations, reinforcing our duty to challenge racism wherever it occurs.

The Anti-Racism Charter shows our commitment to:

- Actively oppose racism in all its forms.
- Promote a culture of respect, dignity, and fairness.
- Support colleagues who experience or witness racism.
- Hold ourselves and others accountable for upholding these principles.

This is our pledge to one another and to the communities we serve. Together, we will continue to build an environment where colleagues, patients and visitors feel safe, valued, and empowered to thrive.



Why the Anti-Racism Charter is important

Our new Anti-Racism Charter is built on key principles that guide how we work together in line with our [Trust values](#). This means championing a diverse workforce that reflects the communities we serve, and taking a stance of zero tolerance towards racism, addressing inappropriate behaviour whenever and wherever it occurs.

We are committed to providing training and awareness for all staff on unconscious bias and what it means to be actively anti-racist, while also tackling inequality by improving opportunity, access, and fairness across services and employment.

At the heart of this is creating a workplace that ensures people from all identities, ethnicities, and cultures feel valued, supported, and able to thrive as part of our organisation.

Putting policy into practice

The charter applies to all staff, regardless of role, workplace, or contract type. It sets clear expectations of behaviour and outlines how we will protect and support our colleagues. Racist behaviour will be treated as a disciplinary offence, with action taken where necessary to protect all of our staff's wellbeing, and fairness.

Staff are encouraged to 'call in' behaviour when it is safe to do so, supported by colleagues. This charter is about more than policy it's about creating a place where our staff feel cared for, a place where they can be open and honest and an organisation where everyone is shown respect.

Training and support

It will be supported through training and development, team briefing and ongoing staff support, with strong leadership support across all our hospital sites. We encourage everyone to play their part. Tackling racism is a shared responsibility, and active bystanders play a powerful role in challenging inappropriate behaviour and creating a respectful workplace.

By launching this Anti-Racism Charter, we are taking firm steps towards dismantling barriers, embedding equality, and ensuring our organisation reflects the values we stand for. Together, we can build a workplace where everyone feels safe, respected, and empowered to do their best work.

Reasonable Adjustments

A review of reasonable adjustment support for colleagues has taken place by stakeholders, including representation from Procurement, Finance, DAWN (disability network) chair, HR, Divisional representatives, and OD.

The reasonable adjustment standard operating procedure has been developed to:

- Provide practical support, information and guidance for colleagues with a disability or long-term health condition that require adjustments in the workplace.



- Support Trust managers to have supportive and meaningful conversations with colleagues about any adjustments that may be required.
- Help managers to understand their responsibilities in relation to the Equality Act 2010 and how reasonable adjustments can impact positively on the wellbeing of colleagues and support them to feel valued and included.
- To encourage disabled colleagues and colleagues with long-term conditions to declare information which enables Trust managers to review and support with any reasonable adjustments.
- Provide a clear and consistent pathway for all Trust colleagues who may require adjustments in the workplace.
- To review the effectiveness of all reasonable adjustments and to consider any changes to the colleagues health condition.

Our Trust Workforce Data:

Our aim is to ensure our staff create a positive working environment and promote a culture of high trust where our people work together and feel motivated and confident to challenge and be innovative. A key objective is to recruit and retain a workforce which is representative of the communities we serve, and to provide an environment that values the differences people bring with them, where they feel safe and supported throughout their career.

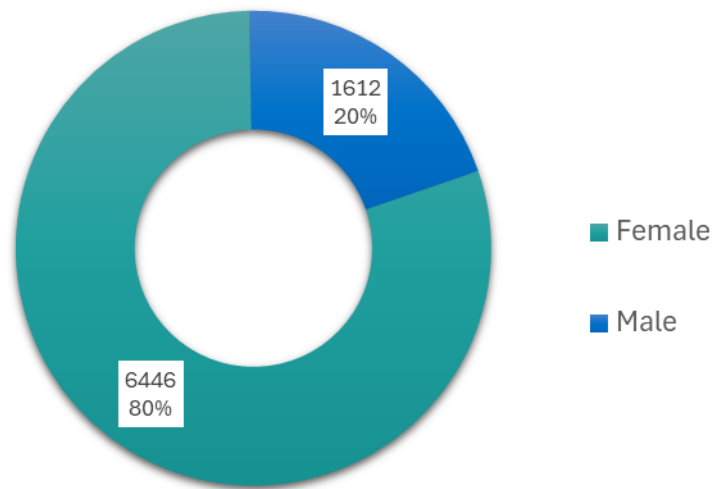
As of 31 March 2025, the Trust employed 8058 members of staff. The profile of our staff, across the protected characteristics, is shown in the charts below, noting that we have no data on Gender Reassignment.

Our data is representative of our local area; the BAME population within Worcestershire is 6.2% according to the 2021 Census data from National Online Manpower Information System (NOMIS) provided through the Office for National Statistics.

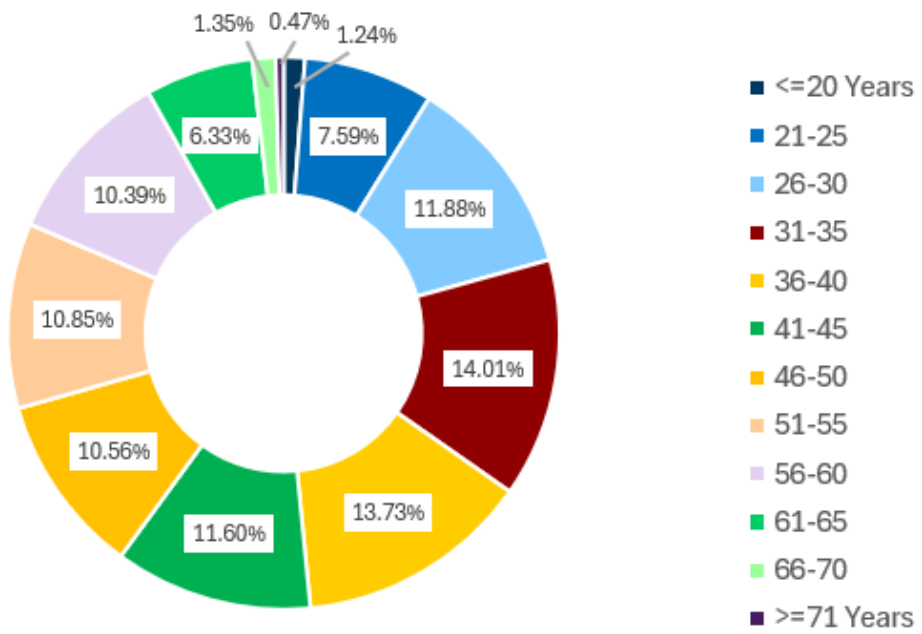
The workforce data below and the data from our Staff Survey, WRES & WDES reports will support conversations within, amongst others, the Culture Steering Group and People and Culture Committee and help us to further investigate and address any areas of concern as well as celebrate areas of success for inclusion and diversity.

Our Trust staff have the right to leave equality and diversity data categories unspecified if they wish to.

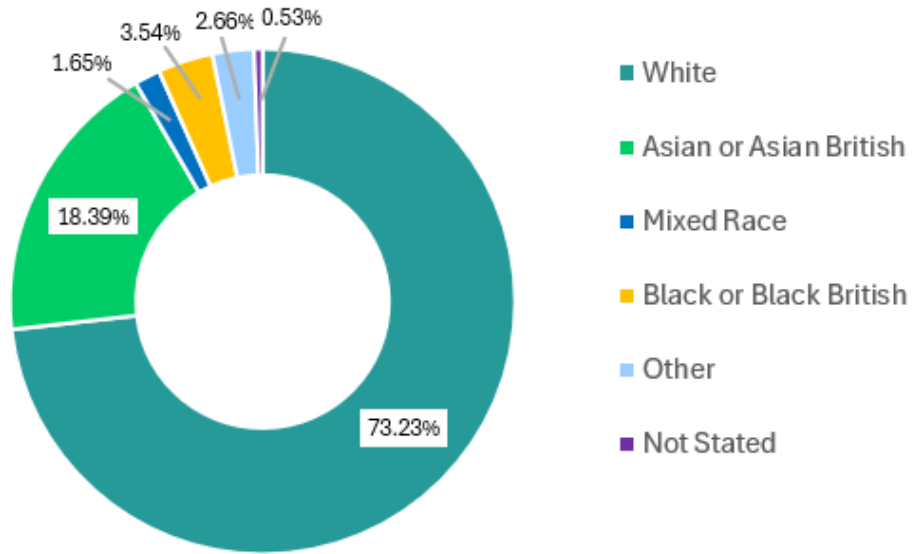
Gender Profile



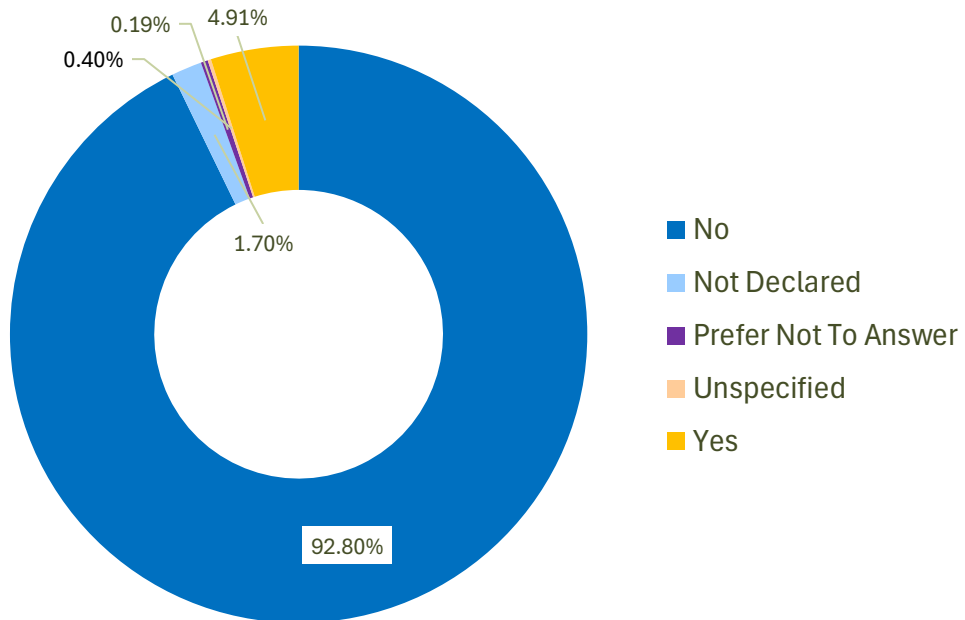
Age Profile



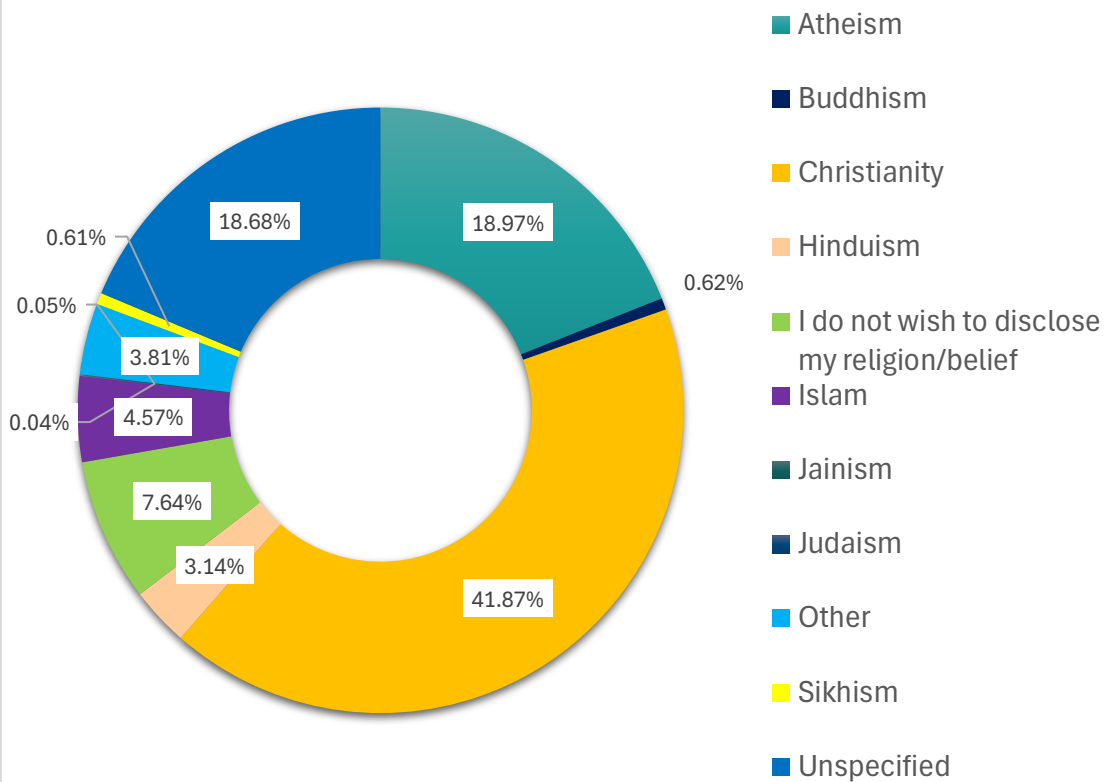
Ethnicity Profile



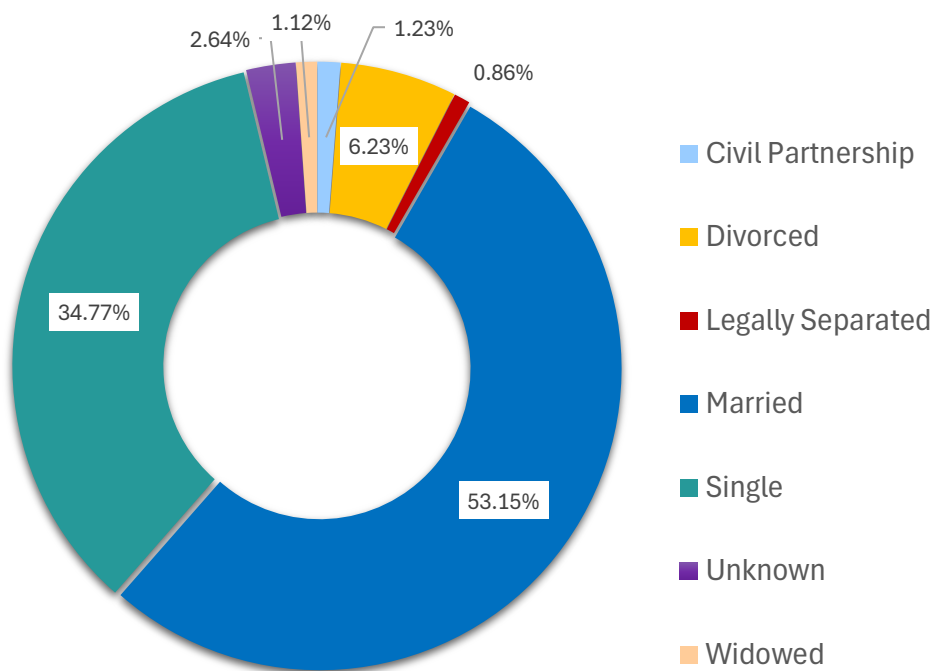
Disability Profile

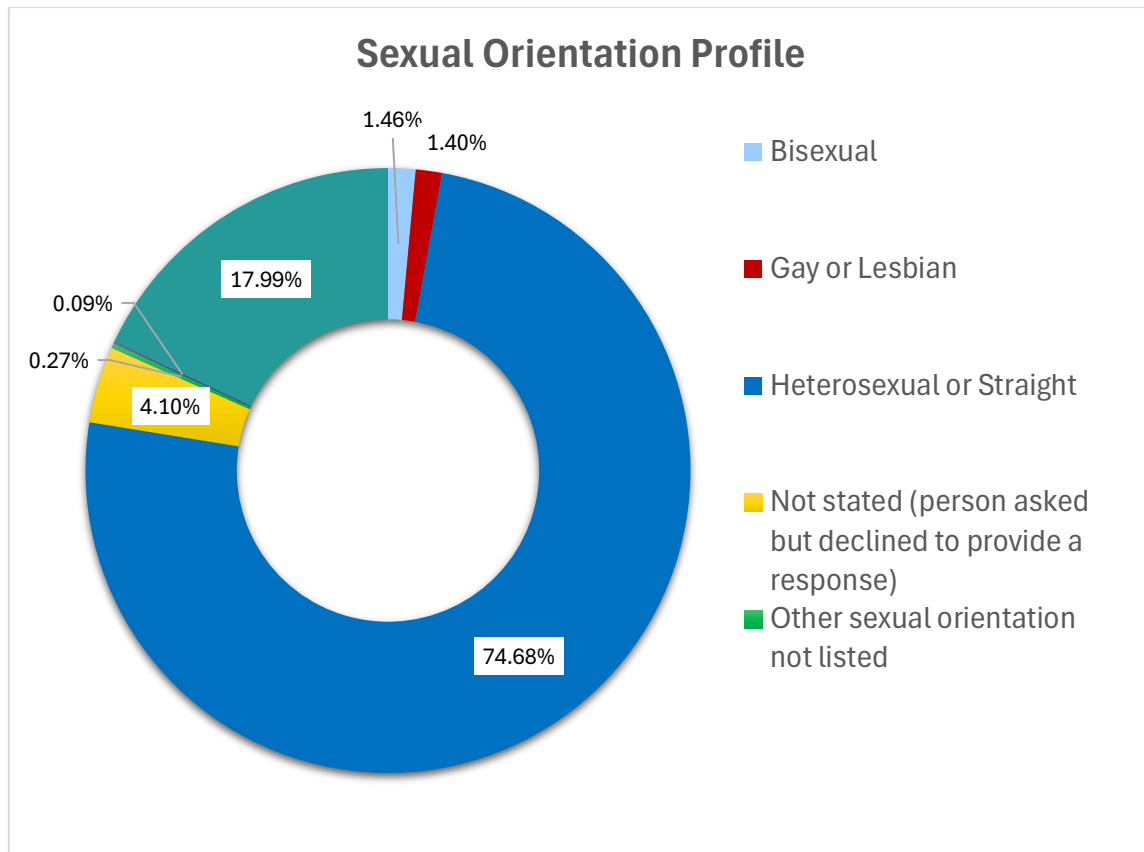


Religious Belief Profile



Marital Status Profile





Starters and Leavers Data

Starters

Starters by Gender		
Gender	Headcount excluding 0 hours	% Headcount excluding 0 hours
Female	1111	72.33%
Male	425	27.67%
Grand Total	1536	100.00%

Starters by Age Band		
Age Band	Headcount excluding 0 hours	% Headcount excluding 0 hours
<=20 Years	64	4.17%
21-25	325	21.16%
26-30	282	18.36%
31-35	266	17.32%
36-40	210	13.67%
41-45	131	8.53%
46-50	74	4.82%
51-55	61	3.97%
56-60	73	4.75%
61-65	36	2.34%
66-70	11	0.72%
>=71 Years	3	0.20%
Grand Total	1536	100.00%



Starters by Disability		
Disability	Headcount excluding 0 hours	% Headcount excluding 0 hours
No	1429	93.03%
Not Declared	16	1.04%
Prefer Not To Answer	5	0.33%
Unspecified	19	1.24%
Yes	67	4.36%
Grand Total	1536	100.00%

Starters by Ethnic Origin		
Ethnic Origin	Headcount excluding 0 hours	% Headcount excluding 0 hours
White	903	58.79%
Mixed	40	2.60%
Asian or Asian British	383	24.93%
Black or Black British	135	8.79%
Other	70	4.56%
Unspecified	5	0.33%
Grand Total	1536	100.00%

Starters by Religious Belief		
Religious Belief	Headcount excluding 0 hours	% Headcount excluding 0 hours
Atheism	419	27.28%
Buddhism	17	1.11%
Christianity	631	41.08%
Hinduism	86	5.60%
I do not wish to disclose my religion/belief	125	8.14%
Islam	161	10.48%
Judaism	2	0.13%
Other	33	2.15%
Sikhism	19	1.24%
Unspecified	43	2.80%
Grand Total	1536	100.00%

Starters by Sexual Orientation		
Sexual Orientation	Headcount excluding 0 hours	% Headcount excluding 0 hours
Bisexual	40	2.60%
Gay or Lesbian	30	1.95%
Heterosexual or Straight	1345	87.57%
Not stated (person asked but declined to provide a response)	78	5.08%
Other sexual orientation not listed	4	0.26%
Undecided	3	0.20%
Unspecified	36	2.34%
Grand Total	1536	100.00%

Leavers

Leavers by Gender		
Gender	Headcount excluding 0 hours	% Headcount excluding 0 hours
Female	729	72.83%
Male	272	27.17%
Grand Total	1001	100.00%

Leavers by Age Band		
Age Band	Headcount excluding 0 hours	% Headcount excluding 0 hours
<=20 Years	13	1.30%
21-25	122	12.19%
26-30	183	18.28%
31-35	169	16.88%
36-40	121	12.09%
41-45	72	7.19%
46-50	47	4.70%
51-55	48	4.80%
56-60	101	10.09%
61-65	84	8.39%
66-70	33	3.30%
>=71 Years	8	0.80%
Grand Total	1001	100.00%

Leavers by Disability		
Disability	Headcount excluding 0 hours	% Headcount excluding 0 hours
No	915	91.41%
Not Declared	25	2.50%
Prefer Not To Answer	8	0.80%
Unspecified	4	0.40%
Yes	49	4.90%
Grand Total	1001	100.00%

Leavers by Ethnic Origin		
Ethnic Origin	Headcount excluding 0 hours	% Headcount excluding 0 hours
White	671	67.03%
Mixed	28	2.80%
Asian or Asian British	204	20.38%
Black or Black British	57	5.69%
Other	39	3.90%
Unspecified	2	0.20%
Grand Total	1001	100.00%

Leavers by Religious Belief		
Religious Belief	Headcount excluding 0 hours	% Headcount excluding 0 hours
Atheism	200	19.98%
Buddhism	13	1.30%
Christianity	377	37.66%
Hinduism	47	4.70%
I do not wish to disclose my religion/belief	100	9.99%
Islam	89	8.89%
Judaism	3	0.30%
Other	42	4.20%
Sikhism	13	1.30%
Unspecified	117	11.69%
Grand Total	1001	100.00%

Leavers by Sexual Orientation		
Sexual Orientation	Headcount excluding 0 hours	% Headcount excluding 0 hours
Bisexual	29	2.90%
Gay or Lesbian	16	1.60%
Heterosexual or Straight	777	77.62%
Not stated (person asked but declined to provide a response)	67	6.69%
Undecided	1	0.10%
Unspecified	111	11.09%
Grand Total	1001	100.00%

Recruitment Data

The table below shows the recruitment activity from 1 April 2024 – 31 March 2025.

	Number of Applications	As % of Total Applications	Number Shortlisted	As % of Total Shortlisted	Number Appointed	As % of Total Appointed
Ethnicity (White)	6234	40.2%	3217	56.9%	776	69.3%
Ethnicity (All Other)	9024	58.2%	2326	41.2%	324	28.9%
Ethnicity (Undisclosed)	250	1.6%	108	1.9%	20	1.8%
Total Ethnicity	15508	100%	5651	100%	1120	100%
Gender (Female)	9985	64.4%	4135	73.2%	847	75.6%
Gender (Male)	5442	35.1%	1472	26.0%	263	23.5%
Gender (Undisclosed)	81	0.5%	44	0.8%	10	0.9%
Total Gender	15508	100%	5651	100%	1120	100%

	Number of Applications	As % of Total Applications	Number Shortlisted	As % of Total Shortlisted	Number Appointed	As % of Total Appointed
Age profile (Under 24)	2249	14.5%	947	16.8%	179	16.0%
Age profile (24 - 44)	10879	70.2%	3528	62.4%	680	60.7%
Age profile (45 - 59)	2009	12.9%	985	17.4%	225	20.1%
Age profile (60 - 74)	243	1.6%	125	2.2%	26	2.3%
Age profile (75+)	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Age Profile (Undisclosed)	128	0.8%	66	1.2%	10	0.9%
Total Age Profile	15508	100%	5651	100%	1120	100%
Disability (Yes)	783	5.0%	438	7.8%	70	6.3%
Disability (No)	14404	92.9%	5069	89.7%	1011	90.3%
Disability (Undisclosed)	321	2.1%	144	2.5%	39	3.4%
Total Disability	15508	100%	5651	100%	1120	100%
Sexual Orientation (Heterosexual)	14222	91.7%	5095	90.2%	1019	91.0%
Sexual Orientation (LGBTQ+)	729	4.7%	328	5.8%	54	4.8%
Sexual Orientation (Undisclosed)	557	3.6%	228	4.0%	47	4.2%
Total Sexual Orientation	15508	100%	5651	100%	1120	100%
Religion (Christianity)	6726	43.4%	2602	46.1%	472	42.2%
Religion (Atheism)	3371	21.7%	1724	30.5%	418	37.3%
Religion (All Other)	4581	29.5%	991	17.5%	166	14.8%
Religion (Undisclosed)	830	5.4%	334	5.9%	64	5.7%
Total Religion	15508	100%	5651	100%	1120	100%

Employee Relations Data

Case Type	Total Number of all cases	Ethnicity: White	Ethnicity: Non- White	Ethnicity: Not stated	Age: Under 30	Age: 31-50	Age:50+	Age: Not stated	Gender: Male	Gender: Female	Gender: Not stated
Disciplinary	33	30	3	0	6	14	13	0	13	13	0
Grievance	10	4	2	4	0	4	2	4	1	5	4
Grievance (Col)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dignity at Work	14	7	3	4	0	4	6	4	2	8	4
Conduct & Capability	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Capability	50	42	7	1	8	19	23	0	11	39	0
Appeals	14	11	3	0	3	8	3	0	2	12	0
Employment Tribunal	7	5	2	0	1	3	3	0	1	6	0

Our Workforce EDI Priorities

These workforce/people priorities are part of our Trust People Strategy. This was created to support and nurture a culture that people want to be part of. This, in turn, is an important part of the overall Trust strategy.

Workforce EDI Priority One

People Experience - Establishing the Trust as a Great Place to Work that attracts and retains the best talent with a shared sense of belonging. We are an inclusive community which enables staff to bring their whole self to work.

We are working towards these outcomes:

- A culture that reflects our values, focused on respect, care and inclusivity.
- Prompt, respectful, and collaborative resolution of disputes and concerns.
- Improved support for disabled colleagues
- Increased colleague engagement
- Increase in the number of colleagues recommending the Trust as a place to work

Key commitments for 2025:

- Launch of a Trust Women's network
- Development of the Trust Respectful Resolution Policy and Framework, with online tools, training and resources.
- Review of reasonable adjustment support for disabled colleagues.
- Sign up and launch the anti-racism charter
- Increase in communication regarding staff survey actions, and an increase in our staff survey response rate

Workforce EDI Priority Two

Leadership - Developing compassionate, inclusive and improvement focussed leaders who support all of our people to give their best and contribute to the delivery of wider Trust strategic aims. Where our Leaders actively role-model organisational values.

We are working towards these outcomes:

- Compassionate, inclusive and improvement focussed leaders who support all our people to perform at their best and contribute to the delivery of wider Trust strategic aims.
- Leaders actively role-model organisational values
- Flexible working is encouraged by our leaders, as a valuable mechanism to enhance colleague Health and Wellbeing

Key commitments for 2025:

- Training and support for colleagues in management roles in respectful resolution (inc. giving and receiving feedback)



- Embed NHS Elect online training and development modules, increasing self directed learning
- Increase competence and confidence in career conversation skills and management essentials
- Increase the use of the colleague Health and Wellbeing passport, encouraging flexibility for all

Workforce EDI Priority Three

Developing our People - Inspire our people to develop the skills, knowledge and capabilities to provide the best possible experience for our patients and fellow colleagues and support their professional and personal development.

We are working towards these outcomes:

- Colleagues at all levels of the organisation recognise and reflect the Trust Values in their everyday working lives
- Increased access to career conversations, at all levels
- Our people continuously develop their skills, knowledge and capabilities, supporting their professional and personal development aims.

Key commitments for 2025:

- Development of a refreshed induction programme, rooted in Trust values and 'the way we do things around here'
- Ensure access for all colleagues to online respectful resolution toolkits and learning resources
- Review of Statutory and Mandatory training processes, enabling new starters to transfer existing learning
- Increase the uptake of sexual safety in healthcare training

Patient Experience and Engagement

In this section of the report, we have shared some of the developments we have made and approaches we have taken, to support us to provide person-centred and individualised care for our patients, carers, their families and our local communities.

It is important that we involve people in their care, recognise diversity and provide accessible services that everyone can use. Our inclusive approach focuses on providing respectful and welcoming environments and fair treatment, which can promote better health outcomes, build trust and create a safe and welcoming place for everyone. We hope that this approach builds patient satisfaction and confidence, alongside our ability to continue to address health inequalities to ensure that all patients, regardless of their background and circumstances, can receive equitable care at our hospitals.

We have again started our report with an overview of some of the approaches we have taken to support our patients with a learning disability and we are also pleased to share developments we have made, to co-produce reasonable adjustments posters and a new Communication Passport.



We have included this year, details about how we have progressed some of the actions we set out in last year's report and we hope that this demonstrates our continued commitment to providing good quality, dignified services which can be accessed by everyone in our community, regardless of age, disability, race, religion or belief or sexual orientation for example.

The Accessible Information Standard makes sure that people with disabilities, impairments or sensory loss for example, can get the right communication support when using health and social care services. We have highlighted in this report, some of the ways we have developed our approaches to provide accessible services, to support improved patient outcomes, reduce risks and provide a more inclusive healthcare experience.

We understand our key role in tackling health inequalities. We know the best way to do this is by working together with partners, patients, their carers, and families. This helps us create services and improvements which truly meet people's needs, and which can benefit the local community. We are proud of the progress we have made and we are committed to our journey of continued quality improvement.

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to our local partners, organizations, volunteers, and patient, carer representatives who have consistently engaged with us throughout our journey of quality improvement. Our continued focus remains on the wellbeing of patients, carers and staff, as well as on understanding individual needs and preferences, to identify and address any gaps in the provision of quality healthcare.

We are committed to leading and implementing innovative approaches, some of which are highlighted in this report.

An overview of some of the ways we have continued to engage with patients, carers, and local communities, with a focus on equality, inclusion and respecting diversity:

Patient Representation and Partnership:

Patient representatives came together with our staff from across Divisions and Departments at **x7 formal Patient and Public Forum (PPF) meetings** from September 2024-September 2025.

The agendas for these meetings are planned with the PPF and our staff. These meetings take place in person and online at the same time, using video conferencing. We would like to thank the Co-Lab in Kidderminster for their continued support in providing space for us to meet (and refreshments).

The overall purpose of the PPF is to ensure that the voices and experiences of patients, relatives, carers and the public are heard by the Trust and acted on in order to achieve the highest quality patient centred care.

The Patient and Public Forum have now been invited to sit as members on **17 committees and steering groups**, which include Quality Governance Committee,



Nutrition and Hydration and AI Ethics. This supports our ongoing partnership and engagement.

We are pleased to have a new **co-produced Terms of Reference** that was created with the Patient and Public Forum and our staff which sets out how we will work together going forwards. Developments include welcoming external groups into PPF meetings from September 2025. Groups invited include the Worcestershire Association of Carers, Healthwatch, Age UK Wyvern and Age UK North Worcestershire.

There are currently 17 members of the PPF (September 2025) and we are actively recruiting to both this group and **Patient Safety Partners** with a focus on welcoming people from all backgrounds, ages and experience levels, to ensure that the group is reflective of the local population of Worcestershire, this includes age, ethnicity and protected characteristics. To support this, we have created new recruitment posters, an example of our posters can be seen below:



Ongoing development and support of the Patient and Public Forum (PPF) reflects our dedication to involving the public in shaping and delivering our services.

This is what some of the PPF members have said about their involvement:

"As a member of the Patient and Public Forum, (PPF) and being registered Blind with severely impaired vision, I was invited to join two members of staff to assist with evaluating access at Kidderminster Treatment Centre, KTC. Of particular interest was disabled access and for me, in particular, directions to Ophthalmology.

It was soon apparent that the signage was difficult, and for a person with impaired vision, it was impossible to follow. We concluded that some form of improvement was necessary and based upon information from other establishments such as Moorfields Hospital, we decided that a floor marking would be the best solution.

A line extending from the main entrance to Ophthalmology was proposed to the Trust. Over a period of months other professional bodies were invited to offer alternatives but eventually the line marking was approved.

The line marking has greatly reduced the number of late arrivals for appointments and has given the patient a degree of autonomy and confidence. It remains an outstanding example of how the PPF can cooperate with the Trust, improving the patient experience".

John, vice-Chair of the PPF

We would also like to thank our **Patient Safety Partner** Julia for her support.

Our Patient Safety Partners are registered volunteers, who work with our staff to provide a patient voice.

The role of the Patient Safety Partner has been developed by NHS England to help improve patient safety across health care as part of a national safety strategy.

The NHS Patient Safety Strategy recognises the importance of involving patients, their families and carers and other lay people in improving the safety of NHS care, as well as the role that patients and carers can have as partners in their own safety. You can read more about the framework here: [NHS England » Framework for involving patients in patient safety](#)

Our Patient Safety Partner Julia said about her involvement in this project:

*In 2025, I have attended the weekly Patient Safety Incident Response Group as Patient Safety Partner, patient representative. I have been pleased to observe questions and subsequent discussions arising from the possibility of any gaps in care due to diversity. I cannot recall any incidents resulting from a patient who has not received equitable treatment because of discrimination, but I have often heard examples of culture, gender and age being respected and accommodated where possible. **Any learning for improvement is subsequently shared.** It appears that staff are committed to providing equitable treatment for all.*

We would like to thank Julia for her support and we look forward to developing our partnership.

We would also like to thank the PPF members for all of their support in 2024-2025. This includes:

- **Supporting with job interviews** for our staff
- **Engaging** with patients, carers, family and friends for the Big Quality Conversation survey across our hospitals and within their networks
- For **joining us** in Patient Experience week, to speak with people at our hospitals
- Carrying out **mystery shopping**
- Taking part in the annual **Patient-Led Assessment of the Care Environment** and follow up action meetings
- Continuing to engage with our **Improvement Programme** work streams
- Engaging with **projects** including a Complaint review
- Continuing to **share lived experiences** with a focus on health inequalities.

Rosemary, Chair of the PPF, shared these words with us to include in this report:

This report demonstrates the multitude of ways the Trust has continued to develop services that consider the different needs for our patients whatever their background.



It is also good to see charities, volunteers and other organisations working so productively with the Trust.

The Patient and Public Forum are pleased to have played a very small part in developing services supporting equality and diversity for our patients.

Rosemary, Chair of the PPF.

We would like to thank the VCSE Alliance for working with us and for coming together to explore together what a new strategy for Patient Voice needs to include.

The Alliance is a collective of Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise organisations, working together to make health service provision stronger and develop partnerships that benefit Worcestershire communities.

At the NHS Providers and VCSE Sector Partnership Event in November 2024 we came together, to focus on how we can shape the future by engaging with a new Public Patient Engagement Strategy, foster key relationships, and expand services.

The focus was how we can tackle challenges together and make a healthier Worcestershire.

Feedback from conversations at the event alongside staff engagement and active participation from the PPF, has helped us develop a strategy which focuses on listening and understanding more about people's experiences to improve patient outcomes.

A key part of our strategy is to work together with our communities and through a series of pledges, demonstrate our commitment to continually improve by involving people in decision making, collaboration and to connect with people by listening to feedback and acting on concerns.

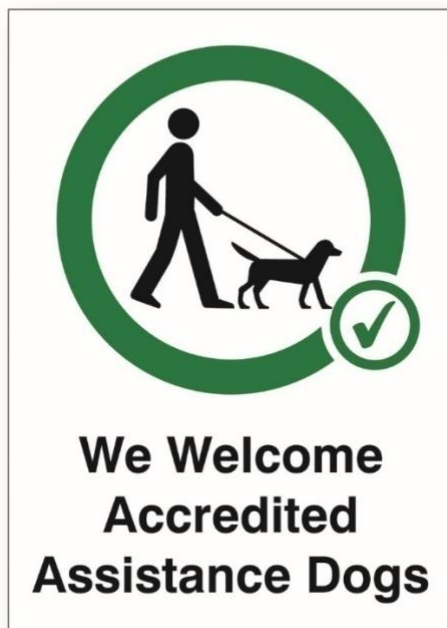
An example of co-production and improvement:

We would like to thank the PPF for highlighting that we can do more to provide a welcoming and inclusive environment for people coming into hospital.

We have created together a new sign which will be displayed in our hospitals to demonstrate that we welcome people to bring in their assistance dogs.



The new sign can be seen below:



We would also like to thank AccessAble for their advice in support with developing our new sign.

Collaborating with others spotlight:

We again worked with partners to create a tool to support with community awareness about accessing key services for people who are d/Deaf.

We are one of the founding members of a strategic d/Deaf engagement/action group and together we re-published a leaflet for local residents who are looking to access British Sign Language interpretation/ information about services across the system.

We launched the updated version in 2025 which we have included below (we have shown the front and back of the leaflet):



We have continued to access opportunities to raise awareness of initiatives we have put in place at the Trust to support people who are D/deaf and this includes continued awareness of our co-produced “**I am Deaf**” cards, which include a QR code to access a short video in BSL about coming into hospital and a text number to check that an interpreter has been booked.

We have continued to find ways to raise awareness with our staff and to support this we have launched updated staff training and awareness pages which includes a guide to share how best to communicate with people who are D/deaf or who have hearing loss, which has been created by the charity Hearing Dogs for Deaf People, posters, cards, a BSL finger spelling training video and links to resources from the national Deaf Children’s Society for example.

Below is an image of one of our resources available for staff:



Improvement Tool:

The Equality Delivery System (EDS) is an improvement tool and a requirement for NHS providers. We completed this again in 2024 and in 2025 we published the details on our website.

We have self-rated ourselves and the majority of patient sections are rated as “achieving activity”

The majority of areas have been self rated as “achieving activity”, with one area is rated as “excelling”.

You can read the full report here: [worcsacute.nhs.uk/~documents/equality-and-diversity/equality-and-diversity-1/equality-delivery-system-22-january-2025/?layout=file](https://www.worcsacute.nhs.uk/~documents/equality-and-diversity/equality-and-diversity-1/equality-delivery-system-22-january-2025/?layout=file)

Hearing Link – in our hospital:

Nicholas Orpin, Service Engagement Manager for Hearing Dogs for Deaf People and their Hearing Link Services has reflected on the charity’s monthly drop-in service at the Worcestershire Royal Hospital.

“Firstly, a huge thanks to the Patient, Carer and Public Engagement team for their continued support with this opportunity. For those who haven’t come across the stand – our information point and peer support volunteers are present on the third Thursday of every month, from 11.30am-1.30pm in The Atrium.

Our peer support volunteers all have lived experience of hearing loss and are there to help, advise on best practice and signpost anyone who has a question on living better with hearing loss. The last 12 sessions have seen 181 people come up and talk to the volunteers.

Enquiries vary, but for people with hearing loss they broadly centre on;

- *Communication – “how can I follow better what is being said to me?”, “how do I know when my name is called for my appointment?”*
- *Technology – “how can I follow better?”, “what works with my hearing aids?”*
- *Awareness – “no-one knows I have hearing loss”, “If I tell people I need to lipread, can they help?”*

Equally, the people coming to the stand are split across 3 main groups.

- *People with hearing loss attending an appointment or visiting a loved-one on a ward.*
- *Hearing people supporting a loved-one at an appointment, or visiting them on a ward*
- *Staff enquiring about identifying hearing loss and supporting patients.*

Peer support volunteers also help develop online services such as our free to join monthly Helpful Hours webinars. These are much appreciated and around 20% of attendees are professionals in the field, which demonstrates their usefulness in deaf-



awareness and practical solutions for all. [Helpful Hours - Hearing Link Services](#). Current topics are:

- [How to get the most from your audiology appointment](#)*
- [Managing your healthcare with hearing loss](#)*
- [Your homelife, your hearing \(launch Oct 25\)](#)*

We currently have 6 monthly in-person drop-in services around the country and will launch a number of new pilot services in both clinical and community locations.

Having the stand at the WRH certainly gives confidence to other NHS locations to enquire about how similar opportunities might work for them. Many thanks to you all”.

Trauma Informed Care

As an organisation we recognise the impact of trauma and adversity on the lives of people who access our services and we intend to become as trauma sensitive in the way we deliver our care as possible. We know from research that there is a link between the experience of adversity and physical and mental health outcomes.

As part of trauma informed practice, we focus on addressing the barriers that those affected by trauma, social inequalities and stressors can experience when accessing hospital care and services.

Our learning journey in 2025 has prioritised education and training for staff as well as focused work in clinical areas. Our Specialist Applied Psychology and Cardiac colleagues have worked collaboratively to support patients who have experienced trauma and who find it difficult to access and trust services, to work in partnership and find new ways to be fully engaged in their care.

This collaborative approach provides a space for our patients to be active in sharing any worries and concerns; to understand their choices and care/treatment options, and participate fully in decision making. This has resulted in enhanced health outcomes.

The Big Quality Conversation 2024-2025

This annual survey is a Worcestershire Acute Hospitals Trust idea. We created this approach because we want to know what our patients, carers, families and friends think about care at our hospitals over the last 12 months. This helps us understand what we are doing well and where we need to focus on improvements. We develop priorities for the coming year from the results.

We will use the results to help shape our Patient Voice and Involvement Strategy, focusing on how we can better support people to share their feedback and how we can communicate back to the public about the improvements we've made.

Each year we ask questions about safety, how effective care is and what the experience of coming into hospital was like for our local communities.



We launched our survey in September 2024, and it ran until January 2025. We asked local networks and organisations to support with promoting the survey, with a focus on reaching patients with health inequalities.

We would like to publicly thank the hundreds of local charities, organisations, groups and individuals who supported with the survey.

Our survey was in Easy Read online and in paper and we reached out to the local community in four ways:

- Via an online survey which could be accessed via a QR code and clickable link on digital posters
- Face to face workshops and sessions
- Via online promotions
- With partners and networks

You can read about our survey, the results and our priorities in our Quality Account report which we publish every year: [WAHT Quality Account 2024-25](#)

The results from our Equality and Diversity monitoring are included in the Quality Account report.

We would like to thank the many local organisations across our local community for their support with promoting the survey.

Approaches in 2025-2026:

We will again launch our survey in September 2025 and we will build on the engagement that we developed in 2024-2025. We will again invite patient representatives and volunteers to support us in hospital engagement sessions and we will seek new methods of engaging with people locally who are d/Deaf and who are blind or who have low vision.

Accessibility for our Local Communities

We have worked with AccessAble for 5 years, and as part of our ongoing partnership, we have 155 Detailed Access Guides to our departments, wards and facilities.

Our Guides provide essential information to help people understand what to expect when visiting our hospitals. By offering detailed accessibility information, we can help to reduce anxiety and empower people to confidently plan their visit to hospital.

People can access our Guides via our trust website, the AccessAble website or by using the free AccessAble App. The Guides can be accessed visually or people can use the “Recite me” audio button; they are available in different languages and site can be customised to support individual requirements.

Our Detailed Access Guides are reviewed and updated by trained surveyors who visit our hospital sites in person. Surveyors come onto our hospital sites every year



to update and refresh our Guides as well as create guides for new buildings and services. Our Guides feature both written measurements and photographs to provide clear, practical information.

Anna Nelson, Chief Executive of AccessAble has said this about our partnership: *“We are incredibly proud of our long-standing partnership with Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust. Over the past five years they have truly led the way, showing how detailed, co-produced accessibility information can transform people’s experience of visiting hospital.*

Their commitment to updating and expanding 155 Detailed Access Guides, checked annually by our trained surveyors, has set a benchmark for best practice across the NHS.

By reducing anxiety and empowering independence, these guides make a real difference every single day.

We hope other organisations will be inspired by the Trust’s leadership and the tangible impact of this work.”

Continuing to improve

To help people find our Guides we have put leaflets and banners in our hospitals and we continue to raise awareness at events and meetings – both with staff and the public.

Key Statistics

From 1st August 2024 to 31st July 2025 our Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust Accessibility Guides had **39,840 Users** and **56,466 Page Views**. We can break this down to a monthly average of **3,320 Users** and **4,706 Page Views**.

We are not able to provide a comparison because of a new way of reporting by AccessAble, however it has been confirmed that these numbers are consistently high and demonstrate strong engagement from the local community in a sustained way, month on month.

We have continued to work with AccessAble, welcoming surveyors on site to survey across our hospitals to ensure that our Guides are accurate and up to date and as part of this process we will continue to raise awareness with our staff and our patients.

Following our annual surveying schedule we received best practice guidance which we have shared with our Estates and Facilities teams to inform future build works and improvements.

Our focus into 2026

We will be looking forward to renewing our contract with AccessAble and developing our plan of work for the coming year, to build on the high level of current engagement



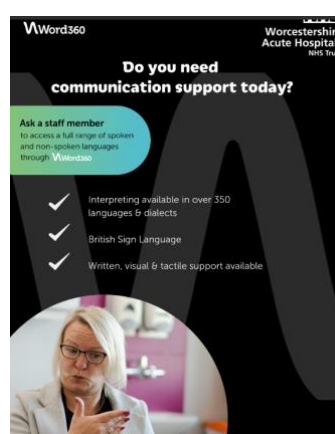
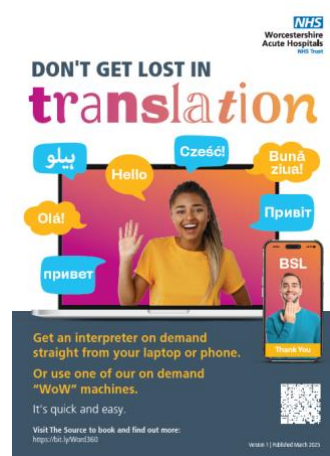
and understand how we can continue to ensure that our hospitals are as accessible as they can be for our local community and for our staff.

Communication solutions

We have continued to work with Word360 to provide verbal and non-verbal interpreting and translation provision for our patients across our hospitals.

To support patient and staff awareness we created and launched new posters in our hospitals in 2025. Examples of our new staff awareness posters can be seen below. We have included an example of one of our patient posters (below right).

Our new staff posters promote our “On Demand” Interpreting machines (we call these WoW machines) and additional digital options and they include links to our staff pages where staff can book interpreting and access training guides for example.



Samantha Armstrong, Account Manager, Word360 Limited shared thoughts for our report:

*Our continued partnership with Worcester Acute is instrumental in driving progress, improving patient outcomes, and ensuring that together we continue to deliver services that are both **efficient and future-focused**.*

*We collaborate and deliver meaningful innovation and collaborate on forward-thinking projects to help **enhance access to services**, further supporting the **tackling of health inequalities** and the NHS's long-term vision of building a more **sustainable supply chain**.*

*We are looking forward to the next step in our improvement project which will be supporting the Trust in taking a '**Digital First**' approach to bookings which will deliver more cost-savings and support the NHS' wider strategic goal of achieving **Net Zero by 2030**."*

Insight

In the past 12 months we have delivered 4,577 interpreting sessions which is a 23% increase to the previous year with a 18% increase in languages delivered.

The graph below shows face to face, telephone and video interpreting.

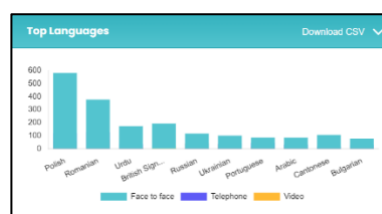
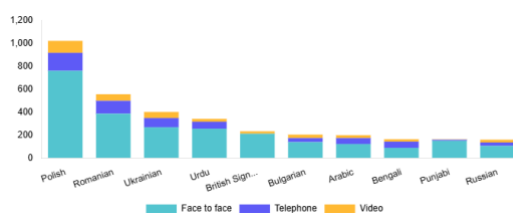


- **78 languages** were delivered
- **6, 476 bookings** were processed on our dedicated online booking portal
- **815 staff members** are registered as portal users to make bookings

The information below shows the number and type of bookings made: September 2024 – August 2025:

Service	Completed Bookings	Service Split
Face to Face	3,035	66%
Telephone	985	21%
Video	557	13%

Languages Delivered 2024-2025 can be seen in the graphs below:



Over the past year, we have demonstrated our commitment to continuing to support a diverse community by providing interpreting services, to support communication across a wide range of languages. Polish remains the most requested language.

In total, Word360 delivered **78 languages** to the Trust, which is a 20% increase on the same time period in 2023-2024.

Languages have remained consistent to the previous year with a surge in Ukrainian, Bengali and Punjabi requests compared to the previous year.

We also successfully provided **35 rare language requests**.

Video usage has also increased across all languages compared with the previous year.

The approach that we are taking, underpins our drive to provide inclusive and patient-centred care.

Department Usage

This is shown in the graph below:



The Maternity department demonstrates a good use of our “blended service solution” which is aimed at utilising different types of interpreting to improve patient care whilst keeping costs to a minimum. Video, telephone and face to face is available for our patients.

Feedback

We capture feedback where possible to help inform ongoing development and learning.

The image below shows star ratings given by our staff about the service provided:



98% of staff rated our services between good – excellent

**1 star feedback relates to patients who have not attended their appointment and/or connection issues which have been fully investigated by Word360’s quality team.*

Feedback has been instrumental in the way in which we have developed our partnership with Word360 and developed delivery of services.

Comments from staff include:

Romanian: “*thank you for staying extra to ensure the patient went to theatre*”

Polish: “*great service very polite*”

Pashto: *“Found a translator for me extremely quickly after requesting one for the same day. The translator was polite, professional and patient. Excellent service.”*

Kurdish: *“Was put through to a translator very quickly, translator was polite and professional.”*

Spanish: *“Highly recommended, very professional, very caring and empathetic with the patient which is a plus while they are going through treatment”*

Turkish: *“Amazing service, thank you so much”*

Digital support – on demand and pre-booked

In our last report we shared that we had launched an innovative trial with two **WoW devices** (Wordskii on Wheels) which are dedicated units with an integrated tablet which enables staff to access video interpreters at the point of care.

Following a successful trial in our Emergency Departments (with positive staff feedback and improved outcomes with patients spending less time in our departments) we purchased more machines and we now have eight machines across our three main hospital sites.

Our machines support communication in many ways and this includes cultural sensitivity, immediate and flexible support. Making information available immediately can help to ensure that patients can access clear and timely communication during their care. The machines offer choice for our staff and we still have access to other means of interpreting – telephone and face to face where this is appropriate.

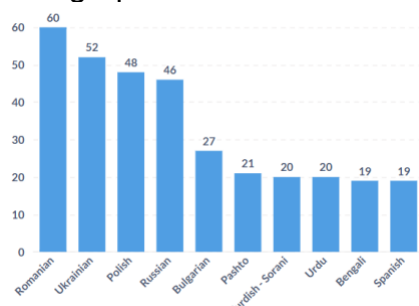
It is important to us to make sure that every patient is included in and is part of their healthcare conversation.

Wordskii-on-wheels usage

From 1st September 2024 – 31st August 2025, there have been a total of **364** bookings made through the WoW devices.

Top Languages

The graph below shows the main languages that are requested at the Trust.



As our communities continue to diversify, numerous NHS patient surveys have highlighted that language barriers are the primary reason non-English speaking patients hesitate to access healthcare services.

By supplying the Trust with the WoW devices, Word360 has helped Worcester Acute engage with harder to reach communities. The benefits of these devices ensure that there are:

Additional efficiencies:

- **Improved Patient Experience:** immediate support for patients at the point of need
- **Increased Fulfilment:** Tap into a wider pool of qualified interpreters from across the whole UK, meaning rare languages can be filled quicker.
- **Reduced cancellations:** Full support of 24/7 human operators should there be any issues, rather than cancelling and rebooking patients for another time.



Our Volunteering Offer

We continue to develop our volunteering offer in response to the needs of our patients, carers, staff, and the local community.



The image above shows some of our volunteers in 2025 – including Bertie, one of the three Therapy Dogs at our hospitals.

We are pleased to have developed working partnerships with other hospitals, including members of the Foundation Group (George Eliott Hospital, South Warwickshire University Foundation Trust and Wye Valley NHS Trust). Our joint working includes initiatives such as improved patient flow and discharge and we have also developed national partnerships to focus on improved End of Life support (see below).

To meet the needs of the Trust and to support a positive patient experience, we actively welcome applications from anyone interested in volunteering (aged 16+ currently) and people can apply to volunteer online, by filling in a paper application form, by emailing us or by contacting us by telephone.

Alongside the NHS national volunteer portal developed in 2024 our volunteering opportunities will be available on a newly developed local portal managed by a local VCSE organisation. We have been instrumental in the development of this portal over the last 12 months, which will open volunteering opportunities to a wider audience.

We currently have **337** volunteers supporting patients, carers and staff across our hospital sites.

In 2024-2025 some of the ways we have developed our volunteering offer includes:



New roles – Discharge Response Service Spotlight:



We launched our Discharge Response Volunteer Service (DRVS) at Worcestershire Royal Hospital (WRH) at the end of January 2025.

Working alongside the National Charity Helpforce who helped us to initiate the service, our volunteering team developed and now delivers the service at WRH and the Alexandra Hospital, Redditch.

The image on the left shows *Bryan, Discharge Response Volunteer (DRV)*.



One of our volunteers at the Alexandra Hospital Redditch (ALX) said:

“7,000 steps, 22 pharmacy bags containing medication for 31 patients, 3 activity log sheets ... keeping me busy and fit, what’s not to like”

The image on the left shows Jessica, another of our DRVs

Discharge Response Volunteers (DRVs) provide a vital link between ward staff and pharmacy teams, helping speed up the discharge process for patients who are ready to leave hospital and go home – for example, by helping to ensure medication gets to the patient in a timely manner.

DRVs is a brand-new way of working for us and we have been excited to be able to launch this new volunteering programme with the support of the national charity Helpforce, and our Worcestershire Acute Hospitals Charity.



The poster above right was created to raise awareness about the service for our staff – pictured are two of our DRVs.

The image below shows new volunteers ready to start as a DRV, after a recruitment day.



Since the DRV service launched in January 2025 DRV volunteers have delivered and supported over **2,300 patients** and provided over **250** hours of productivity gains for our staffing teams across our two hospitals.

This demonstrates the effectiveness of the service.

To compliment the DRV service, the volunteer team are also working in partnership with Age UK Wyvern, offering support to patients up to 6 weeks post-discharge, via referral to their Home from Hospital service.



The image on the left, is from a leaflet that we give to our patients to raise awareness of support that is available to them when they leave hospital.

Showcase:

We made a short film about our service which we shared on social media. You can [Watch it here](#).

Our film had over **24,000 hits in the first 24 hours** and has had **61,000 hits** by 25th September 2025.

Our Peony End of Life Volunteer Service

We would like to thank the Worcestershire Acute Hospitals Charity for supporting us to launch a new service to support patients who are on an end of life pathway.

We recruited a Peony Volunteer Coordinator who joined the Volunteering Team in April 2025 to develop the new Peony End of Life Service at WRH.



The Peony volunteers will provide support, comfort, and companionship to patients who are on an end-of-life pathway, and those closest to them. This service is supported by the Lead Nurse Specialist Palliative and End of Life team.



The service has been made possible not only through the generous support of the Worcestershire Acute Hospitals Charity but also through our partnership with The Anne Robson Trust, which is a national charity which passionately believes that no-one deserves to die alone.



Pictured above are our first team of Peony volunteers, with our End-of-Life staff Facilitators and Stephen Collman, Acting Chief Executive Officer at Worcestershire Acute Hospitals Trust.

Through collaboration with hospital trusts nationwide, the Anne Robson Trust have endeavoured to make a difference to people's experience of death. They are

committed to helping healthcare providers build teams of specially trained volunteers who volunteer their time to be with those who are at the end of their lives.

Volunteers have been recruited to offer company and reassurance to those who are dying, and practical and emotional support to their loved ones. This includes sitting with a patient, reading to or with them or simply holding their hand. Their role also involves offering refreshments to those closest to the patient and the opportunity for loved ones to take a break from being at the bedside; the role also involves signposting families to other services, such as the Chaplaincy team or Bereavement Services Team.

NHS Rainbow badge

Our volunteers have continued to take part in our LGBTQ+ Rainbow Badge training. One volunteer who is Wayfinder and A&E volunteer at the ALX, said about the training:



"The training was a bit of an eye-opener and worthwhile.

I feel sure that much of the information will be useful both in this volunteering role and outside the hospital environment."

Kindness in Action:



The image on the left shows our new Trust values.

The Trust introduced new Values training in July 2025 and our volunteers attended the first training sessions. We will continue to promote the training to existing and new volunteers to help ensure that the Trust is a non-judgemental and safe space for everyone.

Breastfeeding Friends:

Working with the Infant Feeding midwives, we recruited a new cohort of 11 **Breastfeeding Friends** in 2025.

Our targeted recruitment which takes place each year is supported by our Midwife Infant Feeding Advisor, Becky (pictured left), who said:



"Our breastfeeding friend volunteers are an added tier of support to our new mothers and families during their stay in Hospital.



The BFF volunteers who have undertaken comprehensive training specifically to support breastfeeding mothers, offer reassurance, empathy, and practical guidance at a vulnerable time. Their presence brings comfort, encouragement, and confidence, helping the mother feel supported and empowered at the start of her breastfeeding journey”.

Pictured is our 2025 Breastfeeding team.

Volunteer Training:

We now run regular information and induction days to support an efficient recruitment process. This means that we can reduce the average recruitment time from 6 to 3 weeks.

With the support of the Knowledge and Library Services Manager we have developed a partnership with the Libraries team to support volunteers who are digitally excluded. Volunteers can access the libraries across the 3 sites to complete their on-line training. We also offer training support from a long-standing volunteer. This support reduces anxiety and stress for volunteers who don't have IT skills, further supporting a positive recruitment process.

This ensures that digital poverty or a knowledge gap are not barriers to recruitment. This is an example of the accessible and bespoke recruitment process on offer.



One of our partnership online training days is pictured on the left.

Inclusive:

We continue to promote **“Adopt a Volunteer”**, which is our Trust-wide initiative to create a welcoming and inclusive culture across our hospitals for all volunteers on every volunteer placement.

The image on the right, shows a ward team, which includes ward staff, their volunteer and the Volunteer Manager.



Thank you:



We encourage staff working with volunteers to ensure they feel valued and part of the team.

We have included just one example of the many Thank You cards that are sent to our volunteers. The example on the left is from Emma, Ward Manager on the Acute Medical Unit at WRH who thanked one of her volunteers and the Volunteer Manager on behalf of all the volunteers on her ward. **Pictured left.**

Saying ‘Thank You’ – our volunteers work tirelessly to support patients and staff and it is important to us that our volunteers feel valued and appreciated.

Some of the ways we do this are:

- We hold Cake ‘n chat events throughout the year at each site to invite volunteers to meet together and with us
- We celebrate the achievements of our volunteers as part of National Volunteer Week across our hospitals every June
- We invite volunteers to a Christmas Celebration and Appreciation event in December every year
- We try to find other ways to say thank you throughout the year, including in our new “Hot Off the Press” weekly email bulletin.



The images above show some of our volunteers at two of our Cake ‘n Chats at WRH and at Brunos coffee shop in Redditch.



The image on the left is taken from “Volunteer Week 2025” and shows Janet Volunteer Manager, Sarah Chief Nursing Officer and Stephen, Managing Director. They are pictured at the Volunteer “Appreciation Station” at WRH.

Volunteer Week 2025 highlights:

During Volunteer Week some of our activities were:

- We invited all Trust volunteers to join us for a lunch at the three sites
- The Chief Nursing Officer wrote a special thank you to all volunteers
- Our Volunteer tweets received 17,391 hits on social media
- Our volunteers were given a special thank you gift
- Executive Directors “walked an hour” in the shoes of volunteers – and carried out volunteer shifts alongside our volunteers
- We held “appreciation stations” at each site

Staff across our hospitals also took the opportunity to tell us what their volunteers mean to them. We have included a couple of examples below and we share all feedback received directly with our volunteers:

Pharmacy thank you:

The pharmacy team gave the volunteers samosas and a heartfelt thank you. The Lead Pharmacy Technician at WRH said:



“I’d just like to reiterate my appreciation for the Discharge Response Volunteer’s response to our delivery requests, the response time is fantastic.

What once might have taken a nurse away from other vital jobs or might have piled up in Dispensary until a member of our staff could justify stepping away from other tasks, is now collected and delivered rapidly. Please pass on my thanks to all volunteers”.

A and E Thank you:



A&E volunteers were given sunflowers to say thank you for their hard work and support, ensuring patients and their loved ones have a hot drink and food to sustain them during difficult times.

The Emergency Department Matron at WRH said:

“Just to say that the volunteer service that is provided to ED is excellent and I would be lost without them The volunteers who answer the phones and take queries etc are invaluable and this takes such a pressure off the clinical team as our patients relatives are not kept waiting trying to call the department. It is super helpful.

Then we have the volunteers who go round making drinks and meeting our patients etc, what a kind team. They are so helpful and it is

also so reassuring to know we have people seeing our patients and helping them I have recently been told that some are volunteering in ED on Christmas day sacrificing time with their own families to help others - simply amazing. Please pass on my thanks to the team as we wouldn't manage without them. Thank you to all".

Weekly Mail

Our volunteers asked us for updates about training, latest information and important dates, so we launched "**Hot off the Press**", which we send in a weekly email. This is one way we now regularly communicate key information with our volunteers such as Rainbow Badge training, new roles, any planned works on site and Cake n Chats for example.

Christmas party 2024

In December 2024, members of the volunteer team, The Worcester Acute Hospitals Charity, Chief Nursing Officer (CNO), Deputy Chair of the Board and Chaplaincy were joined by our volunteers (including Therapy Dogs Casper and Aero) to celebrate their work and recognise their contribution to the Trust.



Appreciation Certificates were presented by the CNO to those who had volunteered **more than 500 hours**, a free prize draw of gifts were donated by the Trust Board of Directors and the Worcestershire Acute Hospitals Charity, our Christmas quiz provided friendly competition and each volunteer was given a small token of the Trust's appreciation.

These events are vital to retain volunteers which enables us to continue to build the service and support patients, staff and their loved ones - which in turn enables us to offer a wide range of volunteering opportunities.

Deliveries:



Volunteers worked alongside the Worcestershire Acute Hospitals Charity, delivering presents to every patient in hospital during December 2024.

This supports with patient wellbeing and can help reduce feelings of social isolation during a potentially vulnerable time. The volunteers are pictured on the left with Worcestershire Acute Hospitals Charity staff.

Volunteer service promotion and service improvement

The service continues to grow with a higher number of Trust volunteers, more roles offered and an increase in the number of hours that volunteers give.

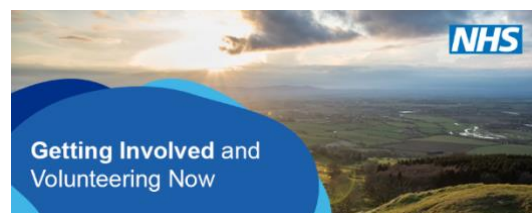
The Volunteer team attended the Worcester Volunteer Fayre in June with the new End-of-Life facilitator.



They promoted volunteer opportunities at Worcestershire Acute Hospitals Trust and networked with other voluntary service and statutory organisations from across the county.

The team with their stall and promotional banners is pictured to the left.

We have continued to co-produce a quarterly volunteer newsletter in 2024-2025 with the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust. The newsletter promotes the latest volunteering opportunities, important updates and spotlights on individual roles and volunteer achievements. The image above right, is taken from the cover of the newsletter. Copies of the newsletter can be obtained from our Volunteering team.



Information sharing

There is a dedicated “Hot Board” noticeboard at WRH near to the main entrance, which promotes volunteering across the Trust.

The Hot Board was funded by the Hospitals Charities and we would like to extend our thanks for their ongoing support. Support from the Charity helps us to pay for volunteer uniforms and refreshments at events for example. The Hot Board can be seen in the image above.



Our Volunteer Survey



We asked our volunteers for feedback about their experiences with the Trust. Our new annual survey will be repeated each June to identify themes, trends and drive quality improvement.

One of the questions we asked was: **Do we take care of our volunteers?**

And our volunteers said.....**Yes:**

- ✓ 100% of volunteers said they feel supported by the Volunteering Team and by staff in their department or ward.
- ✓ 100% said they would recommend the Trust as a place to volunteer.

We will continue to raise awareness of the Trust volunteering service and to offer volunteering opportunities to the communities we represent.

Volunteering Data

We continue to submit quarterly data to NHS Volunteering England following introduction of mandatory monitoring in July 2024 for all NHS Trusts.

The data we gather and submit shows that we have a diverse age range of Trust volunteers with 49% of volunteers under the age of 60.

We also gather and submit data on health conditions and disability, ethnic groups, religious belief and sexual orientation for example. We can draw on this data to support our understanding about how accessible our volunteering opportunities are and how we can continue to best meet the needs of our volunteers.

Overview of our work in caring for people with Dementia

As part of **Dementia Action Week 2025**, the Dementia Team hosted a successful week of engaging and impactful events across the hospital, celebrating awareness and understanding of dementia.

Our two information stands created valuable opportunities for conversations among staff and with patients, relatives, and visitors, allowing us to answer questions, offer guidance, and signpost individuals to the appropriate services.

A particular highlight was our **Move to Music** session, where patients joined in light exercise and movement to their favourite tunes. These sessions are now a regular part of our weekly **Dementia Friendly Enrichment Sessions**. Music therapy is known to have powerful benefits for people living with dementia. It can boost mood, reduce anxiety, stimulate memory, and enhance connection and engagement. The week's activities culminated in a lovely garden get-together on the Acute Frailty Unit, where **vintage singer** Melissa Hollick returned to perform for patients, families, and staff. With music, refreshments, and delicious cakes, the atmosphere was filled with joy and nostalgia, creating special moments of connection and shared enjoyment. The week not only raised awareness but also demonstrated how meaningful activities like music can truly brighten lives.

The singing, dancing and food and drinks were enjoyed by everyone, and it really helped lift the mood and support our patients' wellbeing. A couple of patients even asked if we could do this every week! Your team helped patients feel even more that their hospital stay was worthwhile and because of activities like this one, we in AFU feel that we will continue to have Exemplary in Patient Experience.

Raymond, Ward Manager on the Acute Frailty Unit.



Dance for Dementia – Movement That Matters

As part of our Dementia Enrichment Programme, we have introduced **Dance for Dementia**, an activity designed to get patients moving to music in a way that feels safe, enjoyable, and inclusive. Whether seated in a chair, resting in bed, or standing on their feet, **everyone can take part**. The focus is not on ability but on participation, connection, and joy.

Movement, however big or small, plays a vital role for people living with dementia during their hospital stay. Gentle exercise can:

- Help maintain strength, balance, and flexibility.
- Stimulate memory and mood through rhythm and music.
- Reduce feelings of restlessness, agitation, and isolation.
- Encourage social interaction, laughter, and a sense of belonging.

By embedding dance and movement into everyday care, we are supporting patients to feel more like themselves, even in the unfamiliar hospital environment. This simple but powerful activity demonstrates our commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion — ensuring that every person, regardless of ability, has the opportunity to engage, express themselves, and experience moments of joy.



The image on the left was taken during one of our Dance for Dementia days. We would like to express our thanks to the family for giving their consent for us to share this precious photograph.

The two images below left and centre were also taken on our Dance for Dementia days and shows how our staff take part with our patients. We have also included bottom right, an image of one of our patients using our interactive activity resources.



The image on the right highlights how our staff are engaged and involved in our Dance for Dementia days and below we have shown a photograph of our singer who performed for our patients.

We would like to express our thanks for everyone who has supported our activities.



Dementia Care Advocates



The image on the left shows a group of our Dementia Care Advocates who came to our first Celebration Day.

In June 2025, we proudly extended Dementia Action Week and hosted our very first **Dementia Care Advocate Celebration Day** at the Co Lab, Kidderminster.

A total of 26 newly nominated **Dementia Care Advocates** (representing a wide variety of roles across the organisation) came together to share their experiences, ideas, and inspiring initiatives, focused on enhancing the hospital experience for patients living with dementia.

One of the highlights of the day was exploring enrichment programmes and discussing how even the smallest, simplest activities can make a powerful difference to a patient's sense of calm, connection, and confidence while in hospital. Our poster is illustrated below.



We reflected on the role these meaningful moments play in supporting well-being and how engaging patients through sensory, creative, and social activities can help reduce anxiety, support memory, and even slow cognitive and physical decline.

This celebration was not just a recognition of our advocates, but a reminder of the ongoing impact that person-centred care and thoughtful interaction can have on patients, families, and teams alike.

Formal Complaints Overview

Between 1 September 2024 and 1 September 2025, the Trust received 791 formal complaints, compared with 807 in the previous year. While this represents a slight decrease, overall complaint levels have remained broadly consistent in recent years. Variations may reflect how the Trust records informal complaints, MP enquiries, and complaints linked to patient safety incidents.

During this period, six complaints were recorded with discrimination or equality as the primary issue:

- Disability – 3 (including 2 relating to hearing impairments)
- Race – 2
- Sexuality – 1

Although the number of complaints explicitly citing discrimination remains low, these figures should be interpreted with care. Categorisation is often subjective, and discrimination or bias may contribute to complaints without being recorded as the primary theme, particularly where clinical concerns are prioritised. Current systems also do not consistently capture complaints relating to discrimination directed towards staff.

The Trust is strengthening how such issues are identified, coded, and monitored to build a more complete and reliable picture of the impact of discrimination and health inequalities. Above all, the Trust remains committed to listening to all concerns and using feedback to improve the experience of both patients and staff.

Ethnicity

Ethnic origin codes are recorded on the Patient Administration System (PAS). For complaints, this information is transferred to Datix to support monitoring of the ethnic diversity of patients who are the subject of complaints. The ethnicity of the complainant—if not the patient—is not currently recorded.

For comparison, complaint data has been aligned with the 2021 Census for Worcestershire:

Ethnicity Grouping	% of Complaints	2021 Census Data
White Category Total	96.5%	93.8%
Asian or Asian British	2.0%	3.1%
Black or Black British	0.2%	0.7%
Mixed / Multiple Ethnic Group	0.5%	1.9%

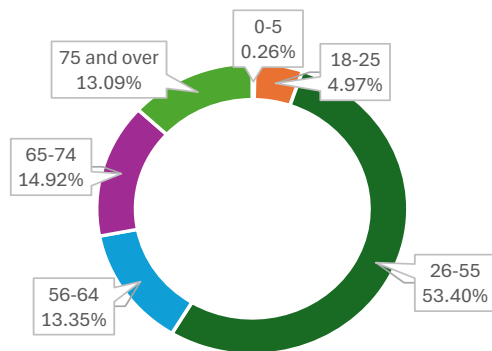
The majority of patients who were the subject of a complaint identified as White, a higher proportion than Worcestershire's demographic profile. This highlights the importance of ensuring that patients from all backgrounds feel confident to raise concerns and can easily access the complaints process.

Age Range

In 2024–25, the majority of complaints related to patients aged 26–55 and 75 and over. Together, these groups accounted for around 60% of all complaints, consistent with data from 2023–24 and the three preceding financial years. This can be seen in the diagram below.



2024-25



The higher proportion of complaints involving patients aged 75 and over may reflect Worcestershire's older population profile, which is above the national average. This pattern also aligns with national data, where both working-age adults and older adults are most frequently represented in complaints.

Reporting and Action

Complaints data and themes are reviewed by Divisions and reported to the Patient, Carer and Public Engagement Steering Group, which includes representatives from the Patient and Public Forum, Healthwatch, the Worcestershire Association of Carers, and Trust staff including the Patient Experience Lead Nurse and Complaints Manager. This forum provides oversight, shares good practice, and ensures that lessons are acted upon. Divisions also share learning locally to ensure timely responses to patient feedback.

The Complaints Manager is working closely with the Patient and Public Forum (PPF) to ensure that changes in policy and process are shaped by public feedback, and that the patient voice is embedded in Trust practice. The PPF has also contributed to reviewing letter templates and response quality, helping to ensure that complainants receive clear, accessible and respectful replies.

The Complaints Team continues to integrate complaints learning into Trust-wide improvement programmes. Increasingly, complaints are recognised as a valuable complement to the Patient Safety Incident Response Framework (PSIRF), highlighting safety and patient experience issues that overlap with incident investigations. Aligning learning from both areas ensures that actions are proportionate, achievable and delivered in a timely way.

Responding to Emerging Themes

- **LGBTQIA+ rights:** Following the recent Supreme Court ruling, there has been an increase in complaints relating to LGBTQIA+ issues, including gender-inclusive language, bed management policies for transgender and non-binary patients, and the use of rainbow symbols on patient information displays. The Complaints Team is working with the LGBTQ+ Network, the Chief People Officer, and the Supreme Court Ruling Task Group to ensure responses are respectful, consistent, and aligned with the Trust's commitment to inclusivity for all staff and patients.
- **Neurodiverse patients:** The Trust has seen an increase in complaints about reasonable adjustments for neurodiverse patients. While patients with learning disabilities are supported by Learning Disability Nurses and identified

within patient systems, similar infrastructure for neurodiverse patients is less well established. In response, the Trust has:

- Invited neurodiverse patients to visit the Emergency Department at the Alexandra Hospital to identify helpful adjustments.
- Initiated a Patient Safety Incident Investigation to improve awareness and communication of reasonable adjustments in Emergency Departments, with plans to extend learning to radiology, fracture clinics and other unscheduled care areas.
- Continued delivery of the Oliver McGowan Training.

Additional Improvement Work

Between September 2024 and September 2025, the Trust introduced several initiatives to improve the accessibility, quality and timeliness of the complaints process:

- **Accessibility:** New online forms and QR codes were introduced alongside existing routes (postal mail, telephone and email). These make the service more inclusive for patients using assistive technology, those with visual impairments, and non-native English speakers, while also signposting to the PALS service.
- **Easy Read Complaints and Concerns Leaflet:** Developed with input from people with lived experience, this leaflet will support patients to access the complaints process independently and with confidence.
- **Regional collaboration:** The West Midlands Complaint Network has been reinstated, enabling shared learning with other NHS organisations, some of which serve more diverse patient populations. This provides valuable insight into how the Trust can better support patients from marginalised groups in navigating both their care and the complaint process.
- **Safeguarding escalation:** A new process is being developed jointly by the Complaints and PALS Team and the Head of Safeguarding, ensuring that any safety or wellbeing concerns identified in complaints are escalated to the most appropriate service. This strengthens assurance that the most at-risk patients receive timely support, both in hospital and in the community.

Future Priorities

The Complaints Team is refining how complaints are triaged and coded, supported by training programmes such as the Rainbow Badge initiative and Unconscious Bias training. In parallel, we are exploring more advanced systems to improve the recording, reporting and analysis of discrimination and health inequality themes.

Once revised policies, processes and templates are embedded, the Trust plans to review its approach to collecting feedback from complainants. This will include exploring additional data relating to marginalised groups and their experiences, ensuring that future learning is informed by a broader and more inclusive evidence base.



Getting Involved:

If you have a patient story to share and / or you would like to work with us to help us continue to develop accessibility, inclusion, diversity, equity and equality for and with our patients, carers and local communities, please contact us via our Patient Voice and Involvement team at: wah-tr.wahpatientvoice@nhs.net

If you would like to find out more about volunteering, please get in touch with our Volunteering Team at: wah-tr.volunteers@nhs.net. You can also find details about our volunteering service and how to contact us on our website.

Thank you.

Summary

This report shows the work our teams have undertaken over the past year to make our hospitals fairer, kinder, and more welcoming for everyone. The actions we take aim to change how people feel when they come to work, receive care, or visit our hospitals.

We have made progress in many areas. We have improved support for disabled colleagues and created new spaces for wellbeing. Our staff networks are growing, and projects like reciprocal mentoring and the Neurodiversity Hub will help people understand each other better.

At the same time, we know there is still more to do. Our data shows that some groups of staff still face unfair treatment, bullying, or barriers to career progression. The gender pay gap also remains a challenge.

Looking ahead, we will continue to build on the progress we have made. We will embed our Anti-Racism Charter, strengthen leadership training, and improve support for disabled staff.

Patient-facing inclusion has also advanced, with expanded accessibility guides and interpreting services.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion is central to our values and our mission to be the best team we can be for our patients, each other and our partners.

