

NHS England Deans' Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Committee Summary 2024

Introduction by Professor Namita Kumar, Regional Postgraduate Dean and Chair of the English Deans' EDI Committee.

In 2020, the English Deans' established the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee whose remit was to consider EDI-related issues raised in multiprofessional education and training. This was in line with their Multiprofessional Quality responsibilities and the [Education Quality Strategy and Framework](#). In January 2022, an [inaugural EDI annual report](#) was published describing how information and feedback would be brought together to understand what NHS England do well and what we have yet to do.

Our [2023 EDI annual report](#) built on progress and areas of focus. This 2024 summary provides an update to drive forward action. The summary is aimed at internal colleagues within NHS England and stakeholders involved in education and training of learners and educators.

The ambition of significantly increasing education and training set out in the [NHS Long Term Workforce Plan](#) makes this priority even more important. In addition, the [Enhancing Doctors' Working Lives Annual Report](#) recognises the significant importance of work and training systems on the lives of doctors in training.

We must ensure high-quality education and training that is equitable and inclusive is available to all healthcare professionals at each stage of their career. Tackling discrimination and ensuring learners are placed in safe and supportive environments needs to remain an urgent priority to develop a sustainable future workforce.

Each year, NHS England runs the [National Education and Training Survey](#) (NETS) and [Provider Self-Assessment](#) (SA). NETS provides measures of learner satisfaction, available opportunities and the frequency of bullying and harassment. Self-Assessment provides an understanding of the actions being taken to address emerging concerns by the large placement providers across England.

National Education and Training Survey 2023

The NETS takes place annually and is one of the ways NHS England is working to improve the quality of education and training. It comprises of 31 core questions focusing on NHS England's Education Quality Framework standards for delivering high quality education and training in the practice learning environment. The questions are organised in five themes: Induction, Clinical Supervision, Facilities, Learning Opportunities and Teamwork.

The NETS and reports produced from it are a key part of NHS England's Education Quality Strategy. From an EDI perspective, we consider these indicators in relation to the following protected characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marital status
- Race including nationality and ethnicity
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

Source: *Discrimination* (www.gov.uk)

Over 38,000 learners responded to the autumn 2023 survey. Across all the measured demographics, those who chose not to disclose protected characteristics rate the lowest satisfaction practice learning experience across all healthcare professions.

2023 NETS Responses Characteristics of Learners

- **Age:** 66% of learners were under 35.
- **Disability:** Learners reporting a disability increased from 6% in 2022 to 13% in 2023.
- **Gender:** Learners identifying as female were the highest respondent group (65%), male at 30%, chose not to disclose at 4% and less than 1% of learners identified as non-binary or did not identify with any of the listed genders.
- **Marital Status:** 47% of learners had never been married/in a civil partnership and 34% are married/in a civil partnership.
- **Ethnicity:** White (53%), Asian (19%), Black (10%), Mixed (3.5%), Arabic (2.5%), Other (1%), and Chinese (1%).
- **Nationality:** 72% of learners were from the UK/Ireland with 23% from the rest of the world (ROW) and Europe.

- **Religion:** 36% selected “No religious belief” followed by “Christian” at 29%.
- **Sexuality:** 7% of learners described themselves as gay, lesbian or bisexual

Many of the 2023 NETS respondents were Postgraduate Doctors in Training (55.75%, 21,229) and represented the highest proportion of ethnically diverse learners alongside dental undergraduate and postgraduate learners. Nursing, the second highest responding professional group (14.74%, 5,612) represented the highest Black learner response rate at 23.08% (1,290).

13.43% of respondents (5,110) selected that they had a disability. For the first time on NETS, respondents were able to select a disability type: physical, mental health, and/or neurodiversity. Neurodiversity and mental health were the most common types of disability (2,348) selected.

Discrimination by Patients

The NETS revealed that learners were more likely to experience patient discrimination if they were between 25 – 35 years of age, from outside the EU/EEA and UK/Ireland, from Asian, Black, Chinese, Mixed and other ethnicities, and reported their religion as Buddhist, Hindu, Sikh or Muslim. According to 2023’s NETS results, 16% (6,216) of learners have experienced discriminatory behaviour from patients and 7% (2,945) have experienced discrimination from staff.

From the learners who experienced discrimination, only 19% reported it despite 94% (35,985) of all learners reporting they know how to raise concerns with 81% (31,156) feeling comfortable to do so. Of the learners who experienced discrimination and reported it, 54% stated the organisation did not deal with it effectively. Further analysis of all the characteristics may reveal groups who may require targeted support and intervention.

Discrimination by Staff

86% of all NETS respondents reported that staff were welcoming, supportive and friendly throughout the practice placement or training post. Learners with protected characteristics report similar overall results of 94-96%.

When learners were asked if they “*have experienced discrimination by other staff in this practice placement or training post?*” 87% of all respondents stated no. Learners with protected characteristics reported more experiences of discrimination. Of the learners who did report their experiences with discrimination, 33% (n = 226) felt their organisation dealt with their complaint.

Sexual Safety

In September 2023, NHS England launched its first ever [Sexual Safety Charter](#) in collaboration with key partners across the healthcare system. Signatories to this charter

commit to taking and enforcing a zero-tolerance approach to any unwanted, inappropriate and/or harmful sexual behaviours within the workplace, and to ten core principles and actions to help achieve this.

5.42% (2,063) of NETS respondents have reported experiencing or witnessing (5.82%, 2,217) unwanted, harmful and/or inappropriate sexual behaviours.

The [NETS 2023 reporting tool](#) is available for those who would like to look more closely into the learner survey feedback with the NETS 2024 findings available in spring 2025.

NHS England Provider Self-Assessment (SA)

The NHS Education Funding Agreement requires all placement providers to provide regular assurance to NHS England confirming compliance with the Agreement and NHS England's Education Quality Framework.

Launched in 2022, the Provider Self-Assessment is the first multi-professional and nationally consistent provider self-assessment. It offers a crucial insight into the quality of healthcare placements from a provider's perspective of 222 trusts in England. The assessment questions focus on the six NHS England Education Quality Framework domains and NHS Education Agreement's key performance indicators.

98% of providers report having policies and processes in place to manage discriminatory behaviour from patients. Providers report a high-level of success with having policies and processes in place to manage discriminatory behaviour (98%) and ensuring reporting mechanisms and data collection take learners into account (95%).

The NETS data (2023) identifies areas for improvement on how relevant Trust policies and processes are signposted to learners and reported incidents of discrimination are managed. From 2022 to 2023, there was an increase in positive responses across all EDI specific questions on the Provider self-assessment.

Most notably, providers have reported a 15% increase in providing international graduates with specific inductions and ensuring reporting mechanisms and data collection take learners into account (from 91.2% to 95.9%). In 2023, we introduced the opportunity for providers to share their EDI successes and challenges within their organisation. 216 providers commented and reported successful EDI activity across multiple domains.

The most frequently reported successful EDI activities are Training; Improving Staff Experience; and Development Programmes. Less often cited are Learning Resources or Tools; Data; Employer Engagement, Outreach, and Partnership; Funding; and Organisational Review or Assessment of EDI.

Educational Good Practice

There is an ongoing commitment to sharing EDI educational good practice initiatives, resources and strategies across the Postgraduate Dean network and to continue to grow a repository on [our website](#) of good practice. This allows for sharing initiatives with an EDI theme that are worthy of promoting and sharing.

Conclusion

Together, NETS and Provider Self-Assessment provide valuable EDI intelligence and views on the performance of learning environments in meeting quality standards

It is reassuring to see that most learners with protected characteristics feel colleagues are supportive; however, the data does show that some groups are more likely to face discrimination. A proportion of learners who report it are not satisfied that it has been dealt with by the organisation.

Postgraduate Deans and their Quality teams will review this data for their regions and their programmes and instigate relevant actions as part of their Quality Improvement Plans to ensure continuous improvement in EDI issues for all learners

Discrimination by patients is most likely to occur based on ethnicity and religion. The reported levels of discrimination from other staff in the workplace remains low but when it does occur many choose not to report it and of those, only one third felt the discrimination had been dealt with.

Ensuring that reports of discrimination are taken seriously and dealt with in confidence and appropriately is likely to improve the satisfaction of learners in the future. We, as NHS England have an ongoing commitment to make EDI data across our work meaningful and accessible and we are committed to sharing EDI educational best practice.

We will continue to develop our knowledge of the EDI challenges faced within education and training of our NHS workforce and continue to target our actions to effect positive change for learners and our teams.

We commit to continuing to collaborate with stakeholders and partners to deliver this important agenda, The aim is to improve and enhance the quality of training, reduce discrimination with the aim of improving retention and increase morale so we can deliver our collective purpose to improve care for patients. This can be supported by improving transparency regarding EDI and actions being taken along with demonstrating good practice initiatives.

Further information

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