

Workforce Race Equality Standard (WRES) Action Plan 2025–2027

(RAG: On track / improving Requires sustained focus Off target / priority)

Review Date: 01/10/2026

WRES Dashboard – Performance and Targets at a Glance

Indicator	2025 Actual	2026 Target (Halfway to Best)	2027 Target (Best or Parity)	Trend / Comment	RAG
1. Percentage of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) staff in each pay band compared with the overall workforce	16.8% (Bands 7+) vs 30.8% overall	23.8%	30.8%	Improving - Focus on senior representation and leadership pipeline.	
2. Relative likelihood of White applicants being appointed from shortlisting compared to BME applicants	1.67	1.34	1.00	Widened disparity - Inclusive recruitment and panel diversity in progress.	
3. Relative likelihood of BME staff entering a formal disciplinary process compared to White staff	0.91	0.96	1.00	Below parity – Still positive. Maintain EDI case reviews.	
4. Relative likelihood of White staff accessing non-mandatory training and continuing professional development (CPD) compared to BME staff	0.95	0.98	1.00	Near parity - Sustain equal access monitoring.	
5. Percentage of staff experiencing harassment, bullying or abuse from patients, service users or the public	25.5%	20.1%	14.6%	Improving but above best - Strengthened “Respect” and ally programmes.	
6. Percentage of staff experiencing harassment, bullying or abuse from other colleagues	17.0%	14.3%	11.7%	Downward trend - Continue Inclusive Ally rollout and leadership culture work.	
7. Percentage of staff believing the organisation acts fairly regarding career progression or promotion	55.2%	61.4%	67.6%	Missed target - Renewed career development and fairness initiatives.	
8. Percentage of staff experiencing discrimination at work from managers, team leaders or colleagues	9.94%	7.2%	4.4%	Gradual improvement - Increased accountability and competence training.	
9. Percentage difference between BME representation on the Board and the overall workforce	11.8% Board vs 30.8% workforce	21.3%	30.8%	Significant gap - Inclusive recruitment and succession planning underway.	

Dashboard Summary

- **3 indicators (3, 4, 5)** are on a positive trajectory.
- **3 indicators (1, 6, 8)** are improving but need sustained attention.
- **3 indicators (2, 7, 9)** remain off target and are priority areas for 2025–2027.

Quarterly progress reports will be reviewed by the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Steering Group, with formal oversight from the Trust Board and consultation with the Cultural and Ethnic Minority Network (CEMN).

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Introduction

Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust (MTW) is committed to promoting race equality, tackling discrimination, and ensuring that all staff, regardless of background experience fairness, inclusion, and opportunity in the workplace.

This two-year Workforce Race Equality Standard (WRES) Action Plan builds on the Trust’s 2023–2025 progress and aligns with the wider Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) strategy. It incorporates the most recent NHS Staff Survey and Electronic Staff Record (ESR) data, setting ambitious but achievable targets for 2026 and 2027.

All targets are benchmarked against the **Best Performing Acute Trust** nationally, with interim targets for 2026 set at the halfway point.

Indicator 1 – Percentage of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Staff in Each Pay Band Compared with the Overall Workforce

Narrative Summary

In 2025, BME staff make up 30.8% of the overall workforce, while representation at Bands 7 and above is 16.8%. The focus for 2025–2027 is to close this gap and achieve parity with the wider workforce. Where no national benchmark exists, “Best” is defined as parity with the Trust’s own workforce demographics.

Performance Table

Year	Actual	2026 Target	2027 Target	Gap to Parity
2025 (Bands 7+, BME %)	16.8%	23.8%	30.8%	-14.1 pp

Action Plan

Objective	Action	Reason	Timeframe	RAG
Improve representation of BME staff at senior pay bands (Band 7 and above).	Monitor ESR data quarterly and identify priority areas for action.	To ensure proportional representation across senior levels.	Ongoing	
Strengthen leadership pipeline for BME staff.	Introduce targeted leadership and mentoring programmes with Organisational Development.	To build readiness for progression into senior roles.	Q2 2025 – Q1 2027	

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Indicator 2 – Relative Likelihood of White Applicants Being Appointed from Shortlisting Compared to BME Applicants






Narrative Summary

In 2025, White applicants were 1.67 times more likely to be appointed than BME applicants. This is a deterioration from 2024 (1.12). The focus for 2025–2027 is to restore parity through enhanced inclusive recruitment training, consistent use of EDI Recruitment Representatives, and strengthened panel accountability.

Performance Table

Year	Actual	2026 Target	2027 Target	Gap to Best
2025	1.67	1.34	1.00	+0.67

Action Plan

Objective	Action	Reason	Timeframe	RAG
Increase applications from BME candidates.	Maintain inclusive advert and job description checklist.	To widen applicant diversity.	Ongoing	
Support BME confidence to apply.	Deliver application and interview skills sessions via Career Development and CEMN.	To increase representation and readiness.	Ongoing	
Ensure fair recruitment practice.	Continue use of EDI Recruitment Representatives on panels.	To promote fairness and consistency.	Ongoing	
Reduce bias in decision-making.	Expand Inclusive Recruitment Training.	To embed inclusive behaviour in managers.	Q1 2025 – Q4 2026	
Strengthen governance for senior appointments.	Require HR Business Partner EDI compliance checks for Band 8b+.	To ensure transparency in senior hiring.	Ongoing	

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Indicator 3 – Relative Likelihood of BME Staff Entering a Formal Disciplinary Process Compared to White Staff



Narrative Summary

In 2025, the relative likelihood score is 0.91, meaning BME staff are slightly less likely to enter formal disciplinary processes than White staff. The Trust aims to maintain parity and transparency through sustained review and monitoring.

Performance Table

Year	Actual	2026 Target	2027 Target	Gap to Best
2025	0.91	0.96	1.00	-0.09

Action Plan

Objective	Action	Reason	Timeframe	RAG
Maintain fairness in disciplinary cases.	Monthly Employee Relations (ER) Case Review Panel with EDI oversight.	To ensure equitable decision-making.	Ongoing	
Identify themes and promote learning.	Share learning quarterly with the Workforce Committee.	To prevent recurrence of inequitable practices.	Ongoing	

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Indicator 4 – Relative Likelihood of White Staff Accessing Non-Mandatory Training and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Compared to BME Staff




Narrative Summary

In 2025, White staff were 0.95 times as likely as BME staff to access non-mandatory training, suggesting near parity. The focus is to sustain equitable access and ensure all staff are aware of opportunities.

Performance Table

Year	Actual	2026 Target	2027 Target	Gap to Best
2025	0.95	0.98	1.00	-0.05

Action Plan

Objective	Action	Reason	Timeframe	RAG
Ensure equitable access to non-mandatory training.	Review ESR data annually to identify trends by ethnicity.	To identify and address access barriers.	Q4 2025 – Q4 2027	
Improve visibility of learning opportunities.	Promote training via CEMN and internal communications.	To ensure all staff are aware of CPD offers.	Q2 2025 – Q1 2027	
Embed equality monitoring within OD planning.	Integrate analysis of ethnicity data into OD reports.	To ensure sustained equity.	Ongoing	

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Indicator 5 – Percentage of Staff Experiencing Harassment, Bullying or Abuse from Patients, Service Users or the Public




Narrative Summary

The 2024 NHS Staff Survey reported 25.5%, improved from 26.7%, but still above the Best Performing Acute Trust rate (14.6%). The focus is on staff protection, cultural competence, and consistent zero-tolerance messaging.

Performance Table

Year	Actual	2026 Target	2027 Target	Gap to Best
2025	25.5%	20.1%	14.6%	10.9%

Action Plan

Objective	Action	Reason	Timeframe	RAG
Improve staff understanding of cultural differences.	Deliver Cultural Competence Programme.	To strengthen communication and empathy.	Q3 2025 – Q4 2027	
Strengthen allyship and reporting confidence.	Launch Inclusive Ally Programme.	To promote intervention and peer support.	Q2 2025 – Q4 2026	
Reinforce zero-tolerance communication.	Implement “Respect” campaign for public audiences.	To set clear behavioural expectations.	Q1 2025 – Q4 2026	

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Indicator 6 – Percentage of Staff Experiencing Harassment, Bullying or Abuse from Other Colleagues



Narrative Summary

The 2024 NHS Staff Survey reported 17.0%, down from 20.5% in 2023, but still above the Best Performing Acute Trust (11.66%). The focus 2025–2027 is to strengthen inclusion, allyship, and leadership culture.

Performance Table

Year	Actual	2026 Target	2027 Target	Gap to Best
2025	17.0%	14.3%	11.7%	5.3%

Action Plan

Objective	Action	Reason	Timeframe	RAG
Reduce bullying and harassment.	Embed Inclusive Ally Programme Trust-wide.	To promote positive culture.	Q2 2025 – Q4 2026	
Develop compassionate leadership.	Include inclusion modules in Exceptional Leaders Programme.	To embed empathy and accountability.	Ongoing	

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Indicator 7 – Percentage of Staff Believing the Organisation Acts Fairly Regarding Career Progression or Promotion




Narrative Summary

In 2024, 55.2% of staff believed the organisation acts fairly, compared with 67.6% at the Best Performing Acute Trust. The gap is wider for BME staff (49.6%) than for White staff (57.9%). The focus is to rebuild confidence through leadership development and visible progression opportunities.

Performance Table

Year	Actual	2026 Target	2027 Target	Gap to Best
2025	55.2%	61.4%	67.6%	12.4%

Action Plan

Objective	Action	Reason	Timeframe	RAG
Increase confidence in fairness.	Continue “Share Your MTW Journey” campaign.	To highlight success stories of BME progression.	Q2 2025 – Q4 2026	
Improve access to leadership pathways.	Partner with OD and CEMN to expand programmes.	To develop readiness for promotion.	Ongoing	
Build inclusive management capability.	Provide targeted training on progression support.	To ensure equitable appraisals.	Q3 2025 – Q2 2027	

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Indicator 8 – Percentage of Staff Experiencing Discrimination at Work from Managers, Team Leaders or Colleagues




Narrative Summary

The 2024 NHS Staff Survey reported 9.94%, reduced from 12.6% in 2023 but still above the Best Performing Acute Trust rate (4.44%). The focus remains on inclusive leadership, accountability, and cultural competence.

Performance Table

Year	Actual	2026 Target	2027 Target	Gap to Best
2025	9.9%	7.2%	4.4%	5.5%

Action Plan

Objective	Action	Reason	Timeframe	RAG
Strengthen inclusive leadership capability.	Deliver Cultural Competence Programme.	To improve understanding and reduce bias.	Q3 2025 – Q4 2027	
Embed accountability for inclusion.	Incorporate EDI objectives into appraisals.	To drive behavioural change.	Q2 2025 – Q4 2026	
Reinforce zero tolerance.	Update and reissue Anti-Discrimination Policy.	To reaffirm expectations.	Q1 2025 – Q2 2025	

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Indicator 9 – Percentage Difference Between the Board Voting Membership and the Overall Workforce




Narrative Summary

In 2025, 11.8% of the Board voting membership were BME, compared with 30.8% of the overall workforce, a gap of -19.1 percentage points. The focus for 2025–2027 is to improve through inclusive recruitment, diverse panels, and long-term succession planning.

Performance Table

Year	Actual	2026 Target	2027 Target	Gap to Parity
2025	11.8%	21.3%	30.8%	-19.1 pp

Action Plan

Objective	Action	Reason	Timeframe	RAG
Improve BME representation on the Trust Board.	Annual publication of Board diversity data.	To ensure transparency.	Annual	
Embed inclusive recruitment for Board appointments.	Diverse panels and targeted outreach.	To attract underrepresented candidates.	Q3 2025 – Q4 2027	
Strengthen succession planning for senior roles.	Identify and support internal BME leadership potential.	To ensure sustainable progress.	Q2 2025 – Q1 2027	

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Monitoring and Governance

Progress will be reviewed quarterly by the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Steering Group, with updates to the Trust Board and Workforce Committee. The Cultural and Ethnic Minority Network (CEMN) will play a central role in reviewing impact and supporting implementation. The plan will be refreshed annually to reflect updated data, national guidance, and local staff feedback.

Top Three Priorities for 2025–2027

1. Inclusive Recruitment and Promotion Practices

MTW will prioritise reducing disparities in recruitment and progression outcomes (Indicators 2 and 7). This includes expanding Inclusive Recruitment Training, embedding EDI Recruitment Representatives, and ensuring equitable access to development programmes.

2. Senior Representation and Leadership Pipeline

Improving representation of BME staff at Band 7 and above (Indicator 1) remains a key strategic goal. MTW will strengthen mentoring, leadership development, and targeted progression pathways to build a sustainable pipeline of diverse leaders.

3. Board Diversity and Accountability

Closing the 19.1 percentage point gap between Board representation and the workforce (Indicator 9) is essential for trust-wide cultural alignment. The Trust will maintain transparent reporting, use inclusive selection panels, and embed succession planning to ensure long-term change.