



Our people, equity, diversity and inclusion strategy

2021/22 to 2023/24

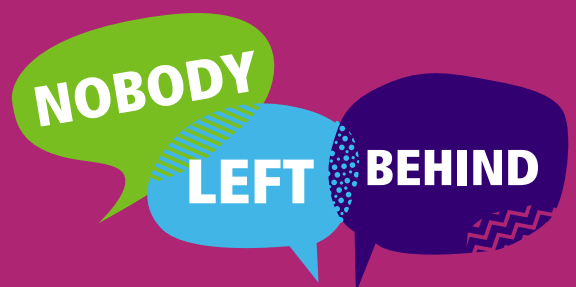
Updated February 2022



My name is Olufunmilola and I have grown up used to being called Funmi and that is okay. I am working on owning my name and identity. Without owning your name, you are not seen, your identity is eroded until you are a shadow of what you could be or become. I am proud of my heritage and my culture. I am proud and grateful to be a citizen of Nigeria and the United Kingdom.

Olufunmilola Balogun,

Chair of KCHFT's Black, Asian and
Minority Ethnic Network





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Nobody left behind –
such a powerful phrase and
I should clarify, not mine.

Introduction

The name of our strategy came from the chair of our Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Network chair in a blog to colleagues.

In it, she shared her lived experience of what it's like to work for the NHS, the discrimination her children face at school and the very different life experience for her, compared to our white colleagues.

We know this is a reality faced by not only other colleagues of different races, but across every protected characteristic.

In developing Nobody left behind – our people, equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) strategy, the question we have all had to ask ourselves was simple, even if the answer is far from a simple one and a journey we need to take.

How do we make all our colleagues feel safe and empowered to bring their full selves and potential to work?

To answer this question and develop the strategy, we have worked with our senior leaders, staff partnership forum, staff networks and taken account of the findings of the Workforce Race

Equality Standard and Workforce Disability Equality Standard (WRES and WDES) reports KCHFT produces each year, together with the feedback you have given us.

At Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust (KCHFT) we know a motivated, inclusive and valued workforce helps deliver high-quality patient care, increased patient satisfaction and better patient safety. It also leads to more innovation across our organisation and helps us to continually improve.

Inclusive organisations get the best from their people and in turn benefit from creative and high-performing teams. Our workforce should reflect the communities we serve and as we provide services in east London, East Sussex and in Kent and Medway, we are fortunate to have a diverse population.

So, this strategy sets out our commitment, building on what we have already achieved, to help make KCHFT the best employer for our people with equal access to career opportunities and fair treatment in the workplace.



Victoria Robinson-Collins
Director of People and Organisational Development



As someone who identifies as LGBTQ+, having an inclusive and welcoming workplace is important. Bringing our whole selves to work can be scary because you are never sure of the reaction you will face when coming out.

Sexuality and gender can play a huge part in people's identities and can be supported and celebrated in the workplace.

Thomas Fentem,
Chair of the LGBTQ + Network

What does equity, diversity and inclusion mean to KCHFT?

What is equity?

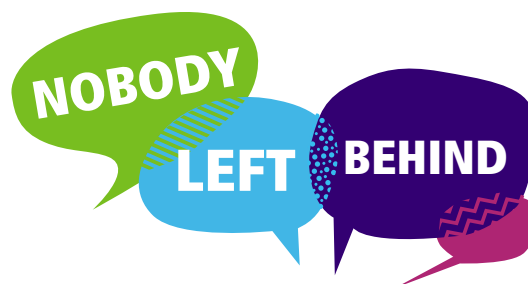
Equity doesn't mean treating everybody the same – it means being fair and making sure everyone is treated individually and in a way that is appropriate for them.

What is diversity?

Diversity means being inclusive of all differences and including everyone. It includes our visible differences, such as gender, race and ethnicity, and disability; and our non-visible differences, such as sexual orientation, religion, unseen disabilities, different perspectives and thought processes, education, family status and age.

What is inclusion?

Inclusion means valuing and celebrating differences and encouraging an open culture for our colleagues and patients. This means individuals are supported, respected, engaged, have a voice and are able to develop skills and talents in line with the trust's vision and values.





The Disability and Carers' Network raises awareness of the complexities and challenges having a disability or caring responsibilities can bring. It brings an opportunity to build a better disability-inclusive, accessible and sustainable world. Statistics say up to 15 to 20 per cent of the workforce develop a disability during their working life. Yet we don't always know about the experience others have had, be that a positive or negative one. The network helps access support and advice from others who have a lived experience of disability.

Jaishree Narayanan,
Chair of the Disability and Carers' Network

About this strategy

This strategy, which will be overseen by our Board, has been developed to support the delivery of our people strategy. It will support the pledge we have made to be the best place to work for our people.

To achieve this, we will:

- engage our people
- look after our people
- develop our people
- treat our people fairly
- have compassionate, inclusive and effective leaders for our people
- and have people ready for the future.

Our people are our most valued asset. Being the best employer for them means making sure all our colleagues experience fairness and equity at work.

This needs to start at the point they apply to work for KCHFT and continue with the way they are treated by all colleagues they come into contact with. It must extend to their experience at work, opportunities for development, progression and promotion; open and honest conversations, voicing opinions and speaking up about concerns.

One of the vehicles we are using to empower colleagues and help to change this mindset is our Reimagine Team Programme.

Reimagine team working is part of our journey at KCHFT to always be better in everything we do.

It's a coaching approach that helps to empower teams to excel in whatever role they are in and focus on the health and wellbeing of colleagues; a significant part of this work is about making sure every one feels valued, trusted and has pride in what they can do so people can flourish.



My story is personal for me. It may upset people, but it's a reality for me. I was born here and my children too, this is my country, but I am made to feel that I don't belong here. Banter and joke comments are not ok and nobody should be made to feel how I am. Those comments impact and make it difficult to bring your whole selves to work.

Saun Singh,
member of the Black, Asian and
Minority Ethnic Network

Context and background

The Equality Act 2010 places a duty on us as a public sector organisation to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, promote equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people with and without a protected characteristic. These three aims of the general equality duty apply to each of the nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. At KCHFT we will go beyond compliance with our duty and this strategy sets out how we will do that.

In July 2020, NHS England published – We are the NHS: People Plan for 2020/21 – action for us all. It details the expectations our people should have of their leaders and colleagues and explains

the importance of an open and inclusive culture. Under the heading of “Belonging to the NHS” it sets out that the EDI focus should be on:

- recruitment and promotion practices to make sure the workforce is representative of the communities we serve.
- health and wellbeing conversations, which include a discussion about equality, diversity and inclusion
- leadership diversity must reflect the overall BAME workforce
- tackling the disciplinary gap to eliminate disparity in entry to disciplinary processes
- governance that helps our staff networks contribute to and inform the decision-making processes.



Every woman and person with ovaries that produce oestrogen can experience menopause. How and when they experience peri-menopause and menopause and the length of time it will be for, is a unique experience for each person.

Understanding the peri-menopause and menopause better will mean everyone can be supported better, it will mean everyone feels included and brings their whole self to work.

Natalie Parkinson,
Chair of the Menopause Network

Where are we now

KCHFT has four active networks. Our BAME, disability and carers, LGBTQ+ and menopause networks work very closely together and have a rapidly increasing membership that works with the organisation in making suggestions and positive contributions towards helping the trust improve. Together, they have organised successful events and worked with partner organisations to participate in events, such as Pride and Black History Month celebrations.

We have recently signed up to the Stonewall Diversity Champions Programme, which is intended to support organisations to develop a framework to achieve inclusivity not just for LGBTQ+ colleagues but for the wider workforce too.

In 2020, KCHFT was shortlisted as finalists in the Recruitment Industry Disability Initiative (RIDI) Awards in the category of Disability Confident. We also continued our work with Kent Supported Employment looking at identifying roles that were suitable for candidates with learning disabilities, having successfully recruited more than 20 colleagues through this partnership already. In April 2021, we achieved Disability Confident Leader status and are now regarded as an organisation that can provide help to others wanting to attract and recruit disabled people by offering flexibility and the right adjustments to enable them.



"Being able to freely be myself without fear of persecution or being negatively perceived by my peers means absolutely everything to me. "Knowing that my employer and colleagues not only support but they also celebrate my differences and my experiences as an LGBTQ+ person and adding value to the team as a whole is vital. Knowing this genuinely makes me want to go above and beyond in my role to support both patients and my colleagues."

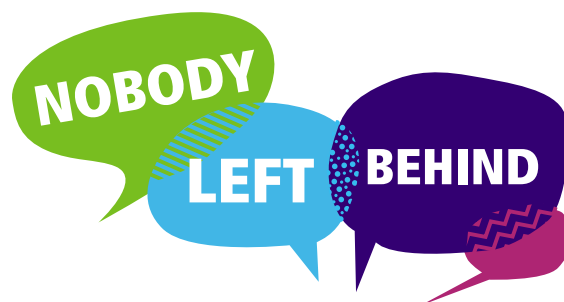
Matthew O'Riordan,
member of the LGBTQ + Network

Our WDES results are positive in many respects, particularly in the measures that look at recruitment and the development of our workforce.

In collaboration with our BAME colleagues, we have been working on a Kent and Medway mentoring programme with partner trusts across the system. This will enable colleagues to access mentoring support from a wider cohort with differing levels of experience and knowledge. KCHFT is working with the NHS Leadership Academy on introducing a Reciprocal Mentoring for Inclusion Programme that will give colleagues with a protected characteristic the opportunity to work with leaders to identify what needs to change across the organisation to bring equity and inclusivity to all so everyone's differences are embraced.

Our WRES results are showing positive improvements with national recognition in one area and colleagues indicating the trust provides equal opportunities for career progression and promotion.

There are areas where we need to make improvements and we will work hard to do so. This strategy sets out the actions we believe we need to take to realise our ambition to be the best employer for each and every one of our people.



Our equity, diversity and inclusion charter

Empowerment

All colleagues with a protected characteristic will be engaged in conversations about their wellbeing at work, career progression and what inclusion and equity means for them. Colleagues should be considered primary stakeholders as employees of the trust in respect of decision making that impacts them in the workplace and in the communities, they serve and live in. There should be clear representation in recruitment processes, workforce groups and other groups making decisions in the organisation that would have impact on colleagues with protected characteristics. There must be clear legal and ethical justification for excluding any colleague. Where direct participation in decisions is not possible, there should be involvement to the extent that is possible.

All colleagues will be asked what they want as the outcome in any conversation that involves their progress, career and this directly informs what happens. They will be directly involved in any decision-making process that involves them.

Protection

The trust is bound by the public sector equality duty to consider the impact of its policies and decisions on those with protected characteristic. At KCHFT, we will go beyond this. There is a duty for all colleagues with a protected characteristic to protect themselves and seek the support they need to protect themselves. KCHFT will work with the staff networks to support colleagues who feel less able to protect themselves. We have a zero-tolerance approach to issues affecting psychological, physical, mental and emotional safety at work.

All colleagues will get help and support to report abuse and discrimination whether it is aimed at them or a colleague. Colleagues will receive help to be an active participant in the process to the extent that they work without the fear of negative consequences.

Prevention

Prevention of harm or abuse in form of discrimination, microaggression and marginalisation will be the primary goal to achieve inclusion. We

will make sure processes are in place to prevent harm. We will reduce the risk of isolation, neglect and unconscious bias operating through our processes, such as recruitment and selection for promotion.

Every colleague will receive clear and simple information on what abuse in the form of microaggression, discrimination and marginalisation are. Colleagues will know how to recognise the signs and how to seek help.

Proportionality

Responses to concerns raised will reflect the seriousness of the issues. Concerns will be managed in the most effective and efficient way.

Colleagues will be confident that HR and management will get involved in a way that supports their interests and only as much as is necessary.

Partnership


We will work collaboratively across the organisation to remove hierarchical barriers and achieve the common goal of being the best employer where employees feel able to bring their whole self and potential to work. This partnership will create an open culture of trust and engagement using a bottom up approach.

Colleagues know their line manager; colleagues and the organisation treat their personal and sensitive information confidentially. They are confident their line manager and the organisation will work together to support their career aspirations and what is best for them in the context of the trust strategy and priorities.

Accountability

We will be open and transparent. We will work with our stakeholders being clear on how our responsibilities towards employees are being met equitably.

All colleagues understand the role of everyone involved in their day-to-day life in the work place.



This strategy is an opportunity to start realising the way the trust impacts our lives as our employer. As a carer, I have multiple responsibilities on a daily basis, along with working full time. These pressures need to be acknowledged, with tangible outcomes that can make things better. I have a duty to put my patients first in my role, but where does the line get drawn when my family need me.

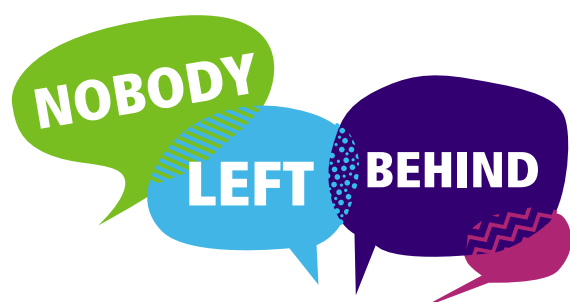
Anonymous,
member of Disability and Carer Network

The strategy

Our six themes and aims

At KCHFT, we value all our colleagues as unique individuals and we welcome the variety of experiences they bring. Our aim is to be recognised by our colleagues, patients and service users as a non-discriminatory organisation. We believe everyone should be treated equally regardless of their race, sex, gender identification, sexual orientation, national origin, native language, religion, age, disability, marital status, citizenship, genetic information, pregnancy, or any other characteristic protected by law. We are committed to achieving this ambition and will continue to evolve this strategy until we have done so.

Each of the six themes has an ambition and a program of work to deliver them over the next three years. Each theme is described in more detail in the following sections, together with our ambition and measures of success. Progress will be monitored by a board sub-committee – the Strategic Workforce Committee.



Nobody left behind: Our EDI Strategy 2021 to 2024

Alignment to 'We are the NHS' and 'NHS People Promise'	Theme	Ambition	Area of focus
Belonging to the NHS: We each have a voice that counts.	Engaging our people.	People feel their contributions are valued. They feel confident to speak up, that their concerns will be listened to and acted upon.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting colleagues to speak up. Range of communications to share lived experiences and encourage inclusion. Celebrating difference.
Looking after our people Belonging to the NHS: We work flexibly.	Looking after our people.	Our people feel well supported and have the flexibility and adjustments they need to support their health or caring needs and to balance work and home priorities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flexible working options are well known. Caring needs are met. Holistic wellbeing conversations happen.
New ways of working, growing for the future: We are always learning.	Developing our people.	Targeted assistance for our colleagues will be given to support them develop and achieve their career ambitions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear career pathways. Career conversations.
Looking after our people Belonging to the NHS: We each have a voice that counts.	Treating our people fairly.	We are an employer known for our inclusive culture. We celebrate diversity and our workforce represents the communities we serve. We have an equitable environment, free from harm, a just culture that is safe and respectful.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reciprocal mentoring. Cultural awareness training. A just culture, civil and respectful culture Recruiting EDI change agents.
Belonging to the NHS: Compassionate and inclusive leadership.	Compassionate and inclusive leadership.	Our senior leaders' model inclusive behaviours within their own teams and encourage team members to act as diversity and inclusion champions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leadership diversity. Information and education. Accountability.
Belonging to the NHS. Growing for the future.	Our people of the future.	We will attract and recruit colleagues who represent the communities we serve, celebrating difference and the benefits a diverse workforce brings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attraction and recruitment. Training and making sure interview panels are representative of our diverse communities.

Engaging our people

Our ambition: People feel their contributions are valued. They feel confident to speak up, that their concerns will be listened to and acted upon.

Year 1

- Equity, diversity and inclusion communications strategy is developed and implemented.
- Consistent messaging to make sure colleagues know how and when to speak up.
- Share blogs, experiences and stories from colleagues with lived experience.
- Work with staff networks to increase membership diversity and engage with groups across the trust to achieve intersectionality.
- Promote the networks to colleagues to become allies.
- Networks are supported to develop action plans and governance frameworks.
- Staff networks are invited to engage in decision-making on issues affecting EDI.
- Encourage the use of pronouns.

Year 2

- Refresh values and behaviours to make sure they explicitly celebrate difference.
- Make sure the trust's Equality Impact Analysis (EIA) process is followed for all new and revised policies and service transformation plans take equity fully into consideration.

Year 3

- KCHFT will have fully embedded co-production. This will make sure colleagues can design, plan, assess and deliver outcomes together with senior executives and management.

We will know we have it right when:

- Staff survey results show a sufficient increase to make us the best trust for our people feeling confident and safe to speak up.
- Staff engagement indicator places KCHFT as the best performing trust and our staff score is equitable for all colleagues.
- EDI communications strategy is in place.
- Staff networks are promoted and each has a governance framework in place.
- Refreshed values and behaviours are in place.
- Agreed EIA process in place.
- Pronouns widely used.

Looking after our people

Our ambition: Our people feel well supported and have the flexibility and adjustments they need to support their health or caring needs and to balance work and home priorities.

Year 1

- Flexible working options are available to all colleagues consistent with the needs of the service and the way people lead their lives.
- Flexible working options are promoted.
- Analysis of leavers' information to identify trends in our workforce that need to be addressed.
- Information about the options and support available to carers is readily available and well promoted.
- Improvements to flexible working identified through engagement in national Flex for the Future Programme with NHS England/Improvement are identified and embedded.

Year 2

- A "take a break" campaign to make sure colleagues are getting adequate rest and screen breaks.
- Health and wellbeing conversations are embedded and extend to the impact discrimination, bullying and harassment can have on physical and mental health.
- A disability and carers' policy is in place.
- A review of all HR policies with Stonewall to make sure EDI is embedded.

Year 3

- Review leave and benefits packages to make sure our offer takes account of cultural and religious needs.

We will know we have it right when:

- Year-on-year improvement in the theme of health and wellbeing in the staff survey with the aim of retaining our status as the best in our comparator group and beating the national average.
- Staff survey results show 90 per cent of respondents believe adequate adjustments have been made for them at work.
- A disability and carers policy is in place.
- All HR policies have been reviewed by Stonewall and the feedback has been incorporated.



Developing our people

Our ambition: Targeted assistance for our colleagues will be given to support them develop and achieve their career ambitions.

Year 1

- Make sure colleagues in our talent programme are selected from a pool of diverse colleagues.
- Introduce BAME mentoring programme.
- Promote opportunities for shadowing and secondment within and outside the organisation specifically targeted at BAME colleagues.
- All colleagues can access acting up opportunities.
- Promotion of and coaching to colleagues attending leadership programmes, such as Ready Now Programme, Nye Bevan Programme etc.

Year 2

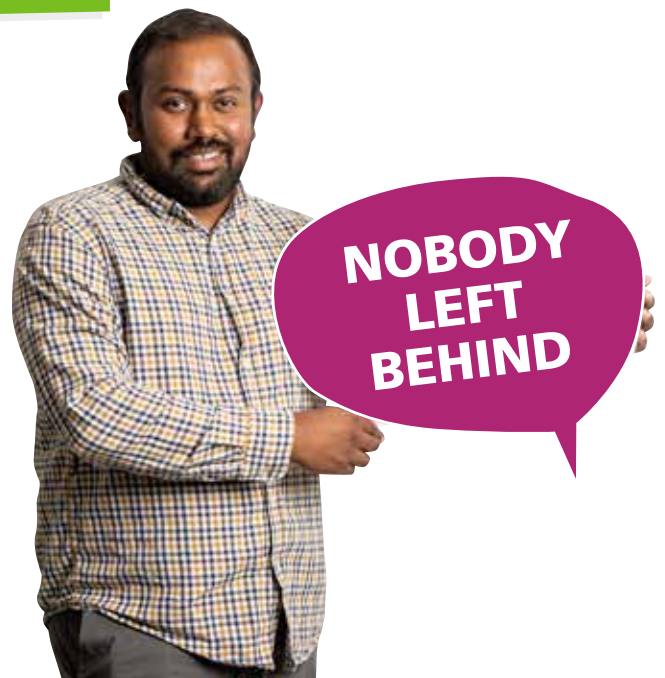
- All colleagues will have work allocated to them in an equitable way, which will be monitored by the organisational development business partners.
- All our people conversations and our supporting documentations, such as 1:1 and objective setting recognise and allow for difference.

Year 3

- Greater representation in talent pools and succession plans embedded across the organisation.
- All colleagues who have participated in the Talent Programme are signed up to the KCHFT aspire mentoring programme.

We will know we have it right when:

- Staff survey results show all colleagues believe KCHFT provides equal opportunities for career progression or promotion.
- 20 per cent of colleagues in the talent programme are from a BAME background,
- All colleagues wishing to take part in the BAME mentoring programme have had the opportunity to.
- All acting up roles are made available to all colleagues to apply for.
- 100 per cent of colleagues who have been through the talent programme are signed up to the aspire mentoring programme.



Treating our people fairly

Our ambition: We are an employer known for our inclusive culture. We celebrate diversity and our workforce represents the communities we serve. We have an equitable environment, free from harm, a just culture that is safe and respectful.

Year 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Resolution and accountability framework is embedded.• Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) process is reviewed and improved.• Cultural awareness training will be rolled out across the organisation.• Events that celebrate difference will be arranged and promoted to encourage all colleagues with a protected characteristic to bring their whole selves to work.
Year 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All senior leaders will have attended inclusion training.• A just and learning culture is embedded across the organisation and incorporates civility and respect.• A staff toolkit will be launched to support conversations about race and empower colleagues to challenge observed racism.• An EIA will be conducted on all HR policies and procedures in the preceding 12 months.• Launch an updated toolkit to support conversations that extend beyond race, which include disability, LGBTQ+ issues, gender and age and empower colleagues to challenge all forms of discrimination and harassment where they observe them.
Year 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• EDI change agents.• All colleagues will have an objective linked to EDI in the annual appraisal.

We will know we have it right when:

- Staff survey results show colleagues with and without protected characteristics report a similarly positive experience of work.
- The proportion of colleagues who have personally experienced harassment, bullying or abuse at work is lower than 10 per cent in all categories and is comparable for this with and without a protected characteristic.
- Cultural awareness training is embedded and available to all.
- A toolkit to support conversations about race has been launched.
- All HR policies have an EIA conducted at the time the policy is refreshed.
- All colleagues have an EDI objective included in their appraisal objectives.

Compassionate and inclusive leadership

Our ambition: Our senior leaders model inclusive behaviours within their own teams and encourage team members to act as diversity and inclusion champions.

Year 1

- Launch reciprocal mentoring for inclusion programme.
- Stonewall Diversity Champions Programme.
- Board members and senior leaders routinely demonstrate their commitment to promoting equity and act as diversity and inclusion champions by including EDI in all interactions with their teams and colleagues.

Year 2

- Managers support their staff and teams to work in culturally competent ways within a work environment free from discrimination.

Year 3

- Increase accountability so leaders at all levels are supported in and measured against their contribution to EDI.

We will know we have it right when:

- Staff survey results for morale and staff engagement show us as the best in our comparator group and beating the national average.
- 40 colleagues have been through the reciprocal mentoring programme
- Five KCHFT jobs have been advertised on the Stonewall jobs board.
- All managers have an EDI objective included in their appraisal objectives.



Our people of the future

Our ambition: We will attract and recruit colleagues who represent the communities we serve demonstrating we are a model employer, celebrating difference and the benefits a diverse workforce brings.

Year 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recruitment process and communications are reviewed through an equity, diversity and inclusion lens.• Targeted and creative recruitment campaigns on alternative platforms to attract colleagues with protected characteristics.• Further collaboration with Kent Supported Employment to recruit more of their clients.• Values-based screening is used to identify future colleagues with the behaviours that fit KCHFT expectations.• Managers will have inclusive recruitment training, which incorporates coaching and interview skills.• Ethnically diverse shortlisting panels will be used.• Integrate the EDI strategy into trust performance management meetings.
Year 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Equity, diversity and inclusion induction training is updated.• Six high impact actions to overhaul recruitment and promotion practices is implemented in full.
Year 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All colleagues with a protected characteristic feel the trust is representative of them at all levels.

We will know we have it right when:

- Applicants from a BAME background or have a disability, are as likely as comparator colleagues, to be appointed from shortlisting.
- All colleagues feel KCHFT is representative of them at all levels.
- Five jobs have been advertised on job boards specifically targeting candidates from a BAME background, who have a disability or identify as LGBTQ+.
- An additional five colleagues have been recruited through Kent Supported Employment.
- Values-based recruitment is being used on to recruit to all KCHFT roles.
- All KCHFT managers with a responsibility for recruitment will have completed inclusive recruitment training.
- EDI is reported in Executive Performance Review meetings.
- EDI training at induction is refreshed.



Do you have feedback about our health services?

Phone: 0800 030 4550, 8.30am to 4.30pm, Monday to Friday

Text: 07899 903499

Email: kentchft.PALS@nhs.net

Web: www.kentcht.nhs.uk/PALS

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust

Trinity House

110-120 Upper Pemberton

Eureka Park

Ashford

Kent TN25 4AZ

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Our values

Compassionate Aspirational Responsive Excellent