

Annual report on progress towards meeting the Trust's published equality objectives under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)

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The equality objectives in place during 2023 were approved by the Trust February 2021 and published on the Trust's website as part of our commitment to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED).

Under the PSED we are required to review our equality objectives at least every four years, and to report on progress towards them annually. Ongoing reporting to the Board, as a standing agenda item in Personnel committee meetings. This report concludes and finalises this reporting across the year to give a view of progress across 2023.

Trustees are asked to:

Review the report and to ask any questions

Confirm that the report should be published on the DNEAT website as the annual report on progress, to comply with PSED and demonstrate our commitment in this area

Our Equality Objectives 2020-24

1. The Trust will gather, record and analyse equalities data effectively for all staff, and for those responsible for governance, in relation to race, disability, gender and age, to support the setting of meaningful Trust-wide and academy level equality and diversity targets
2. The Trust will improve the recruitment, retention and progression of any currently under-represented groups of staff in relation to disability, race and age (numerical targets to be set once objective 1 is completed)
3. The Trust will produce a gender pay gap action plan, in order to reduce the gender pay gap and to increase the representation of different genders in roles where they are currently under-represented across the Trust
4. In line with its three-year strategic plan, the MAT will audit and transform its provision for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities so that we reduce the attainment gap between pupils with SEND and all children with SEND nationally by at least half:
 - from 7% to within a range of 0% to 3% at key stage 2
 - from 8% to within a range of 0% to 4% at key stage 1

Update on objective 1

- Previous issues with collection of equalities and other data remain, in that these data are not required in order to enter staff on to the HR system
- Although there has been an increase in data entry of characteristics, when compared to the previous EPM system (for example at 41% in relation to ethnicity) a decision was taken to gather staff data pro-actively once more

- Appendix 1 gives a summary of the new data collected (83% coverage of DNEAT staff achieved in the current pro-active 2023 data collection), along with some national comparators for age and ethnicity. It should be noted that the only other national comparator that exists is for gender and was used in separate, statutory, gender pay-gap reporting (available on DNEAT website)
- It shows that 94.6% of our workforce are white British, in line with the figure of 94.2% from our previous data collection (see 2022 report)
- It shows a small but slightly increased proportion of staff from a non-white background (2.4% currently compared to 1.5% in 2022 report)
- Overall, in relation to ethnicity, the data continues to show a very low proportion of DNEAT staff from non-white British ethnic groups. As in 2022, this doesn't reflect the children and young people in our academies. It is clear that this demographic has undergone significant change over recent years and that this is likely to continue going forwards
- Currently White British pupils make up 81.4% of our children and young people in DNEAT, compared to 83.3% in 2022
- The concern remains that this lack of representation perhaps does not fully 'ensure young people leave school prepared for life in Modern Britain' (quote from DfE website in relation to the purpose of teaching British values)
- HR was brought 'in house' in 2021 but to date the HR system has not been able to require staff equality and diversity data as planned, hence the need for data gathering exercise in 2023 as well as 2022

Next steps

- The CEO has worked with the new HR lead (in post from October 2023) to establish a programme for adding data gained in the 2023 data collection exercise to HR software by 31 August 2024
- This, in conjunction with cultural and process changes in relation to adding new starters, will mean data will be available for future reporting and to enable the Trust to understand its workforce better
- As the collected data is input into the new HR system, better and more accurate comparisons will be able to be made by job role

Update on objective 2

- Progress with this objective in 2023 has been more limited than 2022, due to a range of factors
- Key to this has been the internal changes and functioning of the HR service that the Trust buys into
- A transition of key personnel has now taken place and a new HR Lead is in place (as of October 2023)
- In 2024 the CEO will pick up some of the previous activity relating to this area, particularly in relation to the rollout of blind recruitment Trust-wide and profiles of existing DNEAT staff, to be used in recruitment, to encourage applicants from currently under-represented groups

- Work with the DBE led ethnicity group which will, amongst its work, seek to develop networks of BAME staff to provide mutual support across a wider pool of schools (i.e. beyond DNEAT/Norfolk) where a 'critical mass' of staff can be found
- After feedback from a diverse range of leaders, and as a result of the additional research carried out by the Trust CEO that identifies the systemic nature of some of the barriers facing applicants from more diverse backgrounds, the Trust has decided to remove the element of objective 2 that relates to the setting of numerical targets
- The Trust remains committed to removing barriers that are in its control and to re-establishing the work to encourage a more diverse workforce

Next steps

- Extend, improve and fully embed previously identified strategies (for example, roll out blind recruitment to all DNEAT vacancies)

Update on objective 3

- The Trust carried out the required gender pay-gap review in March 2023 in line with PSED and is considering the need for a full action plan, which is a longer-term piece of work
- Trustees recognised that some of the potential actions identified in relation to objective 2 will also support representation by gender. For example, profiles of male Teaching Assistants and female Headteachers

Next steps

- Finalise decision on need to develop and complete gender pay-gap action plan and update objectives accordingly

Update on objective 4

- A senior leader within the Trust has responsibility for SEND and SEND has been one of four key strategic focus areas in 2022/23
- The senior leader has commissioned external SEND expertise to deliver professional development to key staff, including SENCOs across the Trust
- A significant range of Trust-wide activity, in relation to SEND, has been successfully completed in 2023:
 - Headteachers and SENDCOs have been supported to better apply for SEND funding
 - AGEP visits show systems relating to SEND are now established in schools and this is reflected in comments relating to SEND in Ofsted reports
 - Portfolios of evidence are allowing schools to demonstrate progress for all pupils with SEND and, with Trust support, to take action where progress is limited
- Additional Trust-wide SENCOs have been identified as SLEs to support the Trust's work in this area and have received quality training regarding conducting a SEND review in school
- The majority of schools have now had a review carried out by the external expert, with the SLE SENCOs supporting.

- As a result of the above strong progress is also being made in relation to the progress of children with SEND who have an EHCP;
- These children, in both 2022 and 2023, have out-performed similar children nationally at KS2. This means that in relation to this particular group the target has now been exceeded
- Progress for pupils with SEND, who do not have an EHCP, has been more variable at KS2;
- There was a closing of the gap for this group in 2022 but this has not been maintained in 2023 and so more work is needed
- At the combined measure at KS1 the gap to national for children with EHCP is - 7% but for the group of pupils with SEND, who do not have an EHCP, the gap has reduced to just -4% and so good progress is being made towards meeting the target

Next steps

- Deliver final year of SEND project in 2023/24
- Continue to deploy SEND SLEs to support schools in the Trust
- Use PiXL and other resource to focus on improving outcomes for non EHCP pupils with SEND at KS2