

East of England – Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2024/25

Investing in diversity: how EDI benefits doctors and dentists in training and the healthcare system



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List of Abbreviations

Acronym	Description
EDI	Equality Diversity Inclusivity
EoE	East of England
GMC	General Medical Council
HoS	Head of School
ICBs	Integrated Care Boards
ICSs	Integrated Care Systems
IMGs	International Medical Graduates
MWRES	Medical Workforce Race Equality Survey
NETS	National Education and Training Survey
NHSE	National Health Service England
PAS	Programmed Activities
QI	Quality Improvement
QA	Quality Assurance
SLT	Senior Leadership Team
WT&E	Workforce Training and Education

Introduction

The NHSE East of England (EoE), Workforce Training and Education (NHSE WT&E) Directorate places Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity (EDI) at the forefront of its initiatives, ensuring that all learners, especially international medical graduates (IMGs), are supported and represented fairly.

The data from the General Medical Council (GMC) Data Explorer indicates that there are 25,621 doctors on the GMC register in the EoE, 39% (n=10,069) of whom are IMGs. Of the 5,267 complaints made against doctors in the region, 34% (n=1,767) were against IMGs. This demonstrates the need to address and support the specific challenges faced by this group.

The region includes 6,000 trainees, and the directorate aims to create not just a compliant environment but one that fosters belonging, inclusiveness, and diversity. This involves both ongoing projects and innovative new initiatives to support all learners, including a focus on empowering the educator force and making it reflective of the learner workforce's diversity.

Recognizing the shared goals among various regulators and stakeholders, the directorate commits to working collaboratively both within and outside the organization to develop a comprehensive strategy that addresses the needs of all learners in the EoE, with a primary focus on postgraduate medical and dental learners.

This approach aims to build a more inclusive and supportive educational ecosystem, promoting a sense of belonging for all learners and educators.

The national context

This strategy links to two key national commitments

- GMC commitments around differential attainment - namely:
 - Eliminate disproportionate fitness to practise referrals in relation to ethnicity and origin of medical qualification by 2026.
 - Eliminate discrimination, disadvantage and unfairness in undergraduate and postgraduate medical education and training, by 2031.
- NHS Equality, diversity and inclusion improvement plan 2023. This has six high impact actions.

This strategy is structured around six high-impact actions aimed at fostering a more inclusive and equitable environment for all learners, educators, and staff. The ultimate goal is to create a framework where everyone feels a sense of belonging, can thrive in their roles, and collectively deliver the best possible service to patients and the public. The improvement plan specifically targets prejudice and discrimination—both direct and indirect—that may arise from

behaviours, policies, practices, and cultures that disproportionately affect certain groups and individuals across the NHS workforce.

Key Elements of the Strategy

1. **High-Impact Actions:** The strategy revolves around six core actions designed to create meaningful change and improve EDI within the workforce. Each action is intended to drive systemic improvements, ensuring the workforce is equipped to support learners and deliver quality care.
2. **Review of Current Position:** The strategy begins with a review of the region's current standing for each of the six strands. This review helps to highlight existing gaps, challenges, and opportunities for improvement.
3. **Clear Goals and Timelines:** For each strand, the strategy sets out clear targets, identifying what the organization aims to achieve and by when. This structured approach ensures accountability and provides measurable outcomes for progress.
4. **Interconnected Plans:** The six strands are not viewed in isolation, as there are areas of overlap. Some initiatives and plans will address more than one strand, maximizing impact across the framework.

By focusing on these high-impact actions and ensuring comprehensive planning, the strategy aims to reduce disparities and promote fairness, ultimately improving the workplace culture and patient care across the East of England region.

Review and iterative development

This strategy is intended to be a living document and, as such, will be reviewed at least annually.

We propose to develop an annual report to drive that review, incorporating key EDI data streams, review of issues and concerns, progress against national commitments and sharing innovation.

We will use that regular review to update our medium and long-term objectives so that they become more specific with time, consider our progress and maintain their relevance for that point in time. We will continue to develop specific time-bound objectives which will evolve on an annual basis as the strategy is reviewed.

Our Vision

To establish a postgraduate medical and dental education system in the EoE that celebrates EDI. This system will reflect the rich diversity of our region and foster excellence in healthcare delivery.

Mission Statement

Our mission is a reflective postgraduate medical and dental education workforce. We will exceed GMC targets, champion NHSE's diverse workforce vision and prioritise lasting EDI impact beyond compliance. Leveraging existing projects, we will build a comprehensive EDI framework, ultimately improving patient care through inclusion.

Core Values

- **Respect and dignity for all:** Adhere to the letter and spirit of Equality Act 2010. Everyone will be treated fairly and with respect, regardless of their age, disability, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, or other personal characteristics.
- **Equality:** Ensuring fairness and dismantling barriers to success for all learners and educators.
- **Diversity:** Celebrating and leveraging the unique talents, backgrounds, and perspectives of each individual.
- **Inclusion:** Cultivating an environment where everyone feels valued, respected, and empowered to contribute meaningfully.
- **Anti-racism:** Actively dismantling systemic racism and promoting cultural competency within our education system.
- **Psychologically safety:** Foster a culture of psychological safety and belonging for all learners (doctors, dentists, and public health colleagues).

Strategic Goals

Our strategic goal is to foster a healthcare training and educational environment that is equitable, diverse, and inclusive. Aligned with the GMC's workforce representation objectives, and NHSE's high-impact EDI directives, we aim to create a culture where all learners are valued, respected, and empowered. Through systemic change, we will address disparities, enhance patient care, and build a high-performing training organizational environment.

High Impact Action 1 – Establish Accountable Leadership for EDI

Chief Executives, Chairs, and Board members will assume ownership of EDI by setting specific, measurable, and achievable EDI objectives. These leaders will be held accountable for driving systemic change to create a healthcare training and educational environment characterized by equity, diversity, and inclusion.

Where are we now?

1. The WT&E Senior leadership team is committed to EDI objectives. This has been evidenced by the support for the formation and progression of the EDI team which consists of an Associate Postgraduate Dean (2 Programmed Activities (PAs); 5 Training Programme Directors (2 PAs each) and 10 sessions for fellows to aid with the development and delivery of the different EDI projects. The team is in place currently for 3 years from January 2023.
2. A conference was held on 13/09/2023 which was online and all senior leaders from within the region were invited to support the EDI initiatives and pledge support.
3. The senior leadership team have recently contributed to a video supporting the EDI initiatives.
4. Reciprocal mentoring programme – in 2023 as a pilot the first cohort of 7 senior educators were paired with 7 learners to understand each other better. The feedback was positive, and the second cohort was commenced in July 2024.

Where do we want to be?

Whilst the team has been set up there remains constant pressure on budgetary and administrative resources.

Key to the planning of the structure of this combined team is establishing outward links to each of the regional Integrated Care Systems (ICSs), local education providers and other regional stakeholders.

Short Term Goals

1. Reapply and secure allocated fellowship resource for 2024-2025 (31/12/2024)
2. Confirm Budgetary approval for the team (31/12/2024)
3. Quality Assurance (QA) - assess the effectiveness of the Reciprocal Mentoring Programme by
 - administering pre- and post-programme surveys
 - to 100% of participants
 - aiming for a minimum 70% response rate.
 - analyse the survey data
 - within eight weeks of programme completion
 - present the findings to stakeholders (31/03/2025)
4. Ensure that regular collaborative working links are established between the NHSE EoE WT&E team and regional Integrated Care Boards (ICBs), local education providers and

other interested stakeholders evidenced by presence at meetings with ICBs facilitated by the patch deans. (31/08/2025).

Medium term goals

The EDI team will be liaising with the ICBs to ensure EDI objectives are appraised annually via the Board Assurance Framework. (31/12/2025)

Long term goals

Continue to apply and lobby for designated fellowship time to drive forward new priority projects and innovation across the region.

High Impact Action 2 – Building a diverse and inclusive workforce

We will establish equitable and inclusive recruitment, talent management, and educator development processes. These processes will actively seek to address underrepresentation and build a workforce that reflects the diversity of our communities.

Where are we now?

1. **Recruitment:** We retrospectively wrote to all Heads of School regarding the recruitment process for special interest posts which are deanery led. We sought information about the recruitment process, diversity amongst the interviewing panel and the successful candidates. Responses were received from the Schools. There was no apparent discrimination noted.

We have uploaded a de-biasing toolkit onto the website which will serve as an aid to Medical Staffing, and recruiting trusts to ensure the process is fair.
<https://heeoee.hee.nhs.uk/differential-attainment-equity-diversity-and-inclusivity/resources-educators-and-learners>

2. **Educator Development:** By raising awareness of EDI issues and empowering educators in their own career development, we aim to cultivate an educational community where both learners and educators can excel, ultimately benefiting patient care and the broader healthcare system.
 - **Educator Development days:** We support educators in accessing and advancing their careers by providing development programs focused on leadership and mentorship. This will help them grow into senior roles. Annual educator development days were held on 27/11/2023 and 17/6/2024. The aim was to improve differential attainment amongst educators and help them with career progression as educators. There were talks from senior educators, career coaches and others. The feedback from 2023 guided the agenda for the day in 2024 which had very positive feedback.
 - We have provided EDI training on topics such as differential attainment, intersectionality and allyship to dental educators, aiming to enhance awareness of EDI's impact on training and healthcare.

- **Educator Faculty Development:**

We aim to provide comprehensive EDI training to all educators. This will ensure that they understand the unique challenges learners from diverse backgrounds may face and can offer the appropriate support to help overcome these barriers. EDI modules on impact of discrimination, Differential Attainment, cultural competence, and bystander training have been incorporated into the educator faculty development programme aimed at Tier 2/3 educators. This would aim to increase awareness amongst educators about EDI issues which in turn will improve the educator – learner relationship and decrease differential attainment.

Where do we want to be?

Short term goals

QA – collate and analyse feedback.

- from at least 60% of educators
- within four weeks after their attendance at the Educator Development Day
- using a standardized feedback form
- to assess the event's effectiveness and identify areas for improvement (Review 31/07/2025)

Medium term goals

1. QA - Assess impact of the EDI modules of the educator faculty development programme through feedback. Achieve a minimum of 20% improvement in survey scores from pre-training to post training, as measured by surveys to at least 100 participants (30/09/2025)
2. Annual monitoring of recruitment within the deanery (31/12/2025)

Long term goals

1. Inclusive Educator Community: Build an educator workforce that is not only aware of EDI but actively engages in creating an environment where learners from all backgrounds can thrive.
2. Diverse Leadership: Promote diversity in educational leadership, ensuring that career progression for educators reflects the values of inclusivity and equal opportunity.

High Impact 3 – Achieving fair remuneration and building a culture of fair pay for all trainees, educators and clinical supervisors

As part of the WT&E Directorate's commitment to fostering equity within the healthcare system, achieving fair remuneration is a critical focus. However, to date, WT&E has not initiated specific projects targeting this action. Fair pay is vital for promoting a culture of

equality, respect, and recognition for the value contributed by trainees, educators, and clinical supervisors.

Where are we now?

No Active Projects: Currently, WT&E has no specific initiatives addressing fair remuneration. This aspect of workforce equity is primarily monitored by employing trusts and national Medical Workforce Race Equality Standard (MWRES) reports.

Medium term Plan

Monitoring & Reporting: Although WT&E is not directly involved in projects addressing pay, it will continue to track trends and developments through MWRES reports and data collected from employing trusts. These reports provide key insights into disparities in pay, and the WT&E will leverage this data to inform its overall EDI strategy.

EDI Framework Alignment: The issue of remuneration will be embedded into the wider EDI framework to ensure alignment with goals of EDI. WT&E will encourage an ongoing dialogue with relevant stakeholders to promote transparency and fairness in pay structures across the workforce.

Long-term Plan

Advocacy for Fair Pay Culture: WT&E aims to advocate for a culture that recognizes and fairly compensates all professionals, regardless of their background and protected characteristics. This cultural shift is crucial to ensure that trainees, educators, and clinical supervisors feel valued and equitably rewarded for their contributions.

In summary, while WT&E has not yet developed direct initiatives related to fair remuneration, the commitment to tracking, monitoring, and supporting fair pay practices through partnerships with employing trusts remains central to the overall strategy for equity and inclusion.

High Impaction Action 4 – Develop and implement an improvement plan to address health inequalities within the workforce

NHS organisations should start by reducing bullying, increasing civility, and having a robust approach to all abuse and harassment. This will address some common causes of ill health, absenteeism and turnover within the workforce which disproportionately impact on those with some protected characteristics, and will improve inclusive team working, staff health and wellbeing.

Where are we now?

In 2023 all learners were surveyed, and we received 666 responses regarding unprofessional behaviours experienced or witnessed. The themes were collated and led to the development of the safe spaces project.

1. Creation of safe spaces for raising concerns – Learners and educators have been signposted to the raising concerns site on the NHS England EoE webpage.
2. Monitoring the National Education and Training Survey (NETS) and GMC surveys that triangulate wellbeing amongst trainees.
3. Impact of discrimination, bystander training part of the educator faculty development course.

Short term goals

- Quality Improvement (QI) – Creation of safe spaces for learners to voice concerns on the website. (31/01/2025)
- QA - Assess uptake by learners of the safe space reporting system, monitor trends and themes which will be fed back to the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) quarterly from its launch on (30/04/2025)

Medium term goals

QA - Continue to triangulate information regarding wellbeing through GMC surveys/NETS survey and staff surveys annually.

Long term goals

Ensure all learners in the region feel able to raise concerns without fear of reprisal.

High Impaction Action 5 – Implement a comprehensive induction, onboarding, and development programme for internationally recruited staff

Since its inception in 1948, the NHS has benefitted from the expertise, compassion, and commitment of internationally recruited healthcare professionals. A warm welcome and comprehensive induction and pastoral support package will make them feel valued from the start and help retain this staff group. The GMC has called for a standardised and supportive induction for doctors new to UK practice and in 2022 the joint national guideline 'Welcoming and valuing International Medical Graduates,' was published, outlining the minimum standards for induction for IMG's.

Where are we now?

1. Enhanced Induction days – The EoE region runs a virtual full day of ‘Enhanced Induction’ for all doctors and dentists new to the region. These days are run four times a year and include both non-trainee and trainee doctors. The aim of the induction is to provide a consistent and effective introduction to the NHS in the region for our international medical and dental graduates no matter which specialty or trust. The programme includes a detailed session delivered by the GMC about professional standards and expectations. This is followed by sessions on electronic portfolios, reflective practice, tips on navigating through culture and communication, a session on a sensitive topic titled ‘when times get tough’ if experiencing discrimination, and finally the day finishes with interactive sessions with trainers and trainee IMGs to answer queries pertaining to specific sub-specialties. GMC representatives recently attended a day and the feedback was positive.
2. Guideline for trusts on enhanced induction for IMGs which can be adapted to local needs. This is available on the website - <https://heeoee.hee.nhs.uk/working-east-england>
3. Soft skills course – all IMGs within the region are encouraged to attend the soft skills course – STAR which includes sessions on Synergy, Time management, Art and empathy and Resilience. The first cohort was run as a pilot for secondary care in 2023 and the second cohort is now ongoing. Primary care has been offering this for some time.
4. Focus Group Discussion – a focus group discussion was held with IMGs within the Suffolk & North East Essex (SNEE) ICB to gauge engagement of the trusts with the onboarding programme. The feedback was mixed, with some learners not getting an adequate induction. This was fed back to the medical director for SNEE and a plan in place with the local EDI lead to re-look at how the programme can be effectively accessed by all learners.

Short term goals

1. QA – assess the impact of Enhanced Induction Days by
 - administering qualitative questionnaires to at least 90% of attendees
 - 6 months post attendance at Enhanced Induction Day
 - achieving a minimum 60% response rate
 - with data analysis completed within one month of survey collection
2. QA – assess the impact of STAR course by
 - administering qualitative questionnaires
 - to at least 90% of participants
 - 6 months post completion
 - achieving a minimum 60% response rate
 - with data analysis completed within one month of survey collection

Medium term goals

1. Repeat the gap analysis of the enhanced induction programme within Trusts (31/12/2025)
2. The EDI team will be working closely with ICBs to ensure these measures are available to all learners and help disseminate the information (31/12/2025)

High Impact Action 6 - Create an environment that eliminates the conditions in which bullying, discrimination, harassment, and physical violence at work occur

Cultivate a workplace environment that fosters the well-being and empowerment of trainees, ensuring it is free from bullying, discrimination, harassment, and physical violence. This will be achieved through a multi-pronged approach that includes clear policies, comprehensive training, accessible support services, and a proactive culture of respect and inclusivity enhancing support for trainee champions, facilitate regional networking events, and empower them to drive impactful EDI initiatives within their training programs.

Where are we now?

A series of videos were created showcasing unprofessional behaviours including sexism in the workplace. These videos aimed to generate discussion, signpost to relevant resources and provide guidance on how to raise concerns. <https://heeoee.hee.nhs.uk/differential-attainment-equity-diversity-and-inclusivity/how-would-you-react-if>

These videos were played to trainees within SNEE and Mid and South Essex (MSE) ICBs, in a safe environment and their reactions were assessed. This led to discussions about resources available and how to deal with unprofessional behaviours in the workplace.

The educator training modules on EDI, Differential attainment, Cultural awareness, and active bystander training were developed as part of the educator faculty development hub days on 01/09/2024. There is an online and in person version of the course.

Short term goals

- QI – Creation of safe spaces for learners to voice concerns on the website. (31/01/2025)
- QA - Assess uptake by learners of the safe space reporting system, monitor trends and themes which will be fed back to the SLT quarterly from its launch on (30/04/2025)

Medium term goals

- QA - Continue to triangulate information regarding wellbeing through GMC surveys/NETS survey and staff surveys annually.
- QI – Embed the course on EDI, Differential attainment, cultural awareness, and active bystander training within the educator faculty development hub training days. (30/08/2025)
- QA - Assess impact of the EDI modules of the educator faculty development programme through feedback. Aim to achieve a minimum of 20% improvement in survey scores from pre-training to post training, as measured by surveys to at least 100 participants (30/09/2025)

Long term goals

Ensure all learners in the region feel able to raise concerns without fear of reprisal.

Ensure all educators are aware of the impact of discrimination on learners and equip them with tools to be an active bystander.

Summary

Evidence consistently shows that diverse teams bring a broader range of perspectives, enhance problem-solving, and improve decision-making. In healthcare, this directly translates to better outcomes for service users, as care becomes more holistic and attuned to varied patient needs. Valuing and leveraging this diversity ensure that all team members contribute their best.

For learners and professionals alike, a sense of belonging is fundamental to their success and well-being. This is especially critical in high-pressure environments like healthcare. When individuals feel safe, valued, and included, they are more likely to thrive, innovate, and maintain resilience.

As an organisation, the East of England WT&E directorate has a clear mandate to ensure that learners feel supported and protected. This goes beyond compliance with policies; it is about actively shaping an environment where learners can grow both personally and professionally.

Whether through day-to-day interactions, leadership initiatives, or peer support, fostering inclusion is a collective effort. By embedding these values into the organisation's fabric, the WT&E directorate can serve as a model of how inclusive and diverse environments lead to exceptional care and enriched learning experiences.

Linking EDI strategic goals with actions

EDI Strategic Goal	Short term goals	Medium term goals	Long Term goals
1. Establish accountable Leadership for EDI excellence	<p>Reapply and secure allocated fellowship resource for 2024-2025 (31/12/2024)</p> <p>Confirm Budgetary approval for the team (31/12/2024)</p> <p>QA - assess the effectiveness of the Reciprocal Mentoring Programme by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • administering pre- and post-programme surveys • to 100% of participants • aiming for a minimum 70% response rate. • analyse the survey data <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • within four weeks of programme completion • present the findings to stakeholders Medium Term Goals 	<p>The EDI team will be liaising with the ICBs to ensure EDI objectives are appraised annually via the Board Assurance Framework. (31/12/2025)</p>	<p>Continue to apply and lobby for designated fellowship time to drive forward new priority projects and innovation across the region.</p>

	Ensure that regular collaborative working links are established between the NHSE EoE WT&E team and regional ICBs, local education providers and other interested stakeholders evidenced by presence at meetings with ICBs facilitated by the patch deans. (31/08/2025).		
2. Building a diverse and inclusive workforce	<p>QA – collate and analyse feedback</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> from at least 60% of educators within four weeks after their attendance at the Educator Development Day using a standardized feedback form to assess the event's effectiveness and identify areas for improvement (Review 31/07/2025) 	<p>QA - Assess impact of the EDI modules of the educator faculty development programme through feedback. Achieve a minimum of 20% improvement in survey scores from pre-training to post training, as measured by surveys to at least 100 participants (30/09/2025)</p> <p>Annual monitoring of recruitment within the deanery (31/12/2025)</p>	<p>Inclusive Educator Community: Build an educator workforce that is not only aware of EDI but actively engages in creating an environment where learners from all backgrounds can thrive.</p> <p>Diverse Leadership: Promote diversity in educational leadership, ensuring that career progression for educators reflects the values of inclusivity and equal opportunity.</p>
3. Achieving Fair Remuneration and building a Culture of Fair Pay for all trainees Educators and Clinical supervisors	No active projects	Monitoring and reporting MWRES report annually (31/12/2025)	Advocacy for a fair pay culture.
4. Develop and implement an improvement plan to address health	QI – Creation of safe spaces for learners to voice concerns on the website. (31/10/2024)	QA - assess uptake by learners of the safe space reporting system, monitor trends and themes which will be fed back to the SLT	

<p>inequalities within the workforce</p>		<p>quarterly from its launch on (31/01/2025)</p> <p>QA - Continue to triangulate information regarding wellbeing through GMC surveys/NETS survey and staff surveys.</p>	
<p>5. Implement a comprehensive induction, onboarding, and development programme for internationally recruited staff</p>	<p>QA – assess the impact of Enhanced Induction Days by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • administering qualitative questionnaires to at least 90% of attendees • 6 months post attendance at Enhanced Induction Day • achieving a minimum 60% response rate • with data analysis completed within one month of survey collection <p>QA – assess the impact of STAR course by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • administering qualitative questionnaires • to at least 90% of participants • 6 months post completion 	<p>QI - Repeat the gap analysis of the enhanced induction programme within trusts (31/12/2025)</p> <p>QI - The EDI team will be working closely with ICBs to ensure these measures are available to all learners and help disseminate the information (31/12/2025)</p>	<p>Supporting IMGs contributes to a diverse workforce and high-quality care.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • achieving a minimum 60% response rate • with data analysis completed within one month of survey collection 		
6. Create an environment that eliminates the conditions in which bullying, discrimination, harassment, and physical violence at work occur	<p>QI - Upload the raising concerns form on the website to allow learners to raise concerns that have not been resolved locally to satisfaction. (31/01/2025)</p>	<p>QA - Monitor the use of this form and feedback to the senior leadership team each quarter (30/04/2025)</p> <p>QA - Continue to triangulate information regarding wellbeing through GMC surveys/NETS survey and staff surveys.</p> <p>QI – Embed the course on EDI, Differential attainment, cultural awareness, and active bystander training within the educator faculty development hub training days. (31/08/2025)</p> <p>QA - Assess impact of the EDI modules of the educator faculty development programme through feedback. Aim to achieve a minimum of 20% improvement in survey scores from pre-training to post training, as measured by surveys to at least 100 participants (30/09/2025)</p>	<p>Empowering trainees is essential for creating a positive learning environment and improving patient outcomes.</p> <p>Ensure all educators are aware of the impact of discrimination on learners and equip them with tools to be an active bystander.</p>

Resources

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10. NHS England. Workforce Race Equality Standard – 2020 Data Analysis report for NHS Trusts and Clinical Commissioning Groups. 2021. Available at: https://www.england.nhs.uk/east-of-england/wp-content/uploads/sites/47/2021/09/WRES-DIGITAL-2020.FINAL_.pdf (accessed 24 November 2024)