

Introduction

Northumbria University is proud to be a Level 3 Disability Confident Leader of the Government's [Disability Confident Scheme](#) and is committed to fulfilling the requirements of the Voluntary Reporting Framework. The framework supports employers to voluntarily report on disability, mental health and wellbeing in the workplace.



This report covers the period from 01 August 2024 to 31 July 2025, aligning with our academic calendar and EDI Annual Reporting cycle.

Part A – The activities in our organisation in relation to the recruitment and retention of disabled people

Recruitment

Northumbria University is committed to inclusive recruitment practices that reflect our values and Disability Confident Leader status. Our [recruitment portal](#) includes dedicated EDI content and a page on [Disability Confident](#), helping applicants understand our commitment to accessibility and inclusion.

We include positive statements in our job adverts and role descriptions to show we welcome applications from disabled people, and a range of flexible working arrangements are supported. Reasonable adjustments are proactively offered to candidates at all stages of the recruitment process and hiring managers are provided with training, guidance and advice from the HR team.

Northumbria University uses [AccessAble](#) to provide accessibility information across campus, helping visitors, including job applicants, understand the physical access provisions before arrival.

Policies

The University has a range of policies and guidelines in relation to the recruitment, support and management of staff.

- *Staff Code of Conduct* – contains information around Health and Wellbeing at work
- *Disability Disclosures and Reasonable Adjustments* – this guidance sets out how to disclose a disability and the support we provide for colleagues with reasonable adjustments in the workplace.
- *Special Leave* – contains provision for disability-related appointments and treatment.
- *Sickness Absence Management* – contains provision for Disability related absence management and support, and Disability Leave. The policy also has provision for Dual Track arrangements in relation to the absence management of an underlying chronic medical condition. This reduces the frequency of staff with chronic conditions hitting a Trigger Point in a situation where an improvement in their medical condition is not likely or possible.

Support

Support offered to colleagues with disabilities is tailored depending upon individual circumstances and needs and we have several different types of support. This includes DSE (display screen equipment) assessments, support from HR Managers and Advisors, access to Occupational Health services and an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), as well as assessments by external providers and a single point of contact for the procurement of equipment and training identified through these routes and Access to Work assessments.

Adjustments in the Workplace Passports were introduced at Northumbria in early 2023, and since then the establishment of a centralised budget and single point of contact has simplified the procurement of goods and services identified as reasonable adjustments for colleagues.

Colleague Equality Networks

The Disabled Staff Network is formally recognised within the organisation and co-chairs of the Network contribute to the development of organisation-wide Disability Equality initiatives, working with the Senior Sponsor for Disability Equality. The Network was founded in 2021, and its purpose is to provide members with the opportunity to share experiences and information; offer peer support; raise awareness of disability issues and barriers and advocate for a culture of equity and inclusion for disabled people. In 2023 the Network introduced a Neurodiversity special interest group for neurodivergent Network members.

Progression and Pay

Northumbria operates a fair and transparent graded pay structure which ensures equal pay for work of equal value. Our pay policy combines all pay-related information in a transparent way and reviews of additional supplements and bonus payments are regularly carried out. This year we have again voluntarily reported on Northumbria's Disability Pay Gap. The data used is based upon those employees who have voluntarily recorded in the online HR system that they have a disability. This analysis allows us to identify vertical and horizontal segregation within the workforce and take targeted action to reduce the Disability pay gap

Employee Engagement Scores

Our Staff Survey is run on a biennial basis and in 2023, around 50% of colleagues responded of which 12.5% identified as disabled. The Engagement Index Score for colleagues identifying as Disabled was 16.9%, lower than that of all respondents. Our next Survey will take place within the 25/26 reporting period.

Part B – The percentage of individuals within our organisation who consider themselves to be disabled or have a long term physical or mental health condition

NU People and Finance (NUPF) is Northumbria's online HR system. Colleagues can update their own personal data in NUPF. In NUPF the question around disability is set out as follows:

Statement: A person has a disability if they a) have a physical or mental impairment and b) the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on the person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Question: Do you have a Disability? *Options:* No; Prefer not to Say; Yes.

Using a datapoint of 31 March 2025, the percentage of colleagues who have declared a disability is 6.8%, and for 4.6% of colleagues this data is either 'Not known', or they have selected 'Prefer not to say'. This marks a significant improvement from the previous year, where 3.8% had declared a disability and 13.6% were unknown.

Over the past year, we have actively encouraged colleagues to update their personal data, using a range of communication methods to increase awareness and confidence in self-disclosure. This supports a more accurate understanding of our workforce and their needs.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Our Wellbeing Agenda is aligned to the [Five Ways to Wellbeing](#), a set of evidence-based public mental health messages aimed at improving the mental health and wellbeing of all individuals. They were developed by the New Economics Foundation (NEF) as the result of a commission by Foresight, the UK government's futures think tank, as part of the Foresight Project on Mental Capital and Wellbeing.

Northumbria University provides a range of mental health support for colleagues:

- Our Occupational Health Service provider can make recommendations to support colleagues at work or facilitate a return-to-work following absence due to mental health.
- The Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) offers free, confidential 24/7 support and practical advice, including qualified legal and financial guidance. It provides counselling for a wide range of issues including anxiety, low mood, work-related stress, family issues, relationships, domestic abuse, gambling, debt, childcare, financial, insurance claims, legal, drugs and alcohol, consumer issues and housing. Our latest data shows that 290 calls were made to EAP during this reporting period. Over 87% of these were counselling calls, with Anxiety being the most common reason, accounting for 24% of overall counselling engagement, followed by Low Mood at 20.5% and Family at 10.2%.
- The Stress Prevention and Management Policy sets out how we take a proactive approach to managing stress at work. It reflects our commitment to ensuring that stress levels are kept to a level which does not adversely affect individuals' health.