

Wheatley Group

One Group, Many Voices

Group Annual Equalities Report
September 2024

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Translations

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Foreword

Jo Armstrong, Wheatley Group Chair

In November 2023, we published our first [Annual Equalities Report](#). This report detailed the equality data we collected over 2022 and 2023, what the data informed, what actions had been put in place as a result and what benefits we had seen.

This followed strong progress we had made over a relatively short period of time, including:

- ▶ **expanding** the collection, reporting and monitoring of equality data to inform our decision-making;
- ▶ **launching** our Different Together approach and six staff networks, with enhanced staff Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (“EDI”) training, awareness-raising, support and resources; and

- ▶ **publishing** our first [Statement of Commitment](#) and first [EDI Action Plan](#), One Group, Many Voices (November 2022).

This, our second Annual Equalities Report, covers the 2023/24 period. During the year, we refreshed our [Group EDI Action Plan](#) recognising the significant progress made in delivering its first iteration. The updated plan focuses on **embedding and sustaining** the structures we have put in place, being particularly mindful of **access and equity** for both our customers and colleagues. We have a continued commitment to embrace, promote and sustain our EDI and Human Rights approach supporting our [Group EDI and Human Rights policy](#) which we updated in April 2024.

[Our 2021-2026 strategy Your Home, Your Community, Your Future](#) sets out our desire to increasingly tailor services to suit the needs of our customers; diversify our engagement with Customer Voices; and consider how our workforce can more closely reflect our communities. In 2023, we reviewed our strategy and strengthened our commitment to EDI.

As we move into 2024/25 and the penultimate year of our Group strategy, delivering personalised services, driven by customer-insight priorities, is a key focus for us. EDI therefore continues to go to the heart of the common values shared by all members of Wheatley Group (“the Group”).

Foreword

Jo Armstrong, Wheatley Group Chair

Our Group and partner Boards and Executive Team are fully committed to EDI and recognise the importance of role-modelling this commitment through our decision-making and governance. We want all our customers to be able to access our services in a fair way, create an inclusive working environment in which our employees can thrive and ensure our policies, procedures and services do not unfairly disadvantage any person or group.

Our Group values

- **Excellence**
to deliver quality in everything we do
- **Community**
to build more sustainable communities where customers have a real say in decisions affecting them
- **Ambition**
to do more for our customers and to provide more opportunities for our employees and stakeholders
- **Trust**
to be trusted by our employees, customers and partners

Our subsidiaries

Wheatley Homes Glasgow (WHG)
Wheatley Homes South (WHS)
Wheatley Homes East (WHE)
Loretto Housing (LHA)
Lowther (LOW)
Wheatley Care (WC)

Introduction

We recognise the value of the diversity of our employees and communities and the benefits this can bring to the Group.

Our Group [EDI Action Plan, One Group Many Voices](#), details the practical steps we are taking to embed our Group [EDI and Human Rights Policy](#).

In progressing from last year, and recognising, for example, an expanding range of languages spoken by our customers and an increase in disabilities declared by housing applicants, we understand our service model must reflect this diversity.

As such, we have updated what EDI means to us. We previously referred to 'equality' which may be defined as treating everyone equally. However, we aim to provide equal opportunities so we now refer to this as 'equity'. This focus on 'equity' rather than 'equality' also follows best practice from the wider diversity and inclusion sector.

As such, for us, EDI now means:

- ▶ **Equity** – people with different characteristics are treated fairly and have access to the same opportunities to fulfil their potential
- ▶ **Diversity** – respecting and valuing individual differences and unique characteristics, both in our organisation and our communities
- ▶ **Inclusion** – making sure our employees and customers feel comfortable being themselves and feel valued, respected and heard.

Introduction

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As detailed in last year's report, we significantly expanded equality data collection and monitoring to inform our decision-making and service delivery, such as through Equality Impact Assessments ("EIAs") and customer engagement.

This report covers the data collected from the following groups over April 2023 – March 2024, details what this data has informed and the steps we have taken to further embed EDI:

- ▶ **Prospective customers** – via our housing application platforms;
- ▶ **Customer Voices** – our customer engagement programme;
- ▶ **Job applicants and employability programme referrals** – JobTrain and Foundation employability projects; and
- ▶ **Board members** – upon appointment.

We also use the following data, the results of which are detailed in our [2023 Annual Equalities Report](#):

- ▶ **Customers** – an anonymous survey conducted in 2022 which received responses from over 10,300 customers. We will next undertake this survey in 2025; and
- ▶ **Employees** – a staff survey conducted in 2022, with a high return rate of 60%. We want to increase this figure even further by empowering our employees to voluntarily provide this data. The results from our 2024 staff survey will be published in next year's Annual Equalities Report.

In this report, we detail [protected characteristic data](#). However, we understand individuals may have multiple characteristics so our EDI approach considers intersectionality.

You can read more about our approach on the EDI page of our subsidiary websites and on our Group website [here](#).



Housing applicants

- MyHousing and Edindex

Housing applicants

We collect equality data from our prospective customers through our allocation platform, **MyHousing**, which includes those who apply via Homes4D&G common housing register.

In 2023 we introduced a further filter to compare live applications to those housed within the quarter. We are aware there can be a delay between prospective customers applying for housing and being housed, so we have not included this comparison in this report.

The way we work with local authorities to match homeless customers to properties means we receive referrals only at the time of matching, which in turn means a number of applications received and rehoused within the same quarter are homeless applicants. In Glasgow, around 80% of homeless applicants referred to us are rehoused within 11 weeks of the referral being received from the local authority.

In 2023/24, the Group's Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) provided **2406** lets to homeless applicants, surpassing the 2000 annual target.

In Edinburgh, our prospective customers access our available homes via **Edindex** the common housing register. From early 2024, we now include available EDI information from Edindex within our own data analysis.

Housing applicants

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We analyse this data quarterly to inform our allocation process and new build development planning. For example, this data informed the EIA of our **2024/25 Group five-year development programme** and from this, an action was identified to ensure our Design and Specification Guide review was informed by feedback from a diverse group of Customer Voices, as well as an EIA using our EDI data.

In 2023/24, over **11,200** people applied for a home through MyHousing. While a number of applicants are rehoused each year and a number do not re-register when we send out the annual re-registration request, demand for our homes far outweighs the number of homes we have available for let each year. At any point in time, we have around 25,000 applicants on our MyHousing list including around 3000 applicants who applied via the

common housing register Homes4D&G. On 31 March 2024, over 25,000 people were on the Edindex waiting list looking for homes in Edinburgh.

The following section details the data collected through MyHousing from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 and for those on the Edindex waiting list as of 31 March 2024. Where available, we have compared data to the 2022 Scottish Census results.

Please note, we have not included 'prefer not to say' or 'unknown' answers.



Housing applicants

Disability

From last year’s Annual Equalities Report, applications from disabled people increased from 23% to 26%. The types of disabilities declared largely follow the same trends throughout quarters and our RSLs, with mental health being the most common.

We understand in some cases, people do not consider themselves to be ‘disabled’ even though they may, for example, have a mental health condition. We appreciate applicants may not have declared a disability, and the true figure may be higher. Understanding the needs of our current and prospective customers in helping us design **personalised services** is a key priority for us and is reflected in a strategic project for 2024/25.

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Disability – MyHousing (Group)	Yes	No
Are you a disabled person?	26%	71%

The remaining % were ‘prefer not to say’

Top disabilities declared	MyHousing Group	Edindex
Mental health condition	65%	
Long term illness, disease or condition	45%	
Physical disability	44%	52%
Neurodivergent	15%	
Learning difficulty	10%	26%
Deafness or hearing loss	7%	13%
Autoimmune disease	5%	
Blindness or partial sight loss	4%	7%

Table Sources - MyHousing 2023/24 (Group level) and Edindex’. Blank where no data



Housing applicants

In early 2024 we launched our Different Together Community of Excellence staff network focused on **identifying areas of improvements in terms of inclusivity and accessibility for our customers and communities.**

This network includes representatives from key customer-facing roles and uses their experience to directly feed into the personalised services workstream.

For example, following the Scottish Government's consultation on the Learning Disability and Neurodiverse Bill, the network's insight is helping inform training for frontline staff to help them support customers with learning difficulties and neurodiversity.

In analysing our MyHousing data, we have enhanced the EDI information in our digital welcome packs by including a link to '[A Local Information System for Scotland](#)', which provides information on local community groups which can offer support.



Housing applicants

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Ethnicity	MyHousing Group	2022 Scottish Census	MyHousing WHG	MyHousing WHE	Edindex WHE	MyHousing WHS	MyHousing LHA
White Scottish, British	75%	87%	71%	75%	66%	91%	85%
African Scottish, African or British African	8%	1%	9%	4%	6%	1%	5%
Polish or any other white background	6%	6%	5%	14%	12%	5%	5%
Arab Scottish, Arab or British Arab	2%	<1%	3%	1%	-	0.3%	1%
Asian - Pakistani, Scottish Pakistani or British Pakistani, Indian and any other Asian background	4%	4%	6%	2%	5%	1%	2%

Table Source - MyHousing 2023/24, Edindex and 2022 Scottish Census. Not including 'other'.

Ethnicity

We continue to see **greater ethnic diversity** in our applications compared to our 2022 customer survey, which revealed 85% of respondents were from a white Scottish or British background.

At Group level, this data is largely in line with the housing applicant data included in last year's report. Stock in Edinburgh and Glasgow continues to have the most ethnically diverse applicants and has a high number of applicants from an African background.

Our data sees slight variation from the Scottish 2022 Census where for Glasgow around 73% of the population were white Scottish/British; 11% Indian, Pakistani or other Asian background; 6% Polish or other white background; and 4% African.

Housing applicants

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From the 2022 Census we know that 71% of Edinburgh's population was white Scottish/British; 11% Polish or other white background; 9% from an Asian background and only 2% African.

This year, following the launch Homes4D&G in WHS, we can analyse EDI data of applicants for this subsidiary. We have a high proportion of white British applicants in Dumfries and Galloway, highlighting the proximity to the English border. This is reflected in the Scottish Census 2022 data which found 19% of the Dumfries and Galloway population were white British and 76% white Scottish.

Again, our applicants represent a wide range of nationalities with around **70 nationalities declared**. As with last year, after British, Nigerian, Polish and Ukrainian continue to have the highest representation.

On Edindex, applicants declared they spoke over **35 different languages** with Arabic being the most popular language after English, representing 2% of those who declared their main language. At the end of March 2024, Arabic was the most requested language for interpretation followed by Farsi, Kurdish, Vietnamese and Tigrinya.



Housing applicants

In 2023/24, **17%** of MyHousing applicants were non-UK nationals; out of this **72%** were refugees, **19%** migrant workers and **9%** asylum seekers. Throughout the year we housed **285** New Scots.

We have made improvements to help customers whose first language is not English access our services as part of our aim to provide **EDI-friendly communications**. These have included:

- ▶ **Renewing staff guidance** for accessing translation and interpretation services, and requesting alternative formats, with tips on how to ensure an efficient service;
- ▶ **Expanding information** designed specifically for this customer group, such as translated leaflets on condensation, dampness and mould leaflets and our New Scots welcome pack;

- ▶ **Developing a translated pack** for customers including information about accessing key services such as repairs. This is available in our top five languages on our websites and will be issued upon sign-up or where language need is identified by, for example, the Customer First Centre;
- ▶ **Refreshing translation/interpretation services**, with a new contract launching in September 2024; and
- ▶ **Joining Happy to Translate** which undertook an external review of our translation and interpretation service to highlight our areas of good practice and recommendations for improvement, particularly focused on repairs as a priority service for our customers.

[Click here to find information relating to accessibility and translation on our Group website](#)



We have also launched a programme to address under-occupancy, with the help of funding from Glasgow City Council. We know there is a need for larger family homes: Shelter published a report in summer 2023 which found this had a particular impact on ethnic minorities who may be more likely to have multi-generational living. We have joined Shelter's Race and Housing network to help us improve access to the sector.

Housing applicants

Religion and belief

Our **religion and belief** data for MyHousing follows similar patterns to the data we reported last year, although we have seen an increase in ‘no specific belief’ declarations from 41% to 44%.

Overall, in comparing to the 2022 Scottish Census we see **more religious diversity** in our MyHousing applicants. This partially reflects the large number of applicants applying for homes in the West, where, from the 2022 Scottish Census, the religious results for Glasgow were as follows:

- ▶ 43% no religion
- ▶ 21% Roman Catholic
- ▶ 13% Church of Scotland
- ▶ 8% Muslim
- ▶ 5% other Christian.

This is in comparison to the Dumfries and Galloway and City of Edinburgh areas where, after no religion, Church of Scotland was the biggest group at 29% and 13% respectively, whereas Muslim only represented 0.4% and 3.5% of the populations.

This data has helped inform our **2024 Different Together calendar**, which includes celebration and awareness days which help inform interactions between staff and with customers.



Religion/belief	MyHousing Group	2022 Scottish Census
No specific belief/atheism	44%	51%
Roman Catholic	15%	13%
Other Christian	9%	5%
Church of Scotland	9%	20%
Muslim	8%	2%
Other religion or belief	2%	2%

'Table Source - MyHousing 2023/24 and 2022 Scottish Census'

Housing applicants



Civil partnership and marriage

From the 2023/24 MyHousing EDI data, we know that 8% of applicants are in a civil partnership (no change to previous year); 19% are married (down from 21% last year); 5% were currently pregnant and 4% had taken maternity/paternity leave in the previous 12 months (both down 1% from last year).

We saw roughly the same trends repeated across the four quarters of the year and across our subsidiaries.

Again, we have seen a higher percentage of housing applicants declaring they are currently pregnant or have recently taken maternity/paternity leave compared to the results of our 2022 customer EDI data survey.

Strengthening our housing options, including a focus on family homes, was also informed by families research we undertook in 2022. This is now coming to fruition in the planning of newer developments such as Wyndford in Glasgow and Lochside in Dumfries, for example ensuring the inclusion of 3-bedroom homes.

Sex/trans and sexual orientation

For sex, trans/gender reassignment and sexual orientation we have seen largely the same trends in our applicant data over 2023/24 and across our subsidiaries as we witnessed in the previous year.

Sex/trans and gender reassignment	MyHousing Group	Edindex	2022 Scottish Census
Female	59%	53%	51%
Male	40%	47%	49%
Trans	1%	-	>1%

Table Source – MyHousing 2023/24 and 2022 Scottish Census’.
The remaining % were ‘prefer not to say’

Sexual orientation	MyHousing Group	2022 Scottish Census
Heterosexual	87%	88%
Gay man or Lesbian	3%	2%
Bisexual	3%	2%
Other sexuality	>1%	>1%

The remaining % were ‘prefer not to say’

Customer Voices

The background of the slide is composed of several overlapping, semi-transparent geometric shapes in various shades of orange and yellow. These shapes create a layered, abstract effect, with some areas appearing darker due to the overlap of multiple shapes. The overall color palette is warm and vibrant.

Customer Voices

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Ensuring our Different Together approach is threaded through our engagement is a key aim within our Group EDI Action Plan. With **over 2000** Customer Voices (customers registered in our engagement programme), and over 40,000 interactions with customers over 2023/24, we continue to have a strong commitment to customer engagement as outlined in our [Group Stronger Voices, Stronger Communities Framework](#) which was reviewed at the end of 2023.

In reviewing the Framework, we asked Customer Voices for their feedback.

We facilitated several in-person and online focus groups with approximately 63 participants, in addition to an online survey, in which the response rate was 16%.

To inform an EIA on the Framework, we undertook specific engagement with customers focused on barriers experienced by protected characteristic groups. From this, an action plan was developed to help us ensure our approach is as **flexible, accessible and diverse** as possible.

Our Stronger Voices staff Community of Excellence is supporting the implementation of these actions which includes continuing to provide a range of options to maximise the opportunities for our customers to take part (e.g. different timings, in-person, online); developing an 'accessibility checklist' for in-

person customer engagement events; and looking to introduce an Induction Loop or other equipment to assist customers who are hard of hearing at engagement events.



Customer Voices



Gender identity and sexual orientation

When we analyse specific types of engagement, we have seen an increase in male participation from previous registered tenant organisations/forums that were underway before our enhanced engagement framework was launched in 2021. Our Group Scrutiny Panel also has an even sex split.

We continue to offer opportunities to all customers to get involved. In some cases one member of a joint household may be signed up to our Customer Voice programme which may impact our sex data results, but both partners, if customers, can be involved in our engagement.

Largely, data for gender identity, sexual orientation and age is similar to the results published in our 2023 Annual Equalities Report.

Comparing to the 2022 Scottish Census, our Customer Voice data is comparable with the overall results for Scotland, which found nearly 0.1% of respondents were trans men; 0.1% were trans women; and 0.2% were non-binary, representing around half of those who considered themselves trans.

We have slightly **more diversity** within the sexual orientation of our Customer Voices compared to Scottish Census results, which found nearly 2% of respondents were gay or

lesbian, compared to 3% in our engagement programme, and only 0.5% 'other sexuality', compared to 3% within our data.

Age

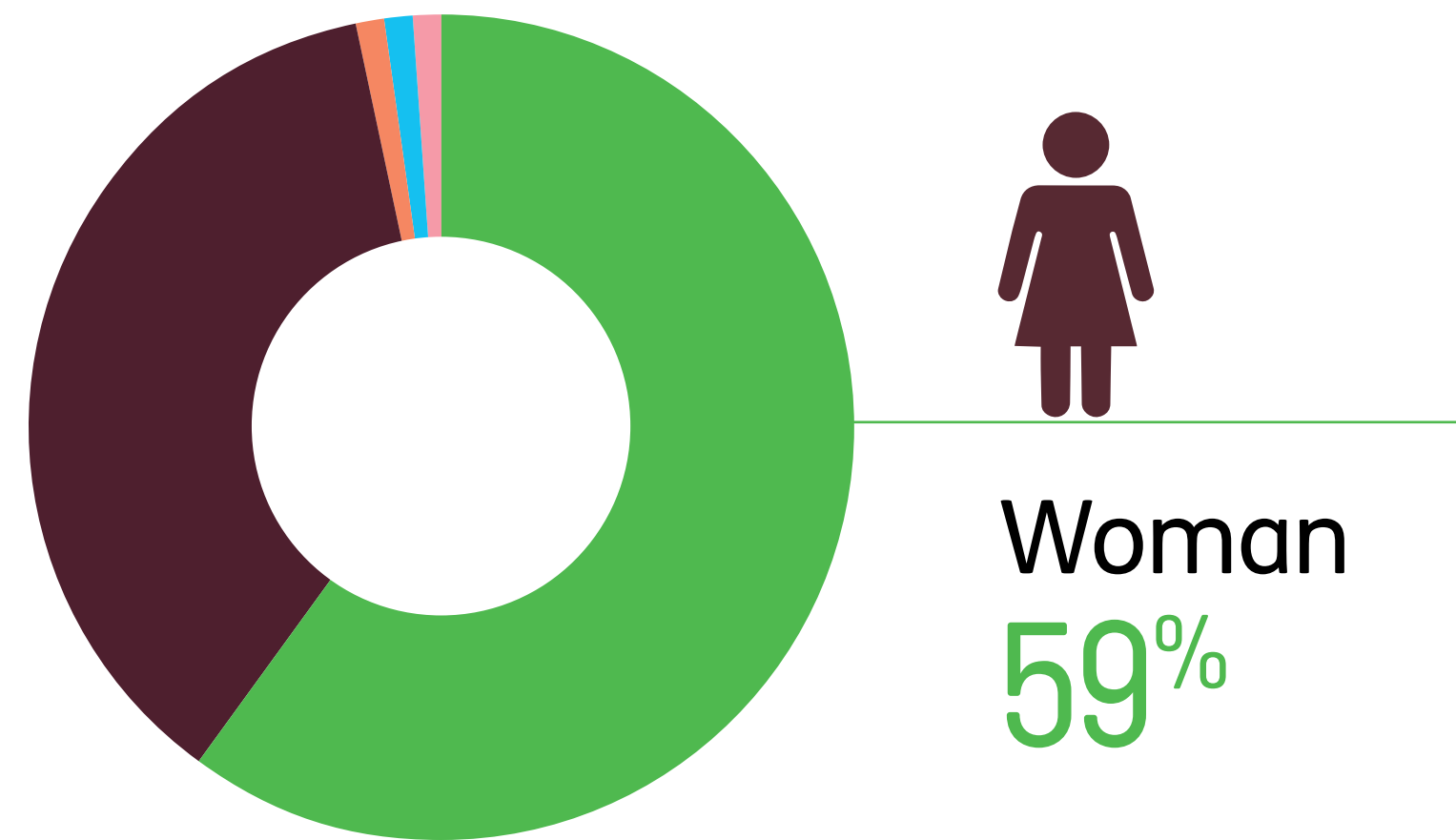
We have seen a 0.5% growth in the 16-24 age range – despite this, we understand there is still room to increase younger representation. Otherwise, we see a fairly good proportion of ages involved in our engagement programme.

Around 20% of our Customer Voices are in the 65+ age range; this is in line with 2022 Scottish Census results which reports that 20% of the population is in this age range, up from around 17% in 2011. It is important then that we provide various methods of engagement including digital, interactive and in-person events to suit a range of ages and ensure no one is left behind.

Customer Voices

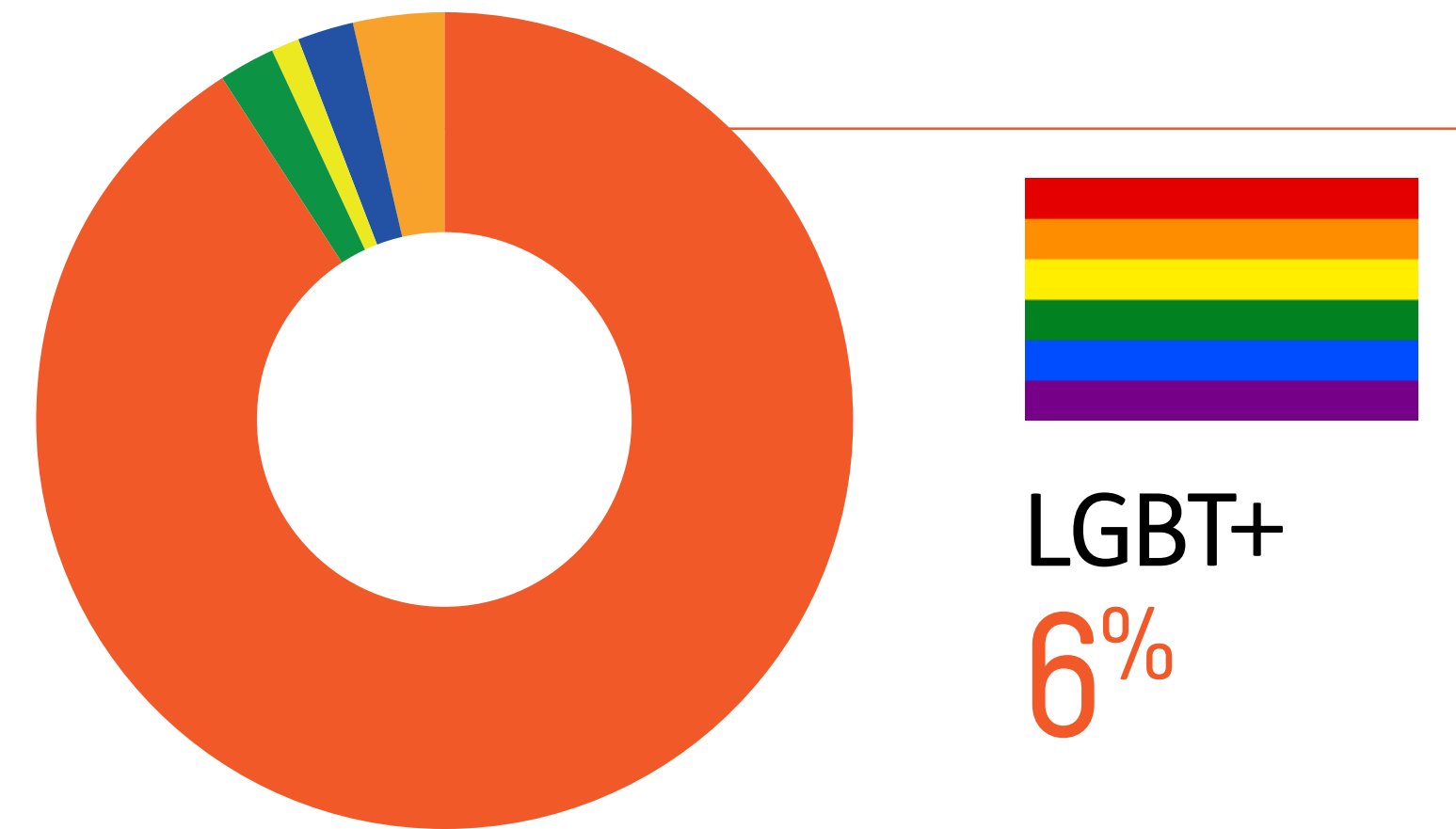
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Gender identity



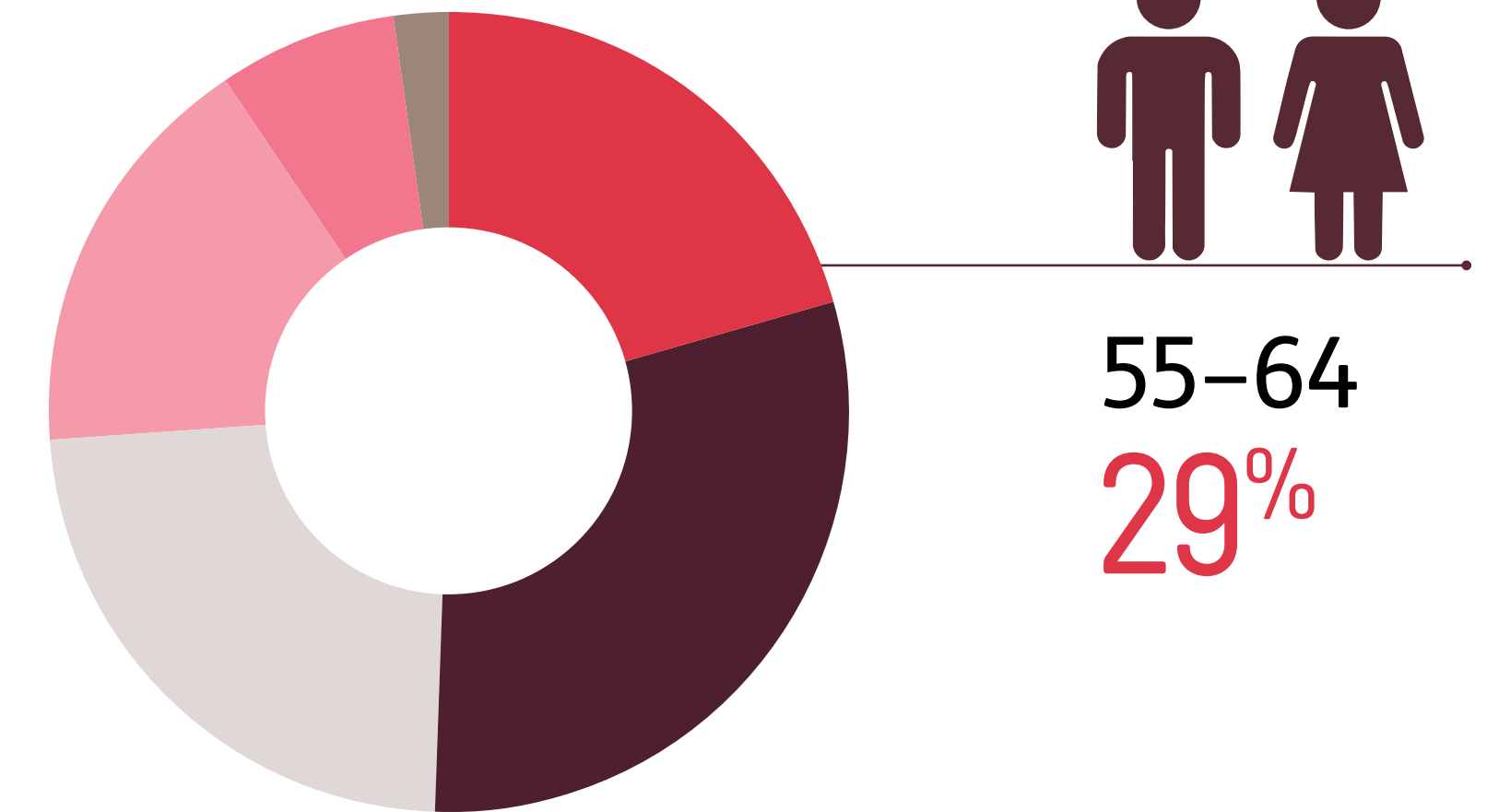
Woman	59%
Man	36%
Non-binary	>1%
Trans man	>1%
Trans woman	>1%

Sexual orientation



Heterosexual	81%
Gay man	2%
Lesbian	1%
Bisexual	2%
Other	3%

Age



65+	20%
55-64	29%
45-54	22.5%
35-44	16%
25-34	7%
16-24	2%

Customer Voice data from customers who have provided data

Customer Voices

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Our stronger voices officers (SVOs) continue to engage with local communities to reach groups that are underrepresented in our engagement programme, for example, younger people. Wheatley Homes South SVOs have supported a young person's project in local schools and attended the Queen of the South football camp in Lochside, an event specifically designed to encourage girls into the sport. At events, SVOs advertise vacancies, promote apprenticeships and show testimonials from tradespeople to encourage young people in our communities to view housing as a career, supporting our social mobility approach.

Disability

Although there is no change in the overall percentage of Customer Voices who indicated they were disabled, there are some variations in the disabilities declared compared to the data reported last year. Long-term illness has decreased from 80% of those who answered 'yes' to being disabled; physical disability decreased from 63%; and mental health condition decreased from 62%.

This Customer Voice EDI data was used last year to **inform EIAs** such as for our Group RSL Medical Adaptation Internal Guidance and Group Repairs and Policy Framework.

We also continue to celebrate awareness-raising events such as **Scottish Learning Disabilities Awareness Week** (6–12 May); this year the theme was 'digital'.



Customer Voices

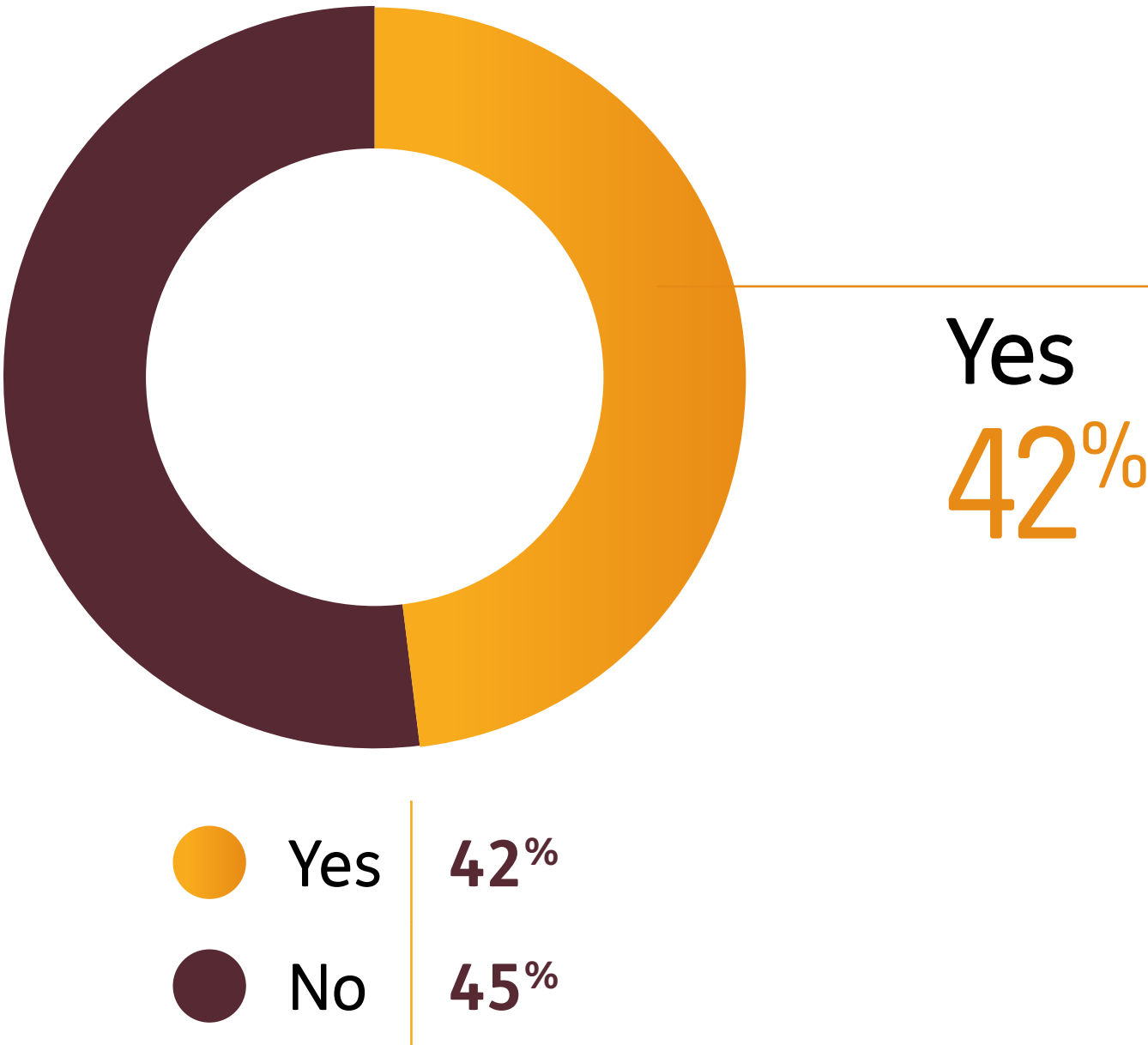


Staff and tenants across Group got involved by holding events with partner organisations to improve understanding of how technology can support those with learning disabilities.

Our Wheatley Care personalised and self-directed support service in Maryhill embraced the theme with art sessions that allowed residents to creatively express what digital means to them. One resident said:

“It’s great to be able to come together and learn from other people’s experiences and interests, and how we can use this in our lives.”

Are you or is any of your household a disabled person?



The remaining % were 'prefer not to say'

If 'yes', top disabilities declared	Customer Voices
Long term illness, disease or condition	72%
Physical disability	57%
Mental health condition	56%
Neurodivergent	23%
Learning difficulty	18%
Deafness or hearing loss	22%
Autoimmune disease	7%
Blindness or partial sight loss	6%

Source - Customer Voice (Group level)

Customer Voices

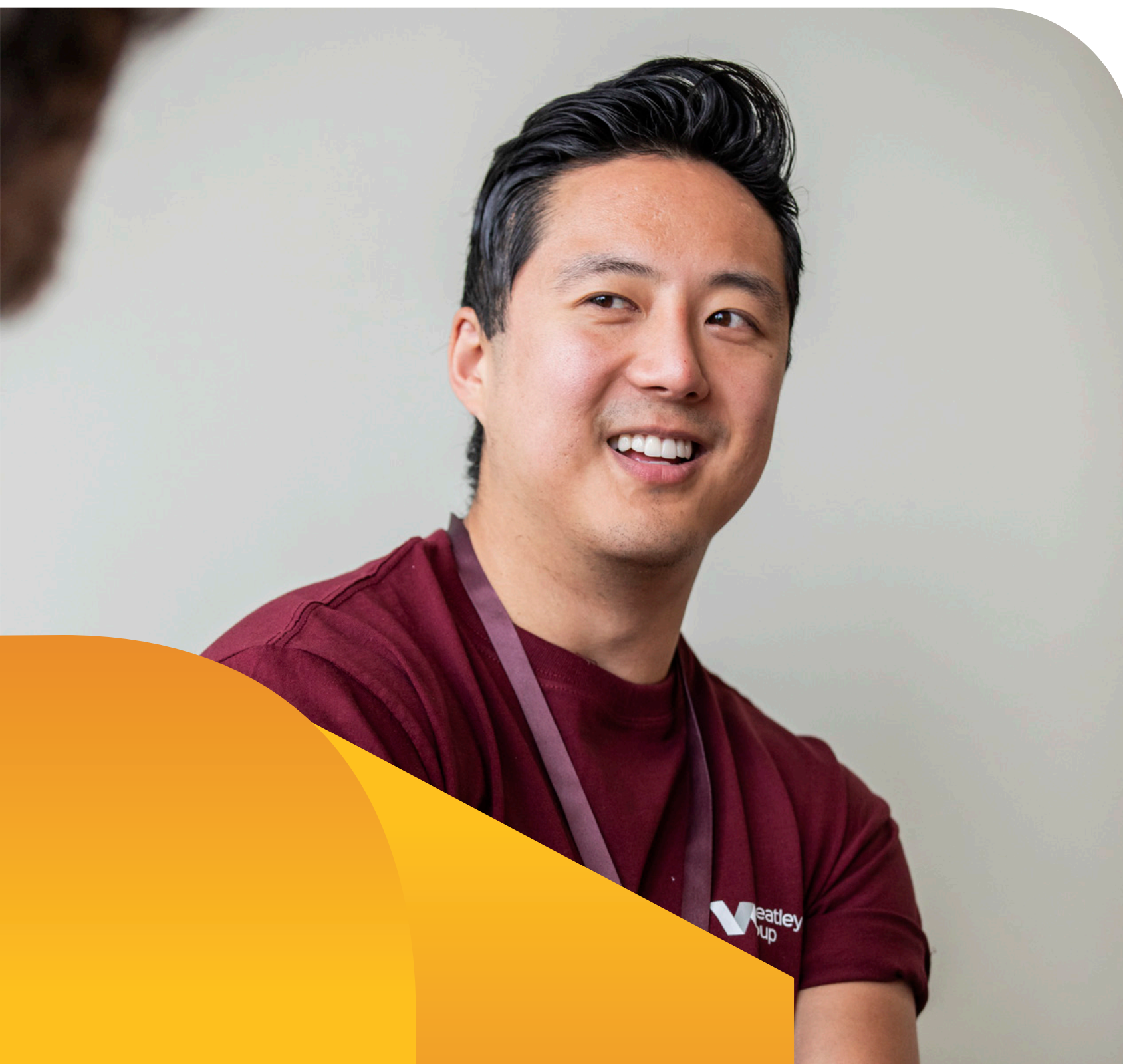
The ethnic diversity of our Customer Voice data largely aligns to our 2022 Customer EDI survey reported last year.

Ethnicity

Proportional to our stock base, the majority of our Customer Voices are from Glasgow. This reflects that we see a proportional ethnic diversity from the African Scottish, African or British African or black British group within our Customer Voice programme when compared to the 2022 Scottish Census, as 4% of Glasgow's population is from this group.

Ethnicity	Customer Voices (Group)	2022 Scottish Census
White Scottish, British	88%	87%
African Scottish, African or British African or black British	4%	1%
White Polish or other white background	3%	6%
Other ethnicity	5%	6%

Source – Customer Voice and 2022 Scottish Census





Wheatley Foundation

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Wheatley Foundation's purpose is to **maximise access to employment, training and learning opportunities** for customers of all ages, and support customers by **tackling social exclusion and alleviating the impacts of poverty**.

Social mobility is a theme throughout our EDI approach and the Foundation's work is central to this. In 2023/24, we continued to monitor access to Foundation employability programmes and support services including welfare benefits and fuel advice. Details of the data collected over the year are included below.

Employability programmes

We continued to support employability programmes. This includes **No One Left Behind (NOLB)**, a Scottish Government funded programme initially based in Edinburgh and

focused on employability for younger people. We also supported **Way Ahead (WA)**, initially based in Glasgow, as a general employability project focused on providing a single point of entry.

In the last quarter of the year, we saw fewer referrals as these projects wound down. Contracts for these programmes were renewed for 2024/25 and we continue to support and monitor these. Overall, over 2023/24, we had **89** referrals for NOLB and **121** for Way Ahead.

From quarter three, we also supported **Progress 4 Parents (P4P)** based in Edinburgh and Glasgow. P4P supports parents/ primary caregivers aged 16+, and in Glasgow is targeted at those who have a disability need within their household. In 2023/24, this project had **18** referrals.

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Over the year, we saw referrals from a broader range of ages than reported last year, although primarily, given the targeting of these projects, we expected to see a younger profile.

Age and sex

In recognising that the sex split could be more balanced, we worked to improve this, particularly for Way Ahead, through engagement with female-orientated projects via our Glasgow social work partners.

This programme, however, focuses on providing employability opportunities for those who have experienced homelessness or criminal convictions, which tends to increase the number of male referrals. Referrals for NOLB mainly came via schools and 16+ meetings as part of our funding agreement from Capital City Partnership and the City of Edinburgh Council.

Age	WA	NOLB	P4P
Under 16		7%	
16 - 24	23%	63%	8%
25 - 34	29%	14%	22%
35 - 44	27%	11%	58%
45 - 54	14%	3%	11%
55 - 64	7%	2%	
Sex	WA	NOLB	P4P
Male	86%	43%	36%
Female	14%	57%	64%

Source - Way Ahead, No one left behind and Progress 4 Parents



Wheatley Foundation

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Ethnicity

In analysing the ethnic diversity of these programmes, we saw variation throughout quarters. As primarily targeted in Scotland's biggest cities, Glasgow and Edinburgh, these projects did see a more proportional ethnic diversity than compared to the overall Scottish 2022 results for Scotland, in which 87% of the population were from a white Scottish or British background.

Throughout the year, our partners promoted these programmes to diverse communities and accessed multi-language materials. We also looked to use our influence to improve reach and market these employability programmes through different communication methods, for example, through promotion by the Scottish Refugee Council, in an effort to increase diversity including ethnicity.

Ethnic group	WA	NOLB	P4P
White Scottish, British	73%	84%	58%
Any other white background	2%	8%	8%
African Scottish, African or British African or black British	20%	4%	8%
Asian – Pakistani, Scottish Pakistani or British Pakistani, Indian and any other Asian background	4%		25%
Other ethnicity		4%	

Source - Way Ahead, No one left behind and Progress 4 Parents. Does not include 'prefer not to say' or 'unknown'



Wheatley Foundation

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Disability

We saw a significant increase in disability throughout the year for Way Ahead and NOLB. However comparing to last year overall, we have seen a decrease in disability for NOLB, 59% 'yes' last year, whereas this has increased for Way Ahead, 30% 'yes' last year.

We launched our new partnership employability contract in quarter one of 2023/24, which aims to support disabled parents with children under five to begin to prepare for work in the future. This project was delivered in partnership with Enable, Parents in Trauma and Recovery, Parent Network Scotland and One Parent Families Scotland. We expect the increase in those with disabilities for Way Ahead to be due to referrals from this contract.

In recognising the high proportion of referrals declaring mental health conditions, SAMH (Scottish Association for Mental Health) is a main delivery partner for the project for 2024/25. Through the quarters for Way Ahead, NOLB and P4P mental health was the most declared disability which reflects trends seen in our other equality data.

Disability	WA	NOLB	P4P
Yes	86%	36%	36%
No	14%	64%	64%
Top disabilities declared	WA	NOLB	P4P
Deafness/partial hearing	5%		2%
Learning disability	20%	11%	6%
Mental health	54%	36%	47%
Neurodivergent	2%	26%	12%
Blindness/ partial sight	2%		
Physical disability	3%	3%	8%
Long term illness	7%	27%	15%
Physical disability	4%	2%	11%
Other condition	5%	3%	

Source - Way Ahead, No one left behind and Progress 4 Parents

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Support services – Fuel advice, welfare benefits advice

Throughout 2023/24, we introduced EDI data monitoring for those accessing our support programmes Fuel Advice (FA) and Welfare Benefit Advice (WBA). We provided a total of **7956** customers with WBA support and **3360** customers were supported by FA. In analysing the data, we see a good range of ages accessing these services, and where we have sex data, this is fairly split between men and women.

We are working to increase EDI data responses for these programmes to allow us to better identify gaps. For example, unlike EDI data reported in other sections of this report, only 5% of customers supported by these services declared they were disabled. However, when analysing the disabilities declared, similar to our data elsewhere, mental health is the most declared disability followed by long-term illness and physical disability.

Age	WBA	FA
Under 16	5%	7%
16 - 24	13%	17%
25 - 34	18%	24%
35 - 44	23%	26%
45 - 54	22%	17%
55 - 64	14%	9%
Sex	WA	FA
Male	30%	21%
Female	38%	20%

Source - Fuel advice and welfare benefit advice (AdvicePro)



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Disability (% of those declared 'yes' to disability)	WBA	FA
Deafness/partial hearing	1%	1%
Learning disability	4%	5%
Mental health	31%	39%
Neurodivergent	2%	1%
Blindness/partial sight	1%	1%
Physical disability	18%	14%
Long-term illness	31%	26%
Autoimmune (eg HIV, multiple sclerosis, Crohn's)	1%	1%
Other condition	12%	13%

Source - Fuel advice and welfare benefit advice (AdvicePro)

Ethnic Group (% of those declared)	WBA	FA
White Scottish, British, Irish	93%	93%
Any other white background	3%	2%
African Scottish, African or British African or black British	2%	3%
Asian – Pakistani, Scottish Pakistani or British Pakistani, Indian and any other Asian background and Arab Scottish, Arab or British Arab	2%	2%

Source - Fuel advice and welfare benefit advice (AdvicePro)



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Our bursary programme provides people living in our homes with financial support to attend university or college. Bursaries are awarded based on specific criteria, including prioritising people who are carers, care experienced, or live in areas of multiple deprivation.

Bursary – 2023/24 programme

Last year, we received **125** applicants from our customers and **50** were successful in receiving a bursary.

Following the EDI data analysis of our bursary programme last year we identified some areas of underrepresentation; the Wheatley Foundation used this to enhance the approach for 2024, reflecting the programme's role in supporting social mobility. From this we saw more applications from customers of an African Scottish/British or black British background, and neurodiversity being the most selected disability by disabled applicants, showing the application process was accessible.

Improvements included:

- ▶ The **application process and form were reviewed** and equality impact assessed; this involved internal consultation with the Disability and Neurodiverse staff network, as well as the Digital, Communication and Governance teams. Externally, the Scottish Refugee Council were consulted and their feedback was considered to strengthen our approach and reach.
- ▶ **Website text and social media messages to promote the programme were updated** to re-emphasise our commitment to EDI and that support is available to complete a bursary application, especially for those whose first language is not English, or have literacy or neurodiverse conditions.

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- ▶ **Applications were moved to Microsoft Forms** which is considered a more accessible platform and has built-in features such as auto-translation. We also delivered a drop in session with the Bridges Programme to support people to apply.
- ▶ **Local delivery partners were engaged** to help promote the programme; this includes FARE; Cranhill Development Trust; Learning Network Centres; Dumfries and Galloway Action Team; Dumfries and Galloway College; south west/south east Edinburgh employability hubs; and CEMVO.

EDI data was collected for applicants and will be compared to awardees so we can analyse access and representation of the programme. **The results of this will be included in next year's Annual Equalities Report.**



Our people

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Since our first Annual Equalities Report, we have continued to embed our Different Together approach to ensure Wheatley Group is a truly inclusive place to work, where everyone can thrive and be themselves. Building a workforce that is as diverse and vibrant as the communities we serve remains our ambition, as we implement a wide range of initiatives to support us in our EDI journey. Highlights from 2023/24 include:

Inclusive employee engagement

Our inclusive approach has continued to have our employees' voice and engagement at its heart. Our staff Community of Excellence and its six people networks have continued to inform our EDI approach. As reported in last year's report, each of our networks has an Executive Sponsor from our Executive and Senior Leadership teams.

Our people networks are:

- ▶ Disability and Neurodiversity;
- ▶ Age Networking;
- ▶ LGBTQ+;
- ▶ Carers;
- ▶ Race and Multicultural, and
- ▶ Menopause and Perimenopause.



Our people

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Examples of our network's initiatives across the last year include, but are not limited to:

- ▶ Our **age network** hosted a series of young colleague events designed to learn about career development routes, how to build a professional network and engage in tailored wellbeing support. Approximately 109 young people attended these with over 94% sharing they feel recognised and valued for their contributions in Group.
- ▶ Our **menopause and perimenopause** café implemented new menopause guidance and manager training to ensure leaders have the tools they require to support colleagues experiencing menopausal change.
- ▶ Our **LGBTQ+** network marched at Pride events across Edinburgh and Glasgow with a colourful presence to show support and representation to our LGBTQ+ staff, customers, and wider communities.

- ▶ Our **disability and neurodiversity** network continued to raise awareness of invisible disabilities, such as hearing loss, as well as a focus on supporting individuals with cancer in the workplace via Macmillan training and coffee mornings raising £5,300 for the charity. Our network also continued to support mental health, including support for men's mental health workshops delivered in partnership with Men Matters Scotland in February and March 2024 which were attended by 53 employees.

Making best use of our EDI data

Results from our last employee EDI survey in 2022 deepened our understanding of our workforce profile and the potential needs of our employees, helping to influence our areas of focus with our people networks over the last year. Our survey had a 60% response rate

with a summary of our profile shared in our last Annual Equalities Report. Our next staff survey is currently ongoing, and its results will be shared in our 2024/25 Annual Equalities Report.

We continue to monitor and analyse both our recruitment data and gender pay gap reporting to influence how we can attract underrepresented groups to Wheatley, as well as supporting career pathways to create opportunities for people to develop and work across our subsidiaries. You can access our gender pay gap reports on our websites and on the [EDI page of our Group site](#). Our suite of people data will continue to grow in 2024 with EDI analysis of our sickness absence information and other employee relations areas.

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Benchmarking

In analysing our people data, it is important that we benchmark and consider where our workforce profile sits within wider contexts. Therefore, we have undertaken benchmarking with available housing sector data that offers insight into EDI in the workforce.

The most recent report of this kind was published by the [National Housing Federation \(NHF\) in September 2023](#). The report covers England's housing association workforce following an analysis of data provided by 177 housing organisations – representing 76% of homes owned by housing associations in England. We understand that in some areas, England's demographic makeup will vary compared to Scotland, so we are mindful of this when benchmarking.

In comparing our 2022 EDI staff survey results with NHF findings, key points to highlight include:

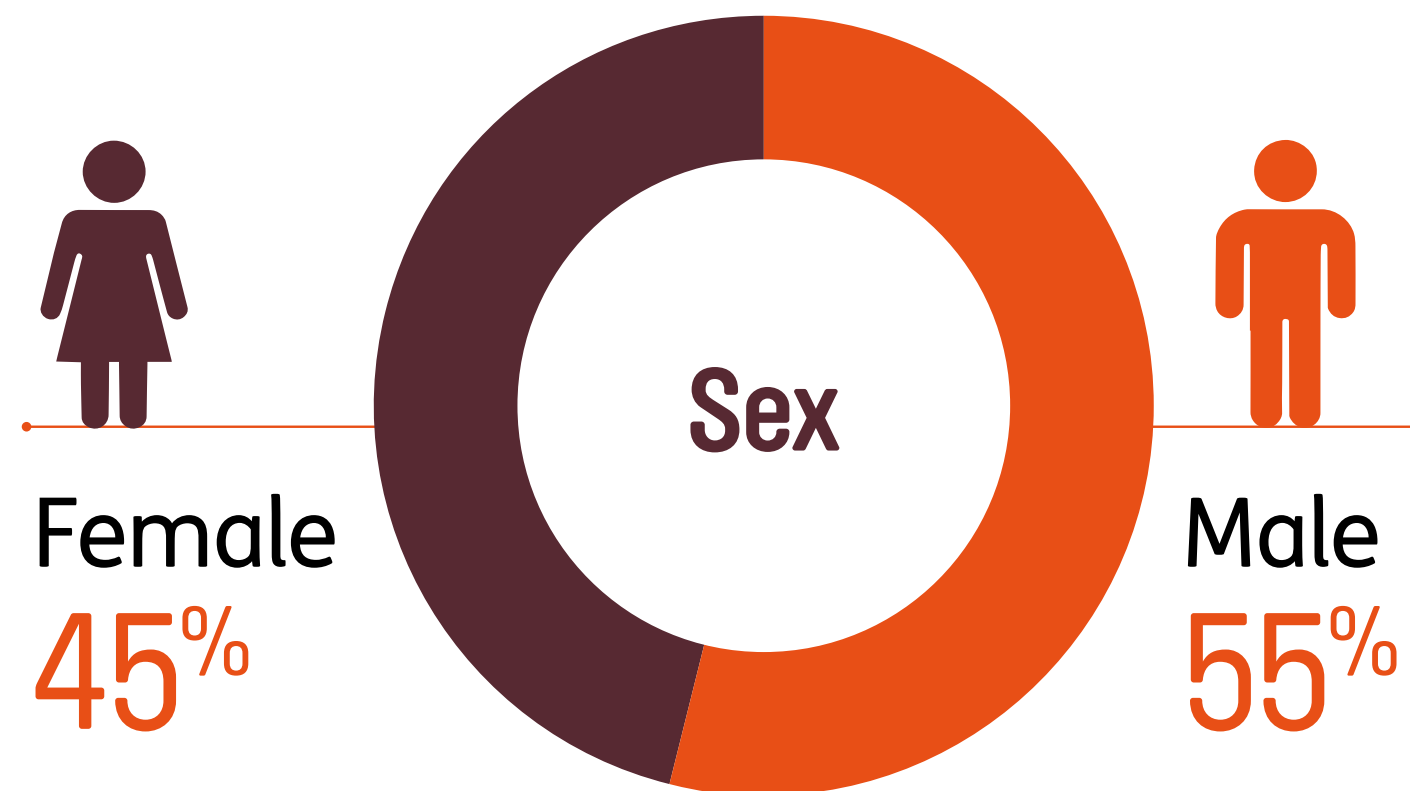
- ▶ We have **100% data for age and sex** but have up to 60% for the other characteristics, including prefer not to say responses, which is favourable, although could be improved, when compared to the NHF findings that reports variances of missing data; some of these gaps are up to 90%.
- ▶ We have **good data on caring responsibilities** when compared to NHF, who reported that this information is a significant gap from their collected workforce data. From our 2022 survey, 42% of our staff told us they have caring responsibilities outside of work.

- ▶ Similar to NHF, we found **our staff do not necessarily consider themselves 'disabled'** as only 7.6% answered 'yes' to this question, compared to NHF's 9%. However, 31% of our staff then declared a health condition that would meet the disability definition, showing **staff feel comfortable** in sharing this information with us.
- ▶ We have gaps in our leadership diversity profile as we did not gather information in a way that allowed us to analyse this. We have 100% for sex and age but cannot give a further breakdown as it was an anonymised survey. **We have introduced additional questions in our 2024 survey to help us profile leadership diversity.**

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- ▶ The overall Group position for sex is 45% female and 55% male. At 31 March 2024, however, we had **excellent female representation at leadership level**;
 - Executive team 50/50 split
 - Leadership team for locality housing director and above is 59% female
 - Leadership level below locality housing director is 54% female.



- ▶ For **ethnicity**, 3.5% of participants from our staff survey declared that they were from an Asian, African, Caribbean/black, mixed or other ethnic background. This is lower than workforce ethnicity cited by NFF, which found 10% were from black/African/Caribbean/black British backgrounds and 5% from Asian/Asian British backgrounds. However, we know England is a more ethnically diverse country than Scotland. When comparing to Scottish Census data, which provides a more relevant benchmark, 7% of the Scottish population were from an Asian, African, Caribbean/black, Mixed or other ethnic background.
- ▶ For the '**prefer not to say**' comparison the three top areas for this were; sexual orientation (5.8%); religion (5%); and disability (5%). Other 'prefer not to say' responses ranged between 1 to 3%.

This is similar to NFF findings on the areas staff were more likely reluctant to disclose.

- ▶ We had no data on the **socio-economic** background of staff, similar to NFF findings. As a point of reflection, we **added a question around social mobility for our 2024 staff EDI survey**.

As part of their recommendations from their report, NFF suggested that housing associations in England should 'adopt sector-wide initiatives to drive change including Disability Confident Scheme, Leadership 2025 and HouseProud Pledge.' Currently, we have the **Disability Confident** accreditation and we will explore the other recommendations.

Our people – approach and culture

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Embedding an inclusive approach and culture

Our commitment to ensuring our services are delivered through an inclusive and equitable lens led to the launch of **in-person refreshed EDI training** from January 2024 onwards. This training will ensure our people across Wheatley subsidiaries and City Building (Glasgow) are equipped with valuable knowledge and understanding of EDI to better support our customers.

So far **215 colleagues** have attended this training up to the end of April 2024, with training expected to complete across our workforce by summer 2025. This follows delivery of inclusive leadership training to over 250 people managers across the Group, and updates to our suite of online EDI mandatory training.

Working with our people networks, we have continued to make our **staff communications more inclusive**. We have made this a focus by celebrating dates of recognition in our Different Together calendar and also by tailoring staff announcements, for example taking time off during the festive period. This has raised visibility on a range of topics throughout the year. Examples of this have included colleagues sharing their personal experiences of observing Ramadan and marking other cultural celebrations like Lunar New Year.

In March, our commitment to embedding an inclusive approach was recognised by the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) who asked us to **present our work around EDI initiatives at CIH Scotland's Housing Festival**. This allowed us to share our best practice initiatives with others in the housing sector and hear about the successes and challenges other organisations have experienced.



Our people – diverse recruitment

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In order to encourage and attract more diversity within our candidate pool, we refreshed our recruitment and attraction pages on our websites to incorporate Different Together and showcase our commitment to employee diversity, including videos testimonials from members of our Different Together Community of Excellence and networks.

Our recruitment data analysis remains a key focus for People Services as we continue to strive to increase the diversity of underrepresented groups. We continue to collect and analyse data on all protected characteristics of job applicants. Over 2023/24 we focused on ethnic minority backgrounds and attracting young people.

Ethnic minority background

We gave particular focus to attracting candidates from an ethnic minority background. Our inclusive recruitment efforts have positively impacted on our number of applicants from an ethnic minority background. In 2023/24, we saw a 91% increase in the number of candidates applying for roles across group from an ethnic minority background.



489

ethnic minority
applicants in
2022/23

936

ethnic minority
applicants in
2023/24

This increase in attraction of a more diverse candidate pool has resulted in an increase in our percentage of employees from an ethnic minority background from 3.69% in 2022/23 to **4.22% in 2023/24.**

Our people – diverse recruitment

Attracting young people

We have made efforts to attract young people into roles across the Group through the creation of our new apprentice programmes and continued recruitment of graduates through our Ignite programme.

600

16–24 applicants
in 2022/23

721

16–24 applicants
in 2023/24

This has resulted in an increase in our percentage of employees within the 16–24 age bracket from 6.9% in 2022/23 to **7.1%** in **2023/24**.



Accreditation, awards and partnership working

We want to show staff and applicants that we are actively looking to make the workplace inclusive for all and we want people to feel confident working for us. At Wheatley, we have been recognised by various organisations for the good work we are doing to champion EDI.

As an organisation, we are proud to be a member of the **Employers' Network for Equality and Inclusion (ENEI)**, who are a leading employer network promoting equality and inclusion in the workplace.

At Wheatley, we are committed to removing barriers to disabled people and those with long-term health conditions. This is reflected by our ongoing **Disability Confident Employer** commitment to best practice, which includes providing a guaranteed interview to disabled applicants who meet the minimum criteria for a role.

We have also joined the **Housing Diversity Network (HDN)** who provide external expertise to support us in delivering our EDI Action Plan, as well as access to a host of resources and learning materials that are available to

all staff. This supplements our membership to **Business in the Community (BITC)**. BITC reviewed this report and commented “overall, [a] brilliant piece of work again”.

We have also engaged with the **Scottish Federation of Housing (SFHA)** on new EDI initiatives, this includes launching a roundtable network of over 20 SFHA members which met for the first time earlier this year.

Accreditation, awards and partnership working

Over the last few years, we recognised the importance of attaining meaningful accreditations that reflect our values and we are proud to have successfully attained the following recognised awards:

- ▶ ENEI Inclusivity Excellence Awards Winner – Driving Social Mobility;
- ▶ ENEI's Talent Inclusion and Diversity Evaluation (TIDE) – silver award in 2023 and 2024, up from Bronze in 2022;
- ▶ Menopause Friendly Committed Employer.

Accredited employer

We have successfully retained the following accreditations:

- ▶ Disability Positive;
- ▶ Carer Positive;
- ▶ Mindful Employer, and
- ▶ IIP Platinum.

In 2024, we will be working towards our Group re-accreditation in Investors in Young People, which we currently hold at gold standard.



Board members

Board members

We collect equalities data from our Board members. We keep this data under review and use it to inform our succession planning. This helps us to ensure that our Boards are as representative as possible of the communities we serve.

We also benchmark this data; for example, we undertook a comparison exercise against equality data published by the National Housing Federation (NHF) in England in 2023.

In the Scottish context, we also look to compare our Board composition against the 2022 Census data, as this becomes available. At time of writing this included age, trans history, sexual orientation and ethnic group. In analysing our Board member data for 2023/24, we found:

► **Sex** – Over 50% of our Board members were female, which met the requirements of the Gender Representation on Public Boards (S) Act;



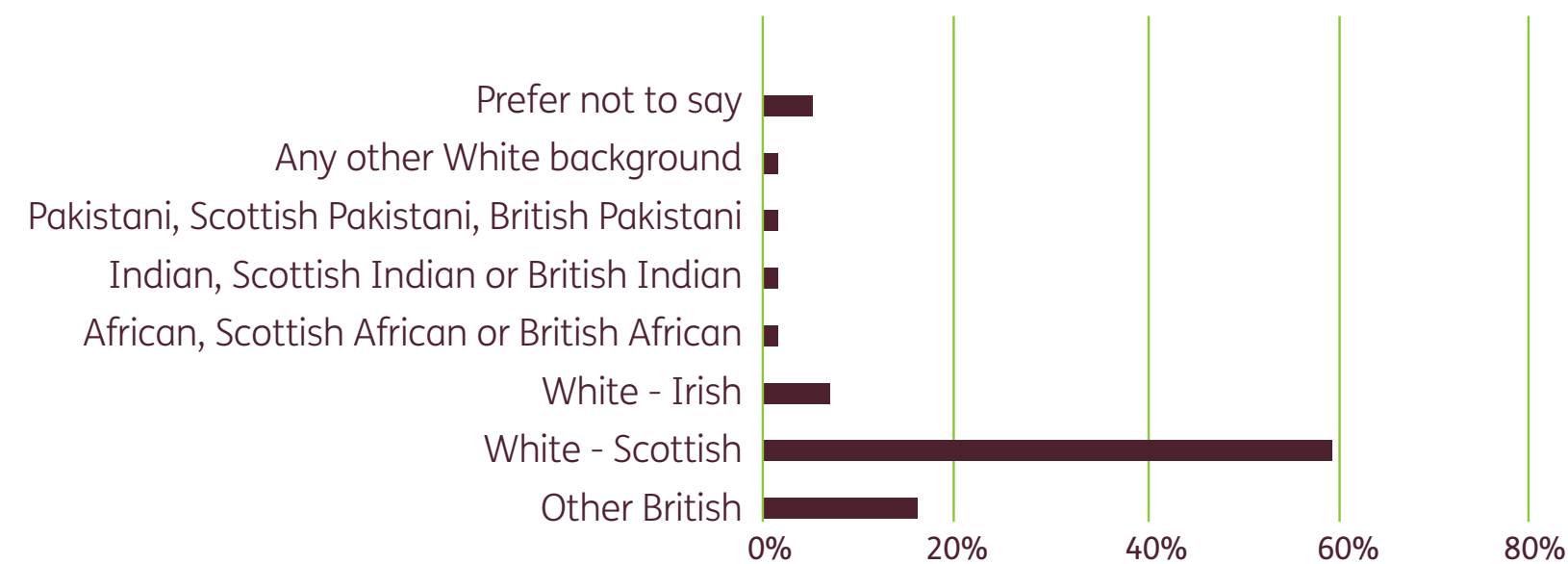
The remaining % were 'prefer not to say'

- **Disability** – 11% of our Board members indicated they had a disability. Representation was highest within our RSLs: 25% for Wheatley Homes Glasgow, 25% for Wheatley Homes South and 20% for Wheatley Homes East.
- **Age** – The average age of our Board members was 56, with the youngest being 32 and the oldest being 81. This is in line with the 2022 Scottish Census in which the 55–59 age group was the largest of the five-year age groups.

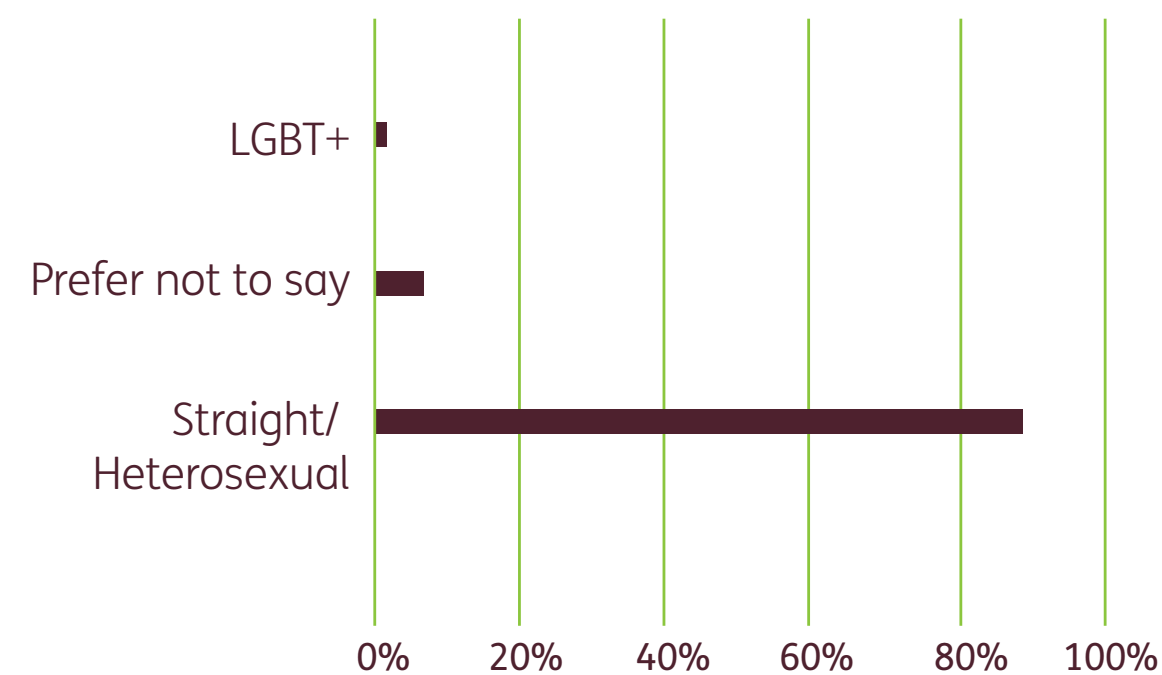


Board members

- **Ethnicity** – 6% of our Board members were ethnically diverse; comparatively the 2022 Scottish Census found that approximately 7% of the Scottish population was from an ethnically diverse background.

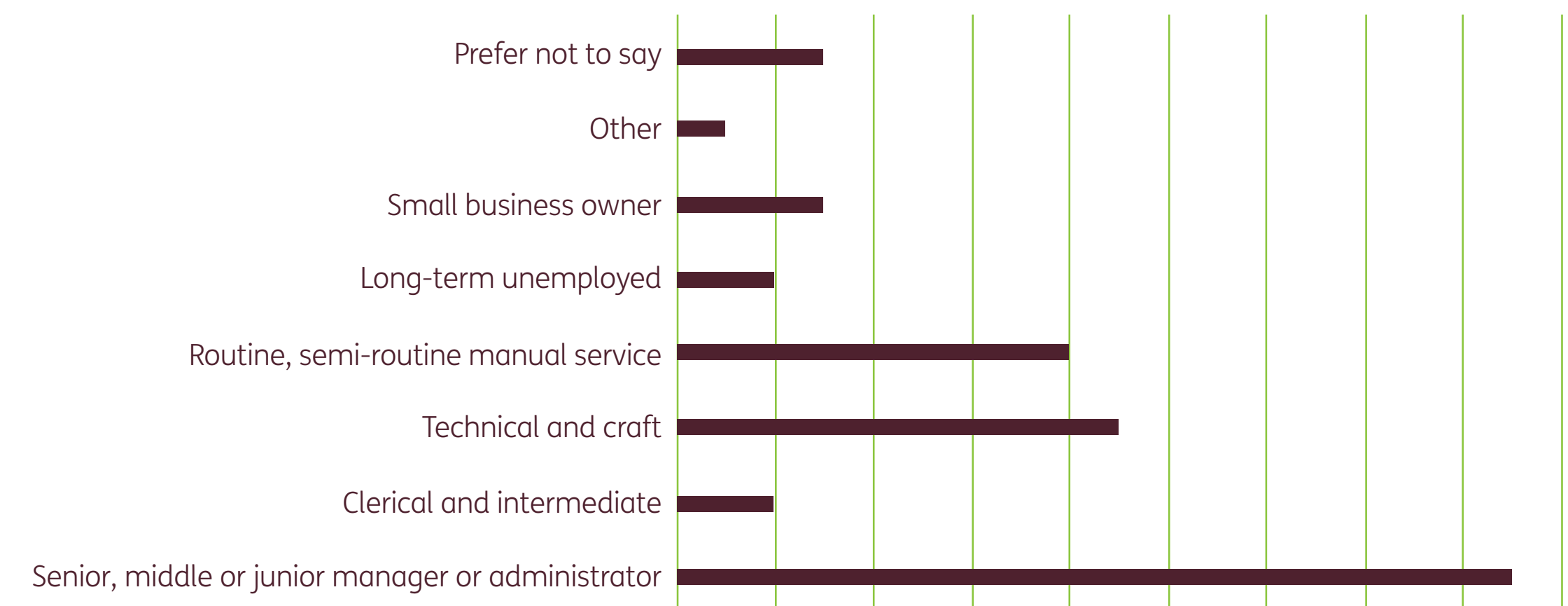


- **Sexual orientation** – 89% of our Board members declared they were heterosexual and 2% LGBT+; this is slightly below the overall Scottish Census results for 2022 of 88% and 4% respectively.



- **Socio-economic** – 49% of our Board members had parents with a professional or management occupation

Further benchmarking of our Board member EDI data will be undertaken against the Scottish Census as the data sets are released.



Next steps

Next steps

Equity, diversity and inclusion continue to be a strong focus for us as we further embed this through our service design and decision-making.

Sustaining and evolving the structures we have set to ensure Wheatley is a thriving workplace for our employees, improving access to our services and taking a whole journey approach are key themes as we implement our second EDI Action Plan. Progress with the action plan continues to be monitored quarterly by our Wheatley Solutions Board.

In delivering the penultimate year of our 2021-2026 Group Strategy, we are focused on ensuring our services are **personalised and tailored**, driven by customer **priorities and insight** data – an EDI approach is intrinsic to this. This involves improving customer journeys and responding to drivers of customer satisfaction. Understanding and actioning areas of improvement in terms of customer accessibility is vital and will be supported by our customer-focused staff network group.

In evolving our data, Wheatley Care is expanding their EDI data collection to better understand the demographic of the people we work for, and MyHousing has launched for Lowther Homes, meaning we can utilise this platform to analyse the demographic of mid-market rent customers applying with us.



Next steps

The results of this data analysis will be included in next year's Annual Equalities Report.

For our staff, we are undertaking a diversity survey to collect EDI data and understand additional factors linked to caring responsibilities and social mobility. We also asked staff about the impact Different Together has had, allowing us to measure our success. At the end of May we submitted our 3rd TIDE assessment to the Employer's Network for Equality and Inclusion. We are reviewing the benchmarking results and our recommendations, and this along with an analysis of the staff survey will inform future actions. Results of TIDE for 2024 and our 2024 staff survey will be published in our next Annual Equalities Report.



Want more details?

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