

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY BASELINE SURVEY REPORT



**A report by the DICE (Diversity, Inclusion, Community
Cohesion & Equalities) Group**

September 2020

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Foreword

In 2018, the GMHP (Greater Manchester Housing Providers) set up the DICE (Diversity, Inclusion, Community Cohesion and Equalities) Group as a collaborative workstream with the following remit:

The purpose of this Group is to ensure that the thematic and cross cutting themes of equality, diversity, inclusion, inclusive growth and community cohesion are championed and progressed throughout the work of the GMHP.

The members of DICE commit to being informed and knowledgeable on the relevant issues, policies, strategies and initiatives which support this purpose.

DICE will act as an advisory and influencing resource for all the GMHP workstreams, ensuring that a values-based approach is adopted and embraced across the activities of the GMHP. DICE will work closely with GMCA to support their work on this agenda and seek to combine resources and activity in the spirit of the Memorandum Of Understanding to progress priorities identified within the scope of this remit.

DICE may also promote, champion or otherwise support specific projects, events or initiatives which advance our purpose and aims.

In 2020, DICE began gathering this baseline data report in order to gain a clear picture of the commitment to tackling equality and diversity from GMHP members, as well as setting out the current situation in relation to diversity data and monitoring within and between organisations.

As the findings reveal, there is much more work to do in achieving the equality ambitions of the participating organisations. The report presents the results of the survey and the data which has been collated and analysed by Sonja Wellings, Research Manager, at Irwell Valley Homes, overseen by the DICE Group. There are case studies to demonstrate where participating organisations are taking action to address the issues highlighted by the report as members were keen to share and learn from each other.

My thanks go to all the organisations who participated and have agreed to openly share their results so we can collectively and individually work to address the issues outlined in the report. My thanks go to DICE Group members who assisted with the creation of this important research report. My special thanks go to Sonja Wellings for her work in surveying, analysing and compiling this report. We have received much interest in this report to date and are happy to share further our methodology with any other organisations interested in carrying out similar baseline studies.



Sasha Deepwell
CEO of Irwell Valley Homes
Chair of DICE

sasha.deepwell@irwellvalley.co.uk

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Overview

This report presents the findings from a survey carried out by the Diversity, Inclusion, Community Cohesion and Equalities (DICE) group, a partnership of housing providers with a collective commitment to equality and diversity in social housing provision across Greater Manchester and a sub-group of the Greater Manchester Housing Providers (GMHP).

The survey was carried out to explore the various approaches being taken by GMHP members in meeting their equality and diversity commitments and to understand equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) challenges within the organisations.

The survey also collected benchmarking data to allow GMHP participants to assess how they are doing on diversity and inclusion and compare their position with other members.

This exploratory study helps establish a picture of where organisations stand currently with regards to EDI and presents an evidence base to shape and inform the work of the DICE group and the members of GMHP going forward.

1.2 Methodology

The research was carried out by an online survey, sent out to organisations in May and June 2020. The survey questionnaire contained a series of quantitative and qualitative questions designed to explore:

- approaches to managing and promoting equality, diversity and inclusion
- membership of formal EDI charters and frameworks
- approaches to improving diversity of boards, leadership teams and workforce and challenges faced in doing so
- the range of data collection and monitoring activity undertaken by members
- good practice examples of initiatives being undertaken by member organisations

The benchmarking exercise, carried out alongside the survey, collected information about the diversity characteristics of customers and three cohorts within organisations - board, leadership team and the workforce more broadly. Benchmarking results are presented in Appendix 1.

A total of 23 GMHP members participated in the research. All are registered providers of social housing except for Nacro which is a social justice charity involved in the provision of housing and support to vulnerable young people and adults. Contributing organisations:

- Arawak Walton
- Bolton at Home
- For Viva
- Great Places Housing Group
- Irwell Valley Homes
- Jigsaw Homes Group
- Johnnie Johnson Housing
- MSV Housing
- Nacro
- Northwards Housing
- One Manchester
- Onward
- Pendleton Together Housing
- Riverside Group
- Rochdale Boroughwide Housing
- Salix Homes
- Six Town Housing
- Southway Housing Trust
- Stockport Homes
- The Guinness Partnership
- Trafford Housing Trust
- Wythenshawe Community Housing Group
- Your Housing Group

2.0 Summary

- The majority of organisations have a dedicated EDI forum or working group with responsibility for driving forward progress towards meeting equality objectives, supporting the development of inclusive practices and monitoring the progress of EDI strategies and action plans.
- Forums have strong leadership from governing bodies, chief executive and leadership teams to endorse a strategic commitment to equality and diversity.
- A small number of organisations employ a dedicated EDI Specialist to drive forward strategy development and ensure organisational compliance and good practice. Diversity Champions are also employed by some organisations to raise awareness of equality issues across their organisations and take the lead on EDI initiatives.
- EDI related activity is well supported by a variety of EDI frameworks, accreditation schemes and networks which provide useful tools for organisations to review and improve their approach to equality and diversity and ensure more inclusive policies, procedures and services.
- All organisations offer training and development for staff on equality and diversity to provide them with the skills to make equality and diversity an integral part of their approach to customers.
- A number of organisations employ positive action measures where it can be demonstrated that employees, applicants or board members who share a protected characteristic experience disadvantage or where participation is disproportionately low.
- Workforce demographics show diversity remains a challenge, particularly among board and leadership teams and particularly in relation to black, minority ethnic and disabled people. Low turnover at senior level and limited board opportunities presents a challenge for ensuring diversity, which participants aim to address.
- Involving a diverse range of customers in service design, delivery, review and scrutiny is recognised as vital to ensure a wide range of views are taken on board and to foster a culture genuinely open to equality and diversity.
- There is significant monitoring activity by organisations but there are substantial gaps in the data collected, particularly for sexual orientation and trans status. This makes it very hard to assess how inclusive organisations are at all levels and in their customer services.
- Practices related to the collection and use of EDI data varied across organisations, particularly for less standardised questions such as disability and trans status but also gender, ethnicity and sexual orientation. This makes benchmarking and comparison across organisations problematic.
- There are differences in the way data is recorded on internal systems with different approaches in the treatment of missing data and ambiguous responses such as “don’t know” or “prefer not to say”. Again, this presents a problem for benchmarking.
- The general consensus among survey respondents was that monitoring data was underutilised. While EDI data tends to be used at a broad level to understand the overall profile of the customer base or workforce, the monitoring of specific service

areas was less common. For example, reviewing the equity of recruitment and promotion practices or reviewing the equity of the allocations process were not widely carried out.

- Collecting and maintaining good quality diversity data was felt to be a challenge by some organisations due to IT constraints and a reluctance on the part of customers to provide information. GDPR legislation was also viewed as a barrier to collecting customer data although it is not clear why this was felt to be the case since the legislation does not prevent the collection or processing of EDI data providing certain requirements are met.

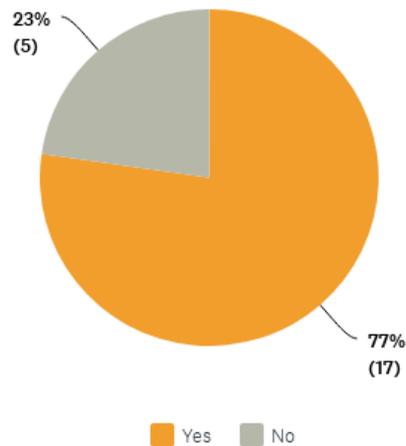
A full set of survey findings is presented in the following section.

3.0 Survey Findings

This section presents the survey results alongside a number of case study examples to highlight the interventions and initiatives organisations have introduced to address EDI challenges and improve diversity.

Does your organisation have an E&D forum or group whose role it is promote equality, diversity and inclusion across the business and oversee the implementation of your equality, diversity and inclusion strategy/policy?

n=22



- 17 respondents have a formal EDI forum to oversee the implementation of EDI strategies and action plans, carry out ongoing monitoring and review progress on meeting equality and diversity commitments.
- One respondent whose organisation does not currently have a formal EDI forum was planning to launch one soon.
- One respondent stated that their organisation took a more fluid approach to EDI, organising bi-monthly “keeping the conversation alive” events and arranging initiatives to champion & support EDI across the business.

Stockport Homes: a vision for an inclusive workplace

Stockport Homes believe a successful workplace is one that values everyone and embraces both similarities and differences. They wanted to enshrine that in the culture of the organisation in a more formal way. This was seen to be particularly important given the wider societal issues of the last few years, including Brexit and the MEN Arena bombing.

In the summer of 2019, they developed *BE YOU – their vision for an inclusive workplace*. *Be You* sums up their belief that everyone has the right to be who they are, and to be that person at work. It also recognises the business benefit of an inclusive approach - high performance comes as a result of maximising staff engagement and ensuring that everyone feels valued and able to utilise their skills and abilities.

Their vision sets out their belief that a truly inclusive workplace is about behaviours and requires an approach that goes beyond simply measuring and monitoring the diversity of the workforce under set characteristics (though having a workforce reflective of their customer base is still very important to them). It is about a culture where everyone feels they belong.

To support the vision, they developed a 'human library' which is a way of bringing together diverse staff to share their personal stories and experiences. It provided Stockport Homes with the capability to ask questions, listen, understand and change the way they think, act and work.

Effective management training, supportive policies, staff groups and events (e.g. sponsoring Stockport Pride) to promote awareness are examples of activities that are in place to help provide this environment.

The human library has brought to the fore different staff members stories. Because these have come from within the organisation, they are more tangible and have led to a deeper level of understanding and learning. By drawing out the real experiences of staff members in an open and honest way, it has given other staff the confidence to come forward with their own stories to share. It has also, in part, led to the development of an LGBTQ+ allies training course which has been developed internally for interested staff members.

Management training has formed an important part of the approach and has ensured that managers have enough knowledge to understand why such a vision is important. Prior to the training not all managers were confident or understood why such a vision was necessary.

MSV: Black Lives Matter and anti-racism forum

The death of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor in 2020 at the hands of US law enforcement sparked a series of conversations amongst MSV colleagues and customers. MSV felt they needed to do more to be actively anti-racist and show their support for the Black Lives Matter Foundation, a global organisation whose mission is to eradicate white supremacy and build local power to intervene in violence inflicted on Black communities by the state and vigilantes.

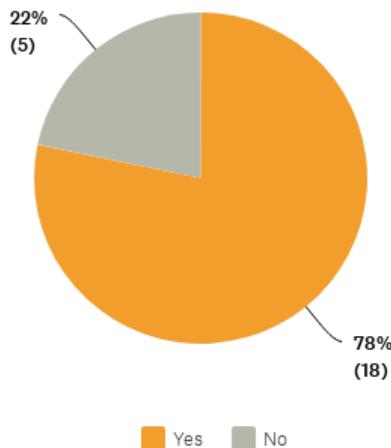
MSV decided to set up a Black Lives Matter and Anti-Racism forum as a starting point. The first meeting took place online due to the coronavirus lockdown and involved around 70 colleagues and board members. It was made clear that the forum would be a 'safe space' where colleagues could share their experiences of racism and speak openly and honestly about how they were personally affected. This led to some very frank exchanges and, after the forum, colleagues who had shared their experiences were contacted and offered support.

An anonymous survey was also carried out to allow colleagues to share any additional feedback and ideas for a way forward. Feedback from the survey, along with ideas and issues raised in the forum will feed into the development of an anti-racism action plan to address racism and inequality within the workplace and local communities.

Many colleagues at MSV commented how the experiences that were shared at the forum had opened their eyes to the reality of racism in the UK. Many also stressed how they now better recognise that a lot more needs to be done to educate people to the realities of racism and tackle their own unconscious biases. Given the success of the forum, MSV plan to repeat it in the future to keep the conversation alive.

Is your organisation signed up to any formal E&D charters, frameworks or benchmarking schemes such as the CIH Equality Scheme, Social Housing Equality Framework, Stonewall UK Equality Index etc?

n=23



- Most organisations are signed up to at least one recognition scheme or specialist EDI member organisation. The Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) Equality & Diversity Charter was most cited with 11 of the 23 organisations currently signed up. The Charter is a general EDI framework that is used by the organisations to identify what outcomes a good quality service should deliver. The charter includes a set of commitments which are underpinned by a range of outcomes – together, the commitments and outcomes provide a framework against which organisations can assess where they are now and where they aspire to be.
- 9 organisations are signed up to Disability Confident, a government scheme that helps employers recruit and retain disabled people and supports employers make the most of the talents of disabled people within the workplace.
- The full list of membership organisations and accreditation schemes cited by respondents are shown below.

| |
|---|
| CIH Equality & Diversity Charter for Housing (11) |
| Disability Confident (9) |
| Stonewall (4) |
| Housing Diversity Network (2) |
| Inclusive Employers (2) |
| ENEI Assessment Framework (1) |
| Mindful Employer (1) |
| MIND Framework (1) |
| UNIFY (1) |
| Leadership 2025 (1) |
| Institute of Public Care (1) |
| Disability Leader Accreditation (1) |
| Houseproud Pledge (1) |
| Inside Housing Inclusive Futures Campaign (1) |
| Investor in Diversity (1) |

Rochdale Borough Wide Housing: becoming a Disability Leader

Rochdale Borough Wide Housing have always strived to ensure equality and remove barriers for colleagues and customers. One way they have demonstrated this is by achieving Disability Confident accreditation, a voluntary government run scheme that encourages employers to think differently about disability and take action to improve how they recruit, retain and develop disabled people.

When they applied to renew their Disability Confident accreditation, it helped them to focus and reflect on the great work they had been doing to attract, support and grow colleagues but they also felt it would be beneficial to benchmark themselves and discover other areas for improvement.

They decided to go through the process of becoming a Disability Leader and, in March 2020, Rochdale Borough Wide Housing become the first housing association to achieve this accreditation. Stepping up to become a Disability Leader means that Rochdale Borough Wide Housing now in a position to act as a champion for Disability Confident and encourage and support other businesses in their supply chains and networks to become Disability Confident.

Going through the process to become Disability Confident and then a Disability Leader has provided reassurance that Rochdale Borough Wide Housing are attracting and supporting colleagues to flourish. They are also able to use this positive achievement as a recruitment and engagement tool.

HouseProud: a shared approach to improving services for LGBT+ customers

The HouseProud group was set up in 2014 as a network for housing providers to improve the way they engage, support and deliver services to their LGBT+ communities. They held their first customer conference in February 2020. The event was supported by 12 member organisations (Stockport Homes Group, Equity Housing Group, Irwell Valley Homes, Great Places Housing Group, One Manchester, the Calico Group, Salix Homes, Bolton at Home, Onward, Home Group, MSV and Riverside).

Over 100 customers and colleague representatives attended. Customers were provided with the opportunity to share their thoughts on what housing providers need to do to improve the way they support their LGBT+ communities.

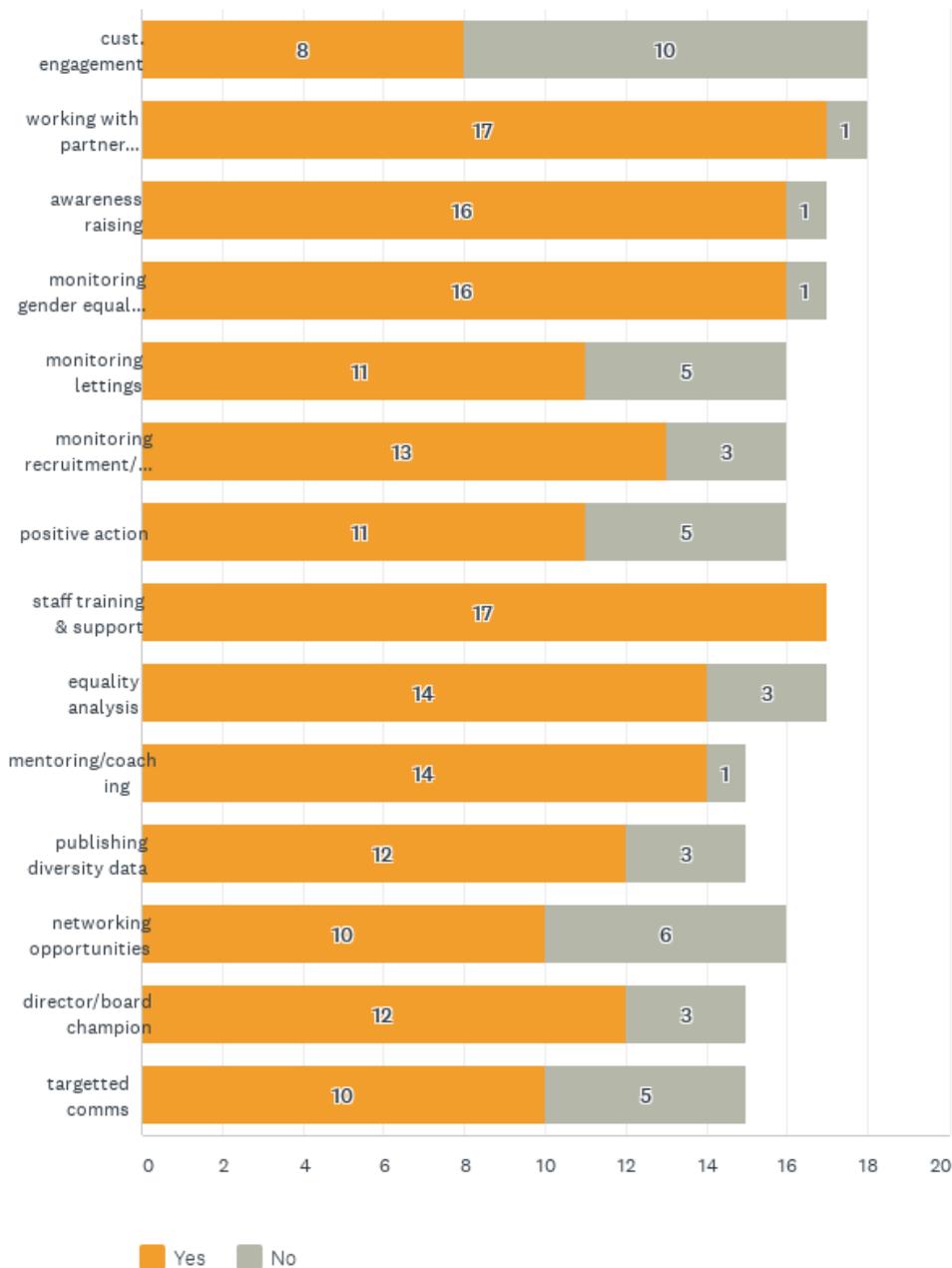
Key priority areas identified included:

- more training to understand issues that affect the LGBT+ community, and involve customers in developing programmes
- have identified staff to support LGBT+ customers
- be more open and visible in promoting support for LGBT+ equality
- all housing providers to sign up to the HouseProud Pledge
- establish a forum for LGBT+ customers
- increase support for isolated LGBT+ customers
- improve methods for reporting hate crime

Following the conference HouseProud North West met to consider and respond to the recommendations, with agreed actions published on social media and promoted by members to their own customer network. A new HouseProud customer forum was launched in August, and the network's response to the recommendation was shared with customers. The forum will receive regular updates on progress against actions.

Please indicate whether your organisation's approach to equality and diversity includes any of the following...

n=18



- As the chart above shows, organisations are undertaking a wide range of interventions and demonstrate a commitment to on-going improvement in meeting EDI challenges with most having a board or director level EDI champion to endorse a strategic commitment to equality and diversity.
- EDI is supported through staff training (for example on race equality and unconscious bias) and career development training with many organisations offering mentoring as a way to develop staff and help them gain appropriate skills and knowledge to progress within their organisations.
- EDI informs recruitment with over half of organisations employing positive action measures to ensure diversity at different levels within their organisations.

- Offering staff networking opportunities and holding awareness raising events were also viewed as important aspects of ensuring an inclusive culture.
- Further examples of actions and initiatives being carried out by organisations included:

Mental health awareness/mental health first-aiders

Women In Leadership initiative

Self-esteem workshops

Review of imagery on customer communications to reflect diversity of customer base

Rainbow badges on lanyards to demonstrate support for LGBT customers

'Social Prescribing' project to support customers tackle loneliness, isolation, mental health, diet, health and employability

'Ban the Box' to improve opportunities for people with convictions to complete for jobs

Advertise on 'Evenbreak' jobs board to advertise opportunities to disabled people

Diversity champions

Technology solutions - handheld translators, What's App engagement group, audio newsletter, web accessibility tools

Six Town Housing: improving web accessibility

Six Town Housing have 8000 customers many of whom have visual impairments, do not have English as their first language, lack basic digital skills or have hidden disabilities such as dyslexia or other reading difficulties.

The organisation wanted to ensure that their website was inclusive for all so, having explored various options, introduced a solution to add text-to-speech capability and reading and translation support to make web content easily accessible for as many of their customers as possible.

The solution, BrowseAloud is an incredibly smart tool that is embedded within their website. It enables users to translate the text of any page into any language. It also includes a voice reader, functionality to download content as an MP3 file and can transform the words on the page into images to enhance understanding.

The solution ensures that Six Town Housing meet the requirements of the Accessibility Regulations 2018 that calls for public sector organisations to make their websites and mobile apps accessible for all.

Salix Homes: a new approach to customer engagement

Anticipating changes to social housing regulation from the social housing green paper 'A New Deal for Social Housing' (August 2018), Salix Homes decided to review its approach to customer engagement and set up a customer committee made up of ten customers and two customer board members.

Salix invited their entire customer base to apply for places on the committee. They did so by running a campaign that used personalised postcards, emails and posts on social media. They received 120 applications for places from customers with a good balance of gender, tenancy type and neighbourhood. Following receipt of the applications they ran an open day to give the applicants a more in-depth understanding of Salix Homes, the role of the committee and its relationship with the board. This was followed by interviews comprising an informal chat and involving customer board members, the Vice Chair, Deputy Chief Executive and the Customer Engagement Manager. The interviews were attended by a critical friend to offer support to applicants.

The ten members who were recruited came from a variety of backgrounds and had a diverse range of experiences that they could bring to the organisation. Following recruitment, they have attended an accredited training course – a level 3 certificate in customer governance.

The customer committee have had a huge influence on the organisation at a critical time. Most recently, they have been involved in the Supporting our Communities strategy and a 'task and finish' group that has identified the best way to move forward in view of the COVID-19 pandemic. The committee has also been able to support officers to understand the Black Lives Matter movement and discuss the impacts of the movement within the communities where Salix operate. Importantly, their successes in these and other areas of work has contributed to a wider change in attitudes within the business about the value of customer engagement.

Arawak Walton: improving workforce diversity

Arawak Walton recognised that they had poor representation of young people from BME groups within their organisation. To address this issue, they developed an annual trainee/apprenticeships programme that has been running for the last 7 years.

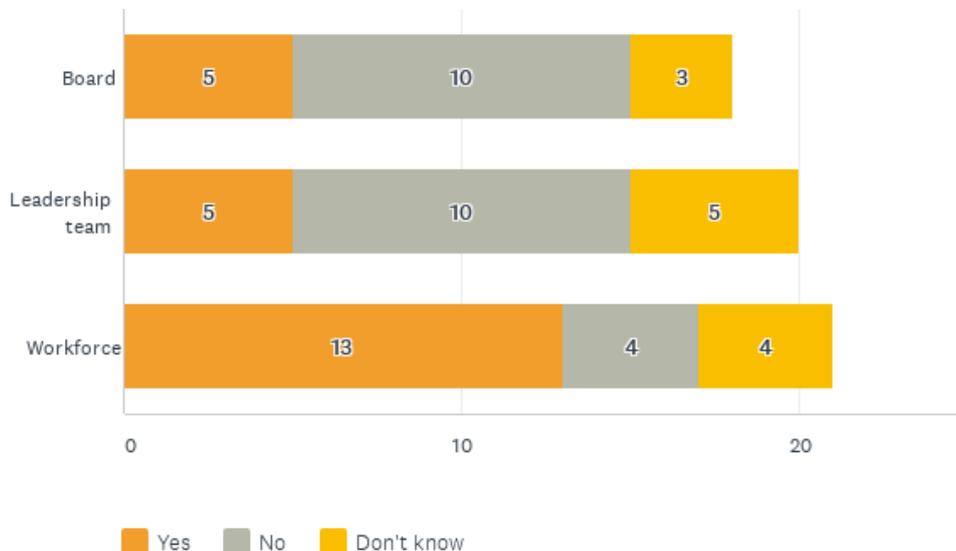
Their approach involves advertising posts externally, targeting local schools, community groups as well as advertising posts to their customers. Once in position, a skilled manager supports the training and learning needs of recruits and, towards the mid-point of the traineeship, the manager supports them with external applications for employment and provides career development mentoring.

They have had a high number of successful trainees throughout the 7 years that the programme has been running. Many of the trainees have gone on to have successful careers either within Arawak Walton (where vacancies have arisen) or with external organisations such as within other registered providers, leading audit organisations and schools.

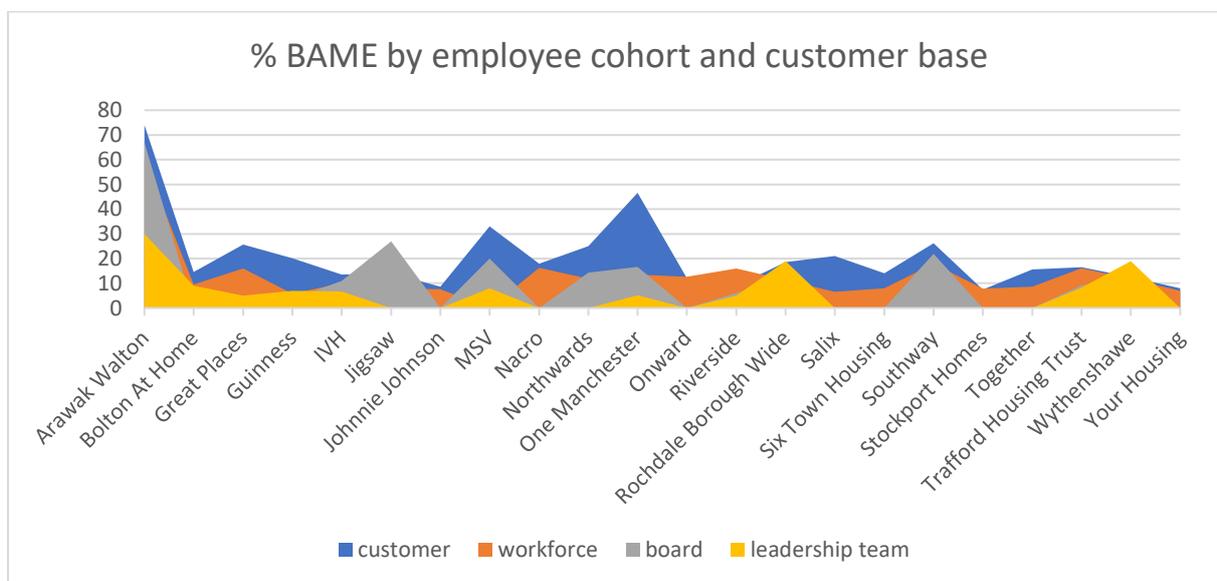
Arawak Walton don't look to formal qualifications unless necessary for the role. Instead they look for transferable skills and assess whether recruits can be trained to carry out their roles within a reasonable time frame. This approach has offered opportunities to people who may have otherwise been overlooked for a role due to lack of formal qualifications. As a result, Arawak Walton have seen a number of successes, for example, a customer services trainee who has gone on to become a sheltered housing scheme manager.

Does your current board, leadership team and workforce reflect the diversity of the communities that you serve?

n=21

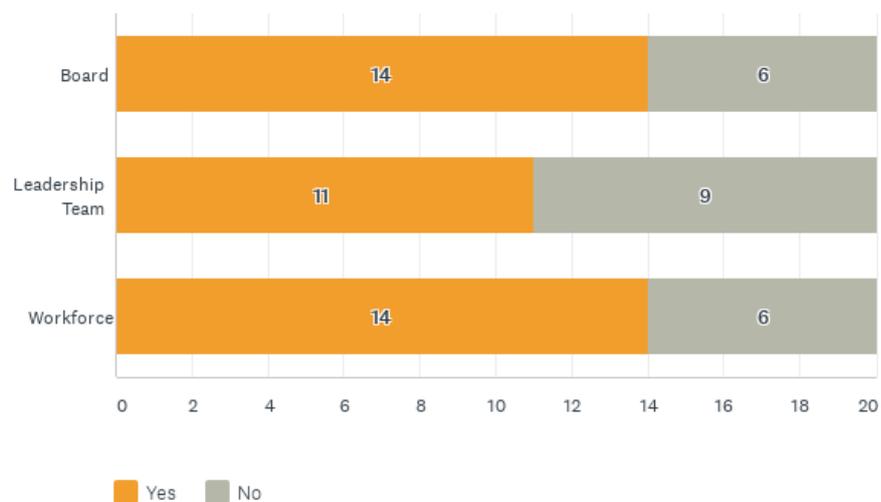


- Around half of organisations responding to the survey feel that their board and leadership teams did not reflect the diversity of their customer base.
- The diversity profile of the wider workforce was generally viewed as being more reflective of the customer base in terms of diversity.
- EDI monitoring data gathered alongside the survey has been used to compare ethnic diversity of the three employee cohorts alongside the customer base. This confirms that the workforce, as opposed to the board or leadership team, is most closely matched to the customer base in terms of ethnic diversity. (see chart below). The percentage of BAME people within the workforce nevertheless remains below the percentage within the customer base for the majority of organisations.



Has your organisation taken active steps to improve the diversity of your board, leadership team and workforce?

n=20



- Around two thirds of respondents have taken steps to try and improve the diversity of their boards, leadership team and workforce although it was noted that improving diversity of the board and leadership team was challenging due to low turnover within these employee cohorts.
- Ensuring gender diversity across certain roles was also viewed as challenge. For example, it was noted that roles such as Independent Living Coordinators were more likely to receive female applicants due to a perception by applicants that these were “jobs for women”.
- Initiatives and actions taken by respondents to improve diversity include:

BAME leadership programme

Asking recruitment agency to provide a diverse pool of candidates

Interviews conducted by a panel to minimise bias

Targetted apprenticeships to improve representation of young people in the workforce

Considering adopting the 'Rooney Rule' (affirmative action)

Targetted job advertisements

Bespoke BAME Talent Acquisition Strategy

Unconscious bias training

Dignity At Work Campaign to champion employees' rights and improve workplace culture

Together Housing Group: increasing Board diversity

Together Housing Group recognised that their governance structures lacked diversity – their Board of ten had only two women and no BAME or young representation.

To improve diversity, Together Housing engaged with Housing Diversity Network (HDN), a social enterprise that works collaboratively to support organisations to improve how they address inequality, get the most from their staff and meet the needs of the communities they work with. This led to the introduction of a board trainee programme.

Together also employed an Equality & Diversity (E&D) Manager who was given the task of reviewing the recruitment process and introducing measures to improve board diversity. This resulted in a change to the way in which roles were advertised. Job adverts and application packs were designed with more inclusive wording and were advertised more widely than previously in order to promote them to a more diverse range of potential applicants. This approach proved successful as 50% of applicants for the board trainee programme were from more diverse groups including younger people, BAME and women.

Shortlisting took place very late in the process to give as many applicants the best chance to shine as Together recognised that many of the applicants were not used to this type of recruitment process. This helped those who were less confident initially to 'come out of their shells' and proceed through the recruitment process. Rather than focus on 'hard' skills, more weight was given to softer skills and emotional intelligence, looking at what applicants could bring to the organisation in terms of helping them to diversify their thinking.

An innovative assessment day resulted in six successful candidates: half were from BAME groups and four were from women, two of which were under 30. All six were recruited onto a two-year formal training, mentoring and coaching programme recognised by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD). The training, which was run by HDN included resilience building, mock board meetings and real-life board and committee observations.

Together were committed to doing things differently and have had success by doing so. They found some candidates to be board ready early within the training programme and therefore in a position to apply for vacancies when they arose. Others on the training programme are now well on the way to becoming future board members once they have completed the two-year course.

Irwell Valley Homes: increasing Board diversity

In 2019, having recognised that there was under-representation on the Board from BAME communities, Irwell Valley Homes (IVH) decided to build a pathway to Board success for applicants.

They had a Board member vacancy and were delighted that the recruitment and selection process resulted in them recruiting a Board member from the BAME community with the relevant skills required to meet the gap on the Board at that time. However, they also had to turn down a BAME applicant who had less experience/skills than the successful applicant.

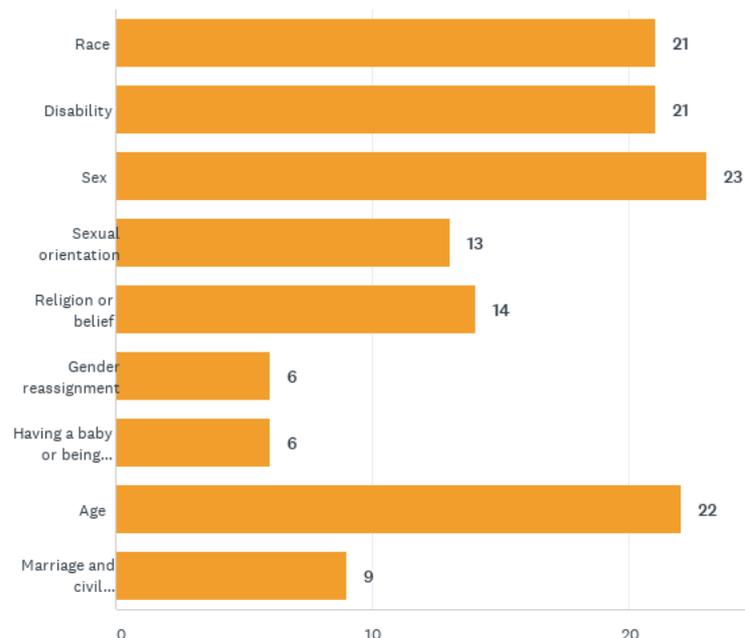
They decided that they would offer the unsuccessful applicant the opportunity to become a shadow board member for a year in order to gain the experience required to apply successfully for future board roles in the sector.

This approach has worked well with the Board in furthering commitment to increasing Board diversity and for the individual involved, creating a pathway for future success. Irwell Valley Homes are, therefore, continuing to offer Board placements for under-represented applicants via the [Gatenby Sanderson Insight Programme](#).

Offering this opportunity for gaining Board experience to younger people, BAME, LGBT and others under-represented groups on Boards not only supports those individuals to achieve personally, but also introduces new perspectives and challenges at the strategic level of the organisation.

Does your organisation routinely collect statistics on the demographics of your customers?

n=23

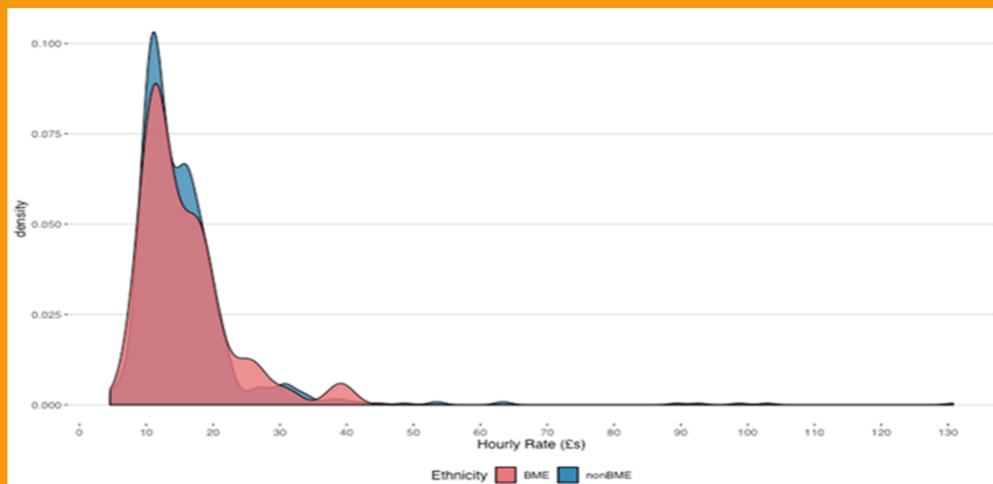


- Data on race, disability, sex and age is collected by most organisations although it is recognised that this data is not always of the best quality due to missing and out of date information.
- Data on sexual orientation, religion or belief and gender reassignment tends not to be routinely collected and the data itself is felt to be unreliable due to large volumes of missing data which is, in part, thought to be due to a reluctance of the part of customers to disclose this information.
- All but one organisation had a process in place to keep customer profiling data up to date. Methods employed to update data include annual tenancy audits, ad-hoc customer profiling exercises and updating information during customer calls to contact centres.
- Organisations cited a number of challenges in terms of data collection including IT system issues, poor data collection processes and a reluctance of the part of customers to provide information. GDPR legislation was also cited as a barrier although it is not clear why this was felt to be the case.
- One organisation had taken steps to improve data quality by ensuring customers were very clear about the reasons for data collection and ensuring staff were aware of how important the data is for service provision

Jigsaw Homes: monitoring the ethnicity pay gap

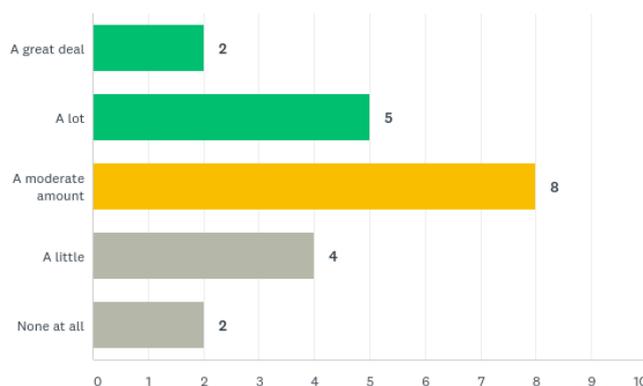
Transparency is a vital first step towards ensuring equality within the workplace and the reason mandatory gender pay gap reporting was introduced by the government in 2017 for organisations with over 250 staff. The reporting of ethnicity pay gap information remains voluntary and, as a result, is not widely carried out.

Jigsaw Homes recognise the importance of ethnicity pay gap reporting and have introduced monitoring to explore pay differences in hourly pay rate among BAME and non-BAME employees. Their analysis also compares the hourly pay of BAME and non-BAME employees for 50 common roles. The results of their analysis show that pay is not systematically biased towards either BAME or non-BAME employees although it does reveal some minor differences, particularly at the lower end of the salary scale. By measuring the ethnicity pay gap Jigsaw is able to identify, and then tackle, barriers to creating a truly diverse workforce.



To what extent do you use your customer profiling/insight information within your organisation to inform your strategies, policies and practices?

n= 21



- While some respondents felt customer insight and profiling information was well used within their organisations, the general perception was that the data could be used better.
- Examples of how data was being utilised include:
 - using customer profiling information as part of equality analysis
 - for identifying and targeting customers for engagement and consultation activities
 - in the development of EDI action plans carried out by care and support teams
 - service planning and strategy development
 - planning for aids and adaptations (disability data)

Irwell Valley Homes: improving work/life balance

In 2018, Irwell Valley Homes began a cultural transformation by engaging colleagues and putting them in charge of creating new ways of working, to provide greater flexibility for colleagues and customers and help colleagues achieve a better work/life balance. This is particularly valuable to colleagues with caring responsibilities and those with disabilities, where a more flexible approach allows for working patterns that fit with personal life. The stress caused by commuting, school drop offs and caring responsibilities could be eased. And for customers, appointments could flex around their working patterns and responsibilities.

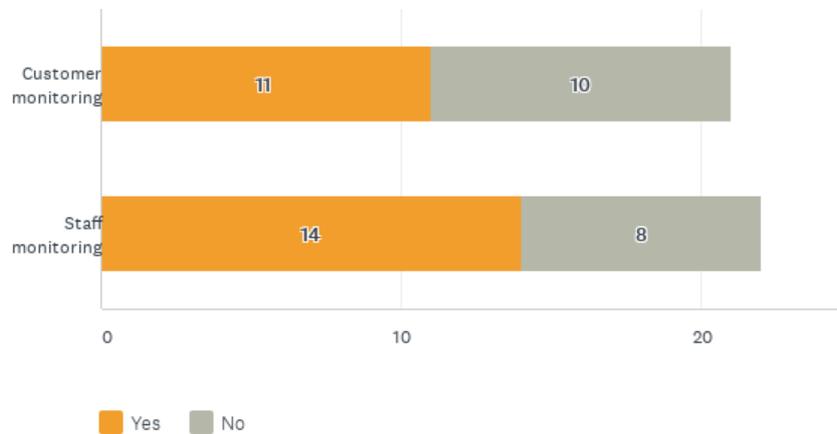
A new agile way of working was developed based on trust and an empowering management style (coaching and mentoring). Work became what you did rather than where you went. The ways of working were designed around the needs of customers and colleagues, and behaviour was central to this: taking responsibility; pride of purpose; learning and growing; making a difference.

The new way of thinking and culture were supported with new workspaces and technology to allow people to work anywhere at any time - all of which came in very handy when the pandemic hit. In 2019, they reduced their office footprint significantly and created a central collaborative hub in Salford – a very different space to a traditional office layout. Colleagues are empowered to work where and when their task demands – be that in out in the community, at home, or in the hub. Their carbon footprint has reduced, and colleagues collaborate better across teams, silos have been broken and colleagues work towards solutions together.

This agile way of working has had a profound impact for those with caring responsibilities (which tends to be disproportionately women), colleagues who observe certain times of the day due to their faith, and colleagues with disabilities. It has also had a significant impact on colleague's mental health and supports general wellbeing.

Has your organisation undertaken any impact assessments or monitoring to assess the differential impact of COVID-19 on customers or staff?

n=22



- Around half of the organisations stated they were collecting information in relation to customers and staff on COVID-19. As the survey was carried out in May 2020, this number is likely to have increased as more organisations have introduced processes to collect information from staff and customers in order to mitigate risks to from COVID-19 and ensure vulnerable customers are being supported.

Six Town Housing: communicating with vulnerable customers during the pandemic

During lockdown, Six Town Customers raised concerns about allowing maintenance operatives and other staff into their homes. Staff also had concerns about their own safety. It was vital that Six Town communicated to everyone to let them know that safety was a priority for the organisation. Of their 8000 customers, 1200 are vulnerable, many were self-isolating, and many are non-English speaking.

To tackle the issue Six Town Housings Communications Team developed a film and social distancing translation boards to ensure customers were aware of the steps being taken to ensure customer safety. In addition, new safety measures were translated into the 5 most common languages spoken by customers.

Very quickly, all vulnerable customers were telephoned and all customers with a mobile phone were sent an SMS text message (90% of customers) and a survey to understand more about their specific needs and concerns.

Using the feedback gathered from customers Six Town Housing were able to tailor services and to meet the needs of their most vulnerable customers. It also ensured they were able to continue to deliver vital services during lockdown in a safe and reassuring way, including carrying out emergency repairs and delivering food hampers, medication and prescriptions for their most vulnerable customers. Six Town Housing also set up an “essential” team to undertake home visits for critical health and safety checks.

Irwell Valley Homes: supporting members of the BAME community during the pandemic

The pandemic has brought into sharp focus the inequalities that exist in our society. There are important indirect social and economic impacts that have disproportionately affected women, especially those on low incomes, migrants, the elderly, disabled or those from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups.

The disproportionate impact of coronavirus on people from the BAME community has also highlighted the longstanding inequalities in health, income, housing, education and employment that still exist in society today.

To help address this and provide culturally specific support to their customers, at this difficult time, Irwell Valley Homes funded a dedicated case worker from NESTAC to work within the communities they serve.

NESTAC (New Step for African Communities) support and empower the disadvantaged population within the Black and Asian Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities, particularly refugees, asylum seekers and other immigrants from the new emerging communities in Greater Manchester. They use a person-centred approach, recognising the uniqueness of each person, as well as the diversity of cultures and beliefs. Their mental health team is made of bilingual staff who support clients in different languages.

Helplines and digital platforms are used for *cross-cultural counselling* and *emotional support*, or simply for an informal chat to alleviate any form of stress related to **Covid-19**.

What are the key areas that you think the DICE group should focus on in supporting members deliver on their equality and diversity commitments?

supporting best practice across member organisations (12)

support on use of KPI information in the delivery of services to customers (1)

data collection (1)

COVID-19 inequality (1)

study visits (1)

campaigning (1)

GMHP & MMU: generating routes for Black, Asian and Minoritised Ethnic (BAME) leadership through mentoring

Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU) is working in Partnership with 13 housing associations across Greater Manchester Housing Providers (GMHP) to deliver and research a pilot programme: Generating Routes for Black, Asian and Minoritized Ethnic (BAME) Leadership.

BAME individuals are not experiencing the same progression opportunities as their white counterparts. A report from Business in the Community (2015) stated that one in eight of the working age population are from a BAME background, yet only one in ten are in the workplace and only one in 16 top management positions are held by a person of ethnic minority. This pattern is also reflected in the housing sector. A survey published by *Inside Housing* in November 2017 reported that, in 64 housing associations who responded, there were **only 3 BAME chief executives** and 15 BAME executives (including the 3 chief executives) out of 330 executives – the equivalent of 4.5%.

Generating Routes for BAME Leadership is a pioneering pilot programme that uses reciprocal mentoring and change agents to: (i) use the trusted space in mentoring relationships to unearth organisational barriers to BAME progression (ii) support the career progression of BAME Mentees and (iii) activate a collective of change champions, mentors and mentees across GMHP to communicate barriers, advocate for change and use privileged access to senior leaders to design change processes.

The programme was launched via a training session with mentors, mentees and change champions in October 2019. Thirteen BAME mentees at senior organisational levels within the housing providers involved were matched with a mentor in an executive role within GMHP. Mentors are external to the mentee's host organisation to support learning about barriers to BAME progression, without the risk of career penalty, and to share learning and change processes across the Partnership. Crucially, this programme also involves 13 change champions.

Change Champions are senior leaders nominated by each of the housing associations involved in the programme to represent their organisation and be the voice to support other voices to advocate for change. Change champions are open to feedback from the mentoring process and facilitate ongoing conversations at senior levels to continue to push for wider organisational change so that leadership pathways become fairer for everybody.

Commenting on the programme, MMU state:

"We often don't want to talk about race, especially at work, due to a fear of saying the wrong thing or finding out that we are not as free of racial bias as we hoped. The programme has encouraged white and BAME staff to talk about race safely and as part of a mutual learning process. We have reflected at length on our legitimacy as white academics leading the programme and conclude that it is the work of white leaders to reflect on the privileges that accompany our whiteness and to listen hard to BAME staff and advocate for change. Many of the mentors and change champions in the project are also white and are pursuing this learning journey with us. We have also found that BAME mentees, mentors and change champions are pivotal in bravely sharing their experiences with us and challenging us to energise the programme so that it really makes a difference. We will continue to learn about this exciting partnership between BAME and white staff and how to maximise its effects."

3.0 EDI Benchmarking

The survey collected EDI monitoring data from survey participants on the following diversity characteristics:

- Age
- Gender
- Ethnicity
- Disability
- Sexual orientation
- Identifies as transgender

Data was collected for four sub-groups:

- Board
- Leadership Team
- Workforce
- Customers

Full benchmarking results can be found in Appendix 1.

Points to note:

Age

- Leadership teams and boards are heavily dominated by people within the 45-64 age group whereas the age profile of the wider workforce more closely matches the age profile of the Greater Manchester.
- The customer base for most organisations tends to have above average proportions of people in the 45-64 age group while proportions aged 65 and over tend to more closely align to the Greater Manchester average.
- With few exceptions, under 25s are poorly represented in all employee cohorts and the customer base compared to Greater Manchester.

Gender

- Gender diversity of boards is a mixed picture. Two organisations have a gender profile that matches that of Greater Manchester. Of the remaining organisations, 11 had below average representation of females on their board and 5 have above average representation of females when compared to the Greater Manchester population more broadly.
- There is a tendency for leadership teams to have above average representation of females - this was the case for 8 organisations. Of the remainder, 6 had under-representation of females while 2 mirrored the Greater Manchester gender profile.
- The gender profile of the wider workforce is much more closely aligned to that of Greater Manchester profile for most organisations.
- The majority of organisations have a higher proportion of females than males amongst their customer base compared to the gender profile of Greater Manchester.

Ethnicity

- Not all organisations were able to provide data on the ethnic profile of their boards, leadership team and workforce but for those that collected this information, with few exceptions, the picture is generally one of under-representation of BAME groups.
- BAME groups are better represented amongst the customer base with most organisations having a profile similar to that of Greater Manchester. It should be noted, however, that different organisations will have different community profiles with some diversity characteristics being more prevalent in certain areas. To better understand how an organisation is performing would therefore require a much more nuanced approach to analysis looking at data for specific local areas in which an organisation operates.

Disability

- There is a lot of disparity in the way organisations collect disability information in terms of data definitions as well as how data is held on systems. For example, some organisations only record where a disability exists. It is not therefore clear whether missing data equates to 'non-disabled' or whether data has simply not been collected. Disability data therefore needs to be treated with some caution.
- Caveats aside, disabled people are, for the large majority of organisations, under-represented amongst the board, leadership and workforce when compared to proportions of disabled people with Greater Manchester more broadly.
- The picture amongst the customer base is more mixed with around half of organisations having over-representation of people stating they have a disability.

Sexual Orientation

- Sexual orientation data is not widely collected, particularly at the board level and, where it is, there tends to be under-reporting. This presents an issue when looking at small employee sub-groups and trying to compare across organisations.
- When looking at the wider workforce, the LGBT profile tends to more closely mirror the North West region profile, the smallest area for which comparative data is available.

Identifies as Transgender

- A third of organisations collect data on the transgender status although, due to differences in the way data is collected and recorded, comparison across these organisations is difficult. Furthermore, due to re-basing of data to remove missing and ambiguous data, it appears that most organisations have no one who identifies as transgender within their employee cohorts or within their customer base. This is unlikely to reflect reality.
- Data collection around this area is particularly problematic and would require further work on the part of organisations.

5.0 Conclusions

As major employers and providers of housing within the city region, GM providers have the power to reduce discrimination and the disadvantages that people experience. They can do this by making their services more accessible and responsive to the needs of the communities with whom they work, and individuals using their services, whether as customers, employees or contractors.

It is clear that survey respondents are committed to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion within their organisations. They want their services to be accessible and have a desire to reduce discrimination and the disadvantages that people experience – these commitments that are clearly outlined in their EDI strategies, policies and action plans, as well as through recruitment practices, staff training and monitoring activity.

In this respect, EDI appears to be very much a mainstreamed activity and forms an integral part of service delivery rather than something that is bolted on.

However, good practice dictates that mainstreaming include systematic consideration of EDI at all stages, and in all aspects of organisational activity. While there is significant collection and monitoring of customer profiling and employee data at a broad level, organisations were less likely to carry out monitoring at the level of service delivery level, for example, monitoring allocations to understand whether certain groups were more or less successful in their applications for housing.

Organisations need to be clear about why they are collecting and recording equality and diversity data and understand how this information can drive service improvements. This is something that could be supported by staff training so different stakeholders understand why equality and diversity data is business critical.

The EDI monitoring exercise revealed that there are challenges involved in benchmarking across organisations and revealed gaps in the data held. Further consideration will need to be given to how benchmarking data is collected in the future if a reliable baseline is to be established. One approach could be to utilise the GMHP Performance Group whose remit includes benchmarking and performance monitoring. Sufficient lead-in time would be required to develop a suitable data collection proforma and resolve issues that prevent direct comparison across organisations.

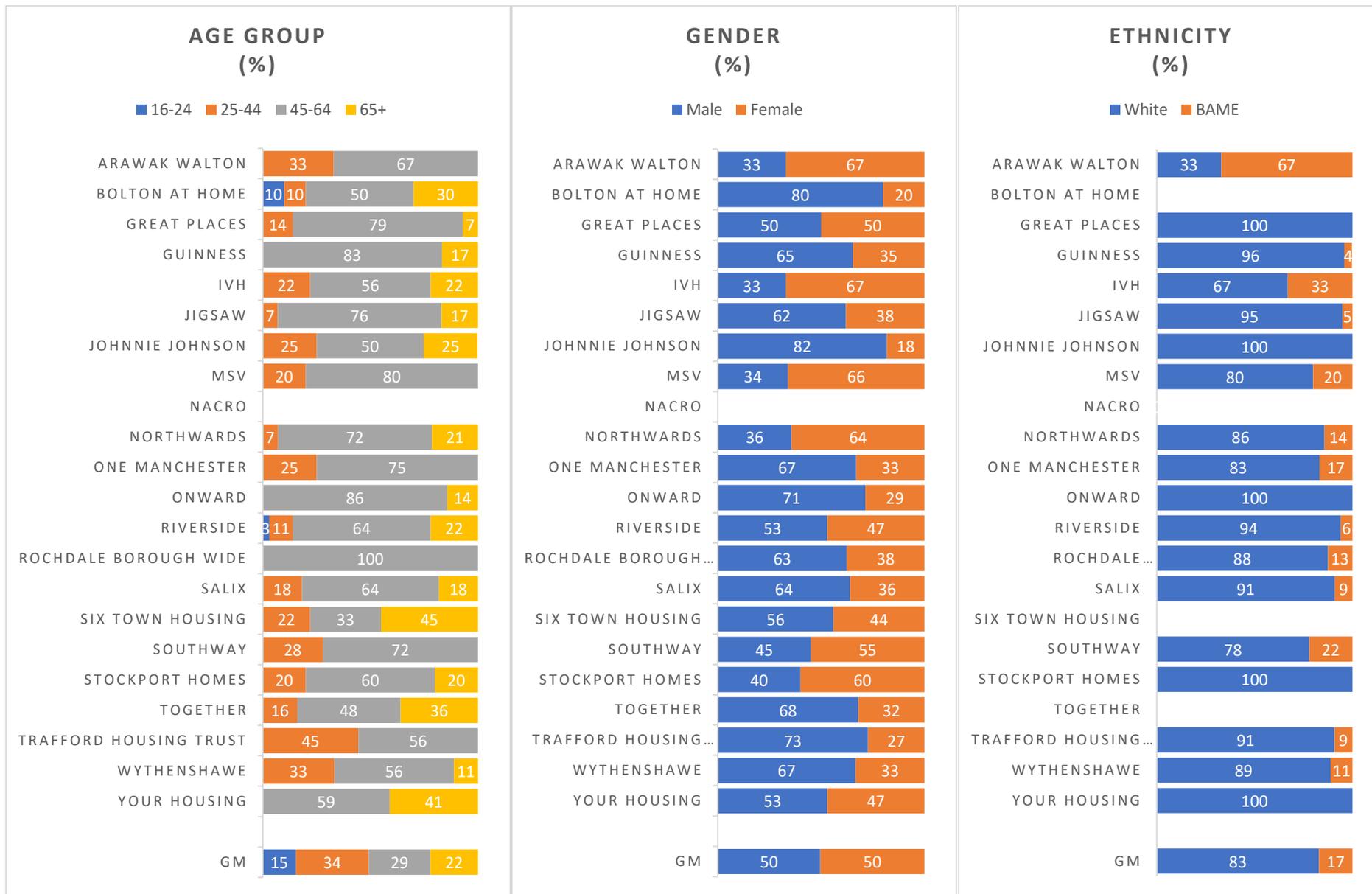
6.0 Recommendations

There are many issues to discuss which this survey engenders:

- 1 Next Steps – all participating members and GMHP more generally will be asked how they would wish to take forward this agenda via the DICE Group and within their own organisations.
- 2 DICE Group – it is proposed that DICE consider the results of the survey and the views of GMHP members on issues that DICE should focus on going forwards.
- 3 CaCHE proposal – CaCHE (UK Collaborative Centre for Housing Evidence, University of Sheffield) have offered to be a ‘critical friend’ in terms of further analysis of the results of the survey and contextualisation of the results with a view to working up a report which could be shared more widely.
- 4 Wider dissemination – DICE will consider how the results of this survey and any proposed actions to address the issues raised are disseminated more widely throughout the sector.
- 5 Pointers for action – DICE will consider and make proposals for further action to propose to GMHP members and research/data analysis to support and monitor progress against actions, including running the survey again to review progress.

APPENDIX 1: EDI MONITORING DATA

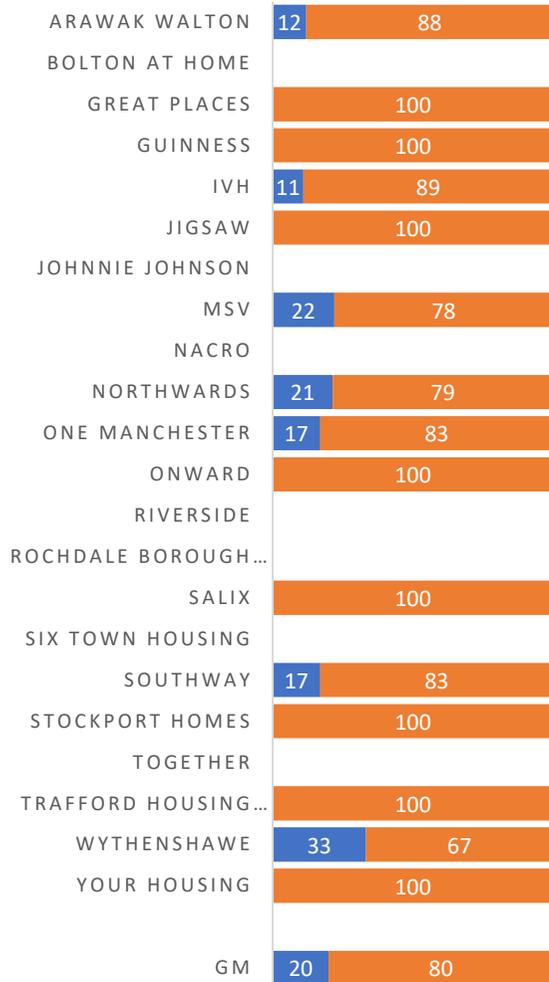
BOARD PROFILE



BOARD PROFILE

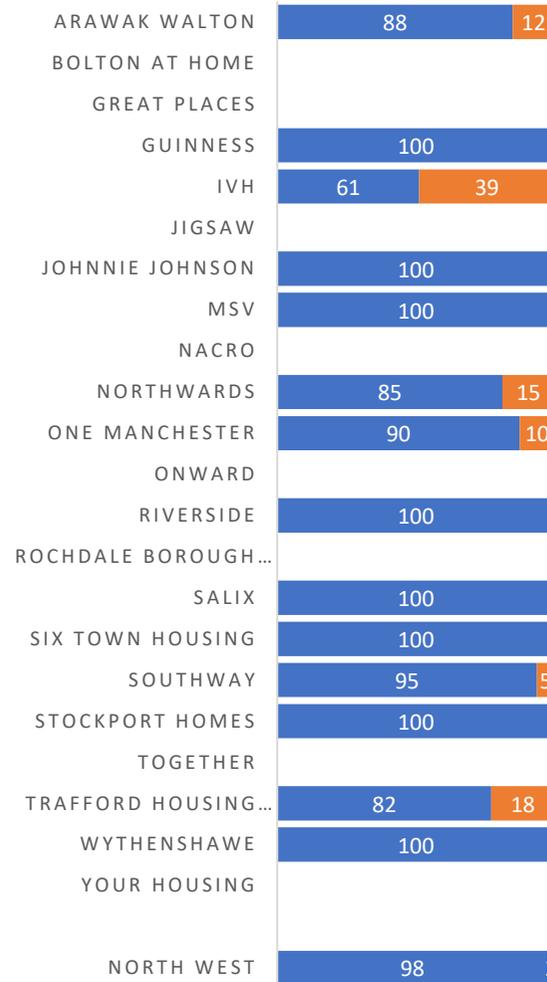
DISABILITY (%)

■ Disabled ■ Non-disabled



SEXUAL ORIENTATION (%)

■ Heterosexual/Straight ■ LGB

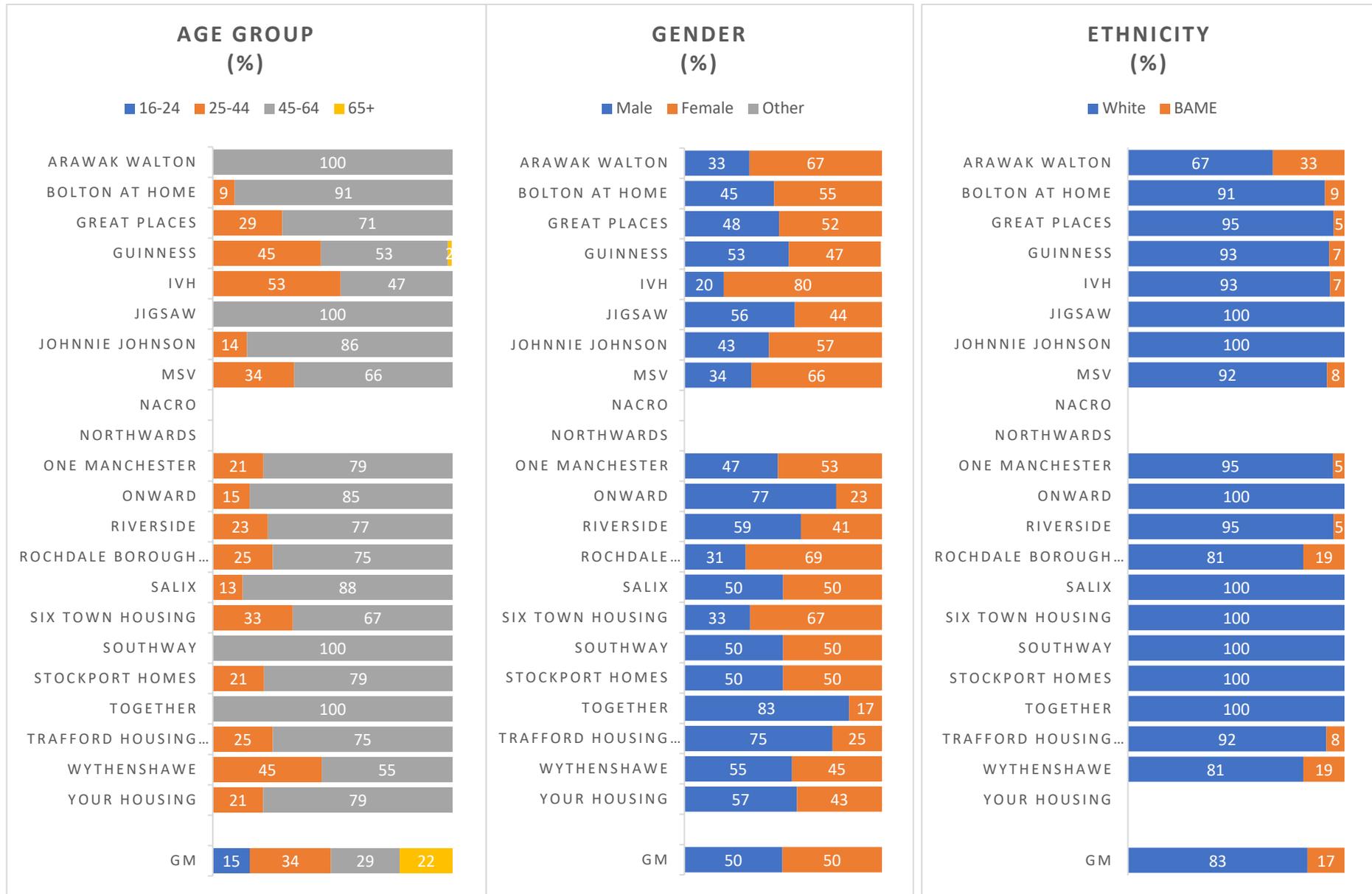


IDENTIFY AS TRANSGENDER (%)

■ Yes ■ No



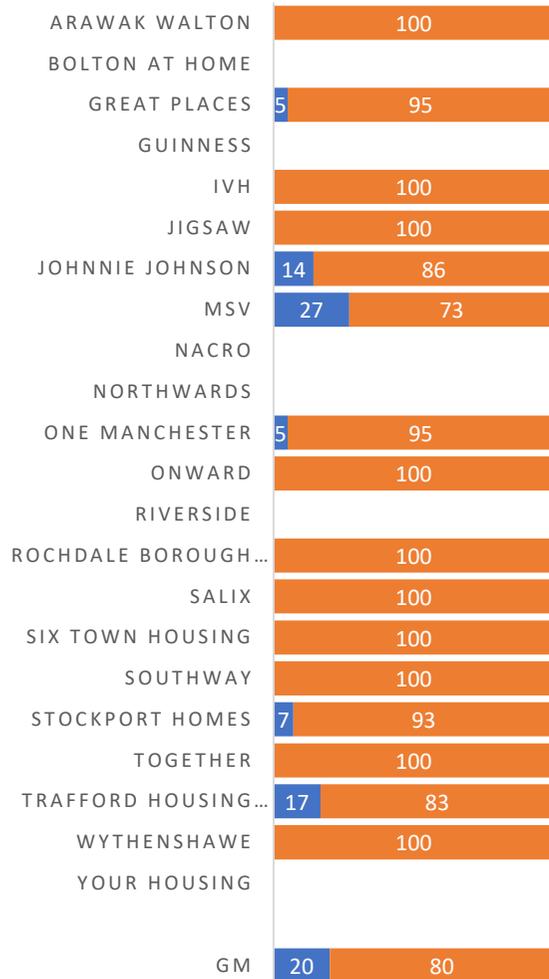
LEADERSHIP TEAM PROFILE



LEADERSHIP TEAM PROFILE

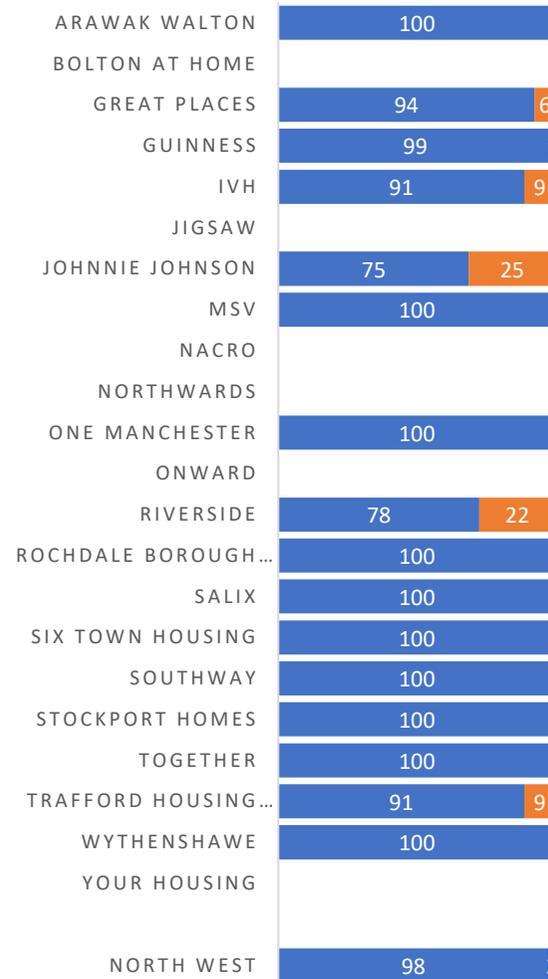
DISABILITY (%)

■ Disabled ■ Non-disabled



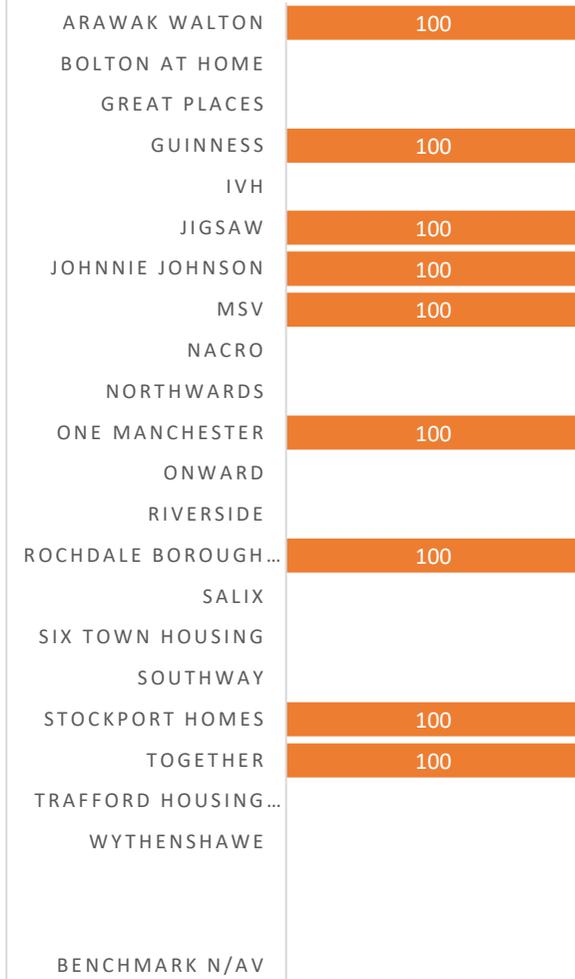
SEXUAL ORIENTATION (%)

■ Heterosexual/Straight ■ LGB

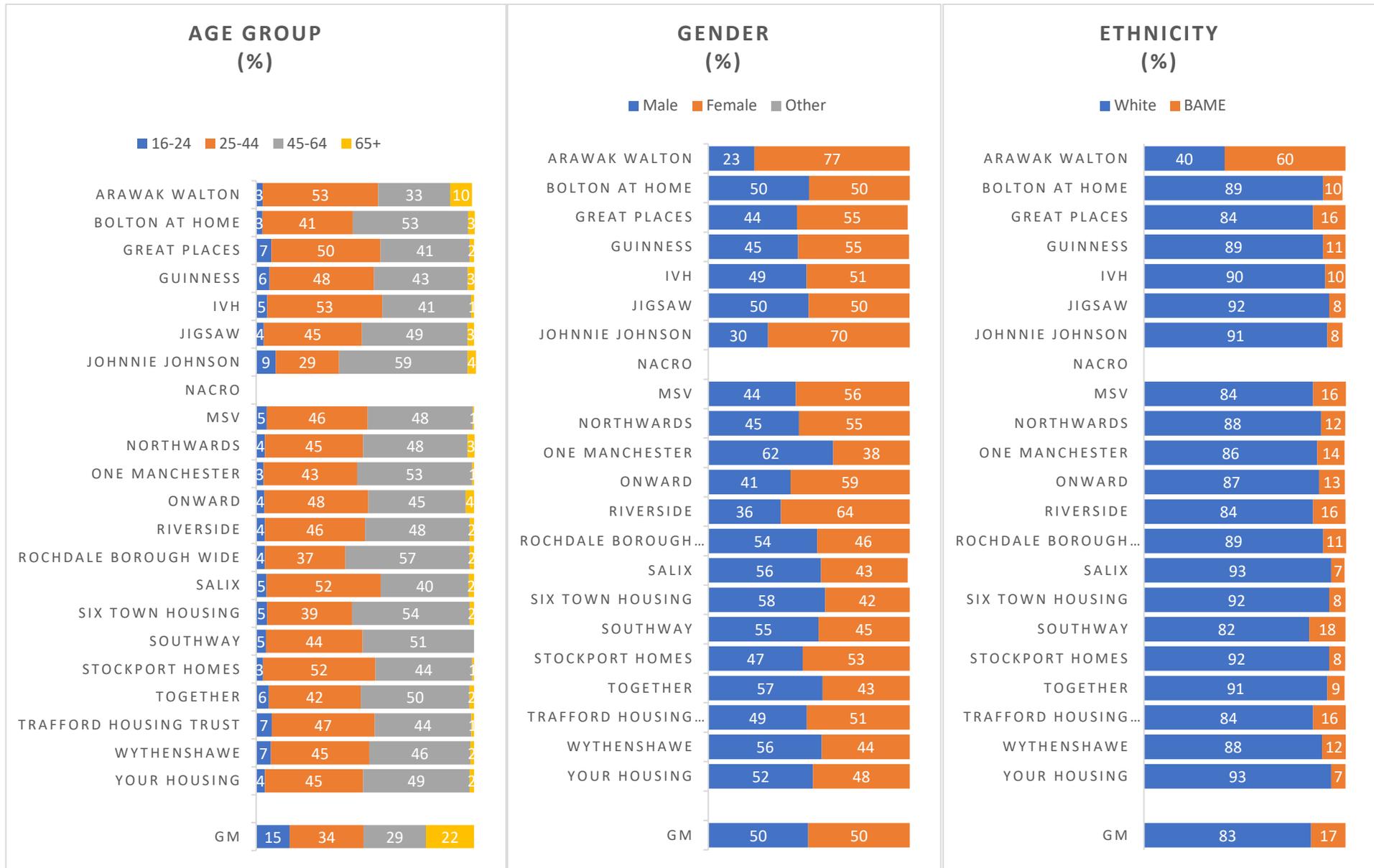


IDENTIFY AS TRANSGENDER (%)

■ Yes ■ No



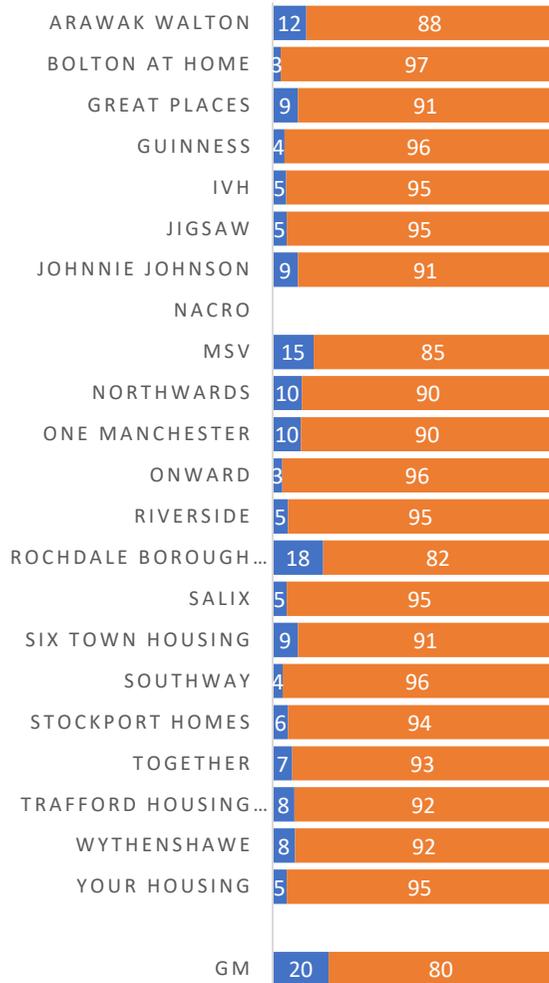
WORKFORCE PROFILE



WORFORCE PROFILE

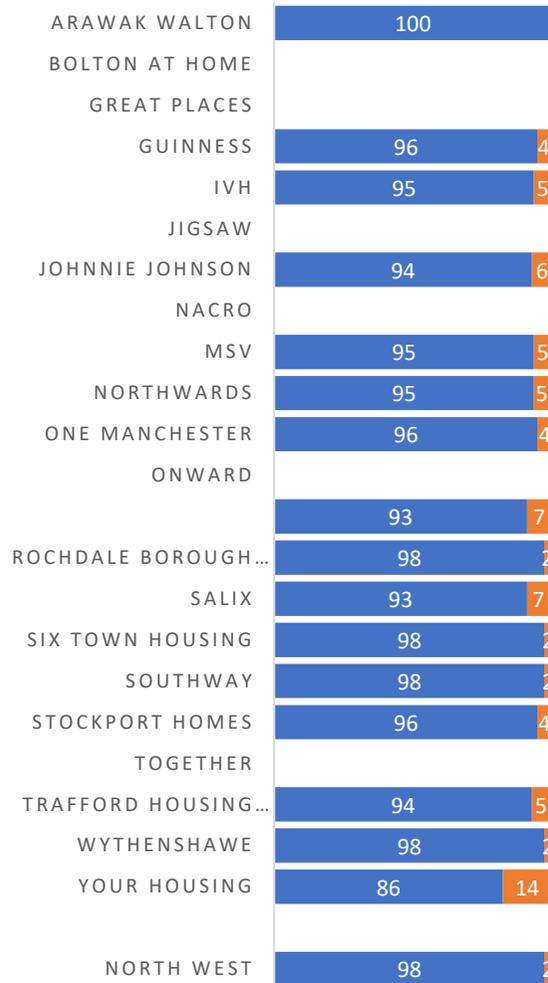
DISABILITY (%)

■ Disabled ■ Non-disabled



SEXUAL ORIENTATION (%)

■ Heterosexual/Straight ■ LGB



IDENTIFY AS TRANSGENDER (%)

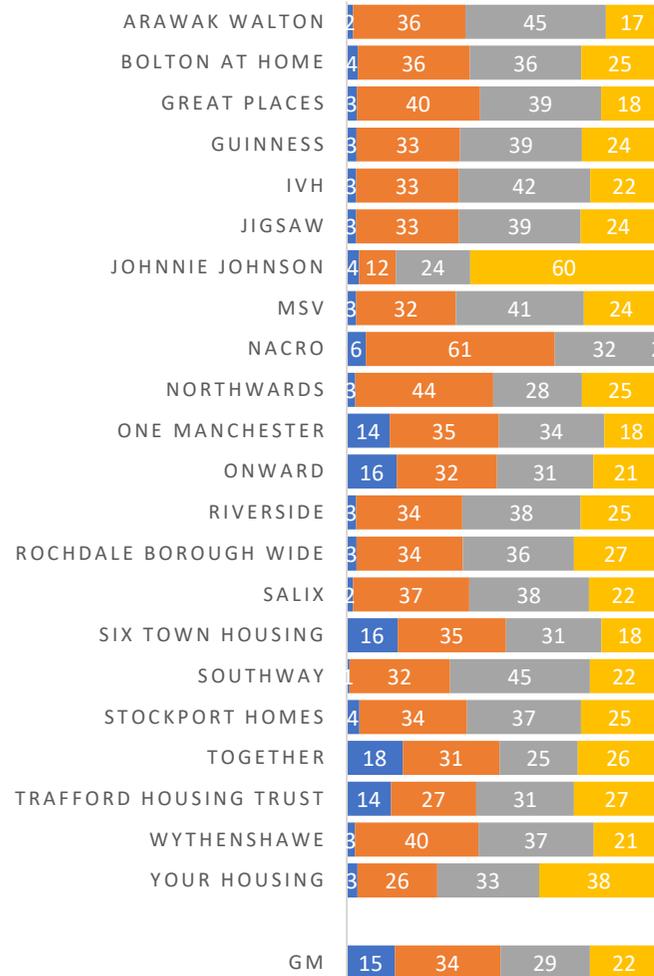
■ Yes ■ No



CUSTOMER PROFILE

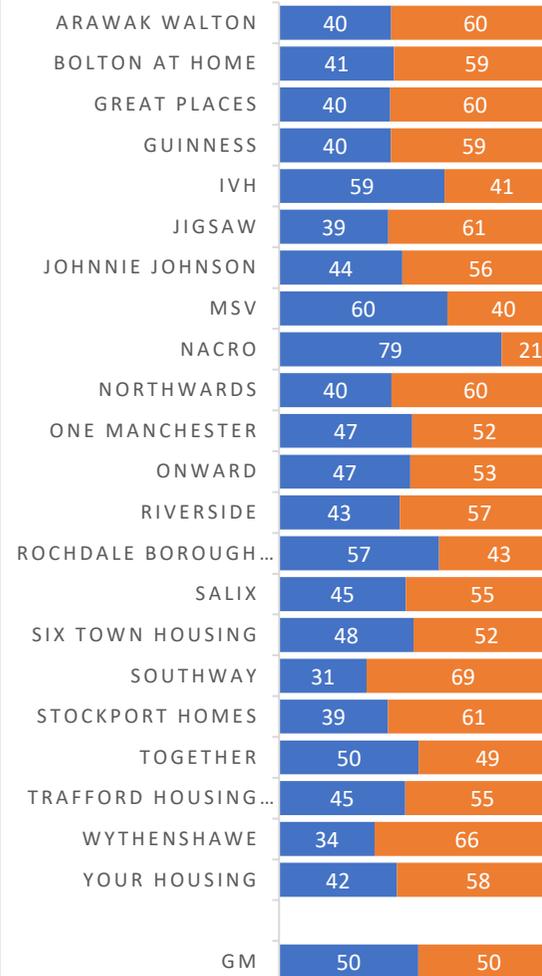
AGE GROUP (%)

■ 16-24 ■ 25-44 ■ 45-64 ■ 65+



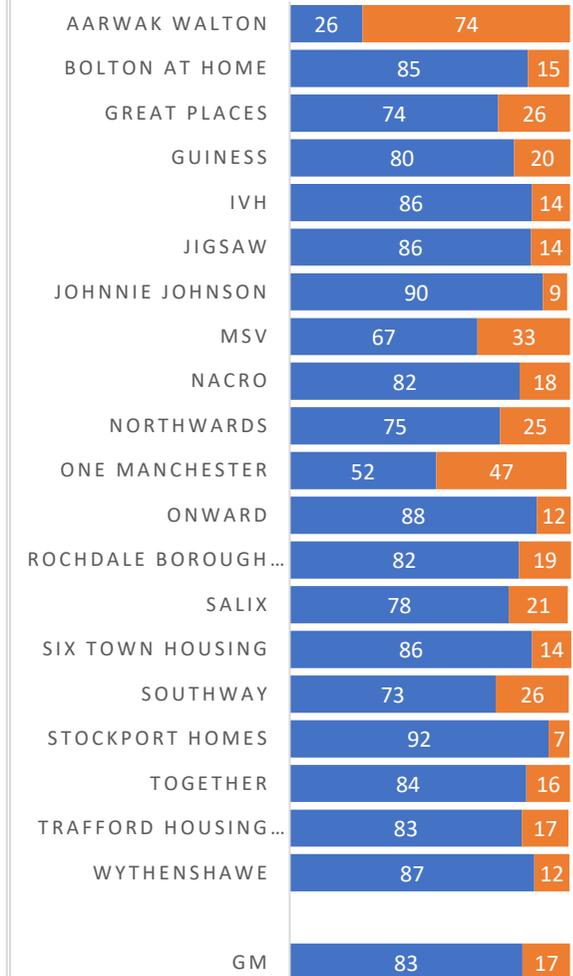
GENDER (%)

■ Male ■ Female ■ Other



ETHNICITY (%)

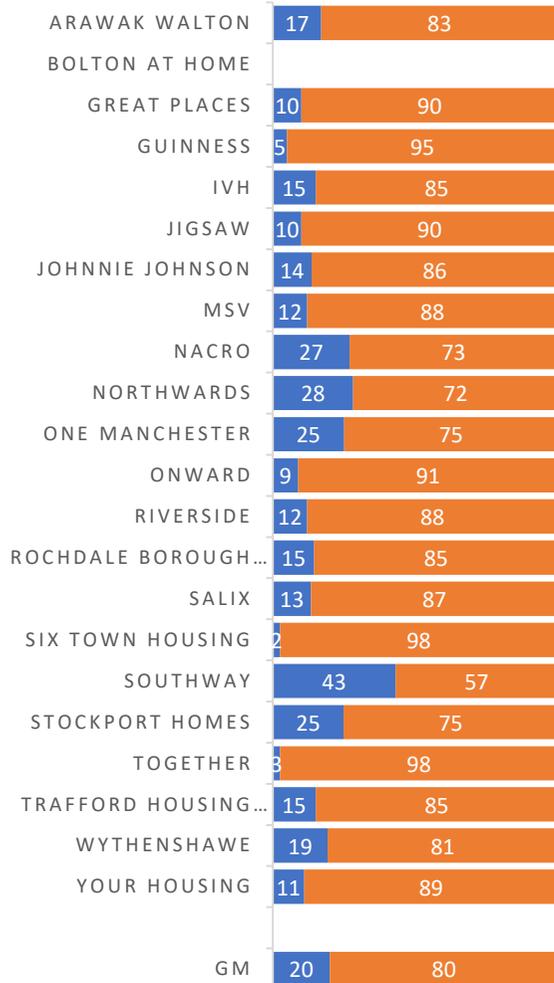
■ White ■ BAME



CUSTOMER PROFILE

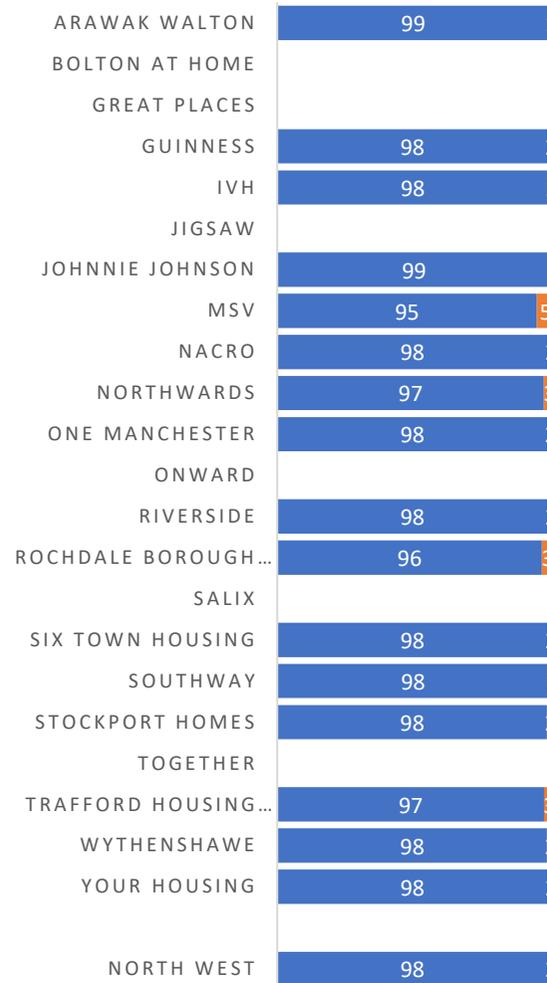
DISABILITY (%)

■ Disabled ■ Non-disabled



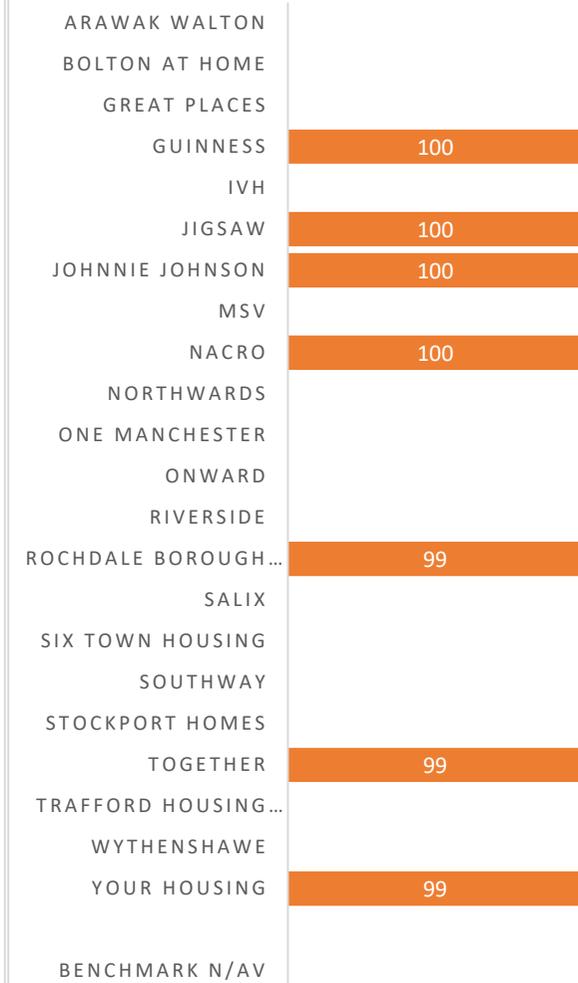
SEXUAL ORIENTATION (%)

■ Heterosexual/Straight ■ LGB



IDENTIFY AS TRANSGENDER (%)

■ Yes ■ No



NOTES:

- Individual organisations hold their data in a variety of different formats making direct comparison across organisations difficult. It has therefore been necessary to rebase the data to ensure it is as comparable as possible. Specifically, data for each organisation has been rebased to remove missing data, “prefer not to say”, “don’t know” or “unknown” response categories since not all organisations record this information consistently. Rebasing has the effect of redistributing these responses evenly across all remaining response categories. This approach does not take account of the fact that non-disclosure of some diversity information may be more prevalent among certain groups.
- Where an organisation does not collect or hold EDI data, this is shown as a gap on the bar chart.
- Comparative data for Greater Manchester presented within the age, gender, ethnicity and disability charts is 2011 Census data as follows:
 - Age - all usual residents aged 16-64 (board, leadership team and workforce charts) and all usual residents aged 16 and over (customer charts)
 - Gender – all usual residents aged 16-64 (board, leadership team and workforce comparator) and all usual residents aged 16 and over (customer comparator)
 - Ethnic Group – all usual residents
 - Disability – all usual residents aged 16 to 74 (board, leadership team and workforce charts) and all usual residents aged 16 and over (customer charts)
- Comparative data for the North West region presented within the sexual orientation charts is from the Office for National Statistics experimental statistics which provide an estimate for the North West region. These estimates are based on data from the Annual Population Survey, which collects information on self-perceived sexual identity from the household population aged 16 years and over in the UK. Due to the relatively small sample size estimates may not accurately reflect the sexual orientation of the wider population.

