

How diverse is the housing association workforce in Yorkshire and Humberside?

National Housing Federation regional analysis of sector-wide equality, diversity and inclusion data

Background

The social housing sector is grounded in a social purpose that places a responsibility on us to be a beacon for inclusion and diversity.

Alongside the powerful moral case for greater equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI), there is a strong business case, which is detailed in our 2020 insight review:

- Talent can be found all around us and attracting it from the widest possible pool creates competitive advantage – don't miss out on available talent.
- Diverse teams (especially at board and executive levels) make better decisions.
- People trust those who reflect the diversity of the people they lead, the customers they service, and the communities in which they are rooted.

The insight review highlighted huge gaps in our knowledge and the importance of this knowledge to know where we are, where we want to be, and to be able to measure our progress.

In response we launched the EDI data tool.

The EDI data tool

The EDI data tool allows housing associations in England to compare the diversity of their workforce to the communities they serve, based on characteristics of the population where their stock is located.

We first launched in 2021 and asked NHF members to submit their completed tools, enabling us to build the first national profile of the workforce of housing associations in England.

Two years on we have repeated the data collection exercise to provide an updated picture of diversity and representation in the social housing sector and to begin to explore how this picture is changing over time, presented in our report [‘How diverse is England’s housing association workforce in 2023?’](#)

We have published regional breakdowns of the data we received through the EDI data tool collection.

The following slides presents the findings for housing associations with headquarters in Yorkshire and Humberside.

About the data

The data is for the housing association workforce (including executive level positions), executives (chief executives, managing directors, and any other senior leaders), and board members.

To understand representation, the characteristics of these workforce groups have been compared against the characteristics of the population where housing association homes are located and, where relevant, against data we received on their residents.

Please note:

Data represents different time points for different organisations.

Some data gaps are due to categories in the tool not matching categories in data collected by housing associations (for example, marital and civil partnership status).

Where social housing is part of an organisations wider business, and where possible, organisations have separated staff responsible for housing from wider employee data.

Language and terminology

Phrasing of questions and categories within the EDI data tool follows recommendations from ONS harmonised standards, where available, and aligns with Census 2021.

This means we can be assured we are collecting the intended information and that we can compare sector data to Census data at population level.

Due to the specific questions and definitions, however, it limits the language we use in the data tool and this report (for example, sexual orientation instead of sexuality, and separating sex and gender identity).

This does not mean we think people can be put into boxes. The tool is not a replacement for talking to staff and understanding their views of themselves and equality, diversity, and inclusion within organisations.

Further notes on language are include within the national report.

Who submitted their data?

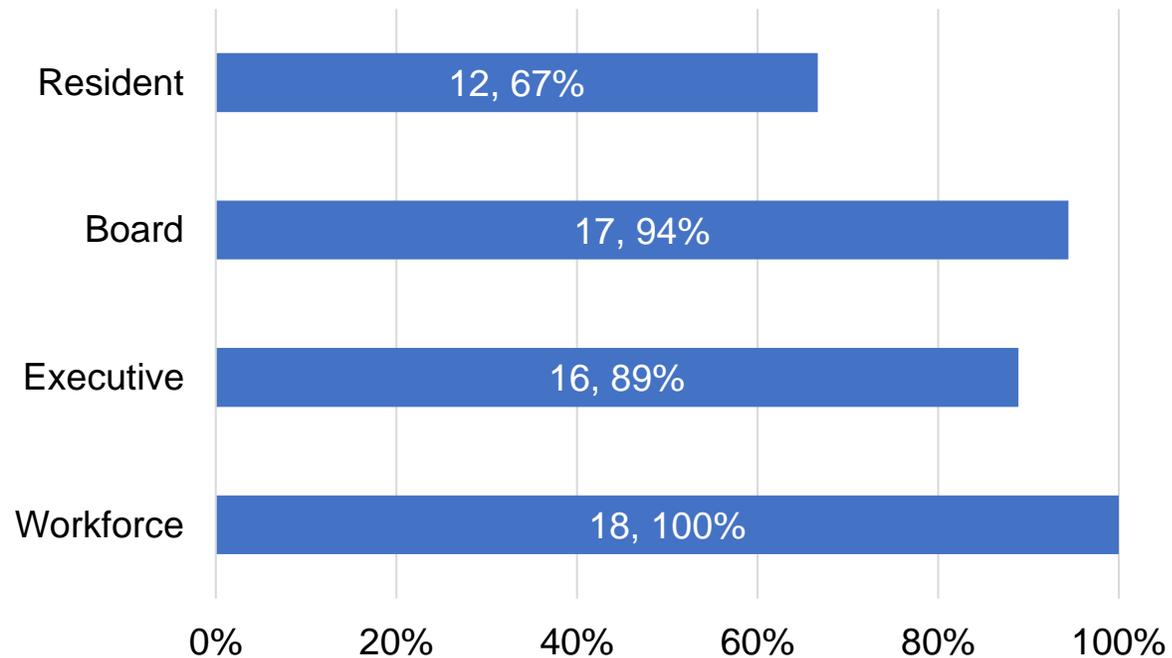
Housing associations/ALMOs that submitted their data by region as a proportion of membership of the NHF

Region	Number of submissions	Response as % of member SDR stock in region
London	39	85%
North West	32	60%
East of England	19	84%
South East	18	63%
West Midlands	18	79%
Yorkshire and Humberside	18	92%
South West	17	92%
North East	11	99%
East Midlands	5	87%
Grand total (England)	177	79%

- 177 housing associations across England, representing 79% of members' homes and 76% of all housing association homes in England.
- 18 housing associations with their headquarters based in Yorkshire and Humberside, representing 92% of members' homes for the region.

Who submitted their data?

Proportion of responding housing associations that provided data on each group

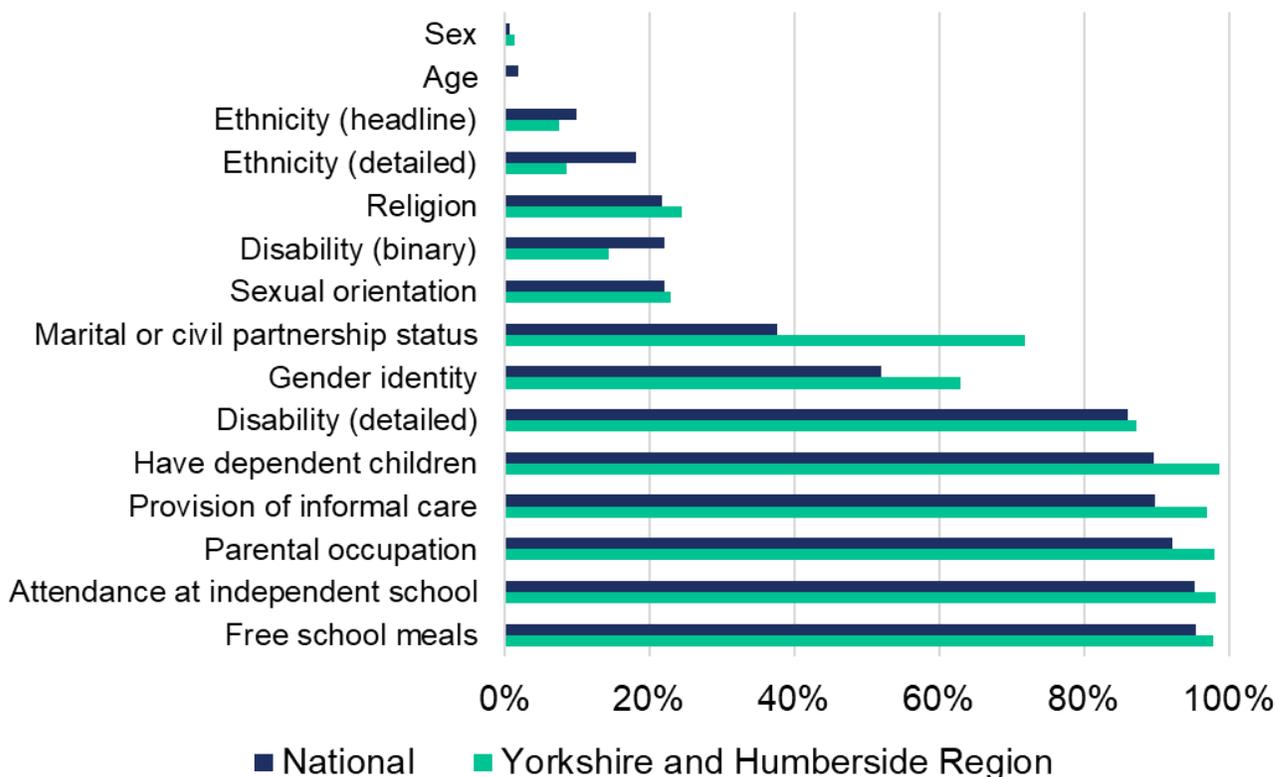


- 89% of housing associations based in Yorkshire and Humberside provided at least some data on all workforce groups.
- 67% provided data on residents, compared to 66% nationally.

Yorkshire and Humberside results

Where are the biggest gaps in data?

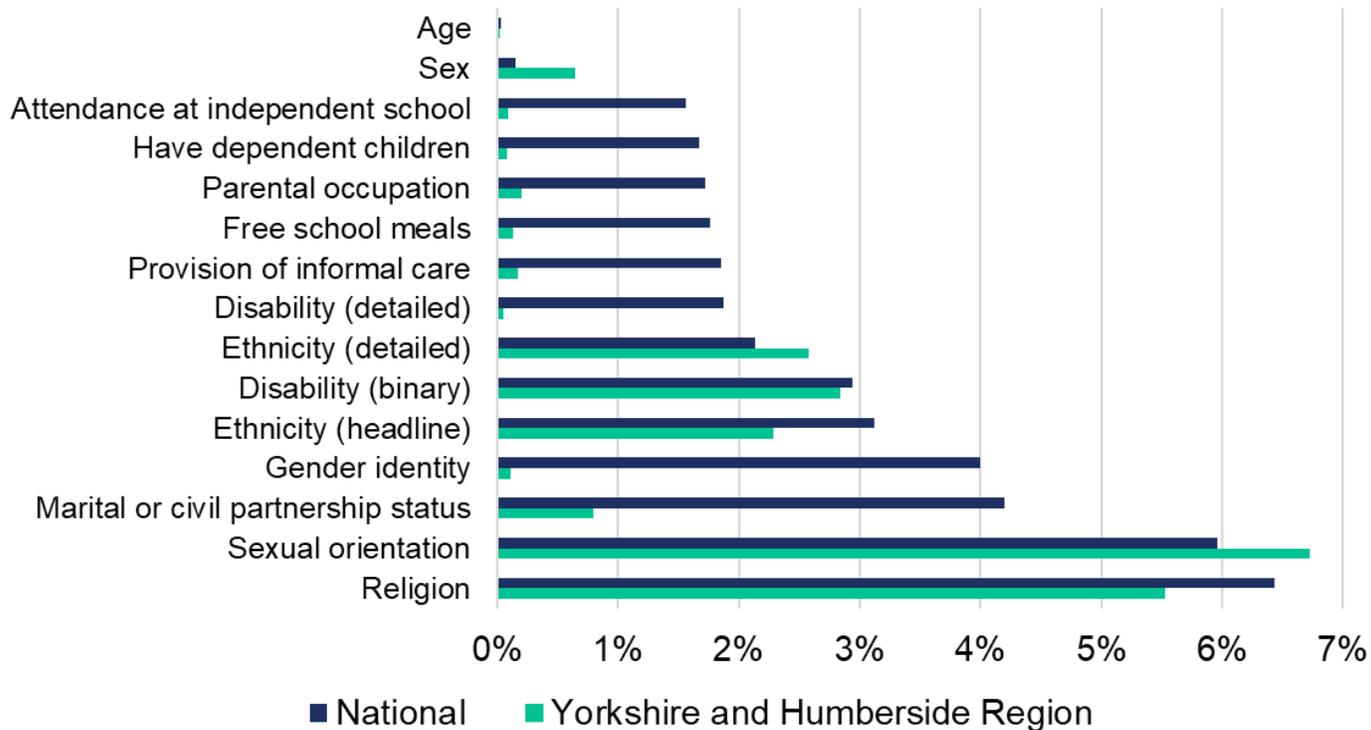
Proportion of workforce where we don't have data for each characteristic



- We received the most complete data for age and sex, where there was no data missing on the age of executives.
- The largest gaps in data were for caring responsibilities and socioeconomic characteristics, where we're missing 97% to 99% of workforce data.
- We're missing more of this data than we are at a national level, but there has been a small improvement since 2021, when we were missing almost 100% of data on socioeconomic characteristics (99.5%).
- We're missing more data for marital or civil partnership status than nationally – 72% of workforce data, compared to 38% nationally.

What are people choosing not to share?

Proportion of workforce where person selected 'prefer not to say' for a characteristic



- Across workforce groups, people are least likely to disclose their sexual orientation, followed by religion.
- 'Prefer not to say' responses for these questions were higher amongst board members.
- Compared to national data, there are fewer 'prefer not to say' responses for most characteristics. For socioeconomic characteristics, for example, this may reflect that the national data is more complete (a larger proportion of the national workforce are asked these questions).

How representative is the workforce?

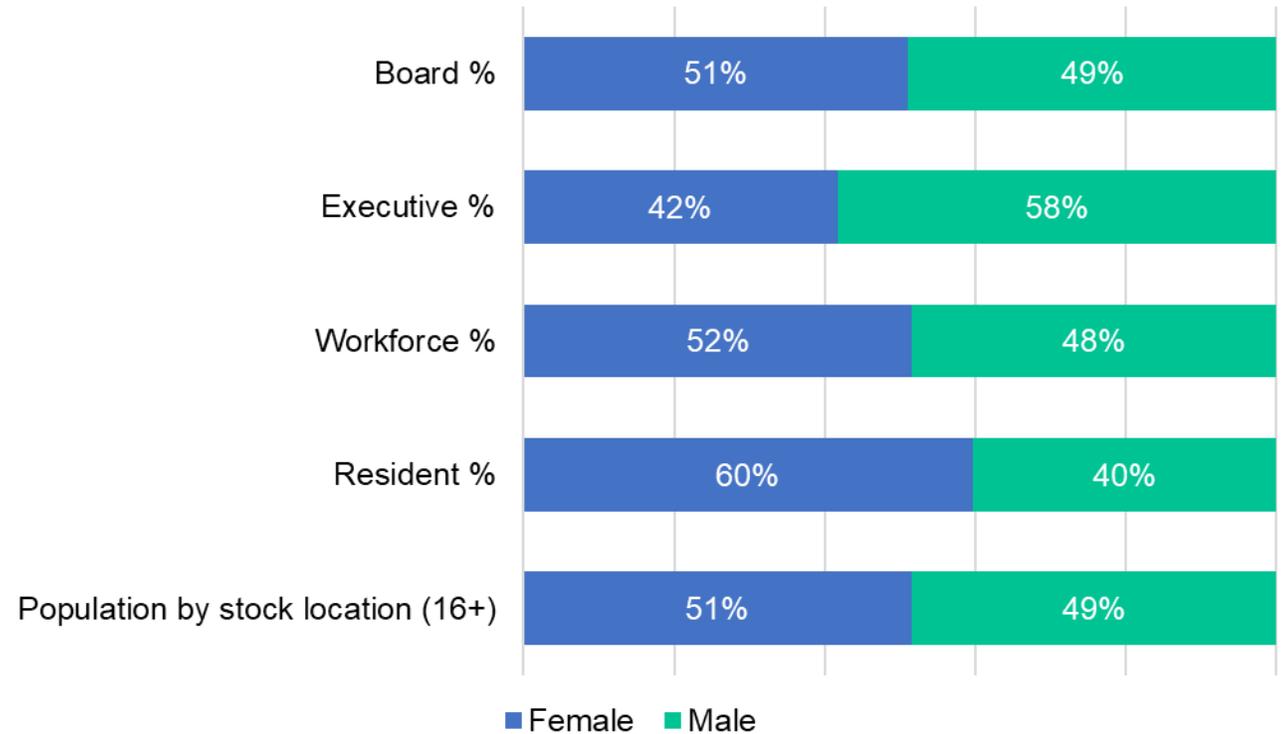
The following slides explore representation by characteristic. Please note:

- Due to gaps in data for socioeconomic characteristics and caring responsibilities, these have not been included within the regional summaries.
- The data is presented without 'don't know' and 'prefer not to say' responses. This means the totals vary by characteristic.

Sex

- The workforce and boards are representative of the population, but not of residents of which 60% are female.
- There is a lack of female representation at executive level – 42% are female compared to 52% of the workforce – fewer than nationally (47%).
- However, the figure has increased since 2021 when 32% of executives were female.
- Female representation in the workforce has also increased since 2021, from 49%.

Sex by group



Gender identity

- Trans women, trans men and non-binary people represented within the workforce.
- There is no representation at all at executive level, and no representation of trans women, trans men or non-binary people at board level.
- However, we're missing 53-63% of gender identity data across all workforce groups.

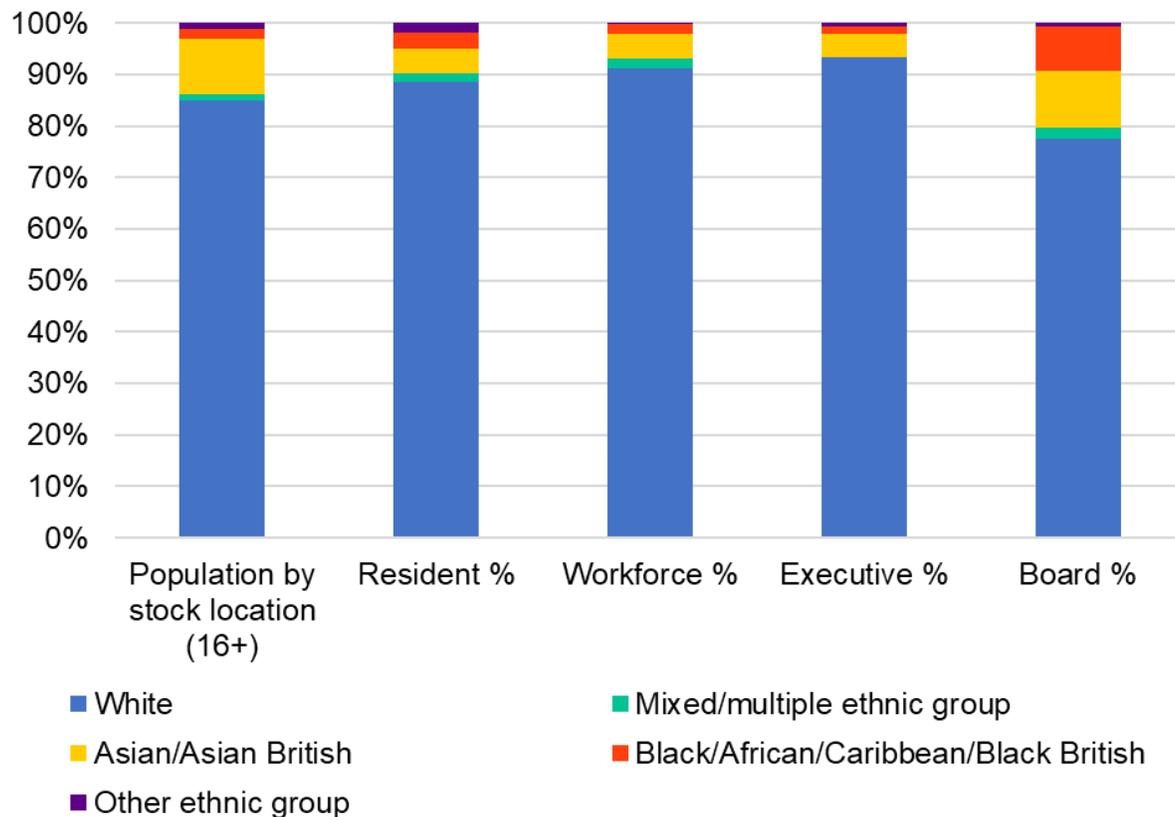
*We are using the term “trans” as an umbrella term to describe people whose gender is not the same as, or does not sit comfortably with, the sex they were assigned at birth, as defined by [Stonewall](#).

Gender identity by group

	Population by stock location (16+)	Workforce %	Executive %	Board %
Gender identity same as sex at birth	93.4%	98.9%	100.0%	98.9%
Identify as trans(gender) woman	0.1%	0.4%	0.0%	0.0%
Identify as trans(gender) man	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%
Identify as non-binary	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%
Gender identity different from sex registered at birth, but not listed	6.3%	0.5%	0.0%	1.1%

Ethnicity

Ethnicity by group

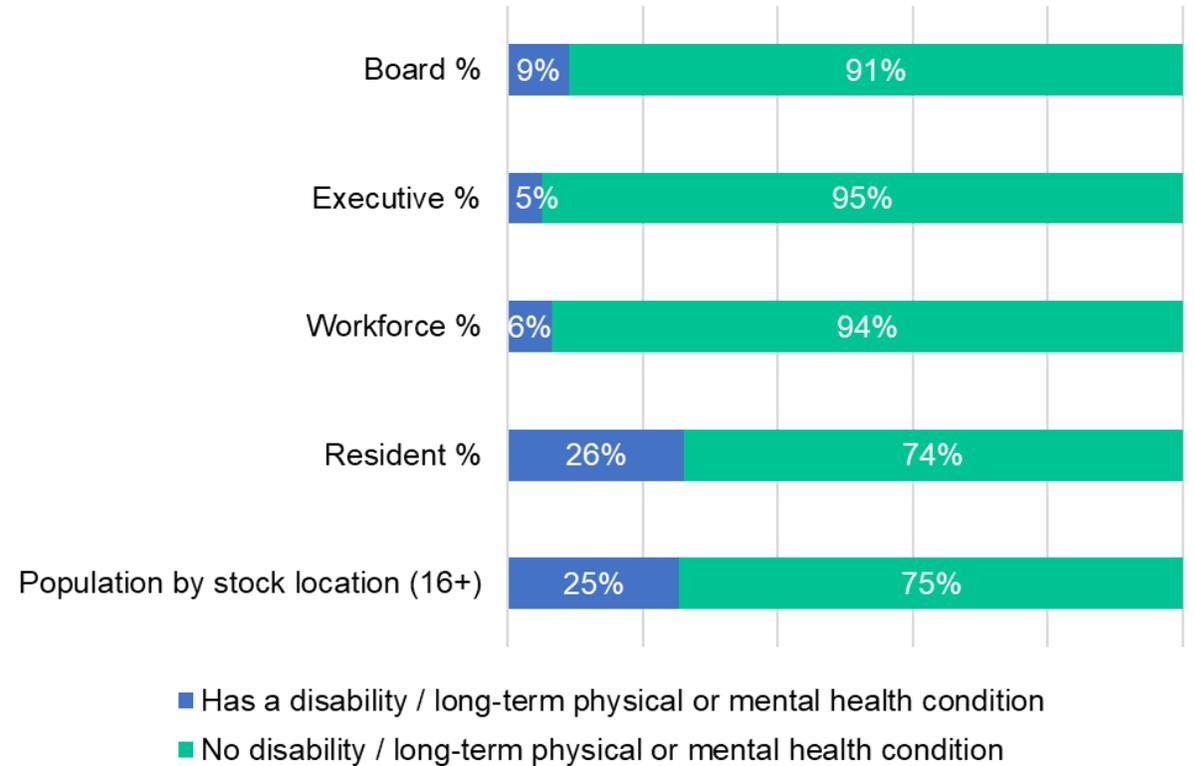


- The workforce reflects residents, but compared to the population, Asian or Asian British people are underrepresented (11% compared to 5%).
- Boards are more diverse than the workforce – 11% are Asian or Asian British, and 8% are Black, African, Caribbean or Black British.
- Executive teams are less diverse than the workforce – 93% of executives are White, compared to 91% of the workforce.
- Workforce and executives are less diverse compared to 2021 when 85% of executives and 87% of the workforce were White.

Disability

- Disabled people underrepresented across all levels of the workforce – for example, 5% of the workforce has a disability or long-term health condition compared to 25% of the population.
- There is less representation in comparison to the national data across all workforce groups – for example, 9% of the national workforce are Disabled.
- There are fewer Disabled people in the workforce compared to 2021 – in 2021, 11% of executives were Disabled in compared to 5% in 2023.

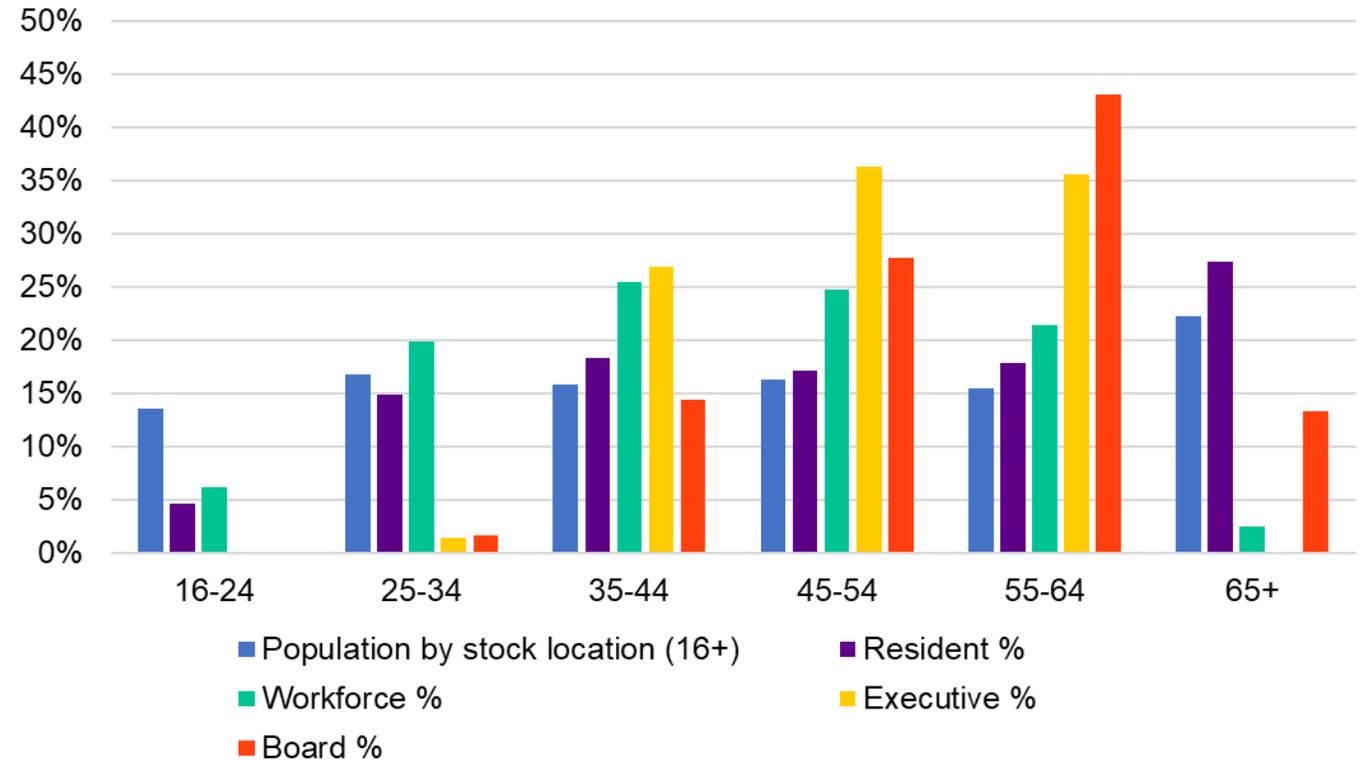
Disability (Yes / No) by group



Age

- The age of the workforce reflects residents and the population.
- Executives and board members are more likely to be older compared to the workforce.
- But, as we've seen in the national data, executives are younger than they were in 2021 (27% of executives are now aged 35-44, compared to 6% in 2021).
- There are still no executives aged 65 and over which was the same in 2021.

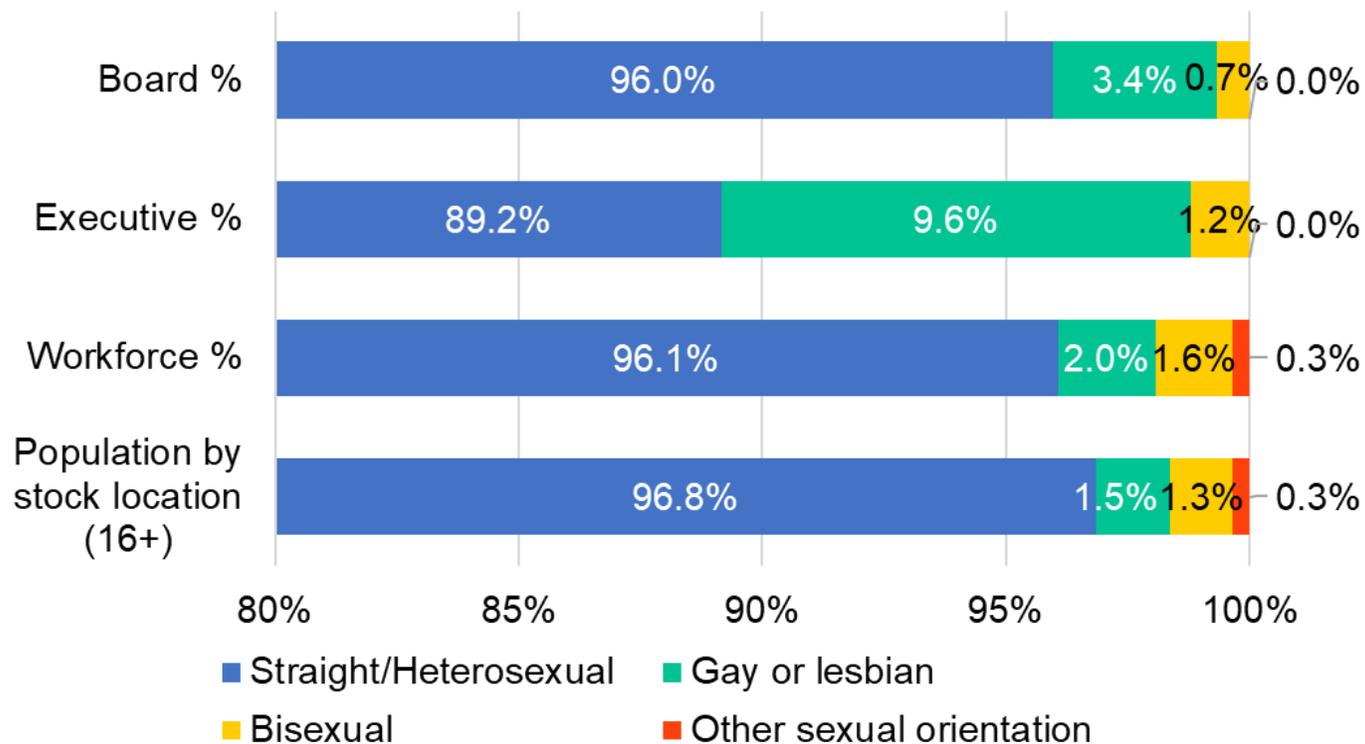
Age by group



Sexual orientation

- There is good representation of different sexual orientations across all workforce groups.
- At executive level, there's been an increase in the representation of people who are gay or bisexual (from 6.7% in 2021 to 9.6% in 2023) and bisexual (from none to 1.2%).
- These results are similar to the national data, although there is greater representation of people who are gay or lesbian at executive level in Yorkshire and Humberside than there is at a national level (5.3%).

Sexual orientation by group



Please note, axis starts at 80%

Marital and civil partnership status

Marital and civil partnership status by group

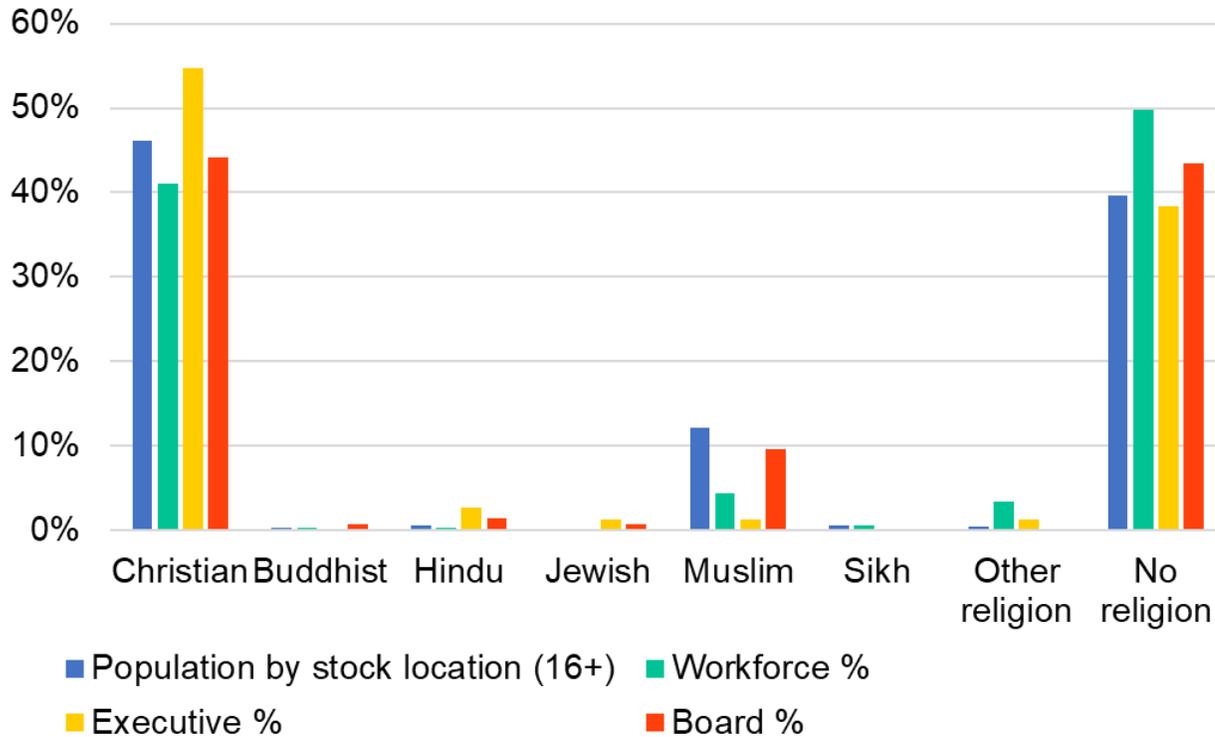


- The workforce reflects the population where stock is located.
- Those in leadership positions are more likely to be married – 61% of executive and 78% of board members are married, compared to 49% of the workforce.
- However, we are missing more than two thirds of data on marital and civil partnership status across all workforce groups (66-72%).

*Includes (former) civil partnerships

Religion

Religion by group



- The workforce are less likely to be religious compared to the population (particularly Christian or Muslim) – for example, 50% have no religion, compared to 40% of the population.
- More of the workforce have no religion compared to 2021 (42%), although this reflects the population change.
- Executives are more likely to be Christian compared to the workforce (55% vs 41%).
- Boards are more likely to be Muslim compared to the workforce (10% vs 4%), but this better reflects the population (12%).

Areas for future focus

Housing associations in Yorkshire and Humberside should aim to:

- Increase female representation at executive level.
- Increase ethnic diversity at executive level.
- Increase the representation of Disabled people across all workforce groups.
- Collect more complete data to close the data gaps, particularly for caring responsibilities, gender identity and marital and civil partnership status.

Recommendations for the sector

1. Review your organisation's processes for collecting equality, diversity and inclusion data.
2. Use the data to set targets and shape plans and strategies to meet those targets, together with the expertise of those with lived experience



Next steps for the NHF

- The [EDI data tool](#) and [suggested questions to ask your workforce](#) are still available for members.
- We will continue to share [best practice resources on equality, diversity and inclusion and case studies](#) highlighting ways that housing associations can use the EDI data tool to address specific EDI needs.
- We'll use your feedback when building the next iteration of the EDI data tool.
- Work with our member steering group to develop an action plan for driving improvement.
- Repeat the data collection in 2026 to measure progress across the sector.

We want to hear from you

We're looking for examples of how members have used their data tool to inform EDI strategies and action plans to add to our bank of case studies on the NHF website. For example:

Have you improved the way you have collected your EDI data?

Have you used your EDI data tool to identify areas for improvement, set targets and taken measures to meet those targets?

Have you engaged with staff to explore and overcome barriers to sharing EDI information?

Have you engaged with staff to explore and overcome barriers to recruitment, retention and progression within the organisation for some groups of people?

We'd also welcome any feedback on the EDI data tool and the data collection process

Please get in touch via Katie.Hipkiss@housing.org.uk