

How diverse is the housing association workforce in England?



Results from NHF analysis

December 2021



**NATIONAL
HOUSING
FEDERATION**

Foreword from Kate Henderson, Chief Executive at the National Housing Federation

I'm delighted to share with you this report, examining equality, diversity and inclusion in the housing association workforce, compared with the communities they serve. Over the last few years, the National Housing Federation (NHF) has been exploring how we, as a trade body, can lead from the front on equality, diversity and inclusion. We've been working hard to support our members on our journey to become the most equal, diverse and inclusive sector we can possibly be.

We're doing this work because it's the right thing to do. Social housing is rooted in addressing inequalities and, as a sector, we provide millions of homes for people across the country. We are a sector that serves so many diverse communities, including LGB+ people, people of all ethnic and religious backgrounds, disabled people, people of all genders, all ages, all families and socio-economic backgrounds.

But, it's clear the housing association workforce, especially at the leadership level, does not represent the communities we serve. And how can we build trust with residents if our communities aren't reflected at a senior level?

Our EDI journey so far

Last year, we published our insight review of housing association staff in England, which examined the current EDI landscape in the sector, the work people are doing already to improve representation, and what we can learn from other sectors. The insight review exposed data gaps and, where data was available, it showed just how far we have to go.

That's why we created our EDI data tool, so we can focus on improving and understanding data. We need to know where we are as a sector, to know where we want to be, and measure our progress.

At the NHF we are on our own journey, looking into our own policies and practices, but we still have a long way to go. I'm proud of our sector for taking this step to address inequalities within our workforces, and to see such a commitment to making the housing sector the most equal, diverse and inclusive place it can be.

Collecting data – what does it show us?

I would like to thank all 174 of our members who submitted their EDI data. We were overwhelmed by the positive response that our data collection received. By being transparent and accountable, we are showing how serious we are about representing the communities we serve, building greater trust, and unlocking the benefits of a diverse sector.

This report shows where our biggest information gaps are around many characteristics. We have little to no data on socioeconomic background, caring responsibilities or gender identity, and we have comparatively large cohorts of staff preferring not to disclose their religion or sexuality. We must explore the reasons behind this, engaging with staff and external agencies on how inclusive our organisations really are.

Lack of representation in our workforce

The leadership of housing associations is not as diverse or reflective of the population as the staff working in the sector. We need to see more ethnic diversity and female representation at leadership levels across the sector.

It's particularly disappointing to see a clear lack of representation for disabled people across all levels within the sector. Housing associations do some amazing work to support disabled people across the country, and it's right that this should be reflected in our workforce. While there are data gaps, from what we know, only 8% of workforce, staff, executives and boards indicate they have a disability, compared to 24% of the population.

The NHF is committed to supporting the sector to become better employers for disabled people, and examine potential barriers for disabled people in our workplaces. We are reviewing our own policies and will continue to explore how we, as a trade body, can effect change.

Together, we can make a change

Our ambition is to drive the change needed for our sector to be a more diverse and inclusive place to work, that reflects the communities we serve. This is not just morally the right thing to do, but will lead to better decisions, better workplaces, and ultimately better outcomes.

I believe that if we work together, invest in the resources needed, and continue to challenge our assumptions we can achieve this goal. We will continue to support the sector, alongside our EDI in Housing member group, and monitor change by repeating the data collection exercise in 2023.

But this is just the beginning. We're at the start of our journey. For the first time, we have a picture of the sector's diversity, and now it's time to drive real and actionable change, using data as a solid foundation.



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Summary

About

The National Housing Federation (NHF) has been working with our members to better understand equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) of the housing association workforce in England. Social housing is grounded in a commitment to tackling injustice and inequality. Our values are founded on providing good quality and safe homes that people on lower incomes can afford, supporting livelihoods, mobility and thriving places. As the trade body for housing associations, we want to shine a light on EDI, to uphold the values of social housing, represent the communities we serve, and help our members unlock the substantial business benefits of a genuinely equal, diverse, and inclusive workforce.

This report presents the findings of the first ever national picture of EDI within the housing association workforce in England. We have EDI data from 174 organisations, representing 71% of homes owned by housing associations in England. The data is for workforce (including executive level positions), staff (excluding executive level), executives (chief executives, managing directors, and any other senior leaders), and board members. The report should be read alongside the accompanying national dataset, which we have published in a completed NHF EDI data tool.

Language and terminology

People choose to identify themselves in a myriad of ways, some of which may change over time. This can make it difficult to choose categories to define ourselves. We have based our EDI data tool and characteristics on best practice, with comparable data from questions developed and tested by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). This means we can be assured we are collecting the intended information and that we can compare sector data to ONS 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. Data on EDI should complement staff engagement to better understand experiences of equality and inclusion in the workplace.

Further notes on characteristics and questions used to collect EDI data are available in the [Appendix](#), with further information on population sources in the notes tab of the national dataset, which is published alongside this report.

Key findings

Housing associations have taken an important first step in understanding more about diversity within the sector. By being open and honest, housing associations have revealed more than we've ever known about equality, diversity and inclusion amongst staff, executive teams and boards.

The data shows us where our greatest gaps in knowledge are, where staff are more likely to choose not to share information, and how representative we truly are of the communities we serve. This indicates where we need to focus to make more progress and become a truly equal, diverse, and inclusive sector.

Where are the data gaps?

- There are large gaps in what we know about our workforce, executive teams, and boards – this makes it difficult to build accurate pictures to compare to population data.
- Sex and age are the two most accurate characteristics, with the most complete picture (fewest prefer not to say/missing responses).
- The biggest gaps are for socio-economic background and caring responsibilities (with data for only 1-10% of people).
- There are also large gaps for workforce gender identity (74%), marital or civil partnership status (54%) and sexual orientation (40%).
- There are more data gaps at board level than within workforce, staff, or executive level data. Results may not reflect the true picture if those with missing data come from certain groups in the population.

There are also large gaps for our workforce, with no data on

74%

of gender identity,

54%

**of marital or civil
partnership status and**

40%

of sexual orientation



What are staff choosing not to share?

- Sexual orientation and religion have proportionately more people selecting 'prefer not to say' than other categories.
- Organisations should engage with their workforce to establish why staff choose not to share this information. It could indicate issues around equality, inclusion, and how safe a person feels revealing this information about themselves in the workplace. Acting on an understanding of issues should improve EDI in the workplace and lead to more accurate data.

How representative is the housing association workforce?

Due to data gaps from missing or unknown data, we have presented our results with don't know/prefer not to say categories removed. This makes the comparison to population data, where there are fewer data gaps, more accurate.

Members may wish to compare data on EDI in their workforce and leadership to their customers, which is possible in the tool. We could not do this for the national data due to the amount of customer data missing. We will publish regional analysis (based on location of headquarters), comparing population to staff and leaders in the region. More locally based housing associations may prefer to use these regional figures, given regional variations in some characteristics.

When we look at available data and compare to population by stock location:

- We are underrepresentative of disabled people at all levels of organisations: 24% of the population have a disability as defined by the Equality Act 2010, compared to just 8% of our workforce, staff, executive teams, and boards.
- Our workforce is ethnically diverse and representative of the population it serves, though with proportionately more people who identify as Black (African/Caribbean/Other Black) and fewer people who identify as Asian (Indian/Pakistani/Bangladeshi/Chinese/Other Asian) than compared to the population by stock location.
 - This representation does not extend to executive level, however, which has proportionately more people who identify as White (English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British/Irish/Gypsy or Irish traveller/Other White); 90.1% of executives identify as White compared to 83.2% of the population and 80.6% of staff.
 - Ethnicity is one characteristic that varies by geography, with some cities and regions having more ethnic diversity than others. We have produced regional analysis for members to review.



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- While our workforce is more female than the population by stock location (57% female, compared to 51% at population level) there is overrepresentation of males in executive level (55%) and board positions (58%).
- The sexual orientation of our workforce is representative of the population by stock location. At executive level, there is greater representation of people who identify as gay, lesbian, or bisexual when compared to population. However, sexual orientation is underreported within the population, so results for executives may be because we have less missing data for this characteristic within the executive group.
- Our workforce is more middle-aged than population by stock location, with fewer 16-24 year olds and those 65+ years compared to the population, there is overrepresentation of those aged 35-64 years. Executives and boards are older than staff and population served; 81% of executives are aged 45-64 years and 59% of board members are 55 years or over.
- Marital and civil partnership status is representative of population served for workforce and staff, except single people, who are overrepresented, and widowed people, who are underrepresented. Sector leadership, both at executive and board level, are more likely to be married than the population or staff. This is likely a reflection of the older age of these two groups.
- For religion, our workforce and executives are less Christian and more 'no religion' than the Census 2011 comparison data. However, estimates from the ONS indicate this is likely representative of the 2021 population. Our board members are more likely to have a religion (mainly Christian or Muslim).
- Data from 163 organisations indicates there is no representation of transgender people or other gender identities at either board or executive level. Only 0.79% of the workforce identify as trans or other gender identity to sex at birth (executive teams represent just 1.1% of the workforce). There is no comparison data for the population; Census 2021 was the first national survey to ask a question on gender identity.



Our workforce is **more female** than the population

57% female

compared to

51% at population level



81% of executives are **aged 45-64 years**

and

59% of board members are **55 years or over**

- It is difficult to conclude much about caring responsibilities and socio-economic background due to data gaps here. The low group sample size distorts the picture.
 - From the available data, it looks like there are proportionately more people with dependent children and informal care responsibilities than compared to the population by stock location. We can speculate that this may be due to the age of our staff and executives.
 - There are more staff who went to independent school compared to the population. However, people who were eligible for free school meals are overrepresented compared with the population.

We do not have data for senior management positions, though some organisations included this within their executive level figures. Whilst we cannot draw any conclusions about representation within management positions from the data we hold, the lack of ethnic diversity and females within executive positions compared to the population may also indicate an issue within other management positions.

We cannot conclude anything on intersectionality as the data is only available by individual characteristic. This means we cannot combine characteristics to look at intersectionality. Executives, for example, may have other protected characteristics which make them more diverse than appears from individual characteristics such as sex or ethnicity.



Only
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No executives or board
 members do, but
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Recommendations

Housing associations have taken an important first step to understand diversity and inclusion within our workforce and leadership. The data within this report has set out the scale of the challenge before us, but now we can see where we are currently, and better understand how to get to where we want to be.

Data is critical to progressing equality, diversity, and inclusion. By being transparent and accountable, we show how serious we are about representing the communities we serve, building greater trust, and unlocking the benefits of a diverse sector. We must act on the findings of this report.

Based on our findings, our recommendations are that housing associations in England should:

- **Engage:** talk to their workforce, boards, and stakeholders to scrutinise recruitment practices and understand attitudes and behaviours around EDI culture within the organisation, with the intention of better understanding inclusion in the workplace and improving data accuracy through more voluntary data sharing.
- **Measure:** use the NHF's EDI data tool (or internal EDI data) to review representation amongst staff, management, and leadership (including boards) within the organisation and any departments. Housing associations should set targets for their organisation (and, for large employers, departments) around representation, based on the communities they serve. They should routinely update EDI data, and then review this data (at least annually) to track progress. We encourage housing associations to be open with their progress.
- **Act:** use data to inform EDI strategies and action plans, using targeted action to make progress towards becoming truly equal, diverse, and inclusive across all levels and teams within the organisation. The NHF highlights [examples of good practice on our website](#). We encourage housing association members to share effective actions or strategies with us.

The NHF will continue to update and improve the EDI data tool and repeat the national data collection exercise in 2023. We will work with the sector to create change, and our ambition is that the 2023 data analysis will show improved EDI in our sector, particularly:

- Better representation of disabled people amongst workforce and leadership.
- More females in executive positions.
- Greater ethnic diversity amongst executives.
- More young people (aged 16-24 years) in our workforce and potentially younger age groups (aged 44 years or less) within leadership teams and boards.
- Improved data coverage through less unknown or undeclared data across all characteristics and groups. We would particularly like to see better data at board level.

Next steps

The NHF will repeat the national data collection exercise in 2023, to give time for equality, diversity, and inclusion strategies and action plans to make an impact and for data gaps to be reduced. If this exercise provides more complete customer data, then we may be able to compare how representative our workforce and leadership is to the people we serve, not just the wider population.

We will also publish regional breakdowns of 2021 data for housing associations to review and act on, given variations by region in some characteristics.

The EDI data tool will continue to be available from the NHF's website. We will update the tool when Census 2021 data is released at local authority level. We encourage members to regularly review and update their EDI data, including setting diversity and data improvement targets for their organisation, and any departments within.

The NHF is keen to hear more about how members are using the EDI data tool and the impact of their strategies to improve equality, diversity, and inclusion. We are already [sharing examples of good practice on our website](#) and look forward to adding more as members use data to drive action. Alongside the NHF, our [EDI in Housing member group](#) will use this data to plan the next steps and ensure we are supporting the sector to make change happen.

Introduction

Background

The NHF has been working with our [EDI in Housing member group](#) to drive progress towards a more equal, diverse, and inclusive housing association sector. Our ambition is to inspire diverse talent, driving progress towards a more equal and diverse cohort of leaders and a culture of inclusion.

In November 2020, the NHF launched our insight review [with Housing Diversity Network \(HDN\): Equality, diversity and inclusion \(EDI\) in housing association staff in England](#). This looked at the current EDI landscape of housing staff and leaders across the country, including what we know about EDI within the sector, work being done already to improve representation, and what we can learn from other sectors.

The insight review exposed data gaps, and where we do have EDI data, showed just how far we have to go. As such, part of our work on EDI in the sector has focused on improving and understanding data. We need to know where we are, to know where we want to be, and measure our progress.

By supporting the sector to better understand the diverse characteristics of their communities, and how their workforces compare to them, we are ensuring the sector forms a solid foundation for ensuring our leadership is diverse, and that housing association workplaces embrace equality.



Why is diversity important?

The sector is grounded in a social purpose that places a responsibility on us to be a beacon for inclusion and diversity. There is a powerful moral case for greater EDI. Alongside this, there is a strong business case, as identified in our insight review.¹

- 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. For example, Women Count 2020 found that executive committees of FTSE 350 companies with female membership over 33% have a net profit margin over 10 times greater than those companies with no women at this level.²
- Diverse teams (especially at board and executive levels) make better decisions. A report by McKinsey & Company examined more than 1,000 companies across 12 countries and found a statistically significant correlation between leadership team diversity and financial outperformance.³
- People trust those who reflect the diversity of the people they lead, the customers they service, and the communities in which they are rooted.

Why is data important?

Data is critical to progressing equality, diversity, and inclusion. Not only does it improve transparency and accountability, but it can also lead to change. The requirement to publish gender pay gap statistics, for example, has led to a 1.6 percentage-point narrowing of the gap amongst affected employers.⁴

Data must be collected in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). The advantages in collecting data on protected characteristics can also be used as their justification for collection. These include highlighting possible inequalities and investigating underlying causes, setting targets for reducing disparities, and signalling to applicants and employees that an organisation is serious about equality and diversity.⁵

In compliance with UK GDPR some caution is necessary as protected characteristics will fall under the definition of 'special category' of personal data. These require two lawful bases for collecting and processing, and will usually include the need to obtain explicit consent. However, surveys carried out with full anonymity from initial data collection to reporting are not subject to UK GDPR. Provided that individuals cannot be identified from the data, either directly or indirectly, then it cannot be treated as personal data.

Employees and employers both need to contribute to better data coverage, through routine data collection and voluntarily sharing data. Research by The Behavioural Insights Team (BIT) notes that there is little to no rigorous experimental research testing what works to increase voluntary disclosure. BIT conducted research on behalf of Arup to increase the number of employees completing demographic forms. They interviewed staff to understand attitudes and behaviours and redesigned communications in response to this. This meant sending emails only to those who needed to update their details, making it clear how to disclose and whether this was a relevant action for the employee. The email focused on the two key messages that staff told them they cared about: the purpose of collecting data and who had access to it. The percentage of staff who fully completed forms increased from 55% to 85%, two thirds of the target audience and exceeding Arup's original target.⁶ This shows the importance of engaging with staff to understand EDI within the workplace, including on data collection.

1. NHF and HDN (2020) Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) in housing association staff in England.
2. The Pipeline (2020) Women Count 2020: Role, Value, and Number of Female Executives in the FTSE 350.
3. McKinsey and Company (2018) Delivering through diversity.
4. Blundell, J. (2021) Wage responses to gender pay gap reporting requirements. Centre for Economic Performance, LSE.
5. Farr, H. (2021) Diversity and inclusion reporting – unlocking the data, Taylor Wessing.
6. Behavioural Insights Team (2021) Improving equality, diversity and inclusion starts with good data.

What is the NHF’s EDI data tool?

The NHF’s solution to overcoming data gaps in the sector was to develop an EDI [data tool](#), which was published in April 2021. Our tool enables housing associations to compare key characteristics of workforce to population by stock location, and staff to executive, staff to board and workforce to customers.

The data tool draws together different datasets on key protected characteristics and socio-economic background from the Office for National Statistics (ONS). It pulls them together into an easy-to-use Microsoft Excel tool for members to download and input their stock and workforce/executive/board/customer figures to see how diverse they are.

Our members reported that the tool was very useful for their work on EDI, including using insights from the data to inform their EDI strategy.

Collecting EDI data

We asked NHF housing association members to complete our EDI data tool and submit their workforce, executive level, and board data to help us build a national picture of workforce diversity in social housing and create a more diverse and inclusive sector. We conducted this exercise between August and October 2021.

We wanted to build a baseline for understanding EDI in the sector. By collecting this data regularly, we will begin to understand the impact of our members’ work on equality, diversity, and inclusion. This will provide opportunities to share learning and good practice. Creating a national picture is vital to informing our sector’s approach.

How many organisations took part?

This report presents workforce data from 174 organisations (172 housing associations and two ALMOs), representing 80% of homes owned and managed by our members (or 71% of all registered provider homes owned in England). A breakdown of responses by membership and region is show in Table 1.

We collected executive and board level data for 163 organisations – 11 housing associations did not provide separate data for their executive teams. Their executive data is included in their workforce figures, but it is impossible to know who to exclude from workforce data to compare executives to staff. Figures for these 11 organisations have therefore been excluded from analysis of executives to staff and board members to staff. Where the report talks about staff or executives or boards, this is data for 163 organisations. More details are available in [Appendix A](#).

A big thank you to everyone who submitted their data.

Table 1 Housing association/ALMO responses by region as proportion of membership of the NHF

Region – based on location of headquarters	Number	Response as % of member SDR stock in region
London	43	83%
North West	33	80%
South East	18	72%
West Midlands	18	70%
East of England	16	86%
Yorkshire and Humberside	15	70%
North East	12	96%
South West	12	76%
East Midlands	7	89%
Grand total (England)	174	80%

Diversity data for housing associations in England

The national results show that our workforce is broadly representative of the population we serve for most characteristics, with the exception of disability, which is significantly underrepresented. Our senior leadership, however, is not representative of our staff or population. It is more likely to be male, White, married, and older than staff. While age can be a sign of experience, and marital and civil partnership status may be linked to age, better representation is required of females and different ethnicities within executive and board positions.

This will not be true of all housing associations – the national picture is an aggregate of multiple organisations' data. We have not reviewed results by the performance of individual organisations.

Housing associations should routinely review their organisational EDI data and consider how representative teams, staff, managers and staff are for characteristics.

Before presenting the results, we will review where the biggest gaps in our knowledge are in terms of characteristic and group (workforce, staff, executive teams, and boards).⁷ The tool distinguishes between prefer not to say, where people have chosen not to share personal data, and do not know, where data is not collected or otherwise unknown. Further information on data limitations is in [Appendix A](#).

Where are our biggest gaps?

By characteristic

The largest gaps in our data are around socio-economic background (parental occupation at 14, attendance of independent school, and eligibility for free school meals) and caring responsibilities (dependent children and informal care).

We do not know socio-economic data for between 97-99% of our workforce, 96-99% of staff, 91-93% of executives, and 90-92% of board members. Data on caring responsibilities is unknown for 96-97% workforce, 96% staff, 84-87% of executive positions and 84-89% of board members.

The next biggest gap is around gender identity, which is unknown for 72% of workforce. Marital and civil partnership status is missing for half of workforce data, though some is due to mismatching categories (see [Appendix A](#) for more detail). Table 2 shows missing data by group and characteristic. Unknown population data is indicated by 'no data'. Questions relating to age, sex and marital status are 'forced' questions in ONS surveys. This means they must be answered for a survey interview to continue, so there are no missing values for these questions.

7. Workforce is data for all staff, including executive, for 174 organisations. Staff data is for 163 organisations who also provided separate executive data.

Table 2 Proportion of workforce, staff (workforce excluding executive), executive and board where we don't know data for characteristic

Don't know by characteristic	Workforce (n=116,824)	Staff (n=94,109)	Executive (n=1,002)	Board (n=1,912)	Population
Free school meals eligibility	99%	99%	93%	92%	No data
Parental occupation at age 14	99%	99%	93%	93%	No data
Provision of informal care	97%	96%	87%	89%	No data
Independent school	97%	96%	91%	90%	No data
Have dependent children	96%	96%	84%	84%	No data
Gender identity	72%	66%	67%	77%	No data
Marital or civil partnership status	51%	42%	42%	56%	No data
Sexual orientation	35%	25%	21%	42%	3%
Religion	32%	22%	25%	46%	7%
Disability	30%	21%	18%	37%	1%
Ethnicity (detailed)	26%	19%	21%	36%	No data
Ethnicity (headline)	12%	11%	6%	26%	No data
Age	5%	1%	3%	15%	No data
Sex	1%	1%	0%	7%	No data



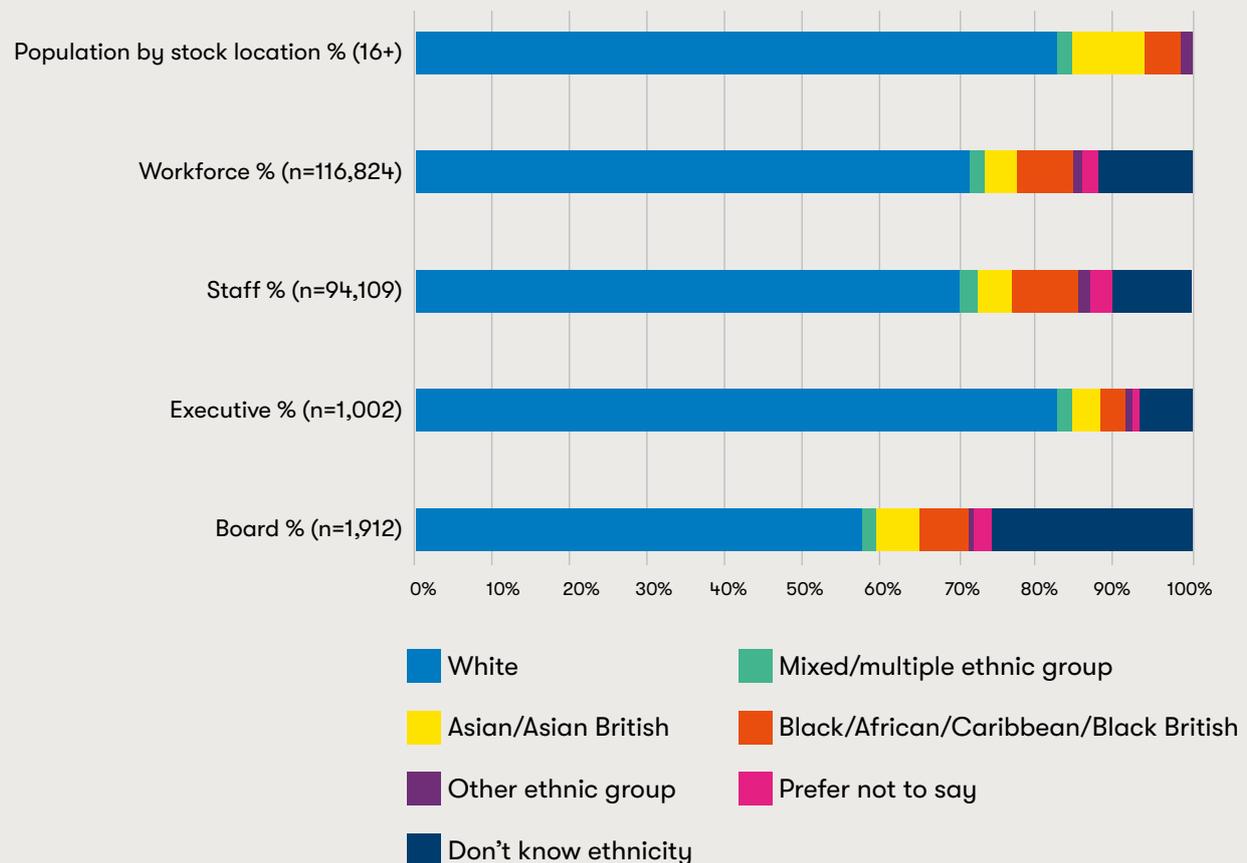
By group

The most complete data is at executive level. This is likely because the number of staff here is small when compared to overall workforce (1,002 executives compared with 94,109 staff). This makes it easier for executives to complete the data tool themselves or to collect data from executives to complete the tool.

The small number of staff at executive level means that representation can be more readily affected by staff changes. If 10 females were recruited to replace 10 males at executive level, the proportion of females at this level would rise 1%. If 10 females replaced 10 males in the workforce, this would shift proportions by 0.01%.

Proportionately, we are more likely to be missing data for boards than for staff and executives. Figure 1 shows results for headline ethnicity. Ethnicity data at board level is missing for a quarter (26%) of all board members, compared to 12% of the workforce (11% of staff) and 6% of executives. Given the smaller numbers of executives and board members, data gaps could potentially have a bigger impact on accuracy of results.

Figure 1 Headline ethnicity data by group, including prefer not to say and don't know



What can the data tell us about inclusion?

Table 3 below outlines the characteristics where people were most likely to tick 'prefer not to say'. The proportion of staff not willing to declare certain characteristics is higher than executive level and much higher than board members (though boards may be explained by the larger data gaps outlined in Table 2). Like Table 2, we do not always know what proportion of the population would not voluntarily share data on characteristics. Where data is missing for the population, it is shown as 'no data'.

Table 3 Proportion of workforce, staff (workforce excluding executive), executive and board where person selected ‘prefer not to say’ for characteristic

Prefer not to say by characteristic	Workforce (n=116,824)	Staff (n=94,109)	Executive (n=1,002)	Board (n=1,912)	Population
Religion	7%	8%	6%	4%	No data
Sexual orientation	6%	7%	4%	4%	No data
Marital or civil partnership status	3%	4%	1%	2%	No data
Disability	3%	3%	2%	2%	6%
Ethnicity (detailed)	2%	3%	2%	2%	No data
Independent school	2%	3%	1%	0.3%	No data
Ethnicity (headline)	2%	3%	1%	2%	No data
Gender identity	1%	2%	0.4%	0.4%	No data
Provision of informal care	0.2%	0.3%	0.3%	1%	No data
Sex	0.1%	0.1%	-	0.5%	No data
Age	0.1%	0.1%	-	0.2%	No data
Have dependent children	0.1%	0.1%	-	0.1%	No data
Free school meals eligibility	0.03%	0.03%	1%	1%	No data
Parental occupation at age 14	0.03%	0.02%	1%	0.5%	No data

Religion and sexual orientation are the characteristics with the highest proportion of ‘prefer not to say’ – 8% and 7% of staff, 6% and 4% of executives and 4% and 4% of boards have chosen not to declare their religion or sexual orientation. The proportion of staff is almost double that of the next highest – marital or civil partnership status, where 4% of staff chose not to supply this information (but marital or civil partnership status has a higher proportion of unknown, with 42% of staff data missing).

There are many reasons that someone may not wish to disclose personal data about themselves. This might include concerns about data storage, effect of disclosure on employment, not understanding the purpose of collecting data, and wording of questions and categories used.⁸ It could be an indication that a workplace is not as inclusive as it could be.

We suggest that employers speak to employees to understand why they would not wish to disclose demographic information and work to overcome these barriers to reduce data gaps.

8. Behavioural Insights Team (2021) Encouraging sexual orientation disclosure in recruitment.

What does the sector look like?

Summary

All data in this section is presented with don't know and prefer not to say removed. This means the totals vary by characteristic. Based on available data:

- Our workforce is broadly representative of population, except for disability, where disabled people are underrepresented. This does not mean that individual organisations are representative of population, nor that different levels of seniority or areas of business are representative.
- Executive teams aren't representative of staff or population when it comes to sex, age, ethnicity, and marital or civil partnership status. There are proportionately more male, White, older, and married people leading housing associations than at either staff or population level.
- Board members, although missing more data than other groups, are even more male, also middle to older aged and married. Board members are more ethnically diverse than executives.

We cannot look at intersectionality using the tool as there is no way of combining characteristics or categories. This means we do not know how many characteristics associated with experiences of discrimination or inequality are shared by individuals in the workforce (e.g. a female from a Black ethnic group, or a gay male).

Age

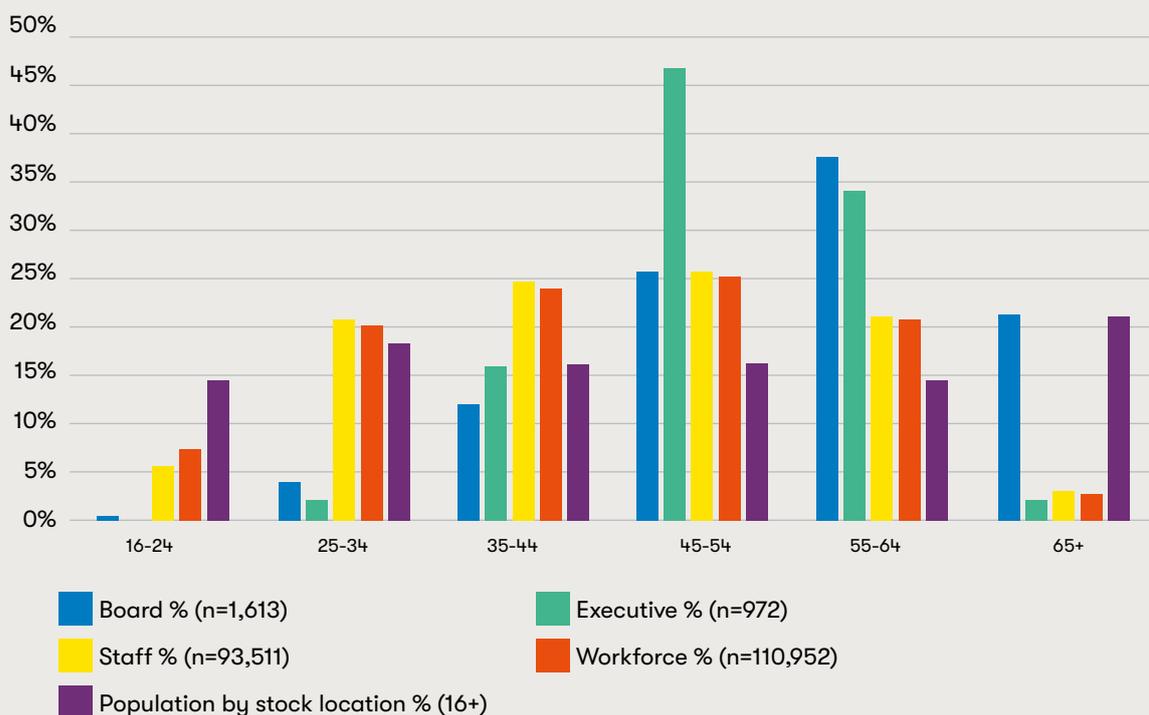
The picture around age is more accurate than for other characteristics. There are very few gaps from missing or elective refusals in the data submitted by organisations. More data is missing at board level (15% unknown) than for other groups. Tables 2 and 3 provide more complete breakdowns.

Available data, shown in Figure 2, suggests that our workforce is more middle-aged than the population it serves, with proportionately fewer people in the 16-24 and 65+ years age brackets. Four in five executives (81%) are aged 45-64 years. Nearly three in five board members are 55 years or over.

For our workforce to be representative of the population it serves, we need to employ more young people aged 16-24 years. Organisations may also wish to consider how to improve representation of younger age groups (aged 44 years or less) within leadership teams and boards. While we are not representative of the oldest age group (aged 65 years or more), this is not surprising given economic inactivity increases with age.⁹

The NHF will monitor change through repeating the data collection exercise in 2023 and supporting the sector, alongside our EDI in Housing group, to make change happen.

Figure 2 Age by group, excluding prefer not to say and don't know



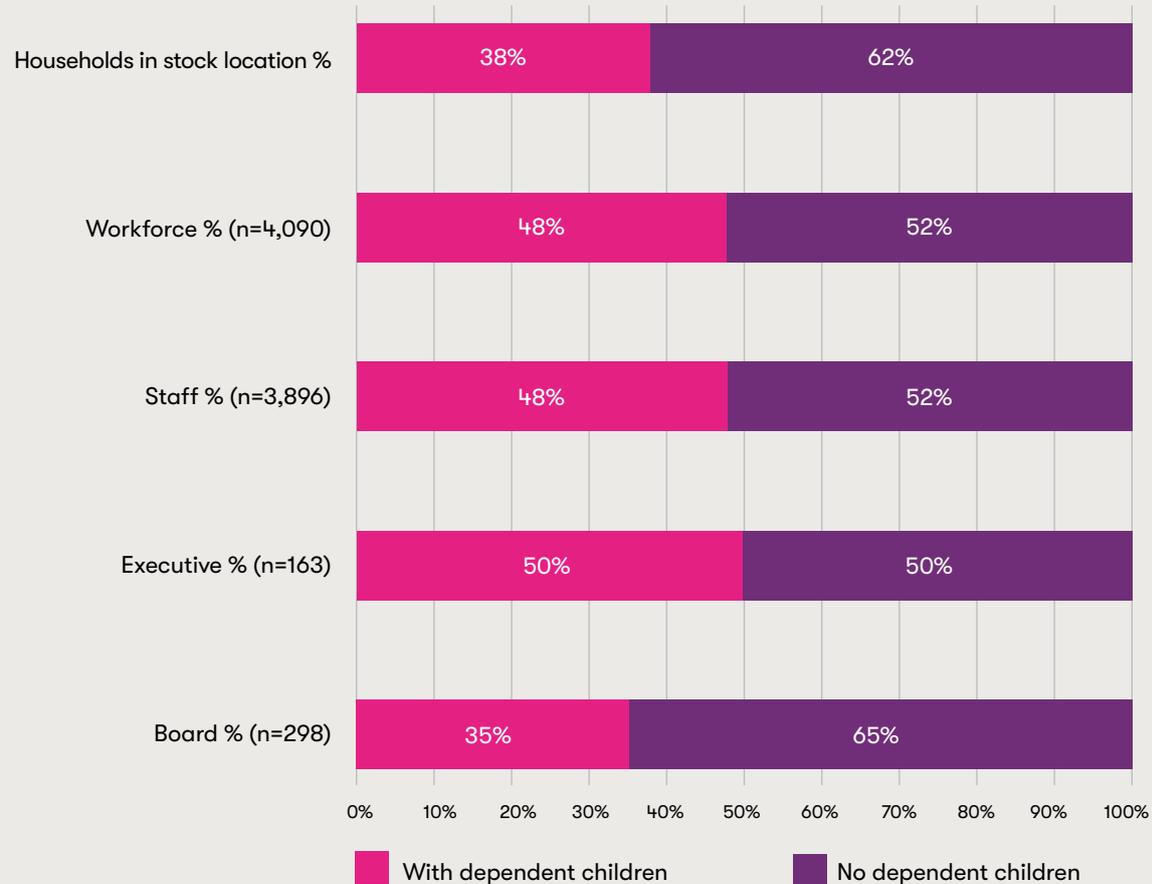
Caring responsibilities – dependent children

There are big gaps in what we know about caring responsibilities for dependent children. We are missing data for much of the workforce, staff, executives, and board members. This means the picture is easily distorted. Based on what we do know, our workforce may be more likely to care for children than at population level. Board members are least likely to have caring responsibilities for dependent children, likely reflecting their older age. Figure 3 shows a breakdown by group.

We need to improve the availability of data on childcare responsibilities before drawing conclusions.

We recommend the sector seeks to understand better who in their workforce and leadership cares for children. Measuring this information ensures the sector can monitor how equal and inclusive it is in terms of parental responsibilities.

Figure 3 Dependent children by group, excluding prefer not to say and don't know



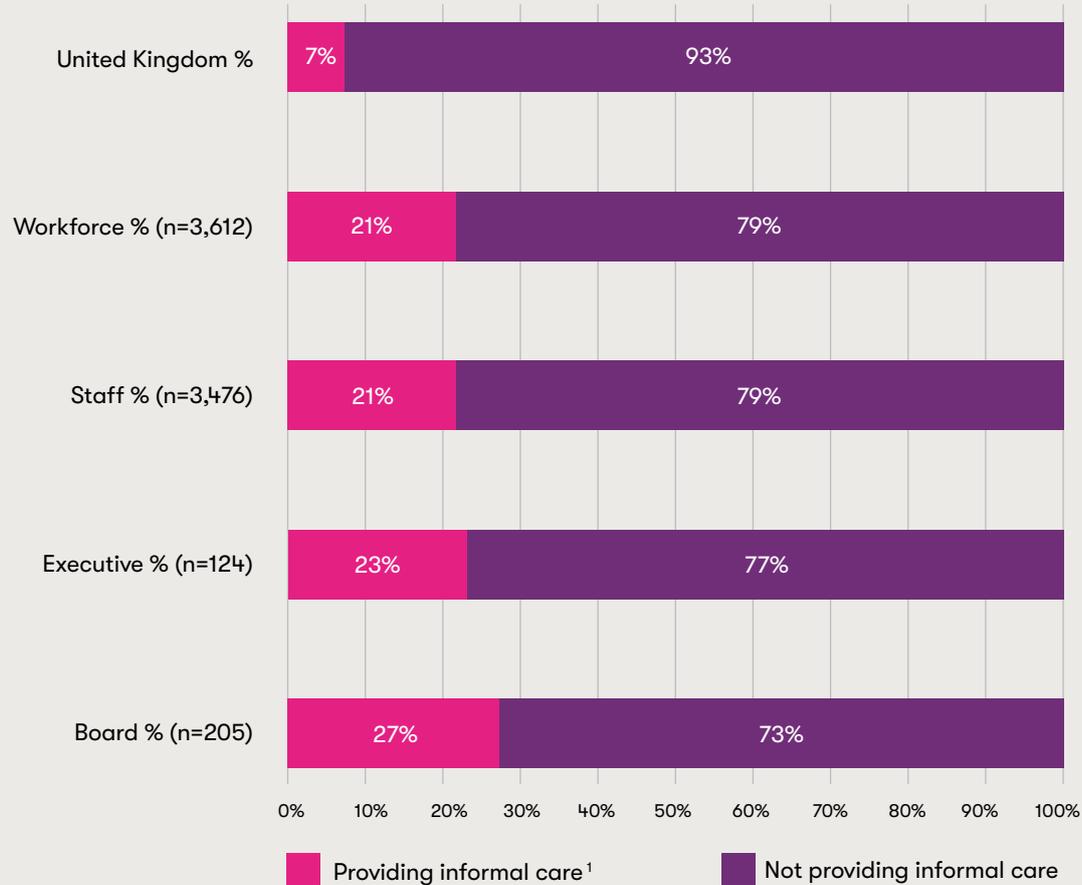
Caring responsibilities – informal care

We are missing data on informal care responsibilities for most of our workforce, staff, executives, and boards. What data is available (which is easily skewed due to small sample sizes) indicates around one in five people in workforce, staff and executives have informal caring responsibilities, higher than 7% of the United Kingdom population. This rises to over one in four board members (27%, n=205). Figure 4 shows the breakdown.

Again, we need to improve data on informal care before drawing conclusions.

We recommend the sector seeks to improve data here, reducing data gaps. This allows us to measure the full scope of equality, diversity, and inclusion.

Figure 4 Informal care provision by group, excluding prefer not to say and don't know



1. Informal care means caring that is not a paid job. This could be for a friend or family member on a voluntary basis.

Disability

While information on disability is more complete than other characteristics, it may be that the true numbers of people with a disability (as defined by the Equality Act 2010) are underreported.

One organisation said they believed their disability data underreported those with a disability as it is collected at the start of employment and not updated. Disability is one example of a characteristic that may change over the course of a person’s lifetime and demonstrates the importance of regularly collecting and updating employee data.

Available data suggests that disabled people are significantly underrepresented across all staff levels and boards when compared to the population. Only 8% of workforce, staff, executives and boards indicate they have a disability compared to 24% of the population. Figure 5 contains more detail.

We recommend that housing associations review and update their data on disability and seek to improve representation at all levels of the organisation. This is particularly important as there are proportionately more disabled people living in social housing than any other tenure.¹⁰

If housing associations are to be reflective of the wider population and their customers then we must work (with external agencies) to identify potential barriers for disabled people in the workplace, including reviewing recruitment processes and practices. The NHF will monitor change through repeating the data collection exercise in 2023, with our EDI in Housing group supporting us to ensure change happens.

Figure 5 Disability by group, excluding prefer not to say and don’t know



10. English Housing Survey 2019/20, AT1.3: Demographic and economic characteristics, 2019-20.

Ethnicity

The sector has a good representation of different ethnicities amongst workforce and staff compared to population; 83% of workforce (100,429 people) and 81% of staff (81,708 people) are White, mirroring the 83% of population by stock location. As with other characteristics, however, representation within individual organisations will differ, including across teams and roles. Our workforce/staff have almost twice the representation of Black ethnic groups and half that of Asian ethnic groups compared to the population in stock location.

There is poor representation of non-White ethnic groups at executive level, with 9.9% (n=923) non-White, compared to 19% of staff (n=81,708). This suggests that even if staff are broadly representative, there is less representation in more senior positions. Boards appear to be more ethnically diverse than any other group, though they also have the biggest data gap, with data missing for one in four board positions, compared to one in 10 staff. This may distort the true picture if those we are missing data for do not reflect proportions in available data. Figure 6 presents headline ethnicity data by group.

Clearly, the sector has work to do to make their executive teams more ethnically diverse and reflective of wider staff and population. The smaller numbers of executives mean that change can be enacted through a smaller number of personnel changes.

We recommend that the sector examines ethnic diversity amongst not just executives, but all senior positions. Diversity at all levels is important for moral and business reasons. We need to ensure that our leadership, and pipeline of future leaders, are accessing all available talent and reflect the communities we serve.

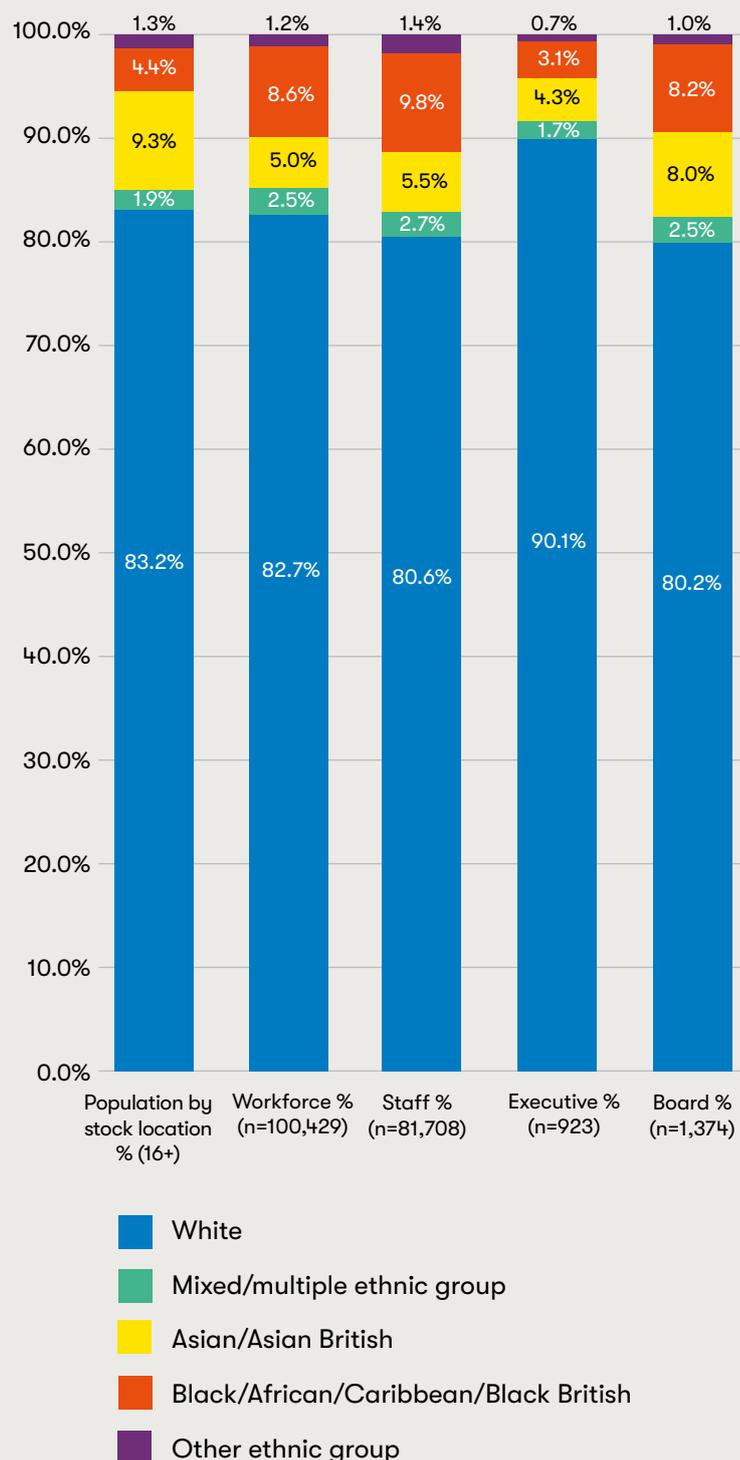
Housing associations should review their workplaces and recruitment practices to identify barriers to progression and recruitment for people from Black, Asian, Mixed and Other ethnic groups. The NHF will monitor change across the sector through repeating the data collection exercise to track progress over time, holding ourselves to account for change. Our EDI in Housing member group will use the data in this report to plan the next steps and ensure we are supporting the sector to make change happen.

Representation will also vary by region, as some regions are more ethnically diverse than others. We have produced regional analysis to investigate this, which we will publish for our members to review and act on.

In London, our regional analysis shows 72% of the population by stock location are in the White ethnic group, lower than the 83% population for the national data, while in the South West, 97% identify as White.

Please note that we have not presented detailed ethnicity as this is not as complete as headline ethnicity (see [Appendix – about the data](#)) and there are some discrepancies in the figures. Detailed ethnicity is available in the EDI data tool showing the complete national picture.

Figure 6 Ethnicity (headline totals) by group, excluding prefer not to say and don't know



Gender identity

Our characteristics and terminology follow the Equality Act 2010 and best practice around data collection from the ONS (see [Appendix A and B](#)). The ONS states that: “In most cases, gender identity collected in the context of social surveys and administrative data is a personal internal perception of oneself. As such, the gender category with which a person identifies may not match the sex they were registered at birth. In contrast, sex collected in the context of social surveys or administrative data sources is usually binary: male or female.”¹¹

The numbers of staff who identify as transgender or other gender identity to sex at birth is very low as a proportion of all staff for whom we have data. We do not have data for around three quarters of the workforce, two thirds of staff and executives, and over three quarters of the board (see Table 2).

As a proportion, where data is known, 0.79% of the workforce identify as trans or other gender identity to sex at birth. We do not know how this compares to the population as there is no national data.

Census 2021 was the first national survey to ask about gender identity, with results yet to be published. The best estimate is that around 1% of the population in Britain identify as trans or non-binary.¹² This suggests our workforce may be underrepresenting those who identify as trans or other gender identity to sex at birth.

Data from 163 organisations indicates there are no staff who identify as trans or other gender identity at either board or executive level. This is likely explained by the low proportion of staff who identify as trans in the workforce (0.79%), with executives accounting for just 1.1% of this workforce.

Table 4 gives a breakdown of gender identity by group, with prefer not to say and don't know removed. There was some double counting for this characteristic, as detailed in [Appendix A](#). We look forward to Census 2021 data being published.

Table 4 Proportion of workforce, staff (workforce excluding executive), executive and board who identify as trans or other gender identity to sex at birth (excluding do not know and prefer not to say)

Gender identity	Board % (n=440)	Executive % (n=330)	Staff % (n=30,467)	Workforce % (n=30,890)	Population by stock location % (16+)
Identify as trans	0.00%	0.00%	0.14%	0.14%	No data
Identify as other gender identity to sex at birth	0.00%	0.00%	0.65%	0.65%	No data
Do not identify as trans or other gender identity to sex at birth	100.00%	100.00%	99.21%	99.21%	No data

11. Source: ONS (undated) Exploring existing data on gender identity and sexual orientation.

12. Stonewall (undated) The truth about trans.

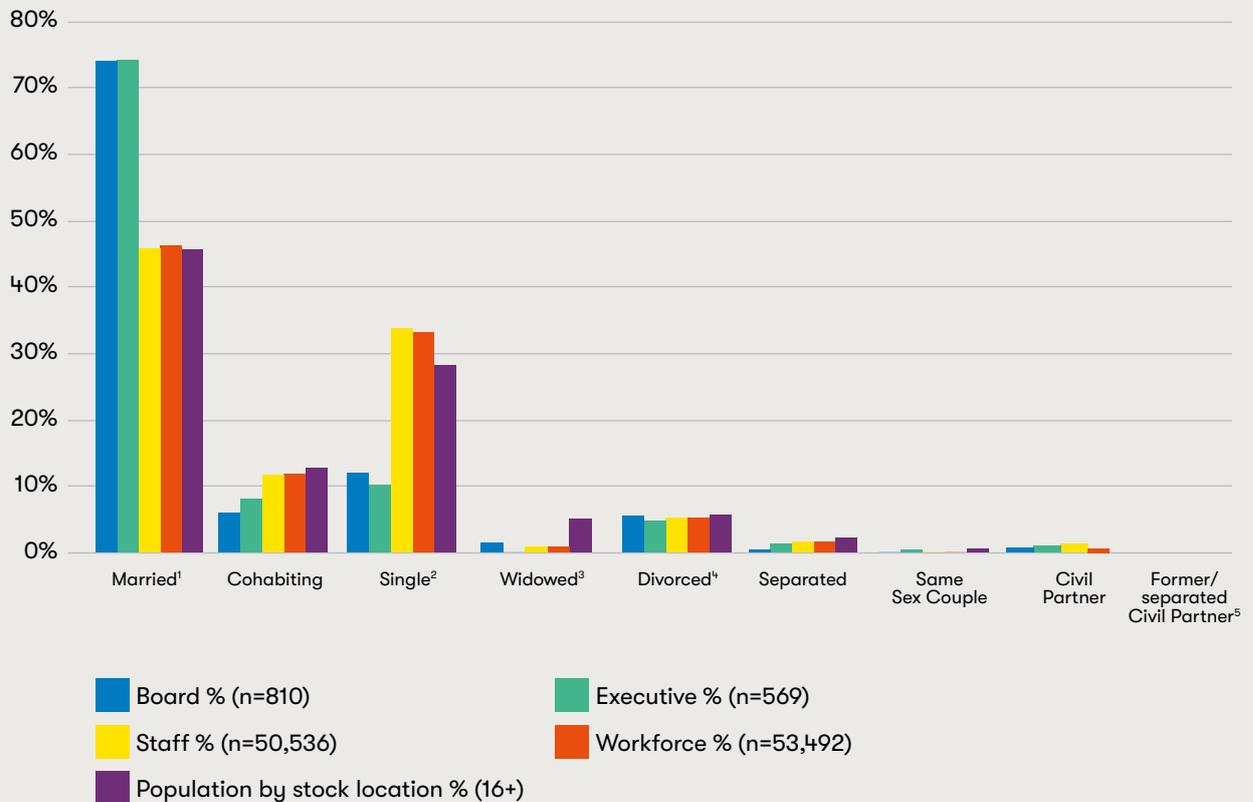
Marital and civil partnership status

Our workforce and staff are broadly representative of population by stock location marital and civil partnership status. There are however, as detailed in Table 2, big gaps in our knowledge here. For known data, shown in Figure 7, the largest group are those who are married, with nearly one in two married. The next largest group are those who are single, representing three in 10 staff/workforce, which is slightly higher than the population, where 28% are single.

Executives and boards are more likely to be married than staff or population, likely a reflection of their older age. Proportionately fewer people within the sector are widowed than the population, likely a reflection of older people being more likely to be widowed and sector staff/workforce being younger. Board members, the oldest of any group, are more likely to be widowed than any other group.

We need to improve data on marital and civil partnership status before drawing too many conclusions. We would expect to see greater representation of single and cohabiting people in senior and board positions if more people from younger age groups held these positions.¹³

Figure 7 Marital and civil partnership status by group, excluding prefer not to say and don't know



1. Married includes those in opposite and same sex marriages.
2. Single, never married or civil partnered.
3. Widowed includes those who are a surviving civil partner.
4. Divorced includes those who have legally dissolved their civil partnerships.
5. Opposite sex civil partnerships were not introduced in England and Wales until December 2019. Due to timing of the annual population survey and sample size, this is likely to be 0.

13. ONS (2020) Population estimates by marital status and living arrangements, England and Wales: 2019.

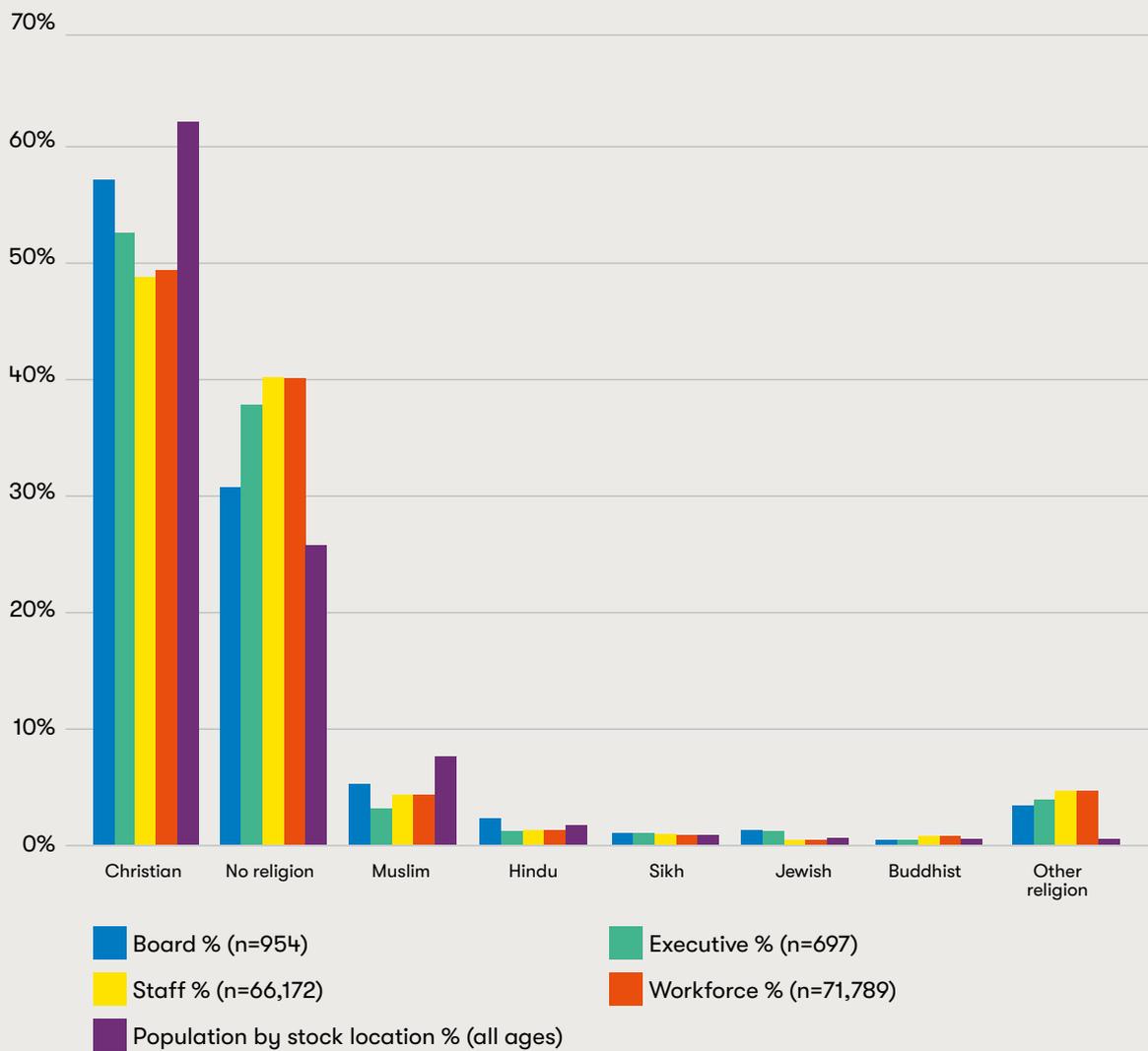
Religion

Figure 8 provides a breakdown of religion by staff/leadership group. It shows that we are proportionately more likely to have no religion within our workforce, staff and executives than at population level. Our board members, however, are more likely to have a religion (mainly Christian or Muslim). As with other characteristics, more data is missing for board members than for other groups, which means results may not reflect the true picture.

Population data comes from Census 2011. As this data is 10 years old, the ONS have explored current estimates of religion in England. This indicates a decline for the Christian group and higher proportions for other groups, particularly Muslim and no religion.¹⁴ This would mean workforce, staff and executives are broadly representative.

The sector should work to improve data gaps for religion and explore why proportionately more staff are choosing not to share this information. We look forward to Census 2021 data being published, to enable more accurate comparison.

Figure 8 Religion by group, excluding prefer not to say and don't know



14. ONS (2020) Exploring religion in England and Wales: February 2020.

Sex

Sex data is accurate for all groups of our staff and governance, with very little data missing or not provided (see Tables 2 and 3). We can see from the data in Figure 9 that **the housing association workforce is more female than the population by stock location, with 57% of positions filled by females compared to 51% of females in the population.**

When it comes to leadership, however, the number of females in the top jobs falls.

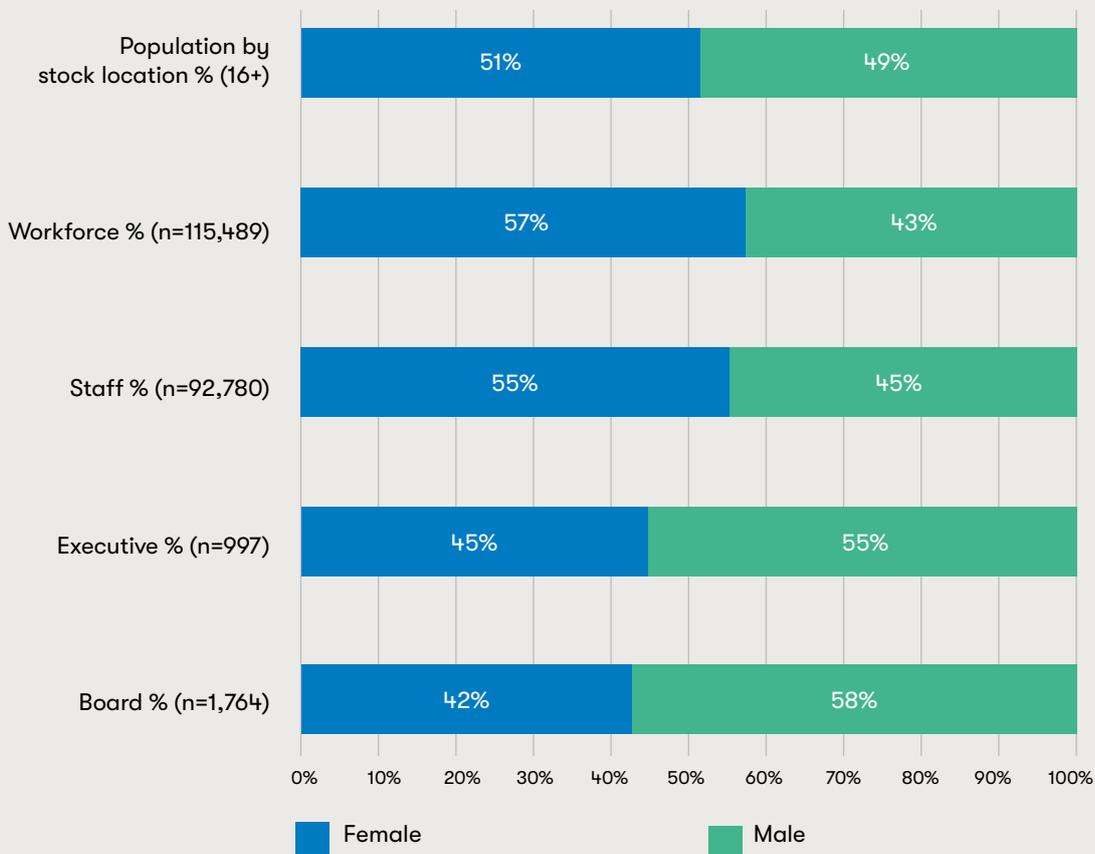
At the executive and board level respectively only 45% and 42% of positions are taken by females.

If we are to be representative of those living in social housing, we would expect more females in the workforce and leadership. There are proportionately more single mothers and single female households in housing association homes than in the general population. When we have more complete customer data, we may be able to compare how representative our workforce and leadership is to the people we serve, not just the wider population.

We recommend that housing associations review their recruitment and other practices to ensure better representation of females within their executive teams and boards. Organisations may also wish to view their diversity data by teams or level of responsibility to ensure that there is good representation within all levels and areas of the organisation.

The NHF will monitor change through repeating the data collection exercise in 2023. Our EDI in Housing member group will help us to plan the next steps and ensure we are supporting the sector to make change happen.

Figure 9 Sex by group, excluding prefer not to say and don't know



Sexual orientation

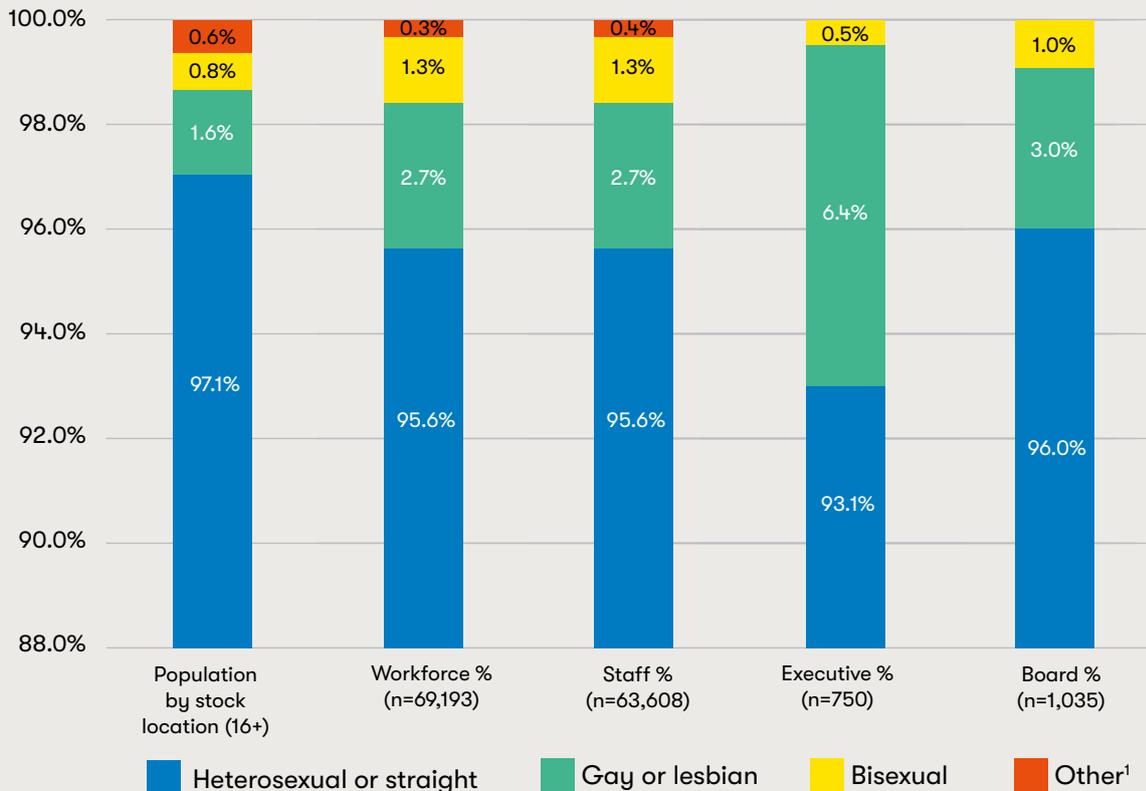
“Sexual orientation” is an umbrella term that encompasses sexual identity, attraction and behaviour. The Annual Population Survey question, which informs national statistics and is where our population data comes from, is designed to capture sexual identity. This is because the ONS has identified that sexual identity is the component of sexual orientation most closely related to experiences of disadvantage and discrimination. Sexual identity does not necessarily reflect sexual attraction and/or sexual behaviour and may change over time.¹⁵

Our workforce and staff are slightly more likely to be gay, lesbian, or bisexual when compared to the population. There is overrepresentation of gay and lesbian people at executive level compared to staff. This greater representation could be due to fewer data gaps for executives. This shows the importance of engaging with staff to understand why they don’t disclose and how to increase voluntarily sharing of EDI data.

Greater proportions of gay, lesbian, or bisexual people may be more representative of true population figures. Questions on sexual orientation are voluntary in population surveys. The proportion of people choosing not to answer this question rose from 2018 to 2019; this may distort results if people who chose not to identify are more likely to be drawn from the same group in the population.¹⁶ Existing research into behavioural barriers to disclosure of sexual orientation indicates that both LGB+ and non-LGB+ applicants may believe that disclosure could harm their chances of selection in the recruitment process.¹⁷

Figure 10 gives the full picture, excluding don’t know and prefer not to say. The sector should investigate what prevents people from declaring their sexual orientation and work to address data gaps.

Figure 10 Sexual orientation by group, excluding prefer not to say and don’t know – note the axis starts at 88%, which exaggerates the small percentage differences in gay, lesbian, bisexual, and other sexual identity.



1. ‘Other’ means that the respondent did not consider themselves to fit into the heterosexual or straight, bisexual, gay or lesbian categories.

15. Source: ONS (2021) Sexual orientation, UK: 2019.

16. ONS (2021) Sexual orientation, UK: 2019.

17. Behavioural Insights Team (2021) Encouraging sexual orientation disclosure in recruitment.

Socio-economic background

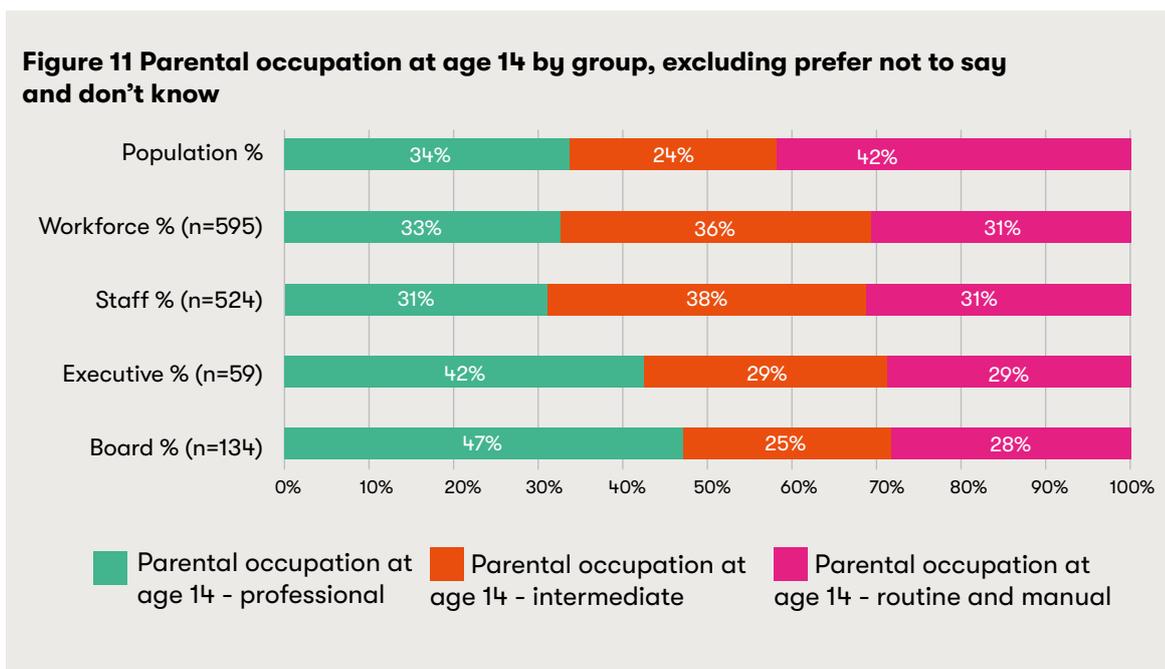
The three measures of socio-economic background are as recommended by the Social Mobility Commission.¹⁸ We believe they are important as they can show how some inequalities and discrimination intersect, while also showing diversity of workforce in terms of socio-economic background. Socio-economic background feels particularly important given the lower income of people living in social housing.

The breakdown of results for all three characteristics below (parental occupation at age 14, attendance of independent school, free school meal eligibility) is based on what we do know. There are big gaps for all three aspects; we are missing data for much of the workforce, staff, executive, and board. The low sample sizes easily distort the true picture.

We need better data before drawing any conclusions on representation. Our focus should be on rectifying data gaps before examining representation.

Socio-economic background – parental occupation at aged 14

Figure 11 sets out data on parental occupation by group. It indicates that our staff and workforce are representative of population, while executives and boards are more likely to be raised in a professional background.

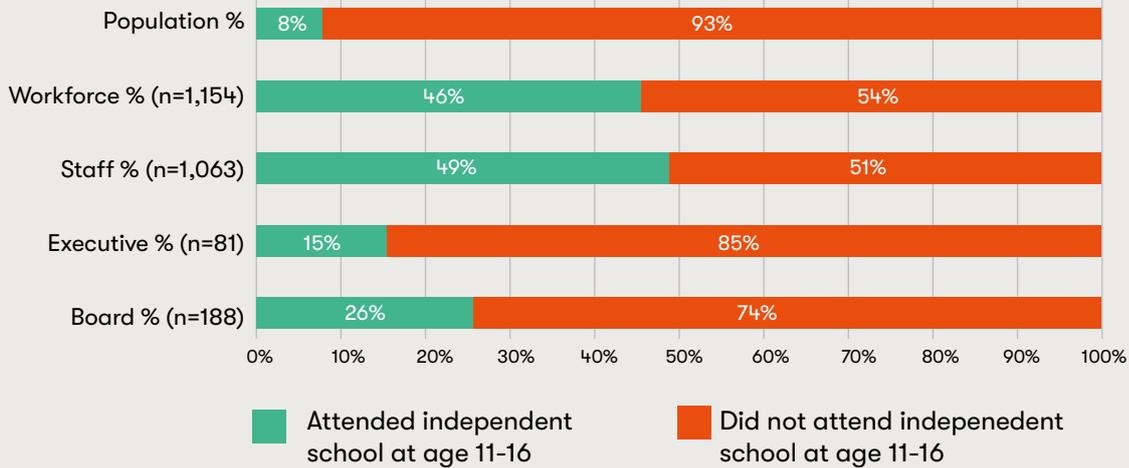


18. Social Mobility Commission (2020) Understanding a workforce's socio-economic background for change.

Socio-economic background – independent school

Data on attendance at independent (fee paying) school, shown in Figure 12, indicates our workforce and staff are considerably more likely to have attended independent school than the population. Known numbers are small, however, when compared to overall group size. Boards are less likely to be staffed by people who went to independent school, with executive level least likely.

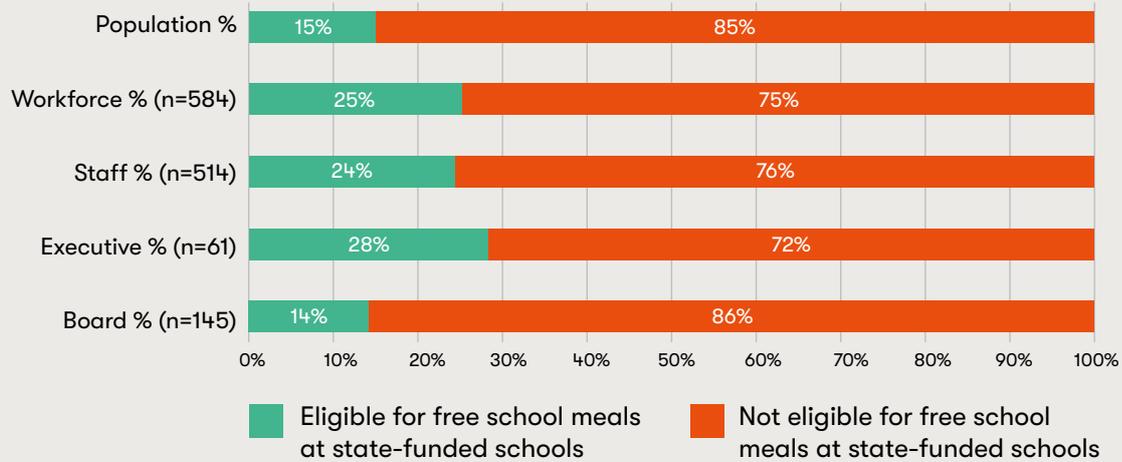
Figure 12 Attendance at independent school by group, excluding prefer not to say and don't know



Socio-economic background – free school meal eligibility

Again, the sample size is small here, but Figure 13 suggests that, where we do know free school meal eligibility, our staff, workforce, and executives are more likely to have been eligible than the population as a whole. This falls for boards, however, where 14% (n=145) were eligible compared to 15% of the population.

Figure 13 Free school meal eligibility by group, excluding prefer not to say and don't know



Conclusion

Housing associations have taken a vital first step to better understanding diversity within the sector. The results of our first ever national picture on diversity of the sector's workforce and leadership show where our biggest information gaps are, how representative we are as a sector, and how far we must go to ensure our workforce and leadership are as diverse as the population we serve.

We have some big gaps in our knowledge when it comes to many characteristics. While sex and age are broadly accurate, with data for at least 85% of any group (workforce, staff, executives and boards), we cannot be certain about socio-economic background, caring responsibilities, and gender identity due to most data being unknown. There are also large gaps for marital status, religion, and sexual orientation.

People are also proportionately more likely to prefer not to share their religion or sexual orientation. There are several potential reasons for this, which organisations should investigate to improve voluntary data sharing and understand whether there are issues around inclusion.

From what we do know about our sector, our workforce is more diverse (and representative of population) than its leadership. We need more ethnic diversity at executive level, and more examination of ethnic diversity amongst senior management positions. The data also shows us that we need more female leaders within the sector, in both executive and board positions. Our national data cannot tell us about any diversity amongst senior managers, but the ethnicity and sex results for executives indicate we may not be as representative as we should be at different levels of organisations.

The data indicates a particular issue, at all levels, when it comes to representation of disabled people. Available data suggests that only 8% of workforce, staff, executives and board members identify as disabled, compared to 24% of the population. We must investigate any barriers to disabled people in the workplace and recruitment through talking to staff, applicants, and external experts. When it comes to age, we need more people aged 16-24 and 65+ in our workforce, and to consider how to improve representation of younger people (aged 44 years or less) at executive and board level.

The data within this report comes from 174 organisations, with executive, staff and board data from 163 organisations. It presents a composite picture of diversity within these organisations in comparison to population by stock location. This research did not look at representation in individual organisations, which remains an important issue for each housing association. We recommend our membership examine their own diversity data, alongside this national report, and consider whether they are as representative as they could be across staff, management, and leadership. People's situations and identities can change over time; organisations must update EDI data at regular intervals to ensure characteristics show the current picture. Housing associations should routinely update their employee and board data, setting themselves targets around representation and data coverage. They should review their EDI data at least annually to track progress and take targeted action to address any issues.

We would like to thank all the housing associations who took part in this research. By being open and honest with their data, they have allowed us to see exactly where we are as a sector on equality, diversity, and inclusion. This data provides a baseline from which to measure progress on our journey to becoming a truly equal, diverse, and inclusive sector.

Recommendations

The data within this report has set out the scale of the challenge before us, but now we can see where we are currently, and better understand how to get to where we want to be.

Data is critical to progressing equality, diversity, and inclusion. By being transparent and accountable, we show how serious we are about representing the communities we serve, building greater trust, and unlocking the benefits of a diverse sector. We must act on the findings of this report.

Based on our findings, our recommendations are that housing associations in England should:

- **Engage:** talk to their workforce, boards and stakeholders to scrutinise recruitment practices and understand attitudes and behaviours around EDI culture within the organisation, with the intention of better understanding inclusion in the workplace and improving data accuracy through more voluntary data sharing.
- **Measure:** use the NHF's EDI data tool (or internal EDI data) to review representation amongst staff, management, and leadership (including boards) within their organisation and any departments. Housing associations should set targets for the organisation (and, for large employers, departments) around representation, based on the communities they serve. They should routinely update EDI data, and then review this data (at least annually) to track progress. We encourage housing associations to be open with their progress.
- **Act:** use data to inform EDI strategies and action plans, using targeted action to make progress towards becoming truly equal, diverse, and inclusive across all levels and teams within the organisation. The NHF highlights examples of good practice on our website. We encourage housing association members to share effective actions or strategies with us.

The NHF will continue to update and improve the EDI data tool and repeat the national data collection exercise in 2023. We will work with the sector to create change, and our ambition is that the 2023 data analysis will show improved EDI in our sector, particularly:

- Better representation of disabled people amongst workforce and leadership.
- More females in executive positions.
- Greater ethnic diversity amongst executives.
- More young people (aged 16-24 years) in our workforce and potentially younger age groups (aged 44 years or less) within leadership teams and boards.
- Improved data coverage through less unknown or undeclared data across all characteristics and groups. We would particularly like to see better data at board level.

Next steps

This national picture has provided an important baseline from which to measure change. We will not be repeating this data exercise until 2023 at the earliest. This gives time to see the impact of the sector's work on equality, diversity, and inclusion and for improvements in data gaps.

If this exercise provides more complete customer data, then we may be able to compare how representative our workforce and leadership is to the people we serve, not just the wider population.

We will also publish regional breakdowns of the data for housing associations to review and act on, given regional variations for some characteristics.

The NHF's data tool will be updated to include Census 2021 data by local authority when this becomes available. When this is released, we will also include the latest stock information from the Regulator of Social Housing (the private registered provider stock).

The tool will continue to be available from the NHF's website; we encourage members to regularly review and update their EDI data, including setting diversity and data improvement targets for their organisation.

We are very keen to hear how our members are using the EDI data tool, more about their EDI strategies and improving their data, and the impact that these strategies are having (particularly where EDI data is showing the impact.)

Appendix A: About the data

Overarching considerations

We made every effort to ensure that each organisation's EDI data is comparable; however, there are some points to note in terms of the data and analysis presented:

- We did not ask organisations to submit their data as at a certain date. This means that the data represents different time points for different organisations. It is also highly likely that it is already out of date, given turnover in staff.
- Where there are data gaps, some of these (particularly marital and civil partnership status) are due to categories in the tool not matching categories in information collected by housing associations.
- For some organisations, social housing is one part of a larger business, which might include (non-residential) support and care or non-social housing. Where possible, organisations separated staff responsible for housing from wider employee data.
- No customer data is included – there were too many gaps within customer data, and the focus was on the housing association workforce, so we have not looked at this.

Characteristics

We developed the tool to help housing associations understand diversity within their organisations. It is designed to be user-friendly, follow best/national practice from ONS tested questions and categories, and flexible enough to accommodate individual preference without being cumbersome to use through multiple categories for each characteristic.

This does not mean we think people can be put into boxes.

The tool cannot cover the multitude of ways that people define themselves. It is not a replacement for talking to staff and understanding their views of themselves and equality, diversity, and inclusion within organisations.

We would like to draw attention to the following known limitations in terms of the data presented.

Gender identity

The language around gender identity is evolving. The way gender identity is captured in the tool is based on ONS definitions and best practice – sex (medical sex or sex at birth) is a separate characteristic to gender identity. Under the Equality Act 2010, sex and gender reassignment are two separate protected characteristics. We were concerned that blurring gender and sex masked people who identified as a different gender to their sex at birth.

We made some changes to the tool in July to reflect the above. Some organisations who submitted data used an older version of the tool that did not so clearly distinguish between sex and gender identity. While we checked with organisations, this has led to some double counting: eight people have been double counted in the workforce data on gender identity.

Marital and civil partnership status

Marital and civil partnership status is one characteristic where multiple categories are available at a population level to enable comparison. Some of these categories, however, do not match the categories recorded by organisations. As such, the 'don't know' figure is higher than reality. We know this affects data from at least three organisations, with a cumulative workforce total of 1,494.



Ethnicity

Headline ethnicity, calculated from grouping more detailed ethnicity categories, provides a more complete picture on ethnicity of workforce, executives and boards than detailed ethnicity. Many housing associations who provided a headline breakdown of ethnic groups could not provide a more detailed picture. There were also some differences in the way organisations had collected detailed ethnicity, meaning they were not directly comparable to headline. This means that detailed ethnicity cannot be used to calculate headline ethnicity. As a result, we have not presented detailed ethnicity data in this report, though it is available in the accompanying data tool showing the national picture.

Staff groups

Executive figures

We did not define executive, but would expect it to include chief executives, managing directors and any other senior leaders. Four organisations said they included their senior management in executive figures.

We do not have separate executive data for 11 organisations. To compare like with like, we removed the executive and workforce (all staff, including executive) figures for these 11 organisations when analysing the staff (workforce excluding executive) and executive data. This removed 21,657 staff from the workforce and 56 executives.

Two organisations told us that they have a flat structure, with their entire staff team also being the executive. This affects four employees and effectively means that the data for staff of these organisations is not included when looking at executives.

Board figures

Three organisations told us that their executives are part of their boards. Five people within the board figures are also included in the executive and workforce figures.

Three organisations told us that their board figures included all their committees. We suspect that this is true for a total of 14 organisations, whose total board each include 20 or more people.

Population

Population data is generally for over 16 years of age, unless otherwise indicated. Proportions are calculated from stock by local authority.

Stock data is as submitted by participating housing associations. As mentioned, some organisations provide registered provider social housing alongside other forms of housing, such as private rented, student, or council housing. As such, the stock figures include some non-registered provider stock as this was relevant to creating a picture of population by stock location for comparing to workforce.

Population data shown in this report is based on stock data for all 174 organisations. Population data for stock from the 174 organisations and that of stock data for 163 organisations who provided workforce and separate executive figures varied across characteristics from -0.21% to +0.65%, with median variance of -0.01%. The population data in the executive tab of the tool published alongside this report is for the 163 organisations.

For further notes on comparison data sources, see the 'Notes' tab of the completed EDI tool that accompanies this report.



Appendix B: Building a staff profile for your work on equality, diversity and inclusion

Suggested questions to support completing the EDI data tool

December 2021

Summary

These suggested questions have been developed for housing associations to use with their staff, board or customers to support completion of the National Housing Federation's equality, diversity, and inclusion data tool. They are based on questions used by the Office for National Statistics and Social Mobility Commission.

By surveying staff with these questions, you will have the information needed to complete the tool and compare how representative your workforce is of the community served. Except for the question on 'position in organisation', they should not be changed or adapted as otherwise data collected will not be comparable to population data.

These questions are not a requirement. If you already have this information, then you will not need to survey your staff.



Suggested questions

Position in organisation

In terms of your role in the organisation, are you?
Please select one.

- A board member
- A member of the leadership team
- A staff member (not on the leadership team)

Note for organisations: this question can be adapted to include more detailed breakdown of roles or teams within your organisation to enable more detailed analysis of EDI within different levels or teams of the organisation.

Sex

Which one of the following best describes your sex? This should be your sex as described on your birth certificate or gender recognition certificate.

- Female
- Male
- I prefer not to say

Gender identity

Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth?

- Yes
- No
- I prefer not to say

If no, please share your preferred gender identity:

Age

How old are you?

- 16-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65+

Ethnicity

To which of these ethnic groups do you feel you belong? These categories have been taken from the 2011 Census.

- White
- Black
- Mixed
- Asian
- Other ethnic group
- I prefer not to say

[If select White] Please specify:

- English
- Scottish
- Welsh
- Northern Irish
- Irish
- Gypsy/Roma
- Irish Traveller
- Other - Write In:

[If select Black] Please specify:

- Caribbean
- African
- Other - Write In:

[If select Mixed] Please specify:

- White and Black Caribbean
- White and Black African
- White and Asian
- Other - Write In:

[If select Asian] Please specify:

- Indian
- Pakistani
- Bangladeshi
- Chinese
- Other - Write In:

[If select Other ethnic group] Please specify:

- Arab
- Other - Write In:

Socio-economic background

What was the occupation of your main household earner when you were aged about 14?

- Modern professional & traditional professional occupations such as: teacher, nurse, physiotherapist, social worker, musician, police officer (sergeant or above), software designer, accountant, solicitor, medical practitioner, scientist, civil / mechanical engineer.
- Senior, middle or junior managers or administrators such as: finance manager, chief executive, large business owner, office manager, retail manager, bank manager, restaurant manager, warehouse manager.
- Clerical and intermediate occupations such as: secretary, personal assistant, call centre agent, clerical worker, nursery nurse.
- Technical and craft occupations such as: motor mechanic, plumber, printer, electrician, gardener, train driver.
- Routine, semi-routine manual and service occupations such as: postal worker, machine operative, security guard, caretaker, farm worker, catering assistant, sales assistant, HGV driver, cleaner, porter, packer, labourer, waiter/ waitress, bar staff.
- Long-term unemployed (claimed Jobseeker's Allowance or earlier unemployment benefit for more than a year).

- Small business owners who employed less than 25 people such as: corner shop owners, small plumbing companies, retail shop owner, single restaurant or cafe owner, taxi owner, garage owner.
- Other such as: retired, this question does not apply to me, I don't know
- I prefer not to say

Which type of school did you attend for the most time between the ages of 11 and 16?

- A state-run or state-funded school
- Independent or fee-paying school
- Independent or fee-paying school, where I received a bursary covering 90% or more of my tuition
- Attended school outside the UK
- I don't know
- I prefer not to say

If you finished school after 1980, were you eligible for free school meals at any point during your school years?

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable (finished school before 1980 or went to school overseas)
- I don't know
- I prefer not to say

Disability

Under the Equality Act 2010, a person is considered to have a disability if they have a self-reported long-standing illness, condition or impairment, which causes difficulty with day-to-day activities. Do you consider yourself to be disabled as set out in the Equality Act 2010?

- Yes
- No
- I prefer not to say

Religion

Do you regard yourself as belonging to any particular religion or belief?

- Yes
- No
- I prefer not to say

[If select yes to religion] Which of the following applies to you?

- Christian
- Hindu
- Muslim
- Buddhist
- Jewish
- Sikh
- Any other religion, please specify:

Sexual orientation

This question is about your sexual orientation. Do you identify as:

- Straight/Heterosexual
- Gay or lesbian
- Bisexual
- Other sexual orientation
- I prefer not to say

Caring responsibilities

Do you have children under the age of 18 years in full-time education who live with you at least part of the time? This could include biological children, adopted children or stepchildren. It does not include children aged 16 to 18 years who have a spouse, partner or their own child living in the household.

- Yes
- No
- I prefer not to say

Do you look after, or give any help or physical support to, anyone because they have long-term physical or mental health conditions or illnesses, or problems related to old age? Do not include paid employment.

- Yes
- No
- I prefer not to say

Marital status

Are you...

- Single, that is never married
- Married and living with your husband/wife
- A civil partner in a legally-recognised Civil Partnership
- Married and separated from your husband/wife
- Divorced
- Widowed
- In a legally-recognised Civil Partnership and separated from your civil partner
- Formerly a civil partner, the Civil Partnership now legally dissolved
- Living with someone as a couple

If living with someone as a couple, is this person

- The same sex as you
- A different sex

