

Our road to inclusion

Public sector equality duty annual progress report

April 2016 – March 2017





Highways England – Our road to inclusion

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Putting inclusion at the heart of what we do

Jim O'Sullivan CEO Highways England

"For me, diversity and inclusion go way beyond the protected characteristics as laid out in UK law. Every person is an individual. We have some characteristics that cause us to feel that we fit in and feel as if we belong, and other characteristics that make us feel different to our colleagues or within our community environment. Where we feel different it can cause us to feel uncertain and not appreciated. For me that's not right.

"In Highways England and through the services we provide, I want everyone to be respected. Differences should not impact on that respect. Considering different characteristics and views may bring something to the discussion and will lead the company to making better decisions. Research suggests diverse groups make better decisions than homogenous ones. From my previous roles I know that diverse groups of front line staff provide a broader perspective on how good customer service should be provided. And this is true at Highways England. Let's all make sure that everyone contributes to the company's success and that includes satisfying our diverse range of customers."



Introduction

David Poole Highways England Executive Director and Exec lead for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Why we are doing this?

"Highways England is a maturing organisation that is growing and developing to meet the investment and performance plans set out in the Road Investment Strategy (RIS). Last year our Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) report focused on us developing as a new business and progressing equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) activity. This year, as the business grows we have made significant change and progress. The business has focused on our three imperatives of Safety, Customer Service and Delivery of the RIS, in addition to this we have developed three work streams tasked with driving our inclusion agenda. Each of these has a firm plan, established teams and is achieving tangible traction.

"This report contains examples of EDI work that we and our partners have undertaken to drive this agenda to establish real difference in our sector and to meet our PSED. Across our sector there are a growing number of examples of change delivered, good practice shared and collaborative working. However, in making this progress it is clear that the opportunities and challenges remain significant. Real and meaningful impact will require many small changes in multiple places. This sustained and determined programme of change will need to touch all areas.

"Looking forward, the challenge will be to deliver the continued and determined effort that is necessary to shift the sector as a whole. The growth in investment, the need to engage with our customers and communities, and attract more and diverse talent provides the ideal platform. We are fully committed to working with our partners to deliver this necessary change."

How are we achieving this aim?

“At Highways England we are taking active measures to weave EDI throughout all we do. As a public body we have to meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and to publish our objectives that support meeting our duty. In 2016 we reviewed these objectives. Our PSED overarching objective for 2016 – 2020 is that Highways England ‘will embed the principles of EDI in to all areas of our business, driving real change in how we work with our customers and communities, our supply chain and our employees’. We cannot achieve this alone. We need to work collaboratively with partners so that our workplaces are inclusive and the strategic road network is accessible and integrated for both our users and communities living alongside the network.

Work is advancing under three broad themes relating to:

- Customers and communities
- Supply chain
- Employment.

“Each aim has a leader in the business that is driving action through a working group and a set of objectives spanning 2016 to 2020. In line with our overarching vision, each objective seeks to embed the principle of EDI into all areas of our business. The table below sets out the ambition and objective for each area.

Customer and communities objective	Ambition	To put people at the heart of what we do by understanding and considering different needs of customers and communities in delivering services.
Led by Mel Clarke	Objective	We will achieve this by consulting with our customers and neighbouring communities to ensure we understand and consider their diverse needs.
Supply chain objective	Ambition	To lead improvements in how all parts of society view and experience the highways sector.
Led by David Poole	Objective	By 2020 all our key suppliers will have improved their StART scores by 15%. (StART is an assessment and alignment tool used by Highways England for certain high-value contracts. It outlines EDI expectations and how performance is measured in relation to decisions impacting on customer and communities and in creating a diverse workforce). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The assessment was designed not only to act as a differentiator in selection, but also as a supplier development tool ■ StART is designed to ensure that our suppliers’ capabilities are adequately aligned to the Highways England objectives and strategy ■ Strategic alignment is more significant in demanding times and times of change - focus on key strategic issues to drive results ■ Our aim is to ensure that suppliers can demonstrate commitment to and achievement of effective performance at organisational and operational levels
Employment objective	Ambition	To become a high performing organisation with an engaged, modernised and innovative workforce.
Led by San Johal	Objective	We will create a more diverse workforce that is managed developed and led in an inclusive manner.

This report provides examples from 2016/17 showing how we are working towards achieving this vision with reflections from the leaders, customers and staff involved.”



A focus on customers

Mel Clarke – reflections on the year

‘We must ensure that our Strategic Road Network works for all the people that use it and I am proud of the good progress we have made this year in increasing awareness about EDI, and engaging with our customers and the communities impacted by our work.

“There has been a concerted effort to introduce tools to help decision makers think about EDI as a key aspect of their job. We have also met with a variety of our customers and communities to better understand their needs and to help shape our future direction. A pilot exercise is taking place involving Major Project schemes in the North to focus on how we consider design in relation to disability and accessibility. This will generate ideas and lessons that can be applied across the whole strategic road network. We are not complacent and appreciate that there remains much to do, so our emphasis for 2017 and beyond is to build on the good work achieved to date, embed EDI into everything we do, and to work in tandem with our partners and stakeholders to achieve positive outcomes for customers and communities.

“Our ultimate aim is to make a positive social difference and to provide our staff and supply chain with effective tools and processes to achieve this.”

The National Road Users Satisfaction Survey

The National Road Users; Satisfaction Survey (NRUSS) enables Highways England to understand the satisfaction levels of users of the Strategic Road Network (SRN). An annual report is produced which covers respondents' general travel patterns, their use of the network and their experiences and satisfaction with elements of their most recent trip on the network.

The latest NRUSS revealed no discriminatory factors against the categories covered which are age, gender, disability and ethnicity. The overall satisfaction rating for 2016/17 was 89.1%.

However, as with other research we found that groups who infrequently use motorways feel less confident. So we used this information to:

- Ensure all our public consultation programmes for major projects take account of the needs of non-motorised users.

In the period to 2020 our network will change. We're going to be completing or starting work on over 400 lane miles of extra capacity on our busiest motorways as part of the Smart Motorway Programme. That is in addition to the 230 miles of Smart Motorway already in operation on motorways including the M1, M25 and M6.

As the Smart Motorway network grows, we're doing more to communicate to drivers about what they will see when they use our roads, including the new signs and signals and the use of emergency refuge areas if they encounter any problems. We also use citizen space which is a website that enables people to engage as part of road scheme consultation exercises.

Our customer panel

Our customer panel is an online community portal which is administered by one of the UK's leading market research agencies, Ipsos MORI. By engaging directly with road users in this way we can quickly assess customer awareness, perceptions and sentiment and gain important insight into projects which will help us determine and shape future Highways England key priorities.

Whilst all panel requests have a diversity element, some additional projects were undertaken to consider the needs of customers with protected characteristics or impairments.

For instance the panel helped us to:

- Update the traffic officers' manual in a way that appreciates how different people wish to be addressed. This in turn led to a new instruction on customer safety and how to help different groups (including people with impairment) when travelling, dealing with a break down or involved in a network incident.
- Consider communication options during long delays. The use of a public address system was considered as a possible measure. However, the majority of respondents informed us that they did not expect this sort of communication and highlighted several perceived limitations for people with impairments.
- Introduce a new engagement model called RETRO. (This relates to relevance, engaging consistently, avoidance of a tick-box approach, readability and using on-line platforms).



Pilots to help us consider customers and communities

Disability in construction

A disability working group has been established to put forward a case for a series of awareness workshops to enhance capability in relation to major project schemes going forward in the North. The approach seeks to formalise a programme of activity based on the success of a learning event previously delivered on the A63 scheme in Hull. The approach in Hull involved members of the local accessibility group, an external accessibility advisor, consultants, project managers and designers coming together to share experiences and gain a deeper understanding of how design elements can impact on people.

In November 2016 project managers, consultants and contractors attended a further event. This focused on identifying consistent EDI project material to support consultation and engagement with disabled people as part of a toolkit being piloted.

Project Manager Claire Minett, said:

“We wanted to examine how we approach consultation with disabled people at the moment and what would help us to improve. The findings from the day will inform work that we are carrying out to develop a toolkit of measures to capture best practice and help us understand and communicate accessibility requirements better.”

Tony Scutt of Costain is a member of the steering group, and the Supplier Diversity Forum, said:

“This was a great opportunity to bring together internal project managers and supply chain partners. There was genuine interest in the room and a desire to engage with people with disabilities in the best possible ways.”

Benchmarking community engagement

We have developed a set of community engagement benchmarks that will enable the communications managers involved in our schemes and operations to assess performance against key indicators. EDI requirements are integrated throughout these benchmarks, with a dedicated ‘inclusivity’ benchmark to:

- Assess how well the diversity of local communities and interests are reflected at all levels of engagement.
- Check that equality impact assessments have been completed and, where necessary, put measures in place to respond to the diverse needs of our communities.
- Ensure that the value of community projects and those involved as volunteers are recognised.

Tools and mechanisms to help us consider customers and communities

The little guide to a big issue

We have produced a 'one-stop' guidance document called *'The little guide to a big issue'* which can be tailored to the decision making processes relevant to each directorate. It was successfully piloted within Major Projects to build up EDI capability among those involved in project management, community and customer consultation, design and construction in relation to road schemes.

An accompanying quiz helps teams test their EDI understanding. It can be used to induct new colleagues and to work collaboratively with our supply chain partners, many of whom are now using it in their own workshops.



Sharon Moore Major Projects EDI Advocate said:

"It's been publicised internally and incorporated into Major Projects Project Control Framework. The genuine interest from our staff and our supply chain partners has been encouraging."

Project Manager Andrew Clarke said:

"The presentation was very useful and so I requested a session with the A303 project team via our 'learn over lunch' talks across Bristol and other offices. These happened and were well received."

Kat Quinn, Project Planner for Atkins Global said:

"The presentation was very helpful to get some more insight into how equalities processes work in Highways England."

The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Tool

The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Tool (EDIT) is a Highways England analytical model developed in partnership with Mott MacDonald. It uses demographic, social, population and economic information on a scheme-by-scheme basis. This helps project managers identify where accessibility and inclusion efforts should be focused for the greatest benefit to communities.

The M11 J7a project team held an event in October to reinforce the importance of using EDIT. By using the tool they were able to introduce a footpath that was accessible for everyone.

Equality impact assessment guidance

An improved equality impact screening and assessment template and guidance has been developed to help us consider the impacts of the decisions we make on staff, communities and different groups of people impacted by our network or the services we deliver. To ensure consideration is not a one-off exercise, the Project Control Framework process in Major Projects requires screening documentation as an ongoing requirement through the life-span of schemes.

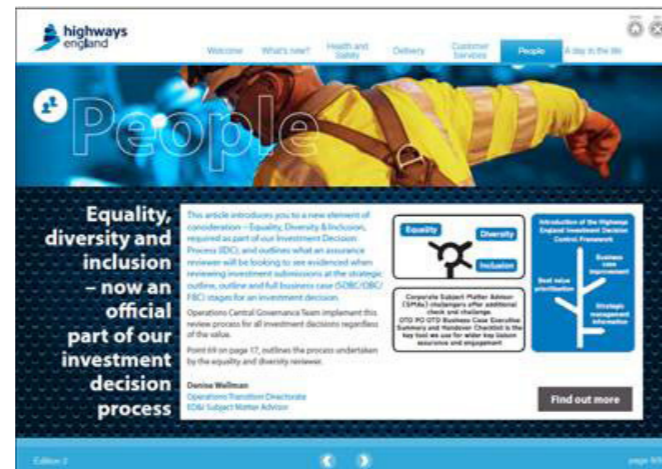


The investment decision making process

Internal guidance has been updated and strengthened to emphasise our responsibilities under the PSED and the EDI considerations that are necessary when making an investment decision.

Denise Wellman Operations Transition Directorate and EDI advocate said:

“We produced internal advice to highlight a key extension to the investment decision making process. This requires evidence in response to EDI activities within all business cases. The article sought to raise awareness of this important change and improve compliance with both the process and the PSED within Operations Directorate.”



The equality, diversity and inclusion advocates' network

Each directorate has their own EDI advocate who help promote the subject, expand directorate understanding and record EDI actions and decisions. Advocates are continuing to embed this topic into everyday working practices across our diverse range of functions.

We organised a workshop in June 2016 to share good practice and build confidence. We have now introduced quarterly teleconferencing and newsletters for this network to keep up the momentum.

Renata Daunoraite EDI advocate for Monitoring and Road Investment Strategy and Performance Division said:

“As a result of the workshop we include EDI as a standard item at our team meetings and set divisional and personal EDI actions that feed into our personal objectives.”

Highways England accessibility strategy

Our Accessibility Strategy was published in May 2016. Its aspirations are driven by the Accessibility and Cycling Leadership Group who have a remit to identify and embed accessibility (and cycling) responsibilities and disseminate good practice throughout Highways England and our supply chain.

New 'Place Making' guidance is being developed, looking at improving our understanding of how our activities impact on communities and how the SRN can contribute to improved connectivity and sense of place. A workshop was held in early April with staff and external stakeholders to improve our understanding of accessibility issues. The output from this session will inform the new guidance.

Designated funding for cycling, safety and integration have been used this year on scheme feasibility, future work programmes and improvement projects. One improvement project was the A64 Askham Bryan junction linking the village of Copmanthorpe to western York and the regional bus network. Tactile paving was installed at 10 crossing points and sections of new shared use footway to connect to adjacent routes.



The design panel

As part of Highways England licence we have established a design panel chaired by Mike Wilson, our Chief Highways Engineer, and comprising representatives from a number of renowned national organisations. The panel's role includes assisting project teams and technical advisors in understanding and promoting high quality design, and encouraging the delivery of better schemes, rooted in the locality and respecting local character and community.

The panel's recommended design vision is:

"We aim to have people at the heart of our work by designing an inclusive, resilient and sustainable road network; admired for its functional elegance and usefulness, reflecting in its design the beauty of the natural and built environment through which it passes, and enhancing it where possible."

Its 10 principles of good road design are a design that:

- makes roads safe and useful
- is inclusive
- makes roads understandable
- fits in context
- is restrained
- is thorough
- is environmentally sustainable
- is innovative
- is long-lasting
- is a collaborative process

The inclusive principle is: Inclusive environments facilitate dignified, equal and intuitive use by all users and are the result of an inter-disciplinary design process, which places people and their needs at its heart. This means including people and communities early and in every stage of the design process, in a manner that reduces barriers to access and participation and which considers these needs both in design and ongoing use. This should ensure that all users are considered, with a focus on the most vulnerable.

Serving communities

Involvement with Living Streets

'We want to create a walking nation free from congested roads and pollution' was the message from the national charity Living Streets who visited our Leeds office to meet with Operations Change Programme Director, Vanessa Gilbert and Asset Manager, Mandy Foster as part of our customer connections programme.

Living Streets Regional Director (North), Jenny Wilkes Head of Policy and Communications, Tom Platt and Regional Coordinator, John Kilner met with Vanessa and Mandy to discuss the importance of walking and how we, as a strategic network provider, can support pedestrians in our long term plans and design considerations.



Vanessa Gilbert and John Kilner

The charity supports many communities that reside close to the SRN and works with local authorities and stakeholders in a critical evaluation of local environments. Living Streets told us, less than half of today's school children walk to school, in comparison to 70% of their parents' generation.

Living Streets have also been instrumental in advising local authorities and SRN providers on pedestrian crossings to make them simpler and safer for users, particularly older people, who often need more time to cross than the current time the 'green man' allows.

Vanessa and Mandy contributed to the session by talking about our long term plans to support pedestrians, cyclists and local communities and referred to our accessibility strategy which includes:

- Improving our understanding of the impact of our activities on communities.
- Delivering continuous improvement through effectively monitoring and evaluating our performance.
- Working more effectively with local authorities on roads and routes for cyclists, pedestrians and other users.
- Improving integration with other existing and emerging networks, infrastructure, developments, and travel modes.

Operations Change Programme Director, Vanessa Gilbert said:

"Overall it was a very useful insight into their agenda, and how we might make better provision for walkers by thinking about them right at the start, and stepping back from our conventional approach to designing schemes."

The A556 Knutsford scheme charity walk

Major project schemes are subject to equality impact screening at every stage which are monitored through the project control framework. The Knutsford scheme was no exception and, as our example shows, the team identified a real opportunity to get involved with the local community.

A walk along the new A556 dual carriageway proved to be not only a huge hit but also a fantastic fundraiser for local children's charity, the Children's Adventure Farm Trust (CAFT), with over £3,000 raised on the day. 704 of the charity's supporters joined Highways England and leading contractors, Costain, for the 6.5km walk. Costain staff led groups along the route of the new £192 million A556 dual carriageway between Knutsford and Bowdon, stopping along the way to explore diggers, construction vehicles and to discuss points of interest.

The 6.5km route started in Tabley and finished at the site offices in Little Bollington, where refreshments and activities were available. It was a unique opportunity to see the progress of the project close up and to meet staff from both Costain and the CAFT, as well as volunteers from Knutsford Hosts. The charity's mascot became 'Bobby the Builder' for the day and was freely available for 'high fives' and dancing.

Paul Hampson, Highways England's Manager for the project, said:

"It was a privilege to be able to assist CAFT and the important work they do by allowing people to walk the route. I know people were impressed by the scale of engineering work that has gone into the construction of this important new road. We'd like to thank everyone who came along for their generosity."

Rachel Ellison, Costain's A556 Project Manager said:

"We were delighted to support CAFT as our local charity and to help raise funds for such a deserving cause while we are working in the area. We have staff who are planning even more events to carry on raising money for CAFT, and are helping by volunteering to carry out maintenance work so this is just part of the help we are giving the charity."

Rob Bashforth from CAFT said:

"This was such a fantastic day, everyone had a wonderful time. It was lovely to meet so many members of our community. We're so grateful to Highways England and Costain for all of their hard work, both on this event and other projects they've supported over at our Millington base. We'd like to say a huge thank you to everyone involved, the money raised will help us to help countless terminally ill, disabled and disadvantaged children across our region."

The A1 Coalhouse to Metro Centre scheme

Balfour Beatty, one of our supply chain partners, run a programme called 'Involved' which invests in communities by promoting local employment and skills, supporting local businesses and engaging with communities. It seeks to capture and share legacy outcomes and best practice. For example, the A1 Coalhouse to Metro Centre scheme had a key performance measure to minimise disruption and maintain good public relations. Clear and timely communications was an essential requirement.

A dedicated public liaison manager was employed to keep the 3000 surrounding households, Metro Shopping Centre, 700 Acre industrial park and numerous small business conurbations informed. Methods included: public exhibitions; newsletters; Facebook; the project website; a monthly 'drop in centre'; public noticeboards and electronic road signage.

A detailed 'Involved' plan was developed to bring benefits to the surrounding communities. The resulting outcomes included:

- the Open Doors Weekend – inviting members of the public to tour the project
- a community project – resurfacing the Tyne United Rowing Club road – where planned surfacing material from the A1CH2MC project were reused
- a fundraising assault course event, rowing challenge and other measures
- staff volunteering to support the Salvation Army's Christmas appeal
- provision of work experience for civil engineering students
- health and safety presentations at local schools
- a road safety competition - with winning posters displayed on site
- site visits for local students and the Chartered Association of Building Engineers
- support for an Institution of Civil Engineers 'Build a Bridge' workshop in local schools
- contributing to Highways England accessibility strategy to ensure the local community benefits from the 600m of renewed cycling paths, linking the wider Gateshead cycle routes.

In addition, the economic benefits showed that 38% of project turnover was with local companies and 44% with small, medium enterprises. This included the creation of 300 jobs, of which 93% were filled by local people.

Supporting community manufacturing

The Royal British Legion Industries (RBLI) is a not-for-profit social enterprise that provides rehabilitation and employment for former service personnel, many of whom have life changing disabilities. The company manufactures signage for many customers including Highways England. Robert Jaffier, Highways England Asset and Resource Manager, is a Royal Navy veteran and a reservist commissioned officer. He visited the factory to see the benefits for our business, employees and the local community.

Income is generated by the sale of goods and services that it provides in open competition with other businesses. Any surplus is recycled to provide support and training to its employees.

Robert Jaffier, said:

“The RBLI business model offers a lifeline to hundreds of people, but crucially for Highways England and road users, it also produces a very high quality product produced through the hard work and discipline of the skilled workforce.”



Developing supply chain capability

David Poole – reflections on the year

‘There is clear evidence that pressures within the labour market mean that suppliers taking meaningful action on EDI are better placed in terms of skills and competitive positioning. These future pressures mean this competitive advantage is likely to become starker. Businesses ignoring the EDI agenda will be increasingly disadvantaged in the market for the skills, and innovation required for the future.’

“Our procurement approach and contracts drive and support the required change but businesses that are actively planning and delivering in the EDI arena are likely to be strongly positioned for future investment growth.”

StART inclusion assessment

Highways England uses the Strategic Alignment Review Tool (StART) in the pre-qualification process for certain high-value contracts. The StART assessment helps both Highways England and suppliers by:

- identifying business strengths and areas for development that are essential to perform a wide range of work
- ensuring companies know what is required to complete Highways England contracts

We ask our suppliers to tell us how they:

- consider the diverse needs of customers and communities when making decisions
- become more effective at attracting and recruiting a more diverse workforce
- create inclusive working cultures that allow everyone to perform to their potential

Focusing on these areas will help us and our supply chain to become more inclusive and throughout the process we look for examples of good practice and areas that need improvement. This year we have assessed 28 of our core suppliers against the StART tool. Further suppliers have asked to be assessed as part of tranche 2 so we are currently liaising with them. To date 18 suppliers had a full assessment and 8 were assessed on EDI only. The results of these assessments will be used to drive the change needed to meet one of the 2016-2020 equality objectives.

The collaborative performance framework

Our Collaborative Performance Framework helps monitor how well suppliers working on our projects are meeting their contractual requirements. We examine costs, health and safety, quality, sustainability and time. There are specific categories that ask about opportunities to improve diversity and inclusion both for employees and customers and communities who use or live alongside our network.

We are looking for our supply chain to attract, recruit and retain a diverse workforce, develop inclusive working practices and culture across their projects. Ultimately, to deliver a more socially sensitive SRN that is a better neighbour to the communities impacted by the contracts.

Projects and schemes are asked to produce an inclusion action plan to show what they are doing to make a difference, and schemes are monitored on a quarterly basis. Currently there are approximately 100 schemes involved in this process. Suppliers are telling us that this is helping them change their business approaches.



The supplier diversity forum

The Supplier Diversity Forum (SDF) was formed in 2010 and has grown into a group of over 25 suppliers and Highways England representatives who meet quarterly to share good practice and to develop and deliver initiatives that will support change across the sector. To date this forum has been involved in:

- National Women in Engineering Days.
- Annual workforce benchmarking activity, which has grown year on year and in 2016, 27 organisations participated.
- The “attract and recruit diverse talent” research project which looked at what the barriers are to joining our industry.
- A varied speaker programme, which has raised awareness and built capability in areas such as unconscious bias and mental health.

As the SDF has grown in commitment and size we have enhanced our vision and structure by forming a steering group of industry figures and a working party of leaders. Our vision is to work together to create a more inclusive and diverse industry, benefiting the customers and communities in which we operate. This is underpinned by 4 themes focussing on:

1. Researching why people are/aren't attracted to and retained by the sector.
2. Developing a threshold for EDI performance in employment, customer service and community engagement.
3. Improving the collection of workforce profile diversity data and its use to inform EDI performance.
4. Increasing SDF and stakeholder momentum to accelerate the pace of change.



Lizi Stewart Supplier Diversity Forum Chair said:

“I was delighted to take on the chair role for the SDF in June 2016, and it has been an honour to be involved with the forum to date. We have a very powerful team who are determined to realise the benefits of a more equal, inclusive and diverse industry.”

Coral Taylor Inclusion Business Partner from Amey said:

“The SDF is a truly excellent concept causing rapid and sustained improvement in the highways sector. Sometimes the presentations and discussions reaffirm that we are doing the right things; other times they challenge and stretch us to think and act differently. It's like a motorway for rapid change.”

Supplier Diversity Forum speaker programme

During each forum, time was set aside to look at a topic in more detail. These sessions were overseen and organised by members of the forum and last year covered topics such as:

Inclusive Leadership – where Stephen Frost (from Frosted Included) spoke about thinking differently about diversity, inclusion and bias. Drawing on his experience from the Olympics 2012 Stephen shared his thoughts on: creating understanding, leading and delivering. He covered the reasons why initiatives in this area often fail, the importance of conscious v unconscious leadership, and he outlined practical steps to move us forward.

Unconscious Bias - with speakers from the Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion, Mott MacDonald and Skanska. The June session focused on the latest thinking on unconscious bias, why businesses are focusing on this and what impact this is having on performance. This was illustrated through engaging activities and interactive exercises.

Mental Health at Work - with speakers coming from Highways England; Mind (Time for Change) and Skanska. In the September session each organisation spoke about their commitment to tackle mental health at work and the reasons why it was important to put time and focus into this area, which often carries a lot of stigma. Information about mental health ambassadors/first aiders and 'Time to Change' programmes were shared.

David Jenkins Diversity & Inclusion Champion, UK & Europe Atkins, said:

“The speaker programme has been highly relevant, aligning with our own business priorities for the EDI agenda. Having heard about mental health first aiders, we are now planning to pilot them in our business and that has been met with enthusiasm by our staff.”

Supplier recognition awards 2016

Each year Highways England recognises the vital contribution made by their suppliers who help us modernise, maintain and operate England's network of motorways and major A roads. One of the categories focused on how suppliers are becoming more inclusive in their business practices so they grow a culture where everyone feels valued and included. This year we saw a range of initiatives that our suppliers are using to become more inclusive and demonstrate the value they place on diversity.

This year's winner Skanska is working hard to deliver its corporate diversity and inclusion commitments and really demonstrated how EDI is being shared both across its projects and down its supply chain. They are:

- developing resources and toolkits and sharing these across the sector
- partnering and collaborating to create something new – especially around working flexibility on a 24-hour site
- positioning EDI so that its part of business as usual, tracking the impact and looking for evidence of the difference all this activity has made.

Vinci Construction Taylor Woodrow was awarded 'highly commended' as they are clearly focused on the next step in their corporate journey and in translating this into meaningful work on their major projects. They:

- used intelligence to concentrate on the things that staff said mattered
- engaged everyone in the conversation about fairness, inclusion and respect
- were creative in their communications.

People are now beginning to feel comfortable sharing their experiences and views on fairness, inclusion and respect and there is a real sense that this company is taking the lead in raising the bar.

Comment from a Highways England judge:

“It was heartening to see entries demonstrating the diverse approaches taken to furthering the EDI agenda across this sector. Both the winning and highly commended organisations are fully engaged in driving change and are committed to not only embedding this in their own business, but are also actively engaged in shared practice and learning with others.”

Highways England CEO Jim O' Sullivan congratulates recipients of Supplier Recognition Awards at the ceremony in Birmingham February 2017.



Cross sector work

National Women in Engineering Day (NWED) 2016

The NWED highways event was held during July and provided the sector with an opportunity to focus on ‘highways’ and what could be done better together to attract more women into the industry. The event was to inspire the industry to act collaboratively in attracting talent from all backgrounds and demographics, and to strive for a legacy that will sustain our sector and deliver better service to our customers. Carillion, Costain, Skanska, Balfour Beatty, Morgan Sindall and BAM Nuttall worked collaboratively to organise this successful event.

The 1 day event was attended by nearly 150 people from across the supply chain and Highways England’s directorates as well as industry bodies, other clients and speakers from other sectors.

The event:

- engaged with senior executives
- included the whole Highways England supply chain
- involved various parts of Highways England
- brought learning and challenge from other sectors.

Benefits included:

- Cross sector collaboration to deliver real value..
- Bringing together leaders and speakers who spurred the sector to really think about the issues and what they could do.
- Gathering ideas which resulted in a prioritised list of actions that would make a difference not just on gender, but across the whole EDI agenda.



Tony Scutt Highways Customer Director, Costain said:

“Costain became involved in NWED 2016 following our Highways England StART assessment feedback. This prompted us to step up our engagement with colleagues and our supply chain on EDI. By volunteering to lead, we set up a collaborative consortium of suppliers from the Supplier Diversity Forum.

“The theme for the day was ‘Shifting the Needle’ aimed at attracting more women into the industry. The stimulating and collaborative sessions with Highways England and fellow suppliers, have helped us to improve our approach to EDI. As a result of our involvement over the past year, we have created a new EDI Strategy which includes targets, something we had previously not included.”

Maxine Wheldon Human Resources Director, Balfour Beatty Major Projects said:

“I attended the NWED event hosted by Highways England last year, along with members of our Highways leadership team. I continue to be inspired by these events, in particular learning from other industries and the wider supply chain on ways to collaborate and improve gender balance across our sector.

“Following this event, our Major Projects business has set a target to increase the proportion of females within the business by 50% by 2020, against our current baseline. Our leadership team is of the view that this target will drive greater focus on the attraction and retention of women and will focus our recruitment teams to identify more diverse sourcing channels.

“We also held an ‘Inspiring Women’ conference, attended by 130 women, representing a cross-section of different disciplines from across our sites and offices, in order to understand any barriers to career progression and inclusion within our company. This was a very thought-provoking day and we have targeted a series of improvements as a consequence.”

Recruiting for success

Highways England commissioned the Clear Company to research supplier capability in terms of attracting and recruiting diverse talent from the widest pool to meet emerging capacity, capability and business needs.

7 organisations (including Highway England) went through the 'deep dive' process. Thousands of pages of policy and practice were analysed, and 70 behavioural interviews completed. A further 22 organisations were involved in 2 focus groups and 127 organisations took part in a survey. This gave us rich data on how inclusively the sector is recruiting; where there is good practice that needs to be spread, and the priorities for improvement. The data has proved to be really insightful and resulted in commitments from Highways England HR going forward.

Strategic transport apprenticeship taskforce

The government launched the strategic transport apprenticeship taskforce (STAT) in April to bring together employers to address the skills gap in the transport sector. Involvement will support the government's ambition to create 30,000 new apprenticeships in transport by 2020, and to increase the diversity of the workforce. David Poole, Executive Director, Commercial and Procurement at Highways England and representatives from across the transport sector sit on the STAT board. It will play an important role in delivering against the Transport Infrastructure Skills Strategy.

The Roads Academy

The Roads Academy is a development programme that aims to change how the industry thinks, behaves and performs to meet current challenges within the roads industry in England. It brings together people working in Highways England and our supply chain as part of a shared learning experience.

This year delegates completed a project called 'How to attract and retain diverse talent to the highways industry through inclusive leadership behaviours'. A masterclass on EDI was attended by more than 80 industry professionals across Highways England's supply chain.

The team developed an inclusive leadership and behaviour model to help others become catalysts for change. This focused on the initial 'lightbulb' moment that has driven the organisations and individuals to take proactive action resulting in tangible benefits. The model aims to aid managers and leaders within the roads sector to become more inclusive leaders. Throughout this process the team personally developed their understanding of EDI, raised awareness amongst industry peers and are now continuing to champion the agenda in their businesses.

Roads Academy graduates 2017





Developing early talent to help deliver our roads investment strategy

San Johal – reflections on the year

“A significant achievement in the last twelve months has been EDI forming an integral part of our people related activity rather than something that is viewed as ‘separate’. At a time of significant organisational change, EDI being woven into all people related activity means that diverse objectives will be met on key people related delivery projects.

“Of particular significance in the last year is the creation and launch of a new set of Highways England values with associated behaviours to follow. The values and associated behaviours set out very clearly the expectation upon people managers to manage and lead in an inclusive way. The roll out of our Management Development Programme this year has provided people managers with the practical training to support the company values and drive for high performance in an inclusive, respectful and engaging way.

“Highways England has grown significantly in the last year, and with growth set to continue next year, we are proactively improving our approach to recruitment with the help of EDI experts. As the culture of our company has continued to evolve this year, we have seized opportunities to set out the integrity with which we expect all colleagues to carry out their roles. A key focus for us in the next 12 months will be to embed the behaviours that drive both performance and inclusivity within the organisation. This is an exciting time for EDI related activity within the company and, I look forward to another year of delivery as our ambition grows in line with business objectives.”

Attracting diversity of talent

Apprentices and graduates provide a strong early talent pipeline into our business. They will help us grow our capacity and capability over this Road Investment Strategy period and will provide the talent required to deliver the next period of investment beyond 2020.

53 apprentices currently work at Highways England. They receive on-the-job training, while studying and earning. They are empowered to become confident and well-equipped colleagues to deliver our business.

We have attended a number of career events in schools to promote our apprenticeships schemes and developed a webinar to promote apprenticeships which has been viewed by over 200 schools across the country.

Internally, our apprentices took over internal communications in March 2017 to celebrate National Apprenticeships Week. The ‘takeover’ was devised to help our staff learn more about the benefits of apprenticeships.

Project Management Apprentice, Amelia Kirwan found out what it takes to become a future CEO of Highways England by shadowing our CEO Jim O’Sullivan for the day.

Amelia reflected on her experience in a company-wide blog and said:

“My day with our chief executive gave me a great insight into Jim’s duties and responsibilities, whilst getting to know him as a person. I will take all of his advice with me into my future career, and I’m very grateful to Jim for allowing me to have such exposure. This was a very valuable learning experience and I am pleased Jim was able to dedicate some of his time to help promote apprenticeships.”

In other related work we:

- Trained more than 20 colleagues across the business to support events in schools, colleges and universities aimed at promoting science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subjects to a diverse range of young people.
- Had a stall at the International Women’s Day Conference in Manchester supported by three of our female graduates.

Amelia Kirwan with CEO Jim O’ Sullivan



Improving our approach to recruitment and retention

We are aiming to attract and retain a more diverse range of people to work for our business. To help with this we took the opportunity to have our recruitment policy and practices reviewed. This was part of a project run by the Clear Company.

Kate Wood, HR Resourcing Specialist said:

“Participating in the CLEAR project was time well invested in helping us to understand how to recruit a more diverse workforce. The project identified a few specific areas for improvement and also highlighted some areas of good practice. The advice we received was practical and is helping us to implement changes immediately to resolve some issues whilst delivering some larger improvements such as developing our new careers website.”



Managing our performance inclusively

Managing our performance

In 2016 our managers attended training to support them with developing their understanding of performance management. This explored ideas on inclusivity and getting the best from their teams.

The training comprised of one session called ‘At the top of our game’ providing line managers with game-changing secrets to create and sustain high performance in teams with minimal effort and maximum benefit. This was paired with a second session, ‘One of us’, which looked at why embracing diversity is so difficult, and what we can do to build a culture of inclusion. 400 managers from across the business attended the training ahead of the end of year performance discussions.

Lucy Mason, HR Performance Specialist, said:

“It is important to us that when line managers are appraising the performance of their teams that they are making fair decisions. At the end of the performance management year we encouraged managers to attend training sessions which were designed to challenge their attitudes and make them think about the way that they manage their teams. The line managers who attended these sessions gave very positive feedback and felt that the sessions had made them think about their approach.”

One manager said: “I attended the course and thoroughly enjoyed it. The content really made me think, and challenged some of my attitudes towards managing staff”

Staff networks - learning from the experiences of our staff

Leading Women

Our national Leading Women's network is headed by Mel Clarke, Customer Service Director for Operations. Mel and other senior women in the company recognised the need to have a forum where women can network, share knowledge, support each other with business challenges and inspire each other to bring about change. The network meetings are open for all Highways England employees to attend and the objectives are:

- to promote diverse role models for the women in Highways England
- to challenge the organisation to create the right culture and do the right things so that it attracts, retains and promotes talented women
- to provide a network of support for the women in Highways England

Several regional forums have formed, the largest being the 'Midlands Motivators' in Birmingham. The national network holds a large event twice a year. In June 2016 the event focused on celebrating NWED, collaborating with Deloitte, who co-hosted the event and provided two inspirational speakers from their Birmingham offices. We also shared with the network our connections with the Cross Government Women's Network.

In December 2016 our event was themed 'Our Leading Men' and the speakers were predominantly male and included inspirational leadership stories from one of our own Regional Directors and the Midlands Regional Chair from PwC. We also ran sessions on the cross diversity issue of mental health awareness and support, with advice and guidance from our occupational health service provider. This focused on women and mental health and the role of our company 'Time to Change' champion. A manager from the Traffic Officer Service discussed trauma awareness and our 'on road' community. To finish the event a senior leader from our HR team gave a learning session on 'Personal Brand and Effective Presentation'.

Lorna Morrison HR Senior Advisor who attended the event in December said:

"I was inspired by the male speakers who addressed the role of women in the workplace and the importance of maintaining a diverse and inclusive organisation. I also enjoyed the personal brand session which made me think about who I am and how to focus on my strengths."

34%

of our workforce are women. This has increased in each of the past 4 years.



Access for All

Access for All is a staff disability network with seven regional groups across the organisation.

Marion Nash explains the role of the Access for All East Group:

"Access for All East (A4A east) is part of a national network of disability support groups where people can work together to address issues and share experiences. You can be disabled or non-disabled to be part of A4A, it really is for everyone.

"As a growing network, A4A works alongside HR to create and enhance its visibility to educate those with and without disabilities, so that we all know what can and should be done (including what the law says) to ensure people are included and not disadvantaged by their disability.

"People with disabilities can sometimes feel isolated and it's good to know that something like A4A exists for them, where they can attend group meetings or request one-to-one discussions, and feel they are being included and listened to. A4A is also there to aid, influence and develop company policy and provides its members and others access to information that impacts on individuals and groups.

"I like to encourage innovation and it's good to see A4A members learn from each other and bring solutions, tips and ideas to the table, whether it's about something personal like reasonable adjustments or something wider such as company policy, it all matters."

Lesbian, gay and bisexual and trans network (LGBT+)

We published articles internally about LGBT history month which generated positive comments and raised the issue of a LGBT network. As a result a small group of people are working together to develop the LGBT+ network.



Supporting good mental wellbeing

With an estimated 1 in 4 of the UK population suffering from mental ill health in any given year, this is an issue which potentially affects Highways England staff in similar numbers. Highways England re-signed the 'Time to Change' pledge in 2015, reaffirming its commitment to tackling the stigma and discrimination associated with talking about mental health at work. A working group of staff identified that introducing more support for individuals would be of value in promoting good mental health for everyone.

To support this aim we have introduced mental health first aiders to our business. 45 staff have been trained. They provide colleagues with confidential support, reassurance and advice. They can signpost to relevant self-help tools and professional support as required.

Launched in March 2017, we anticipate the first aiders will help people access support when needed and also support proactive work such as mental health awareness events. Highways England also supported the 'Time to Talk' day for a fourth year. Teams were provided with activities to help them start a conversation in their team about mental health. Further mental health first aid training is planned for this year and, we look forward to adding more trained first aiders to support good mental health in our business.

Ian Howard, Employee Mental Health Champion and trained Mental Health First Aider said:

"No one is immune to experiencing difficulties with their mental health and wellbeing at some point in their lives. Early diagnosis and access to support services and professional help makes a huge difference and promotes rapid and meaningful recovery. Our mental health first aiders are trained to support our people and provide early support. They will contribute to the future health and prosperity of our business."

Proactive employment policy

Developing the skills of young people – community apprenticeships

Working in our local community we have helped develop the skills of young people in Birmingham as part of the Community Apprentice scheme. This is a 10 month employability competition run by Envision which enables young people to develop key workplace skills and positively impact upon their local communities. Teams were challenged to suggest a way of making a difference on an issue affecting their local area using the skills they had developed along the way.

27 of our staff supported the scheme, volunteering over 163 hours of time to mentor the community apprentices and to help create skills references for them.

The teams worked on issues in their local community such as homelessness and the stigma surrounding mental health. This resulted in running projects which raised money for the mental health charity MIND and provided winter survival kits to rough sleepers.

The impact of participating in the scheme (including the mentoring that the apprentices received), equipped individuals with an understanding of competencies that are valued in the workplace. We will be supporting the scheme again during 2017, this time in both Birmingham and Bristol.

Building accessibility policy and guidance

We have developed a building accessibility policy to ensure that all of our premises and buildings are accessible to everyone. We want accessibility to be at the heart of the design process so that people are able to move around within our buildings comfortably and with ease. The Access for All East network was consulted as part of the policy development.

Louise Crewdson Accessibility and Business Continuity Officer said:

'It was an obvious choice to consult with the Access for All group when we were developing the building accessibility policy as attendees are able to give valuable input and feedback based on their everyday experiences. The group raised some very valid points which resulted in us coming away with some actions to review some of our existing practices and make some changes. For instance, we are currently reviewing the monitoring of accessibility standards throughout the year. We will continue to engage with the group as the policy is fully implemented and embedded.'

Employee engagement survey

We conduct an annual engagement survey. In 2016 we had the highest response rate (78%) since 2012. The survey gave employees the opportunity to 'self-classify' across various characteristics and enabled us to see whether any groups were disproportionately featuring in any of the response groups. Results from our 2017 survey will be available in early 2018.

Reasonable adjustment policy

A reasonable adjustment is when an individual who has a disability or medical condition requires adjustments to their working environment to support them to do their role. Examples of adjustments are specialist chairs, voice activated software, disability awareness training for colleagues, split keyboards and working from home.

The reasonable adjustments process was reviewed and improvements made to provide clarity of responsibilities for those making adjustments and a more streamlined approach. The review involved IT service providers, Facilities Management, and staff who have received reasonable adjustments. Findings from the review informed guidance that was developed to include more practical advice and improve understanding for staff and line managers.

Disability Confident

We are proud to have signed up to the government's Disability Confident scheme and be awarded as 'Disability Confident Committed'. This demonstrates our commitment to employing and retaining people with disabilities and those with health conditions. The Disability Confident scheme aims to help employers make the most of the opportunities provided by employing disabled people. It is voluntary and has been developed by employers and disabled peoples' representatives. As part of our commitment we guarantee to interview anyone with a disability whose application meets the minimum skills requirements for the role.

Promoting the role of carers

We made a pledge in 'Carers Week' for the first time to raise awareness to the provisions we offer to staff such as

- flexible working arrangements
- special leave
- career breaks
- employee assistance programme

We asked our carers to complete a survey so we could understand the challenges of juggling work and caring responsibilities, and to help us develop better workplace support.

Staff who have shared information only

7.2%

Percentage of
Highways England's
staff with disability



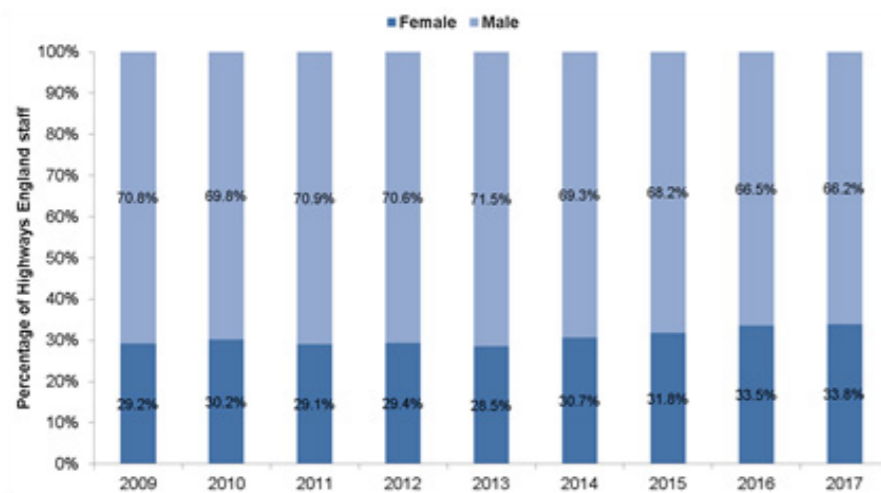
Our people - a look at the numbers

We ask our people to share their diversity information and we use this to understand the composition of our workforce. By analysing this we consider the diversity of our organisation across a number of protected characteristics such as gender, disability and ethnic group. We actively work to improve the number of staff who share their diversity information so we can understand how they are impacted by our policies and practices, and the influence of EDI on our business.

Gender

The number and percentage overall of women in our organisation has increased in each of the past four years. There remains proportionally less women in senior pay scale groups. However, the number of women in senior positions has increased in each of the past three years.

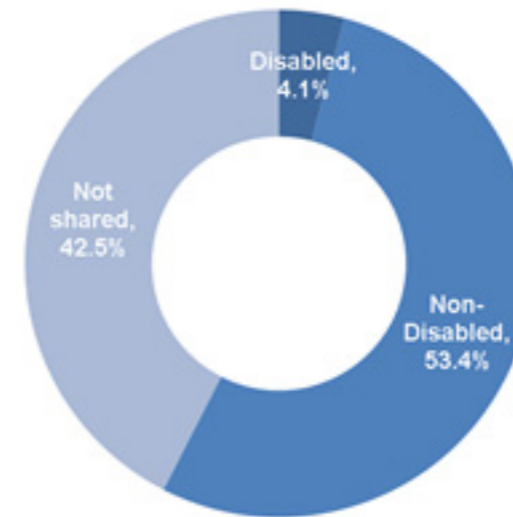
Gender of staff over the past 9 years



Disability

The number of people sharing their disability status remains relatively low. Of those who have shared their information 7.2% have indicated they have a disability.

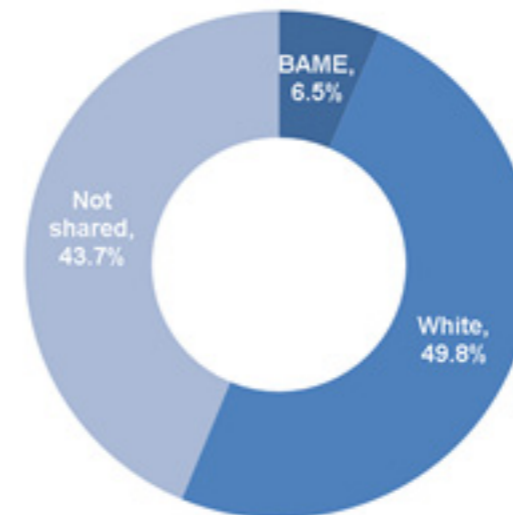
Disability status - percentage of our people



Ethnic group

The number of people sharing their ethnic group is also relatively low. 12% of those who have shared this information identify as a Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic (BAME) group.

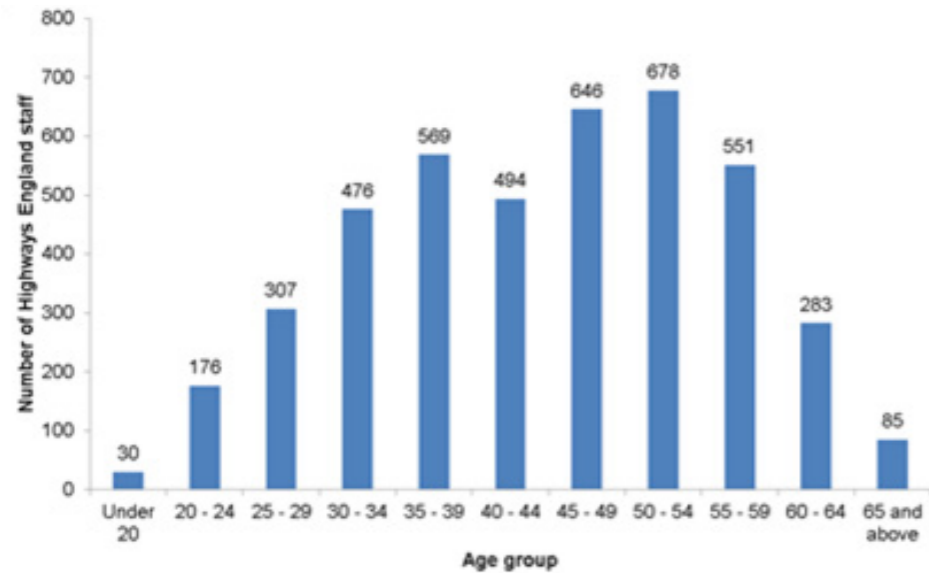
Ethnic groups - percentage of our people



Age

The average (mean) age of people in our organisation is 44.2 years; the average age of people in our organisation has reduced in each of the past four years.

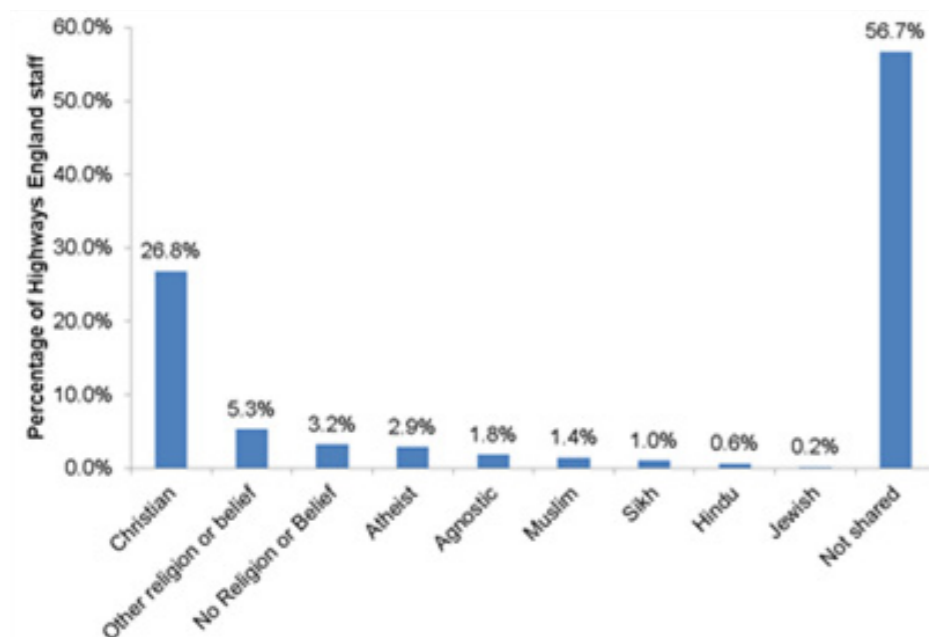
Age profile of our people



Religion or belief

From the information we ask our people to share, religion or belief is that which is least shared.

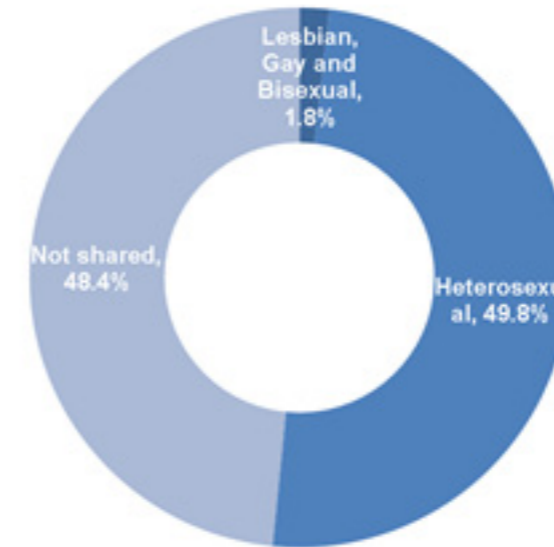
Religion or belief of our people



Sexual orientation

From the information we ask our people to share, sexual orientation is also shared by less than half of our people.

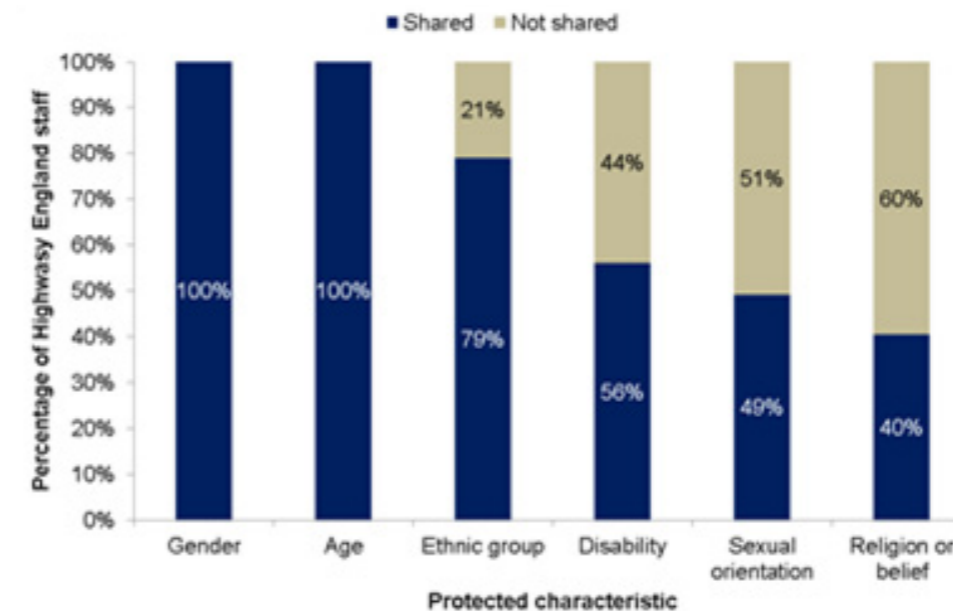
Sexual orientation of our people



Sharing diversity information

We encourage our people to share their diversity information. We are promoting the value of doing so by providing them with confidence that this information is held securely and confidentially

Sharing of diversity information by our staff



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