



# Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report 2018

## Human Resources

Report by John Evans, HR Director  
April 2018

## Contents

Section	Page
PART 1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
PART 2: INTRODUCTION	5
PART 3: PROGRESS ON OUR EQUALITY OBJECTIVES	8
PART 4: RESULTS FROM OUR EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT SURVEY	12
PART 5: GENDER PAY GAP	14
PART 6: EQUALITY MONITORING DATA	16

## PART 1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides an overview of the Student Loans Company (SLC) progress against our equality objectives which were set in 2016. This is our second annual review of the EDI Strategy 2020 for report to our Executive Leadership Team and the Board before being published on our website [www.slc.co.uk](http://www.slc.co.uk).

Some key highlights from 2017 have been:

- **External Recognition:**
  - Conditional Investors in Diversity Award
  - Disability Confident – Level 2 Award confirmed
  - SLC featured on the Time to Change website
  
- **Legislative Reporting:**
  - Capture gender pay data as at the ‘snapshot’ date of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017. Report produced and published in line with the Gender Pay Gap Reporting Guidelines.
  - Deliver communication plan to engage, at the right time, with employees; PCS; stakeholders and media.
  - Gender Pay Gap Report produced and published.
  - Gender Pay Gap action plan approved.
  - Workforce equality profile data produced for the Company as a whole and by location (Glasgow, Darlington and Llandudno Junction). Building trend analysis data.
  
- **Events:**
  - Time to Change; SLC committed to work on mental health in the workplace by signing the workplace pledge and developing an action plan.
  - Global Accessibility Awareness Day recognised in 2017.
  - Company involvement in Glasgow Pride 2017. The first time the Company has been represented.
  - World Mental Health Day and Blue Monday acknowledged with ‘Tea & Talk’ events.
  
- **Employee Engagement:**
  - Values & behaviours Champions.
  - Establishment of LGBT+ Network; ‘Arcus’.
  - Early discussion on disability employee network.
  - International Women’s Day Event planned.
  
- **Company Health & Wellbeing Strategy:**
  - Establishment of Mental Health First Aiders across the Company.
  - Regular themed communications for employees and managers via SLC Connect.

## **Background and context**

The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Annual Report provides an assurance to the SLC Board and Executive Leadership Team that the Company is able to report against the general equality duty as outlined in the Equality Act 2010 which requires public bodies and those carrying out public functions to:

*“Have due regard for the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; to advance equality of opportunity; and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not”.*

## **PART 2: INTRODUCTION**

The Student Loans Company (SLC) has an established commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) and this report highlights the significance of our relationships and engagement with the lives of people, business, education providers, partners and stakeholders in the world we live in now and into the future.

As Interim Chief Executive of the Student Loans Company it is important that the initiatives and progress on equality, diversity and inclusion is embedded into the SLC 2020 Strategy. This is of particular importance to the aspirations across the Company on Organisational Health.

We need to harness talent across the widest possible base reflecting diversity in all its forms to develop a broad and talented workforce.

We want to build an organisation that is more dynamic and inclusive. There should be no issue or concern that cannot be discussed and supported in the workplace and I am proud of the progress we have made in this area, but there is plenty of work still to be done.

Our senior leaders are committed to our diversity agenda and this is now reflected in their performance objectives, but our diversity commitment doesn't just come from the top – it is shaped by our people and our fledgling network groups. So I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all my colleagues especially those who are giving their time to help develop this agenda.

This report highlights the progress we are making and where we are going next.

We are committed to making sure that SLC meets its equality obligations and encourage all of us to work together to achieve our goals.



**Christian Brodie**  
**Chairman**



**Peter Lauener**  
**Interim Chief Executive**

## Context of the Student Loans Company

The Student Loans Company (SLC) is a non-profit making Government owned organisation set up in 1989 to provide loans and grants to students at universities and colleges across the UK.

## Core functions of the SLC

The Student Loans Company (SLC) administers government funded loans and, in some Administrations, grants to HE and FE learners, on behalf of England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, in line with the policy aims of the relevant Administrations. Currently the primary roles of SLC are to:

- Deliver appropriate information to all customer groups at the right time and in the right form;
- Deliver financial support to eligible students and learners pursuing higher and further education in accordance with the student support regulations and relevant public policy objectives. In Scotland, this is done in partnership with the Student Awards Agency for Scotland (SAAS);
- Pay to Higher Education Institutions the public contribution towards tuition fees for England, Wales and Northern Ireland; and pay to Further Education Institutions the public contribution for England;
- Pay bursaries and scholarships on behalf of higher and further education providers;
- Work in partnership with HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) to ensure repayments are collected on time from all those due to repay under the Income Contingent Repayment Loan Scheme;
- Manage the direct collection of voluntary additional repayments, repayments for those living overseas, and recovery of overpaid loans or grants;
- Provide expert operational advice and high quality data and information to support Administrations' policy making and analysis;
- Undertake specific tasks for individual Administrations, such as payment of Education Maintenance Allowances in Wales and Northern Ireland and administer on behalf of the private sector any sold portfolios of Income Contingent Repayment loans.

## Our Policy Commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

SLC is committed to creating and sustaining a positive and supportive working environment for its employees as well as offering a customer experience that reflects our vision, mission and values.

SLC believes that excellence will be achieved through recognising the value of every individual. We aim to create an environment that respects the diversity of employees and customers and enables them to achieve their full potential, to contribute fully, and to gain maximum benefit from the opportunities available. To this end the following basic rights are acknowledged for everyone who is part of the wider SLC community:

- To be treated with respect and dignity
- To be treated fairly with regard to all procedures and assessments
- To receive encouragement to reach their full potential

These rights carry with them responsibilities and SLC expects all of our employees and partners to demonstrate responsible practice and behaviour to uphold these rights. SLC will comply with all relevant equality and good practice to eliminate discrimination as a result of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation or any combination thereof.

SLC is committed to advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations for all its employees, customers, partners and stakeholders. For this duty to equality, diversity and inclusion to become real we will demonstrate effective leadership and management, as well as a commitment from every employee.

In practice this means that we:

- Are committed to providing an environment where everyone is respected and treated fairly regardless of characteristics or distinctions such as: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religious belief/faith, sex and sexual orientation;
- Will develop a culture in which diversity is celebrated;
- Will not discriminate unfairly against anyone and will encourage positive action to promote equality and diversity;
- Will embed equality and diversity at the heart of our mission and values.

## **PART 3: PROGRESS ON OUR EQUALITY OBJECTIVES**

The following information provides headlines of our activities against our equality objectives:

### **Effective Leadership**

- Conditional Investors in Diversity Award.

### **Active use of data to review policy and procedures**

- Development of a policy governance process to measure impact and effectiveness of our revised people policies.

### **Promotion and communication of our EDI commitment**

- Comply with the reporting requirements of the public sector equality duty and the gender pay gap reporting regulations.
- Disability Confident Employer; self assessment August 2017; Level 2 Award confirmed
- A series of interventions and training on mental health to support our managers and employees by encouraging resilience.
- Signed up to the 'Time to Change' pledge and action plan approved to support mental health in the workplace.
- Support across our three sites for Global Accessibility Awareness Day (GAAD) in May 2017.
- Participation in Glasgow Pride 2017.
- LGBT+ employee network 'Arcus' launched 1<sup>st</sup> February 2018.
- We have used Talking Points to share information and progress on the Company's action plan to support mental health in the workplace.

### **Understanding who our customers are**

- Online EDI training module
- A range of Digital Learning Academy resources

### **Increasing the accessibility and usability of our online systems whilst keeping pace with technological advances**

- Online application access extended to our disabled student customers.
- Project development work in place to ensure compliance with Welsh language requirements for AY 18/19.

### **Secure a level playing field for our customers who need specific and targeted support**

- The SLC inclusive design and communication strategy was launched in 2016 and is supported by a network of champions across the business.
- The Disabled Students Allowance function provides a direct service to disabled students applying for support to enable their access to education and further learning.



## Key highlights over the past year

We launched our new **LGBT+ Network Group 'Arcus'** in February 2018 to coincide with LGBT History Month. The aim of Arcus is to engage with LGBT+ employees and allies, increase understanding and awareness of LGBT+ issues and contribute to the Company's EDI agenda.

The network wishes to foster an environment where lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender employees have the confidence and support to be themselves at work. This will help to enhance SLC's reputation, employee morale and customer satisfaction. SLC Participated for the first time in the Glasgow Pride event in August 2017.



We also launched our **Mental Health First Aid** service across all of our 4 sites in 2017.

Our Mental Health First Aiders (MHFA) have all been trained to offer support to colleagues who are in distress and where appropriate signpost them to professional help.

Feedback from colleagues who received the training:

*'Gained a better understanding of the resources available to support vulnerable people suffering from a mental health problem. This has been such a taboo subject for many years, it is so refreshing to have open discussion about mental health issue affecting people in everyday life. Having the opportunity to discuss my personal experiences was very cathartic'.*

*'I am unable to pinpoint a favourite aspect of the training. I found it all to be extremely relevant and well delivered. Despite the subjects covered being "heavy" and emotive – it was really enjoyable and fulfilling training. I'm very pleased that I was able to part of it/attend [sic]'.*

This initiative is helping enable employees with mental health problems to feel supported in the workplace and perform at their best. Spotting the signs early can help us offer support. To support employee engagement we invited colleagues to enjoy some Tea and Talk with our MHFAs at several drop in sessions across our sites to find out more about their role.

We are also a core member of the Mental Health in the Business Community in Scotland network sharing experiences as we all consider how to take forward a focus on mental health within our respective businesses. Our first Glasgow cohort of MHFAs is pictured below.



We have had good response to our Tea & Talk events that we have run across our sites. At our recent Llandudno Junction event approximately 25-30 people dropped by to find out more about the service which was a great turnout.



*SLC is proud to support*

# World Mental Health Day

## Tuesday 10 October 2017

*Aimed at boosting health and wellbeing  
and promoting a mentally healthy workplace*

Join us for tea & talk and to find out  
more about Mental Health First Aid

**Darlington**  
12.00 - 1.30 pm The Winding Room  
7.00 - 8.30 pm The Boardroom

#WMHD



Student Loans Company

We are also holding an **International Women's Day** event in March 2018 with the theme **#Press for Progress**. Using this as a stepping stone to host focus groups to engage with all staff and engage with all those who can support gender equality.

In June 2017 we named our '**SLC Way**' **Champions** who are drawn from across the organisation. They represent a cross section of the workforce. The Champions have all been involved in identifying the culture and behaviours that would help make SLC a better place to work. They are a key support in helping us evolve our culture and ensuring we tap into our fantastic talent base.

## PART 4: RESULTS FROM THE EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT SURVEY

### Background

The SLC Employee Engagement Survey was run in October 2017. After sharing results with the Board top line results were shared with all staff in December and in January we ran a series of local team action planning sessions involving staff. The full results give us an accurate picture of how our staff feel about working at SLC and provide us with information regarding thoughts about our culture, how we go about our work and what we need to do to improve.

### Headlines

We had a response rate of 67%, that's 2026 colleagues, which was an excellent turnout. It shows that our people really care about the organisation and want to contribute positively by identifying areas where we can improve and also by recognising areas and colleagues who are doing a good job.

Our independent partner Unipart/Progressive Connections analysed the confidential responses and while there is a huge amount of detail for us to review:

- We received a 67.5% response rate (60% - 80% is a good response rate for large organisations).
- Average SLC overall engagement score is 66.8% (Overall engagement in a typical UK company is between 66% - 72%).
- Average SLC overall satisfaction score is 63.8% (Overall satisfaction in a typical UK company is between 66% - 70%).
- Our top 3 Scoring Questions:
  - My job is important if SLC is to achieve its vision - 'To deliver outstanding products and services to its customers and stakeholders'.
  - At work I know and understand what is expected of me.
  - In the last 6 months my Line Manager has talked to me about my performance and progress.
- Our top 3 Questions to Improve On:
  - I believe I am properly rewarded for the role I do in SLC.
  - At work there is a commitment to my personal growth.
  - At work I have the opportunity to personally develop.

## **Action/Improvements**

We have followed up on these results by cascading individual Directorate and team reports to managers to share with their teams. Results provide insight, but actions drive change. During January we ran a series of local team action planning sessions involving staff, to begin to make a change at SLC, including:

- identifying quick wins that will have an immediate impact
- developing a medium to longer term action plan on the key areas where we need to improve

## **Outcomes**

The Interim Chief Executive and Executive Leadership Team remain absolutely committed to following through on those things that we can fix, whether they come through in the survey results or from the recent SLC internal Question Time sessions. We recognise that there is no "quick fix" for SLC and some of the issues lie outside of our control. The employee engagement survey is the first in a series of actions we are planning to undertake to change the culture and make SLC a great place to work.

## PART 5: GENDER PAY GAP

### Introduction

Gender Pay Gap legislation was introduced in April 2017 and requires all employers of 250 or more employees to publish their gender pay gap for workers in scope as of 31 March 2017. This is the first year of reporting and we present our data and action plan.

The Student Loan Company (SLC) pay strategy supports the fair treatment of all staff irrespective of gender.

### Gender Make-up of SLC

The Company profile is 53% of SLC's workforce are women and 47% of SLC's workforce are men.



### Gender Pay Gap



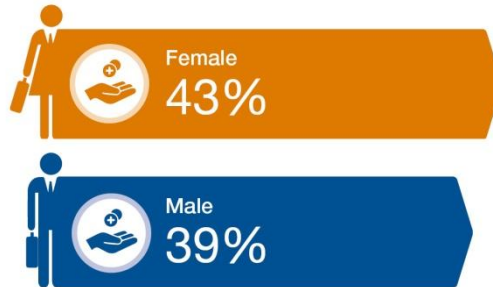
The SLC has an overall mean pay gap of 10% in favour of males - driven by the relatively high percentage of males in professional and technical roles. 60% of The SLC workforce is paid at standard rates of pay at the lower grades and this delivers a zero median gap.



## Performance Related Pay - Bonus



6. Proportion Male and Female Receiving a Bonus



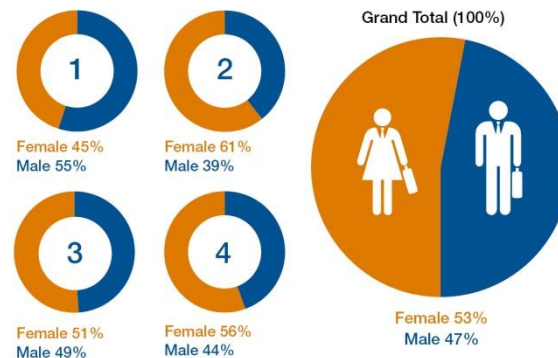
SLC’s performance awards are made to the top 25% of performers (using a four point rating scale) and paid as a set amount, depending on grade and performance level, irrespective of gender. In addition, SLC operate a separate bonus scheme for a proportion of the workforce that work in Repayments and an employee recognition reward scheme.

Proportionately more females than males have received a bonus during the calculation year. The median highlights that males are paid more due to pro-rating for part time workers, who are traditionally more likely to be females.

## Pay by Quartiles

- 1= Top quartile
- 2 = Upper middle quartile
- 3 = Lower middle quartile
- 4= Lower quartile

7. Gender Proportion in Each Quartile



The full report is available on the Company website [www.slc.co.uk](http://www.slc.co.uk).

## PART 6: EQUALITY MONITORING DATA

The following information sets out the equality profile of the Student Loans Company as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2017.

This information is used to compare the profile with the Census and other national statistical research. The purpose of this comparison is to measure our workforce profile with that of the local population to indicate how representative an employer we are.

This is the second year we have disaggregated the data across our 3 main locations of Glasgow, Darlington and Llandudno Junction. This allows us to compare each local population base against the national data and that across the Company.

Improving our equality monitoring is one of the Company's Equality Outcomes and working with colleagues in management information we have been able to increase the level of confidence in the data captured.

Our data is used to provide Company employee information as part of the equality impact assessment process and contribute to Company decision making.

The full analysis including data by location can be accessed on the Company website.



We have people of all ages working at SLC. The average age which remains the same as last year suggests a young workforce when compared with other public sectors where the average is 47 years.

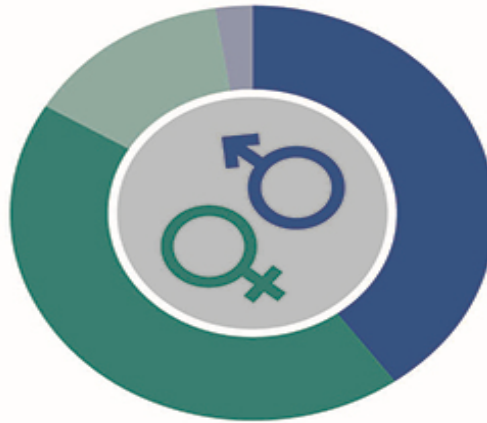




## Grades Breakdown ( Female/ Male )

	Female	Male	Total
Apprentice	0.47%	0.57%	1.04%
G1	7.92%	6.81%	14.73%
G2	24.88%	18.47%	43.35%
G2B	3.41%	2.51%	5.91%
G3	8.98%	8.42%	17.40%
G4	5.04%	5.41%	10.45%
G5	2.10%	2.27%	4.38%
G6	0.77%	0.94%	1.70%
G7	0.40%	0.47%	0.87%
G8	0.03%	0.13%	0.17%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>54.01%</b>	<b>45.99%</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

Since last year the balance for Apprentices has shifted slightly to men whereas it was previously equal. Then from G1 to G3 there are a higher percentage of women to men which is the same as last year. From G4 onwards the gender balance changes in favour of men. Last year G4 and G5 equalised and the balance shifted to men from G6 onwards.



## Gender

<b>Full Time</b>	Female	40.06%
	Male	43.63%
<b>Full Time Total</b>		<b>83.69%</b>
<b>Part Time</b>	Female	13.94%
	Male	2.37%
<b>Part Time Total</b>		<b>16.31%</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>100%</b>

The percentage of women working for the Company is slightly higher than the UK average of 47% (Business in the Community research). The part time differential reflects national labour force survey data (ons.gov.uk). Recent research from BITC indicates that 43.6% of women with dependent children are in employment. According to ONS research from 2017 mothers aged between 16 and 49 are still less likely to be in employment than women without dependent children of the same age.



## Race/Ethnicity

Nil Response		19.61%
White		76.15%
Other	Other Ethnic Group	0.10%
	Mixed/ Multiple Ethnic Group	0.50%
	Black/ African/ Carribean/ Black British (Ethnic Origin)	0.50%
	Asian/ Asian British	2.40%
	Prefer not to say	0.73%
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>100.00%</b>

The table above shows the ethnic breakdown of SLC people.

Since last year our ethnicity chart shows a slight decrease since last year from 77.52% to 76.15% of staff saying their ethnicity is white. 3.5% of our staff are from the BAME community, which remains the same as last year. There has been a slight increase since last year in staff preferring not to say from 0.69% to 0.73%.

The England and Wales population profiles by ethnicity at 2011:

White 87.2%  
 Black/African/Caribbean/Black British 3%  
 Asian/Asian British: Indian 2.3%  
 Asian/Asian British: Pakistani 1.9%  
 Mixed Race 2%  
 Other 3.7%

Across Scotland the minority ethnic population is 4%.



## Religion and Belief

Nil Response	33.99%	
Religion	No Religion	32.29%
	Christian (All denominations)	27.12%
	Muslim	1.03%
	Other	2.37%
Prefer not to say	3.20%	
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	

We hold data for 66.01% of our people that shows us that 27.12 % of employees are Christian. 32.29% have no religion or belief/are atheist. 3.2% prefer not to say. 1.03% are Muslim which is an increase from last year at 0.9%. 1.87% are Other. We have groups of employees who are Sikh, Hindu, Buddhist but these form less than 1% each so are shown with Other. In the 2011 Census Christianity was the largest religion at 59% of the population. The next largest was Muslim with 4.8% of the population.

The picture across the Company of those expressing a religion is:

Glasgow 32%  
 Darlington 29%  
 Llandudno Junction 28%



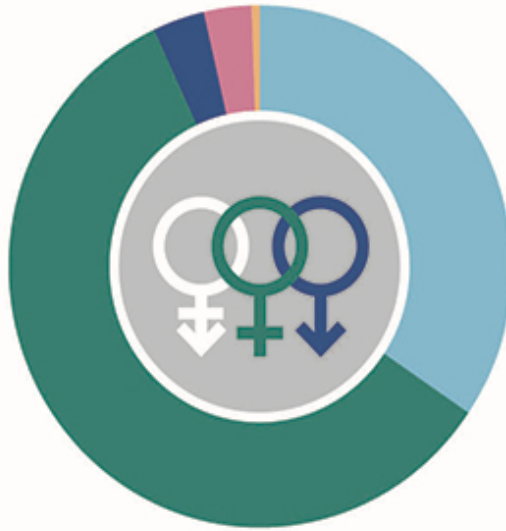
## Disability

No		61.24%
Yes	Learning Disability	0.53%
	Mental Illness	0.53%
	Mobility Impairment	0.60%
	Other	1.17%
	Prefer not to say	0.23%
	Sensory Impairment	0.37%
	<b>Yes Total</b>	<b>3.44%</b>
N/A		35.32%
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>100.00%</b>

We hold data for 64.68% of our people which shows that 3.44% of SLC employees have indicated they have a disability. This is a slight increase from 3.23% last year.

19% of the UK working age population has a disability; this equates to almost 7 million people. According to the Labour Force Survey 2012, 46% of working age disabled people are in employment; this compares with 76% of the working non-disabled population.

We remain committed to ensuring that we support people affected by mental and physical wellbeing issues and have a number of initiatives to deliver this commitment including membership of the national Disability Confident scheme.

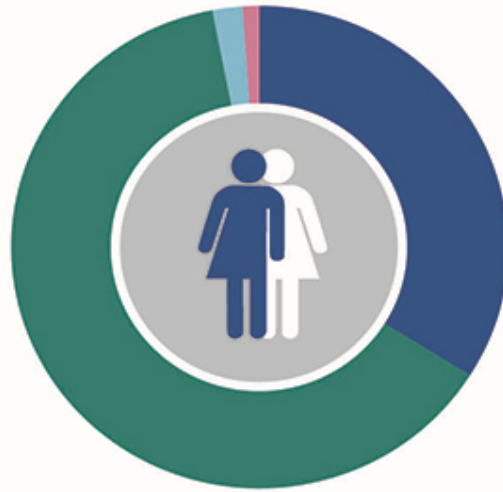


## Sexual Orientation

Nil Response	34.7%
Heterosexual	58.5%
Gay, Lesbian or Bisexual	3.2%
Other	0.3%
Prefer not to say	3.3%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

We had 62% of SLC employees share their sexual orientation. 3.2% of employees said they are gay, lesbian or bisexual (LGB). 2.0% of the UK population are lesbian, gay or bisexual (ONS 2017) this is the most recent data source however, the LGBT foundation has estimated the figure to be between 5% - 7%.

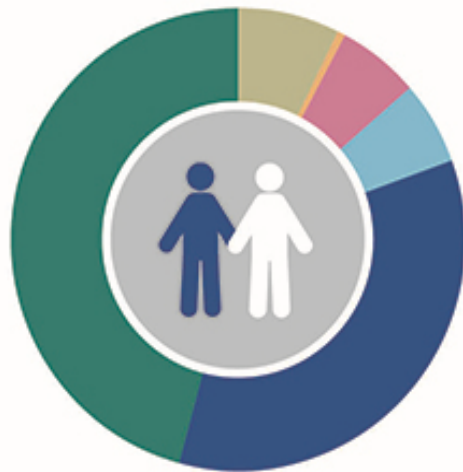
Within the Company this represents a slight increase on last year's report where 2.7 % of people identified as LGB.



## Gender Reassignment

Nil response	34.82%
No	63.98%
Prefer not to say	1.07%
Yes	0.13%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

0.13% of SLC employees share this information. This figure has decreased from 0.28% last year which was the first % report by SLC against this protected characteristic. There is an absence of public data for comparison.



## Marriage & Civil Partnership

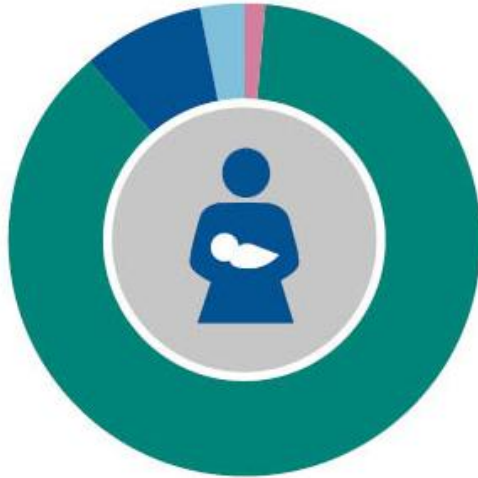
Prefer not to say	7.37%
Civil Partnership	0.50%
Divorced/ Separated	5.84%
Cohabiting	5.87%
Married	34.79%
Single	45.63%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

We hold data about marriage and civil partnership and civil partnership for 98.97% of our people. 34.79% are married, a slight increase from last year of 33.23%. 0.50% have civil partnership, a decrease from last year of 0.62%. 5.87% are cohabiting, a decrease from last year of 6.34%. 5.84% are divorced/separated, a decrease from last year of 6.38%. 45.63% are single, a decrease from last year of 48.07%. Those preferring not to say have increased from 5.45% last year to 7.37% this year.

In 2015, the number of civil partnerships in England and Wales by same sex couples decreased to 861, from 1,683 in 2014 and 5,646 in 2013. This represents a decrease of 49% compared with 2014, and a decrease of 85% since 2013. These decreases could be attributed to the introduction of marriage for same sex couples in March 2014; Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013.

2016 was the first year that civil partnership formations had not declined since the introduction of marriages of same-sex couples was announced. There were 890 civil partnerships formed in England and Wales in 2016, a rise of 3.4% compared with 861 in 2015.





## Pregnancy and Maternity

Adoption Leave	1
Maternity Leave	117
Shared Parental Leave	11
Paternity Leave	27
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>156</b>

Over the past year:

- 117 employees took maternity leave
- 11 took shared parental leave
- 27 employees took paternity leave
- 1 employee took adoption leave.

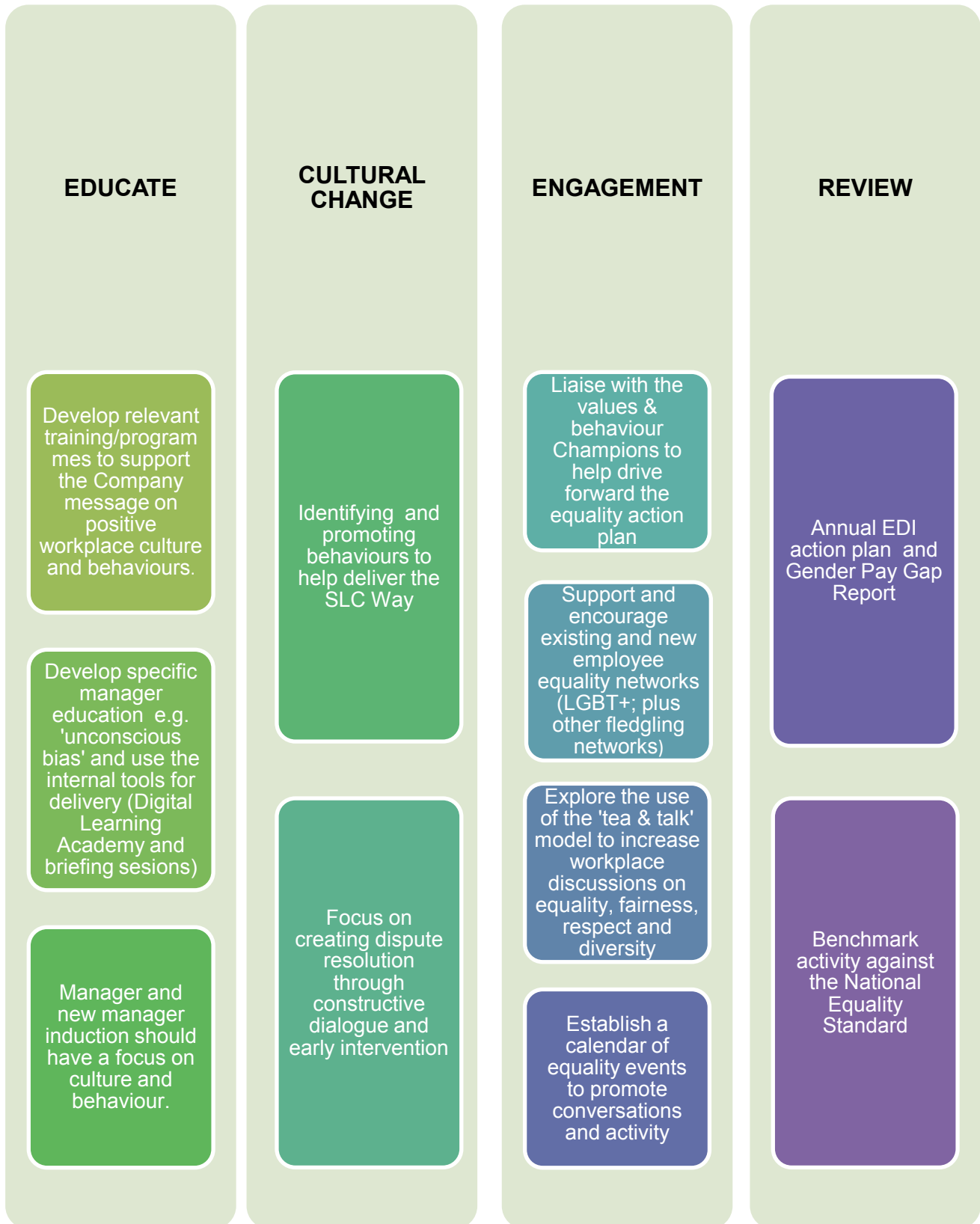
Employees going on maternity leave in 2017 decreased from 135 in 2016 to 117 in 2017.

There has been a small increase since last year in the uptake of shared parental leave. Shared parental leave, which allows both parents to share up to 50 weeks of leave and 37 weeks of statutory pay after their baby arrives, was introduced by the UK government in April 2015 in the hope it would boost gender equality in the workplace.

The numbers of employees taking paternity leave has decreased with 36 in 2016 to 27 in 2017. The number taking adoption leave has decreased from 3 in 2016 to 1 in 2017.

We refreshed our family friendly policies in 2017 and are planning to pilot drop-in sessions for pregnant women and new or expectant parents of any gender in 2018.

## PART 6: EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION ACTION PLAN



## Measuring Progress

This will be achieved by:

- Publishing an EDI annual report (inclusive of workforce and recruitment equality data) on the progress we make on the equality objectives and actions.
- Monitoring our employee equality data and compare annual trends to identify relevant business actions to improve workforce representativeness.
- Reporting our gender pay gap information and analysis before March 2019.
- Improving employee engagement:
  - Support for employee networks and other internal Champion groups.
  - Encouraging internal conversations on fairness, equality, diversity and inclusion.
  - Promoting activity to highlight the importance of individual health & wellbeing to the Company aspirations on Organisational Health.
  - Reviewing our diversity questionnaire and seeking to increase declaration rates to ensure we are role modelling best practice in this area.
- Promote and highlight case studies of good practice for sharing with other employers and external networks.
- Benchmarking our performance.
- Engaging with our customers and stakeholders to create 'a level playing field' particularly for our customers with specific support needs.
- Keeping EDI on the business radar by using our internal and external communication systems and processes.