



Homes
England

Making homes happen

Annual Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Report 2020/21

Published 27th July 2020



Forewords



Nick Walkley
Chief Executive Officer,
Homes England

Championing inclusion and diversity, and role modelling the right behaviours must happen at all levels and corners of our organisation.

Publishing our first Equality, Diversity and Inclusion report is a real milestone for Homes England. It sets out not just how we will ensure a more inclusive, equal and diverse workplace, but why. More importantly, it gives us a further platform for progress and accountability.

It is also an opportunity to step back and celebrate the work we've done as an organisation to create an environment where people are encouraged to be themselves and to speak up about the issues that matter to them. I am particularly proud of the members of our Employee Networks, who represent the very best of Homes England – they're passionate, honest, and relentless in advocating for change.

But it is not just up to our Employee Networks to do the hard work. Championing inclusion and diversity, and role modelling the right behaviours must happen at all levels and corners of our organisation. This is vital if we are to really create an organisation where the principles of equality, fairness and inclusivity are woven into everything we do – whether that's how we recruit, how we communicate or anything else.

There is a particular responsibility on our leadership tiers to lead the way in this work, which is why

it's important to me that each of our new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion objectives has a senior sponsor. Sponsors commit to investing their time into understanding what needs to be done and who takes personal responsibility for making sure it happens.

Through this work, we want to send a clear message to colleagues and potential colleagues about the type of organisation we are. This is necessary, not only because it's the right thing to do, but because each person at Homes England contributes to making homes happen. It is only with true diversity within our organisation – and a culture which encourages people to speak up when we don't live up to our words – that we can deliver homes and services that meet the needs of the diverse communities we serve.

To that end, we must also continue working with our partners and suppliers to create a more inclusive industry. Aspirations fall flat without data, and I would like to make sure that Homes England plays our role in changing the statistics about who works in this sector and what their experiences are. I welcome conversations, ideas or challenges from anyone who wants to join us in this commitment.



Simon Dudley
Chairman, Homes England

The Board wholeheartedly supports the report as a positive step forward for Homes England and I'm delighted that board member Olivia Scanlon has agreed to be our Board Sponsor for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

In publishing our first Equality, Diversity and inclusion report, Homes England is demonstrating its commitment to creating a workplace- and an industry – where everyone is able to be themselves.

The statement 'sets out our stall', and through our five objectives shows how we will work together to create a more inclusive, diverse and equal organisation.

No matter what our role at Homes England, it's our job to build a workplace where diversity and inclusion are valued and celebrated and to ensure fairness and equality are at the heart of what we do.

It's also the job of everyone who works here to ensure the homes we deliver meet the diverse and evolving housing needs of communities across the country, and to work with our partners to achieve that goal.

The Board wholeheartedly supports the report as a positive step forward for Homes England and I'm delighted that board member Olivia Scanlon has agreed to be our Board Sponsor for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

The report is both a platform for us to build on and an opportunity to positively influence the sector, ensuring that we're making homes happen – for everyone.



Arshad Bhatt
Chief Executive Officer
and founder of Apex
Airspace and Apex
Housing Group

As an industry, we need to work together to call out discrimination, whether systemic or behavioural and seek to address inequality wherever it is found in our sector.

Apex Airspace welcomes the timely publication of Homes England's first annual equality report.

We fully support the five key diversity and inclusions objectives set out in the statement, accompanied by a clear route map of how each one will be achieved over the next four years. We will do our utmost at Apex Airspace in helping to support the successful delivery of these clear objectives.

As an industry, we need to work together to call out discrimination, whether systemic or behavioural and seek to address inequality wherever it is found in our sector.

Apex Airspace fully embraces the need to support and nurture a diverse workforce.

We look forward to our continued partnership with Homes England and sharing best practices to help create a more inclusive industry in delivering homes that meet the needs of all in our society.



Julie Musesoglu
Diversity and Inclusion
Manager, Homes England

Together we can create a welcoming industry.

The publication of this report signifies an exciting time for Homes England. We have come a long way over the past few years, starting at a place where inclusion was seen as a ‘nice to have’, with the work largely driven by a few individuals.

We’re now at a point where diversity and inclusion are recognised as necessities, both from a human and business perspective, and championed from the top. However we have a long way to go, and can’t be complacent.

We know that the built environment as a whole is falling behind other industries in this area. As a sector, we need to make a collective effort to change this. We recognise the role that Homes England must play, but also need our partners and stakeholders to share our diversity and inclusion ambitions.

We know that some of our partners are doing great things; we’d love to learn from you. And for those who are starting your journey; we’d love to support you.

Together we can create a welcoming industry, that attracts the best talent, drives productivity and innovation and ensures that the right homes are built for the people that need them. Achieving the objectives outlined in this report will bring us closer to that goal.



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1

Purpose

Purpose

Our equality, diversity and inclusion statement and objectives are ambitious – they will guide us to becoming an organisation that champions diversity and inclusion, and raises the bar in the housing sector.

We want to do more than just fulfil our legal obligations as a public body.

As a government agency, we are committed to meeting our responsibilities under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

We consider the impact that our work has on our communities and pay due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who don't.

We know that just meeting the Public Sector Equality Duty is not enough, and this report outlines the steps we will take to go beyond our statutory obligations.

We want to create a culture of acceptance, inclusion and belonging, where our differences are celebrated and where we truly reflect the needs of our diverse communities through the services we deliver.

Protected characteristics were introduced through the Equality Act 2010 and refer to a personal characteristic that is protected by law. These characteristics are: age, disability, gender, gender identity, marital status, pregnancy or maternity status, race, religion and belief, sex or sexual orientation.

Definitions

At Homes England, we define equality, diversity, inclusion and belonging as:

Equality

Equality is ensuring individuals or groups of individuals are treated fairly and no less favourably regardless of their protected characteristics. Equality is not about treating everyone the same, but about making sure that people are given equal access to opportunities.

Diversity

Diversity is what makes us different. Age, gender, ethnicity, religion, disability, sexual orientation, education, national background and life experiences, and more are examples of our differences.

Inclusion

Recognising diversity alone is not enough; we need inclusion to ensure that diversity is embraced. Inclusion harnesses and celebrates our diversity to the benefit and greater good of the organisation, those who work in it and the wider industry. It's about bringing diversity into action, allowing everyone to feel included and where people are proud to pull together to create environments of mutual respect.

Belonging

Belonging is about feeling part of a bigger group. Just because someone is included in our organisation, doesn't mean they feel they belong. People feel that they belong when they are seen and valued for who they are, their true and unique self, which helps them, and people around them, to thrive.

The reach of our impact

We strive to have a positive impact on the homes created to support the diverse communities we serve: through our colleagues, our partners and our supply chain.

2

The Homes England Way

The Homes England Way

Our **mission** and **objectives** are what we are all aiming to achieve and the Homes England Way sets out **how** we will do it. It's a common way of working for all of us and sets the standards on how we relate to and work with each other, our partners and stakeholders.

Our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion is underpinned by our values.

We are ambitious about creating a welcoming and inclusive organisation where everybody can be themselves and thrive. We are building a diverse workforce which will bring a wider variety of perspectives and creativity, enabling us to be stronger.

Creating a culture where inclusion and belonging is a shared responsibility, but we can't do this alone. We need to work together to achieve our ambitions and this includes our colleagues, partners and stakeholders.

Our values underpin everything we do and our culture is founded upon them. At Homes England, we are:



Ambitious

We always strive for more and believe in better.



Collaborative

We work together to get things done.



Commercial

We're professionals who achieve value for money.



Creative

We're always thinking up new ideas and disrupting the status quo.



Diverse

We value everybody as an individual, and in their thoughts and ideas.



Learning

We can always do better, share what we know, and admit our mistakes.

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Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Statement

Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Statement

Building belonging at Homes England.

At Homes England, we strive to be an employer of choice. We recognise diversity through our Homes England values.

We believe that a diverse and inclusive organisation empowers teams to perform better. The diversity of backgrounds, perspectives, thoughts and ideas will provide a richer platform for us to do things differently and challenge the status quo.

We recognise that our diversity will enable us to best understand the housing needs of the communities we serve and in turn help us achieve our mission: to intervene in the housing market to ensure that more homes are built in the areas of greatest need.

We welcome everyone who believes in our mission and shares our values, regardless of their age, belief, disability, ethnicity, gender identity, maternity status, marital status, pregnancy, religion, sex or sexual orientation.

We want everyone at Homes England to thrive, and this means feeling that they can bring their whole self to work and feel a sense of belonging, knowing that they play an important part in fulfilling our mission.

Working closely with our partners and stakeholders will also allow us to make an impact not just within our organisation but on the sector more broadly.

Together we can create a welcoming and inclusive industry that attracts the best talent and drives productivity and innovation, which are essential for us to successfully grow communities and deliver the Government's housing agenda.

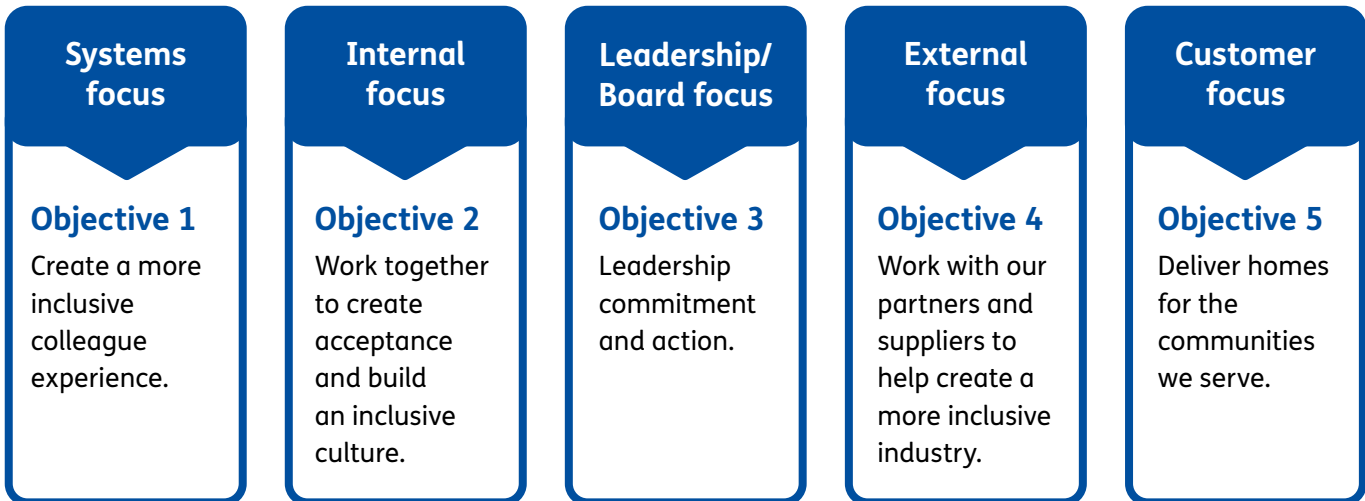


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Our Diversity and Inclusion Objectives 2020-2024

Our Diversity and Inclusion Objectives 2020-2024

Our diversity statement is supported by our objectives which cover the whole reach of our impact – not just our internal practices.



We want our commitments to deliver systematic organisational and cultural change, as well as positively impact the industry and our communities.

We'll focus on the five following core areas of change:

- **Systems** – how we embed diversity and inclusion by systemic change through our systems, process and policies. This will be addressed by objective 1.
- **Internal** – how we use our networks and colleagues to support driving change. This will be addressed by objective 2.
- **Leadership/Board sponsorship** – how we increase ownership for diversity and inclusion through our leaders, actions, sponsorship and leading by example. This will be addressed by objective 3.

→ **External** – how we support and influence the market and our partners. This will be addressed by objective 4.

→ **Customer** – how we ensure the homes we help to deliver meet the needs of the community. This will be addressed by objective 5.

Each objective is sponsored by an Executive Director, who will play a key role in promoting, advocating and shaping the work.

These are our objectives for the next four years and they will be reviewed and published with our Annual Equality, Diversity and Inclusion report every year.

Objective 1

Create a more inclusive colleague experience.

Senior sponsor:



Lynda McMullan
Chief Finance Officer

Improve the experience that our colleagues and candidates have with us by ensuring the employee cycle, from recruitment and onboarding to our HR policies and ongoing workplace practices, are inclusive.

We will achieve it by:

- Ensuring that our attraction, recruitment, onboarding, appraisal and exiting processes are inclusive and take into account our colleagues' and candidates' diverse range of needs and experiences.
- Quarterly monitoring of our diversity data and Gender Pay Gap.
- Improving our mandatory diversity and inclusion training, to ensure it is robust and effective.
- Using workforce data to identify barriers faced by certain groups, and developing data-driven action plans to address them.
- Supporting our colleagues' development by ensuring that opportunities are available and equally accessible to everyone.

What success will look like:

- Candidate data will show an improvement in the diversity of applicants.
- Improved diversity make up of our colleagues across all levels.
- Improved diversity data declaration rates, allowing us to create data-driven action plans.

Priorities for 2020/21

- Develop a diversity and inclusion recruitment strategy (including graduate recruitment).
- Undertake a diversity 'data cleanse', aiming for a 95% declaration rate.
- Improve our mandatory diversity and inclusion training offer.

Objective 2

Work together to create acceptance and build an inclusive culture.

Senior sponsor:



Amy Casterton

Chief of Staff

Work together to share individual experiences and raise awareness and acceptance. Demonstrate inclusive behaviours and lead by example, embracing the work of employee network groups, allies and individual role models.

We will achieve it by:

- Using our internal channels and platforms to recognise behaviours that support our diversity and inclusion agenda.
- Tackling bullying, harassment and discrimination and building confidence in challenging inappropriate behaviours.
- Formalising the way in which networks raise issues and influence the wider organisation.

Priorities for 2020/21

- Implement a framework for employee networks to provide common ways of working, which are aligned to corporate priorities and encourage sharing of best practice.
- Launch a series of virtual diversity and inclusion learning events.

What success will look like:

- Employee networks will be engaged in key process implementation and change management
- Increased number of visible diverse role models and shared success stories.
- Reduction in incidents of bullying and harassment.

Objective 3

Leadership commitment and action.

Senior sponsor:



Nick Walkley

Chief Executive Officer

Create a culture where the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion are visible and actively championed at a senior level and where our leaders are educated, empowered and confident in role modelling inclusive behaviours.

We will achieve it by:

- Holding our leaders accountable for inclusion in their teams and in challenging behaviour that goes against our values.
- Holding regular dedicated diversity and inclusion learning opportunities for senior leaders.
- Having senior leadership sponsorship of diversity and inclusion initiatives and of our employee networks.
- Leaders attend and encourage their teams to attend, diversity and inclusion training/network events to increase understanding, acceptance and inclusive behaviour and practices.

What success will look like:

- All network groups will have senior sponsors.

- Directors will take ownership of ensuring their directorate's operational policies, business processes and ways of working are inclusive.
- Leaders will engage with partners and colleagues on diversity and inclusion themselves.

Priorities for 2020/21

- All network groups, diversity and inclusion objectives and key diversity and inclusion initiatives will have a senior sponsor.
- Develop a mentoring and reverse mentoring programme for network members and directors.
- Increase understanding and acceptance by senior leaders of different groups through a series of training sessions.

Objective 4

Work with our partners and suppliers to help create a more inclusive industry.

Senior sponsor:



Stephen Kinsella

Chief Land and Development Officer

Lead by example by setting expectations on those who want to work with us and enable the sharing of best practice with our partners.

We will achieve it by:

- Using our relationships with our stakeholders to collaborate with and learn from them by sharing ideas and best practice.
- Supporting industry-wide diversity and inclusion initiatives.
- Raising awareness about our commitment to diversity and inclusion to the sector through presentations, meetings and via social media.
- Setting diversity requirements for our supply chain through our procurement processes.

- Diversity and inclusion discussions integrated into mainstream industry events.
- Growth of active networks within the industry where best practice is shared.

Priorities for 2020/21

- All future panel procurement to request diversity and inclusion commitments from panel members.
- Homes England representation across all relevant Building Equality regions.
- Diversity and inclusion to be spoken about at all panel framework meetings.

What success will look like:

- Improved experience and representation of diverse groups within the industry, evidenced through existing industry-wide survey.

Objective 5

Deliver homes for the communities we serve.

Senior sponsor:



Lou Downe

Director of Transformation

Promote and actively contribute to the delivery of housing that meets the needs of people with protected characteristics.

We will achieve it by:

- Providing training to colleagues to increase understanding of the on the Public Sector Equality Duty.
- Monitoring the impact of homes supported by Homes England on diverse communities.
- Improving our understanding of the housing needs of the diverse communities, identifying gaps in the current market and taking steps to address them.

- Homes England leading projects to understand housing inequalities and exploring them with partners and stakeholders.

Priorities for 2020/21

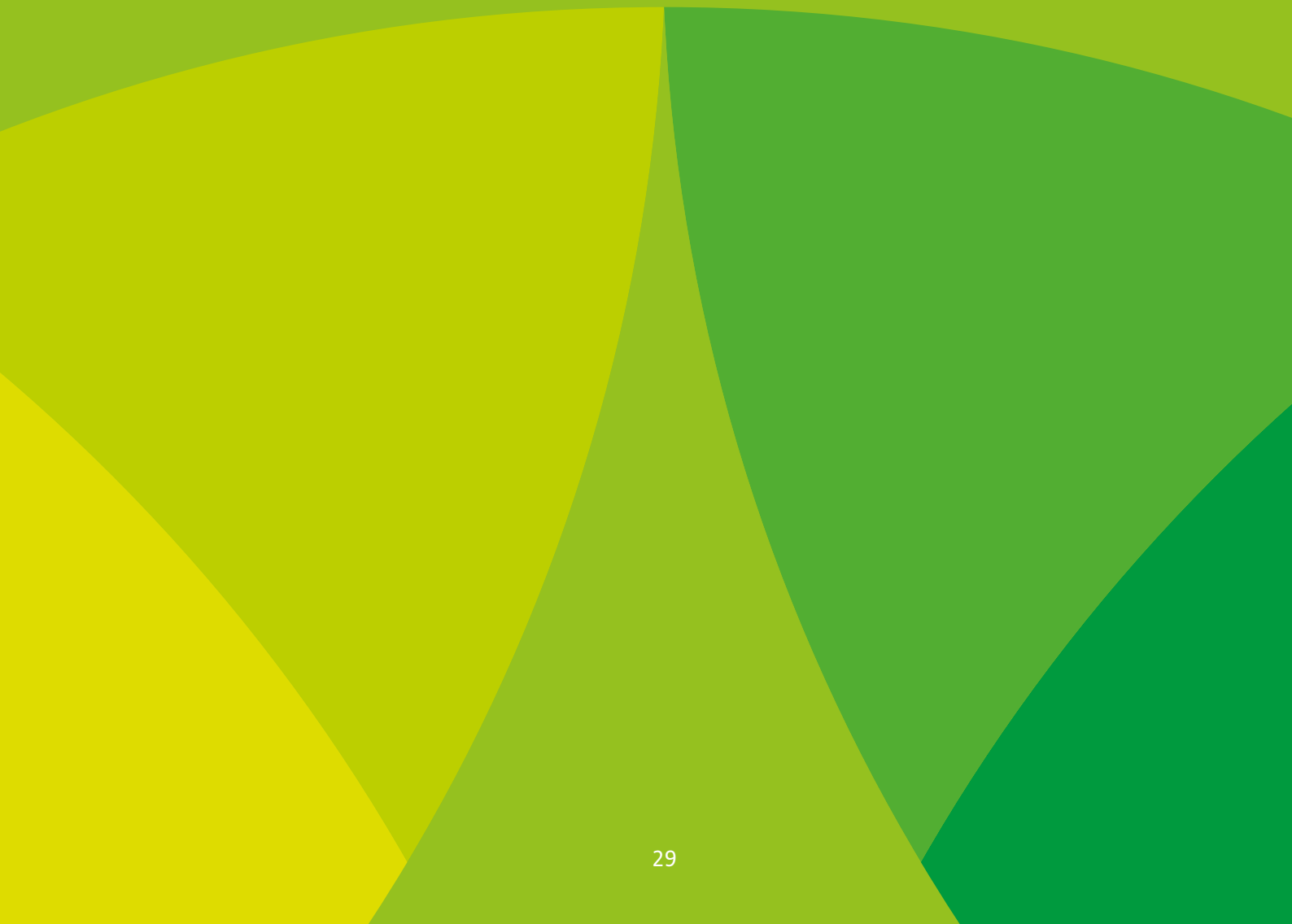
- Roll out training on the Public Sector Equality Duty.
- Identify methods of improving data collection to demonstrate the impact of homes delivered on diverse communities.

What success will look like:

- Improved understanding of the Public Sector Equality Duty internally, evidenced by more robust considerations about the impact of our work on our communities.

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What our data tells us



What our data tells us

We collect data from our employees, which helps us understand the makeup of our organisation and the actions we want to take.

This is collected through self-declaration and whilst we encourage our colleagues to provide their information or use the ‘prefer not to say’ option, there are still some gaps in our data, which means that the picture of our organisation’s make up is not full.

Between 31st March 2019 and 31st March 2020, number of employees grown from 921 to 1,035, resulting in a higher number of colleagues with protected characteristics. Our gender diversity is improving at the Director level, but this is not reflected across all diverse groups where we are still underrepresented.

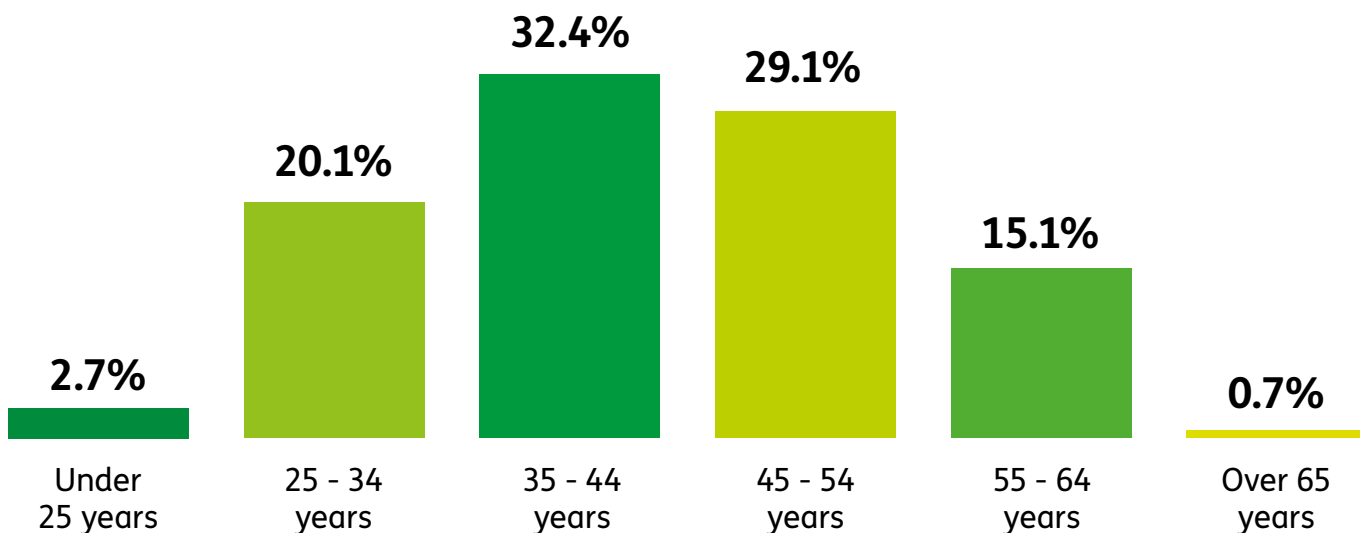
The representation of different ethnicities across our more senior grades is an issue that stands out. We have more work to do here to ensure that all colleagues have access to the same opportunities, regardless of any protected characteristics.

Because we have a number of undeclared answers in our diversity data, we cannot fully understand the issues we may need to resolve or successes that we need to measure. This currently limits our ability to identify issues or potential barriers facing certain groups. In 2020 we will be refreshing our diversity data, encouraging colleagues to share their data to help us develop better action plans.

On the following pages, you can find an illustration of the diversity data as of snapshot date 31st March 2020.

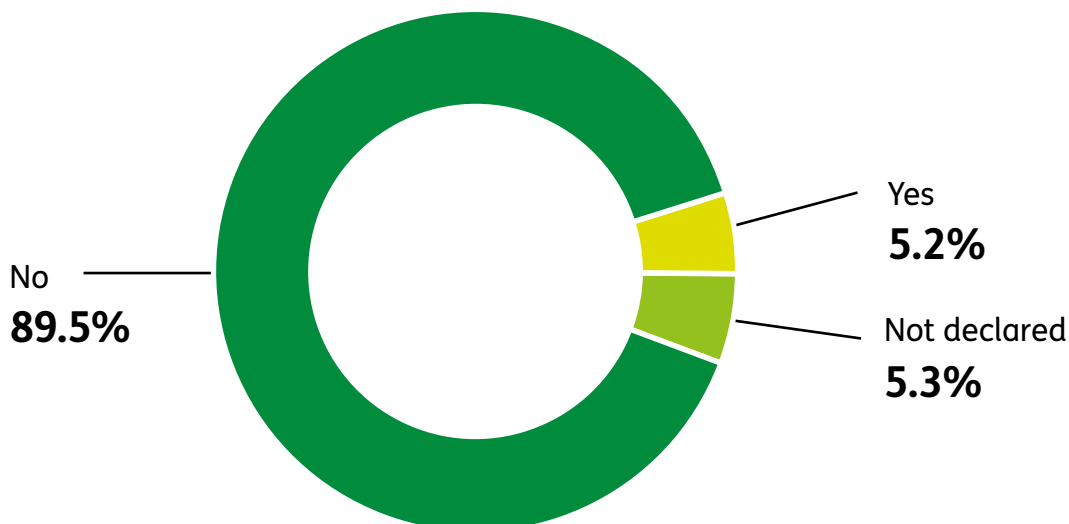
Age

Of our employees, 97.7% are aged between 25 and 64. The age groups with the most employees are 35-44 years (32.4%) and 45-55 years (29.1%).



Disability

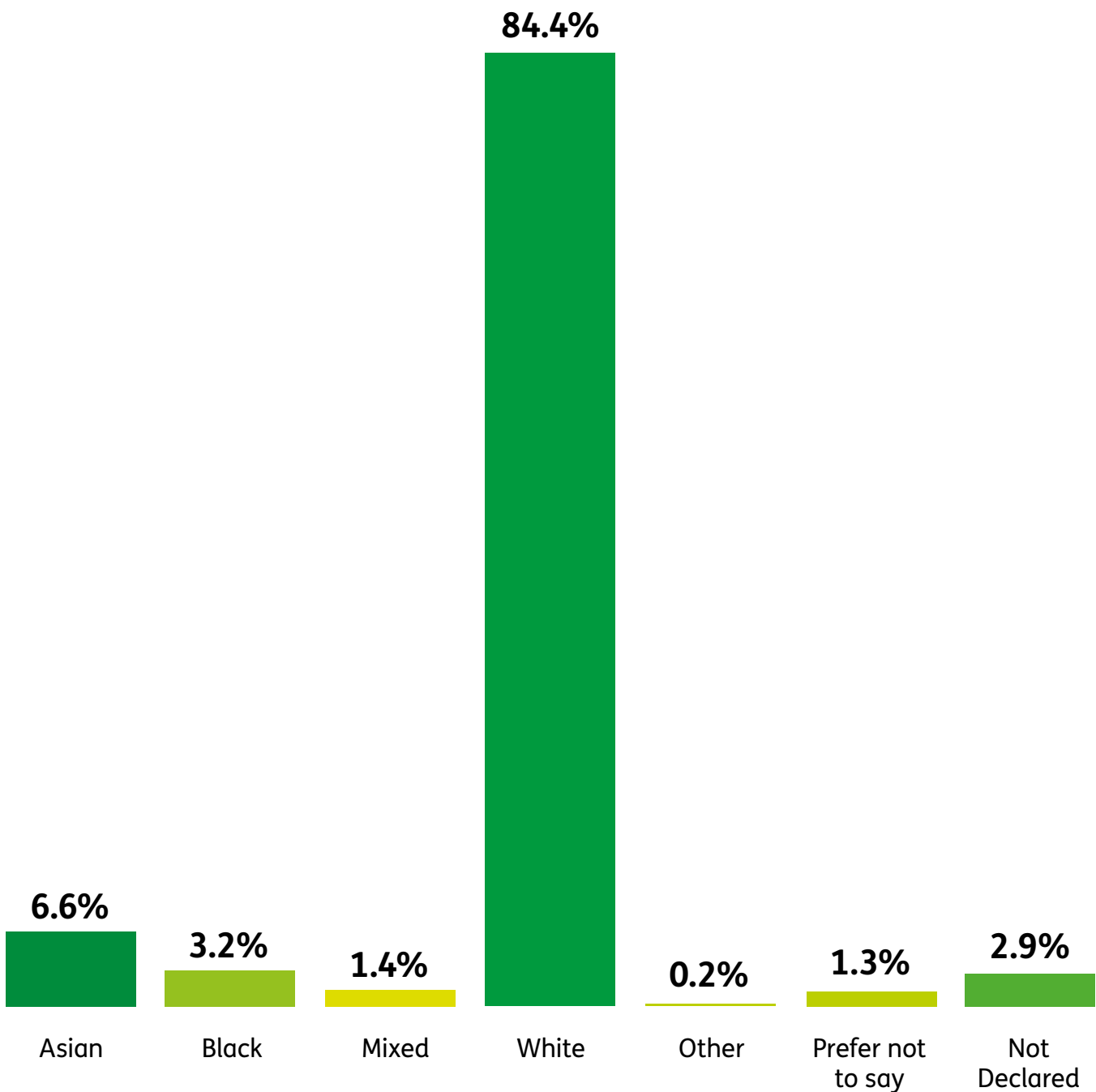
Within our organisation, 5.2% employees declared a disability, which is on average 1 in 20 employees.



Ethnicity

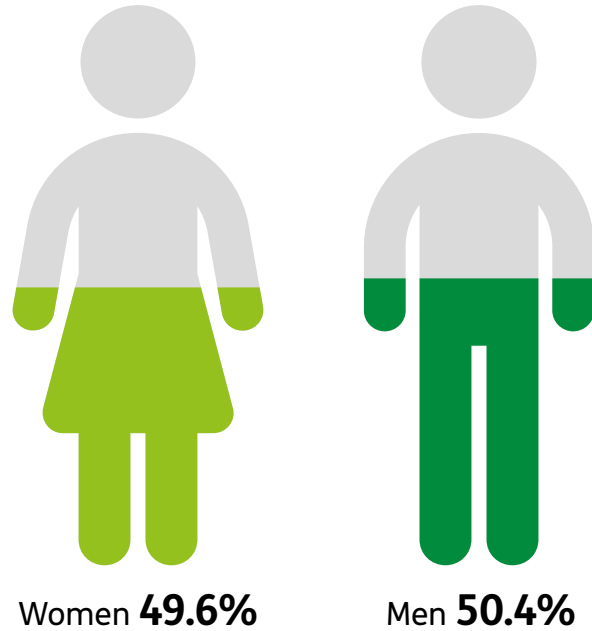
Of our employees, 11.4% declared ethnicity other than White. The proportion of employees that declared ethnicity is respectively:

- Asian 6.6%
- Black 3.2%
- Mixed 1.2%
- White 84.4%
- Other 0.2%



Gender (HMRC records)

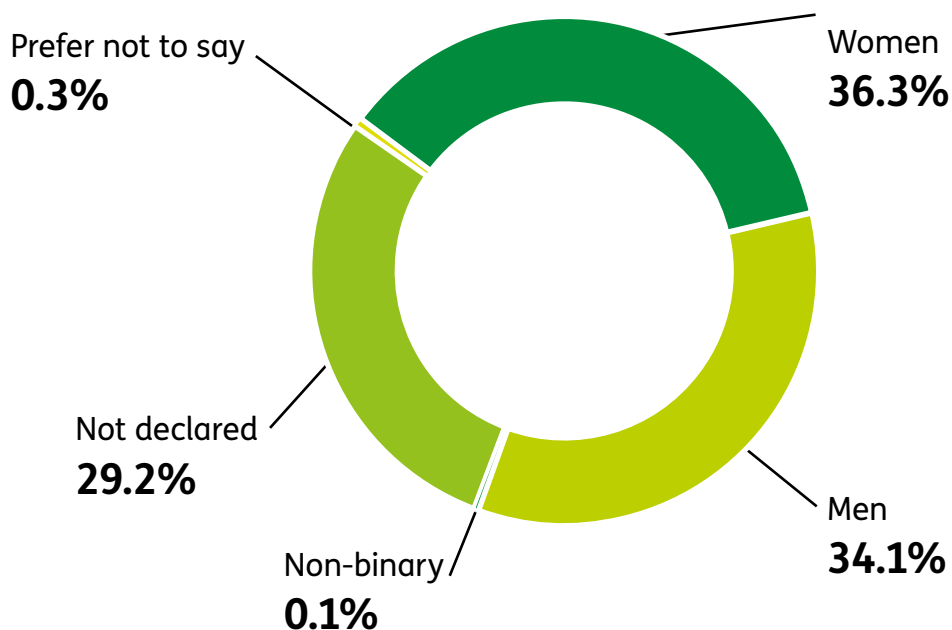
The gender records from Her Majesty’s Revenue and Customs (HMRC) provide the information that there is a close balance of men and women in our organisation (0.8 percentage points more men than women).



Gender (self-declaration)

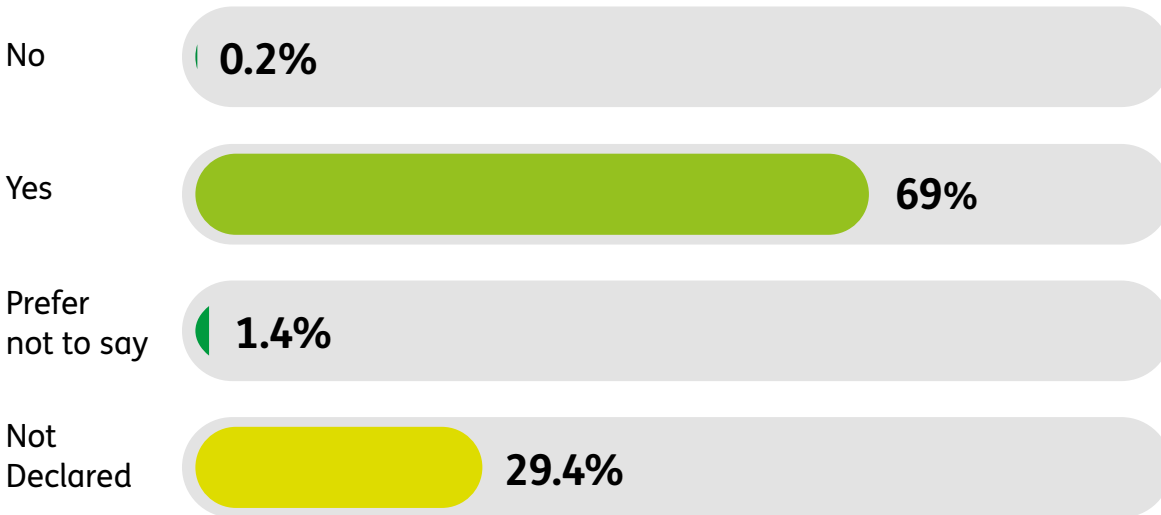
We know that gender is not binary and we encourage our colleagues to share their gender identity in our self-reporting system. The proportion of declared gender identity is as below:

- Women 36.6%
- Men 34.1%
- Non-binary 0.1%.



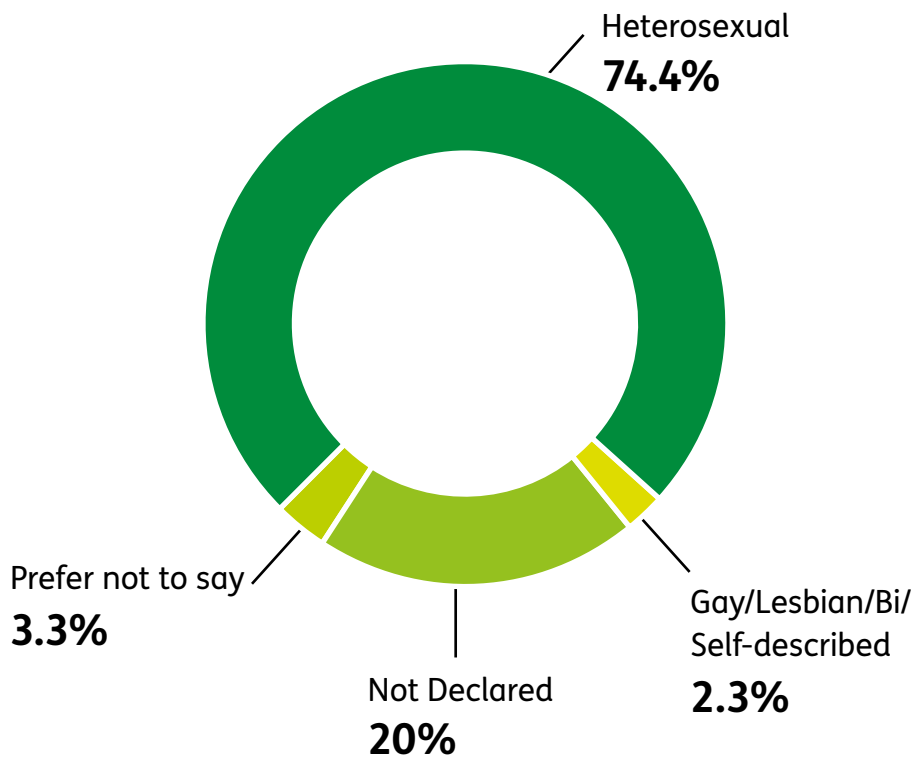
Gender identity the same as sex assigned at birth

Of our employees, 69% declared gender identity as the same as sex assigned at birth and 0.2% declared as not the same as sex assigned at birth.



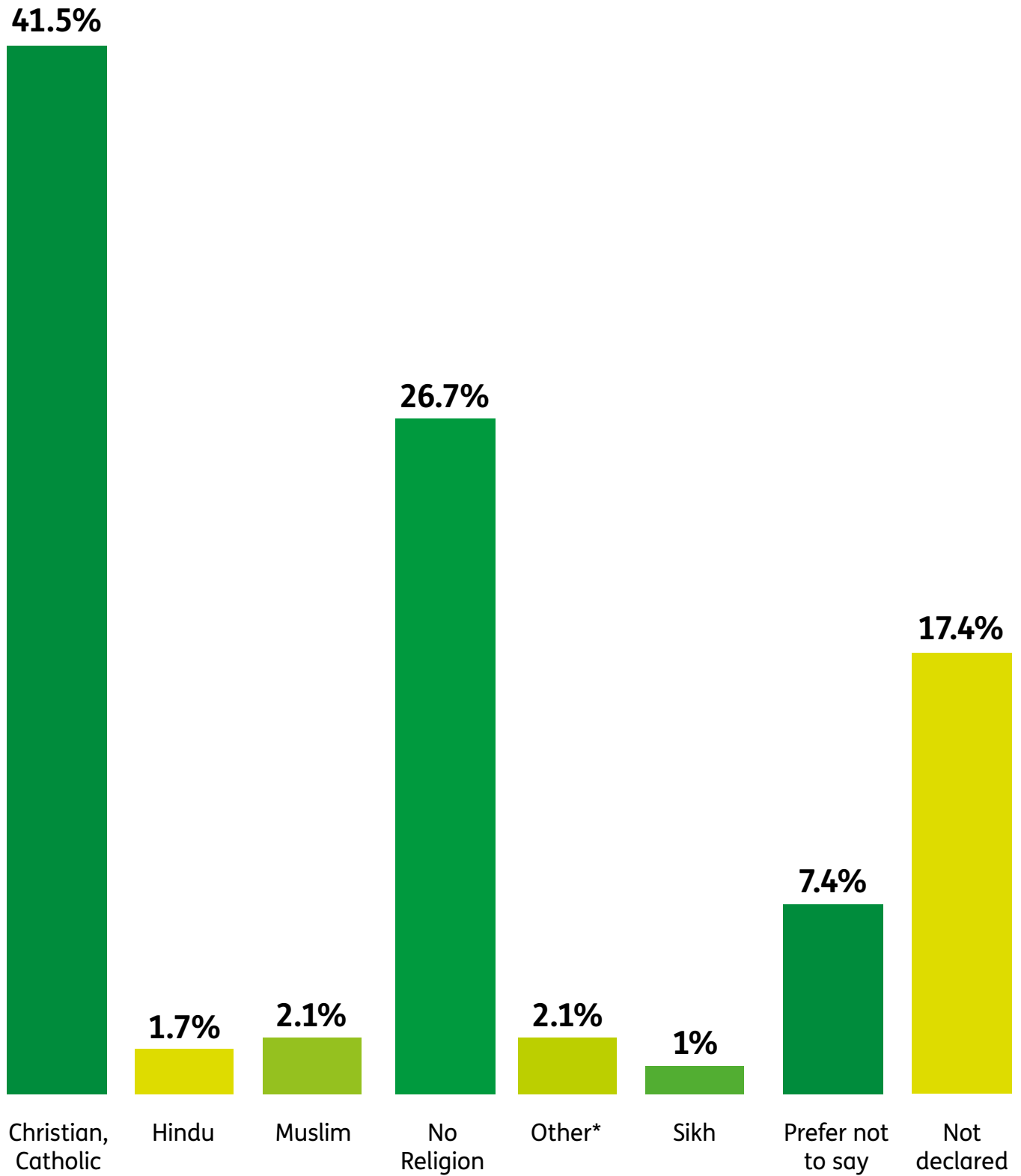
Sexual Orientation

Of our employees, 74.4% declared their sexual orientation as Heterosexual and 2.3% stated that they are Gay, Lesbian, Bi or other sexual orientation.



Religion

Amongst our employees, 48.4% declared their religion or belief and 26.7% declared no religion.



*Answers with less than 10 resp. (Agnostic, Buddhist, Jewish, Other) have been grouped as Other.

6

Our Gender Pay Gap 2020

Our Gender Pay Gap 2020

We recognise that there is much work ahead of us to close the gender pay gap.

At 31st March 2020, Homes England’s mean Gender Pay Gap was 16.9% and the median Gender Pay Gap was 15.3%. We are slowly improving, but the pay gap between men and women is still significant and we are not progressing quickly enough.

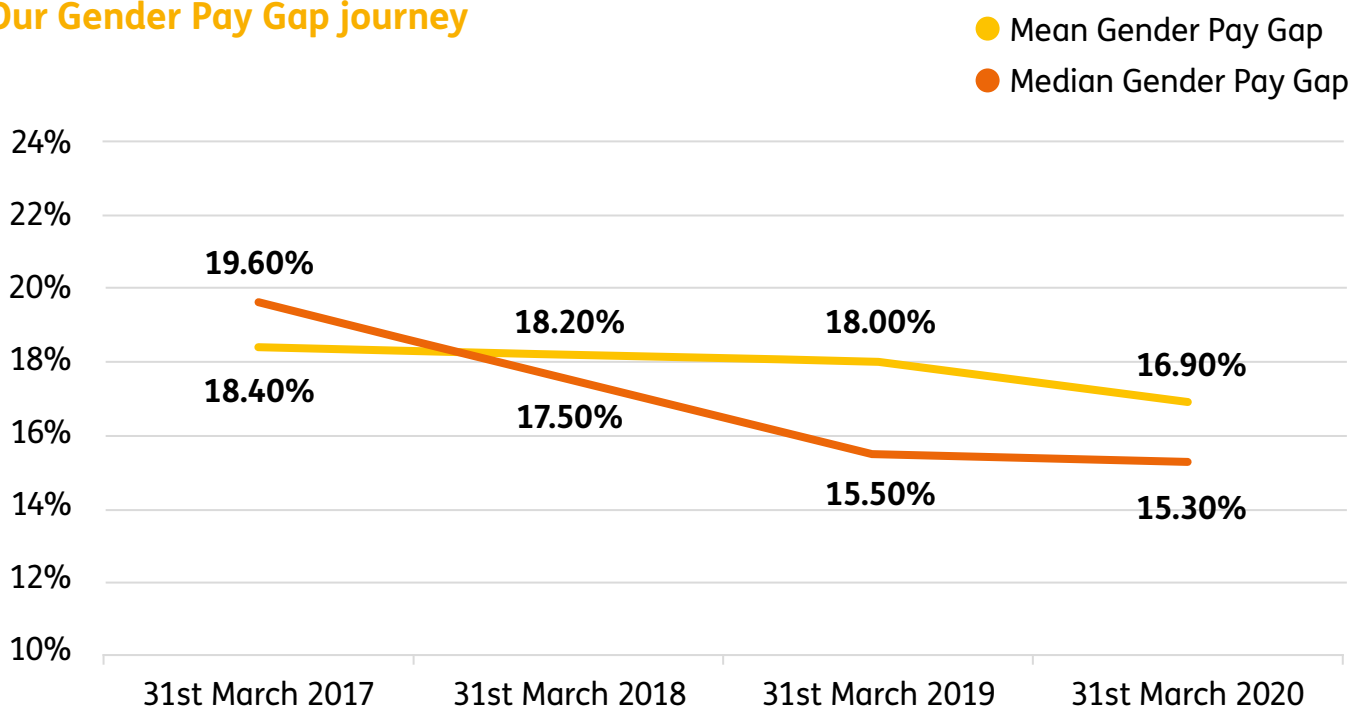
Internally, we monitor and report progress each quarter. Our annual Gender Pay Gap 2020 report is published alongside this annual report and includes a closer look at our results, progress and action plan.

The gender pay gap is not the same as equal pay. Equal pay deals with the pay differences between men and women who carry out the

same jobs, similar jobs or work of equal value. The gender pay gap shows the difference in the average pay between all men and women in a workforce.

We recognise that gender identity is broader than simply men and women. A person’s gender does not always match the sex that they were assigned at birth and is not always binary. While the current gender pay gap regulations require us to report gender in a binary way, we value and welcome colleagues of all gender identities and encourage colleagues to self-declare their gender identity through our HR system.

Our Gender Pay Gap journey



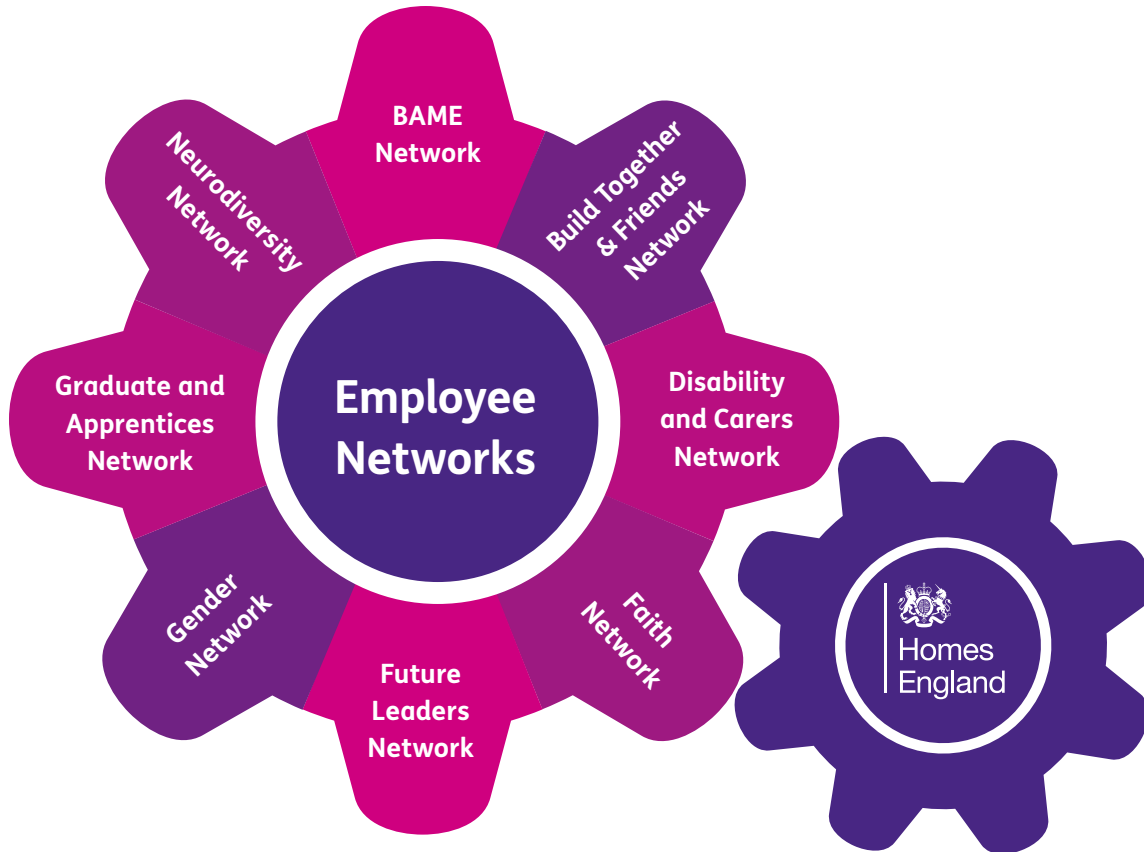


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Our Employee Network groups

Our Employee Network groups

Employee Networks are the heartbeat of our organisation and play a critical role in shaping our culture.



We are very proud of the work that they do to:

- Help us to create a healthy, inclusive and positive working environment where we can all be ourselves, give our best and flourish.
- Ensure equality, diversity and inclusion is embedded throughout Homes England so that all of our people understand the importance of the agenda and their roles in delivering it.
- Help us to continuously improve our working environment, policies and processes that affect our people by providing advice and guidance.
- Help us have the richest possible mix of talent from all demographic groups by working with us to develop our people and ensure that potential employees understand the benefits of a career with us.
- Raise awareness of matters that affect people through the provision of training, events, blogs and articles to our people and wider stakeholders.
- Ensure that diversity and inclusion remains a core principle in the delivery of Homes England's role to help fix the housing market and the delivery of homes that our country needs.

Meet our Employee Networks

Black, Asian, Minority, Ethnic (BAME) Network

Our BAME Network exists to improve the working lives of Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME) colleagues as well as helping to influence the agency's delivery of its wider mission, by:

- Ensuring we have an inclusive work environment where everyone feels welcome and can thrive and be at their best.
- Providing a safe forum for BAME colleagues to discuss any issues or worries that they may have.
- Acting as a voice for BAME people.
- Assisting with policy development on BAME issues through providing advice and feedback to HR and Diversity and Inclusion manager.
- Acting as an advocate for targeted learning, development, mentoring and promotion opportunities for BAME colleagues.
- Assisting the organisation to address under representation of Managers and Senior Managers from BAME groups.
- Promoting diversity and inclusion training and awareness opportunities to everyone.
- Working with HR to ensure our recruitment process reflect the most up-to-date inclusion hiring practices.
- Work with charities that represent the BAME community with a view to learning through shared experiences.



Build Together & Friends (LGBTQ+ and Allies) Network

Our LGBTQ+ and Allies Network was formed to raise awareness of issues affecting LGBTQ+ people and advise the organisation on LGBTQ+ inclusive policies and practices. The network regularly engages with colleagues and partners, both across the organisation and externally, raising awareness of challenges impacting LGBTQ+ people in the workplace, industry and housing. It also acts as a support function to colleagues and offers confidential advice and guidance on areas including:

- Coming out (to Homes England, to partners or to friends and family).
- Supporting friends, family members or colleagues in coming out.
- Transitioning in the workplace.
- Supporting friends, family members or colleagues who are transitioning.
- Reporting homophobic, biphobic or transphobic bullying, harassment or discrimination.
- Using appropriate terminology.
- Challenging inappropriate behaviour or language.



Disability and Carers Network

Our Disability and Carers Network supports and brings together people who either have a disability covered by disability legislation or are a carer, be it to a child/children, other dependent, or an elderly relative. They do this by:

- Providing a safe space for people with a disability or caring responsibilities to discuss issues and seek support for their worries.
- Promoting equality, diversity and inclusion for our people through active involvement and consultation on our policies and guidance in an informal and relaxed way.

Faith Network

Our Faith Network celebrates different faiths and raises awareness of religious events and festivals that impact the lives of our people. The network provides advice on how we can be more inclusive to people of different faiths, both internally and through our wider external work. They do this by:

- Creating awareness of the variety of religious and faith events so that we can fully support and celebrate.
- Acting as an advisor to stakeholders on faith-related matters.
- Encouraging everyone, whether they belong to a faith group or not, to feel comfortable and confident in bringing their whole self to work.

Future Leaders Network

The aim of our Future Leaders Network is to develop an inclusive and diverse forum for colleagues that supports leadership opportunities and capabilities to colleagues, irrespective of their grade, location and experience. Their key objectives are:

- Helping colleagues to channel their ambition to unlock the leadership potential in everyone.
- Working collaboratively with other networks and provide a forum for discussion and sharing.
- Developing the commercial thinking of members to support business objectives.
- Developing new and creative ways to engage and add value to members.
- Using diverse voices to share knowledge and experience.
- Focusing on learning and helping colleagues to make new connections.

Gender Network

The aim of the Gender Network is to support our organisation and our people to achieve gender equality, by:

- Providing a safe space for people to share their experiences, opportunities, ideas and concerns.
- Offering a safe space of mutual support to all women from across the agency.
- Establishing working groups to explore issues and recommend changes to improve policy and practice across the organization.
- Raising awareness and providing a forum for the discussion on gender equality issues.



Graduate and Apprentices Network

The Graduate and Apprentice Network seeks to provide a community for those who are at the early stages of their career and provides a platform to network, socialise and support professional development. Members of this network include graduates, apprentices, analysts or those who are new to the industry. Members will have a desire to broaden their understanding and knowledge around the wider housing sector.

They have four core aims:

- To provide a community for members to network and socialise across Homes England.
- To provide a platform to support, promote and provide opportunities for professional development – with an emphasis on learning through creativity.
- To collaborate and support HR and Learning & Organisational Development to introduce formal processes to support the learning and development of members.
- To develop a platform for members to collaborate and (increase awareness) partner across offices on projects and initiatives across the organisation.

Neurodiversity Network

Our Neurodiversity Network raises awareness of the differences in neurodiverse individuals so we can harness the benefits of a more neurodiverse workforce. They provide a supportive, safe space for neurodiverse colleagues and identify ways of challenging discrimination and stereotyping among colleagues, stakeholders and investment partners. Their focus includes:

- Creating a safe environment within the organisation where the benefits of disclosing one's neurodiversity outweigh the risk.
- Identifying and driving the removal of barriers that prevent current and future neurodivergent employees from achieving their full potential.
- Acting as a support function to all colleagues, offering confidential support and guidance.
- Providing means for neurodiverse colleagues to network with each other.
- Contributing towards development of organisational policy in Homes England, and in the way we deliver our business objectives.
- Helping increase the profile of neurodiverse colleagues within the organisation; showcasing the value added by highlighting achievements of internal and external neurodivergent individuals.
- Supporting the organisation in providing information to prospective employees to demonstrate its commitment to creating an open and welcoming environment for neurodivergent people.

Networks' achievements

Our networks have developed and built over the past three years and membership stands at around 300 colleagues. Their role is to raise awareness and communicate with the wider organisation to help educate, create positive relationships and empower them to be allies to one another. Each network is sponsored by a senior leader.

Our networks have been instrumental in driving this agenda forward over the past few years, with some of their achievements including:

- UK's first ever LGBTQ+ extra care scheme.
- Hosting BAME career development events for colleagues addressing the lack of diversity at senior levels.
- Development of a Disability Passport to support colleagues with disabilities throughout their career path.
- Development of a Transitioning at Work policy and line manager guidelines to support trans people in the workplace.
- Introduction of gender neutral toilets in some of our offices.
- Creation of external networks to improve inclusivity within the property and construction industries.
- Contributing to the development of a diversity calendar to drive ongoing engagement with colleagues.
- Sharing personal stories to raise awareness of issues of difference and promote inclusivity.
- Ensuring our new offices are inclusive and accessible to all.
- Exploring how we can use procurement and tendering to help encourage partners to think about diversity and inclusion.



8

Celebrating successes

Celebrating successes

We have invested time and dedication to a number of initiatives and activities to increase diversity, inclusion and belonging in the organisation. We know there is more we can do to improve; however, we also have a lot to celebrate.

Over the past few years we have worked hard to create a welcoming and inclusive environment for everyone. In addition to complying with our statutory obligations, we have invested time and dedication to several initiatives and activities to increase diversity, inclusion and belonging in the organisation.

Memberships

We are proud to be a Disability Confident Employer and a Stonewall Diversity Champion. In 2020 we have secured a place in Stonewall's Top 100 LGBT+ Inclusive Employers and we were recognised as a Top 20 Trans Employer. This is a huge achievement and a testament to the commitment of colleagues across the agency, however, we know there is more to do.



Our Policies

All our refreshed policies use gender neutral language and any new or updated policies include the views and input of our diversity networks to ensure they are as inclusive as possible.

Through the influence of our networks with have recognised where we have gaps in our policy framework. Our Transitioning at Work policy and manager guidance which provides support for trans colleagues who transition while working for Homes England is a great example of this – created by our LGBT+ network, with the support of the HR Team. Our Dignity and Respect at Work policy contains strong messages on bullying, harassment, victimisation and discrimination to support our General Equality Duty.

Flexible working

Flexible working is a strong focus in our organisation. We care about work-life balance and offer a range of flexible working opportunities including part-time work, compressed hours, term-time working and more.

Communication and Engagement

We strive to ensure that our communications and engagement approach is as inclusive as possible. This is reflected both in our routine messaging as well as providing a spotlight on our diversity and inclusion focused activity.

Our networks play a key role in engaging with colleagues on diversity and inclusion, whether through network events or blogs and articles.

Throughout the year we celebrate awareness days, educate colleagues and share personal stories. External engagement on diversity and inclusion is also stronger than ever, with Homes England and our colleagues using social media as a platform to champion inclusion.



We are also sharing our commitment to the industry through engagement. Last year our Chief Executive publicly challenged industry events with all-male panels and events demonstrating our commitment to shifting the culture of our industry.

Training & Education

All new colleagues are required to complete training on LGBTQ+ Awareness, Disability Awareness, Race Awareness and Unconscious Bias.

Throughout the year, we provide targeted training and development open to all including Stonewall Allies training.

Recruitment and selection

We advertise widely using social media and job boards that fit with our values. Hiring managers complete unconscious bias training before commencing the recruitment process and we have gender diversity on all interview panels.

For senior roles, at least one woman is shortlisted, providing they meet the minimum criteria. We also adopt the guaranteed interview scheme which ensures that all disabled candidates who meet the minimum criteria are shortlisted.

Onboarding

From day one, new colleagues gain a strong sense of our commitment as we share via our onboarding platform information about our networks, our inclusive family policies including our Dignity and Respect at Work Policy and our Transitioning at Work Policy and line manager guide and a statement of commitment from our CEO about the importance of diversity and inclusion at Homes England. This is followed by a dedicated session on diversity and inclusion.

Monitoring and reporting

Our diversity data is monitored on a monthly basis, and our gender pay gap is monitored quarterly. Both sets of information are reported up to our Executive Directors and our Board on a quarterly basis.

Wellbeing

We care about employees' health and wellbeing and support colleagues to feel well at work. Our Wellbeing Hub contains guidance

and resources on a range of wellbeing-related topics and provides an opportunity for colleagues to share their thoughts, tips and connect with each other.

There is also a dedicated free Employee Assistance Programme available to all employees and their household members that can provide advice on a range of matters, including financial issues, personal issues, family crisis, illnesses, work life and more.

Mental Health First Aiders

Mental Health First Aiders are colleagues trained by Mental Health First Aid England - a national organisation that aims to normalise conversations around mental health. They offer advice and support to colleagues who may feel worried, stressed, anxious or depressed. They can provide the assurance of a confidential conversation at times when a listening ear from someone who understands is what is needed.

Engaging with suppliers and partners

Homes England has begun to engage with partners and suppliers on our commitment to diversity and inclusion through our meetings with panel members, demonstrating our ambition to provide a leadership role within the industry.

Last year, diversity and inclusion were discussed at both our Property and Multidisciplinary Framework meetings and we led a separate round table discussion with our property partners.

We are also collaborating with the construction industry as part of Building Equality, an alliance of construction and

engineering organisations, committed to driving LGBTQ+ inclusion in our industry.

One of our colleagues runs an external network called LGBTQ+ Property Professionals, which launched in 2018 and has around 200 members in the North West.

In addition to this, several colleagues sit on industry-wide boards and committees, advising on diversity and inclusion.

Community engagement

Last year Homes England had a presence at Salford Pride, Manchester Pride and Sparkle Weekend (trans celebration). We also and took part in an outreach day in Manchester over the Pride weekend, showing the public that it is possible to have a career in construction (or at Homes England) no matter who you are. Homes England has raised money for charities including the Alzheimer's Society, Samaritans, Proud Trust and Albert Kennedy Trust.



11 Signatures

We know that leadership accountability is essential to the successful delivery of our ambitions.

We want our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion to be led from the top. To demonstrate that, our Executive Directors signed this document and will follow up follow their commitment with actions, working together to help build belonging at Homes England.

The Statement of Equality report is signed on 17th July 2020.



Nick Walkley
Chief Executive Officer



Gordon More
Chief Investments Officer



Amy Casterton
Chief of Staff



Lynda McMullan
Chief Finance Officer



Stephen Kinsella
Chief Land and Development Officer



Harry Swales
Executive Director of Markets, Partners and Places



Lou Downe
Director of Transformation

Get in touch

enquiries@homesengland.gov.uk

0300 1234 500

gov.uk/homes-england